



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield

Program Title: Learning With You

Program Category: Communications

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Title: County Administrator

Signature: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Digitally signed by Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.
DN: cn=Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D., o=Chesterfield County, ou=County Administration,
email=caseyjoe@chesterfield.gov, c=US
Date: 2023.06.27 12:13:47 -04'00'

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(Communications Category)

Abstract of the Program:

In 2021, Chesterfield County Public Schools launched Learning With You (LWY). Designed to help members of the multicultural community connect with and learn more about Chesterfield County Public Schools, LWY covers topics that affect public education and the resources available to students and families in Chesterfield County.

Learning with You is offered in four weekly sessions on Wednesdays, 6-8:30 p.m., with interpretation services available for those who are not proficient in English. During the sessions, participants met with school leaders and department directors to discuss several issues affecting the education of immigrant children and their professional futures. They explored how their local school system works, learned how to resolve issues, and obtained information and resources not only related to school issues but to general situations.

Upon graduation from the LWY program, participants will have not only increased their understanding of Chesterfield County Public Schools thus increasing their access, but they will also be able to help their communities better understand and access our school division. As alumni of the program, they are able to interact with other residents who are part of the LWY Alumni Network and receive frequent communication about “hot-topic” issues and engagement opportunities.

Problem or need addressed by the program:

In November 2020 the school board approved funding for a Multicultural Outreach Specialist to be added to the Family and Community Engagement team (FACE). As a bridge between the

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school division and our multicultural community, this staff person has proven valuable in insuring that all CCPS families have a voice. Realizing that many of our families did not have a clear understanding of public education in the United States conversations began in the Spring of 2021 and focused on ways in which we could connect with individuals in order to increase their knowledge of our school division. In May of 2021, it was decided that Learning With You, a four-session academy designed to build an understanding of public education, would be offered the following fall.

While the team spent much time discussing the topics that would be covered over the four weeks, they also spent a fair amount of time discussing barriers that existed within the school division and the community that prevented families from engaging as advocates and partners in their child's education. While these barriers had existed prior to 2020, the pandemic and subsequent shutdown had exasperated the barriers while amplifying the needs of many in the multicultural community. As the rest of suburban America pivoted, bringing work and school home, many members of the multicultural community faced a very different experience. Language barriers and access to technology, access combined with the stresses of a pandemic made facilitating learning at home difficult. As resources were developed to help families with virtual learning the school division relied on the voices of our multicultural community to not only communicate with others in their community but to inform decision-makers as to the needs and concerns of the communities they represented.

Upon returning to in-person learning many of our families, as well as members of the greater community, spoke of their experiences during the shutdown referencing the need to be more fully aware of our local community, the school division, and the resources available. The

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conversations had with members of the multicultural community through focus groups and town halls during the shutdown not only spoke to the issues of access, barriers to opportunities, and resources needed, these conversations reinforced the value that the diverse voices brought to our community. Purposefully engaging our multicultural community was mutually beneficial and could play a critical role- not only in closing gaps but in driving positive impact for all residents of Chesterfield County.

The work went beyond increasing knowledge of supports and resources available, as individuals engage more around the issues impacting public education in Chesterfield as a whole, their role of ambassador and advocate benefits the entire community as a whole. Being able to build relationships with members of the school division at all levels combined with the understanding of the system goes far in mitigating the reluctance and fear that members of the multicultural community experience when advocating for change. While this fear and reluctance often prevents individuals from seeking solutions to their own issues- it quiets the voice of an entire community, which has been historically absent in advocating for community-wide issues.

Program Description:

Learning With You is a community academy designed to welcome and empower residents of Chesterfield County, focusing specifically on members of the from our multicultural community. Individuals participating in Learning With You learn about the many facets of our school division as well as explore topics impacting public education in Chesterfield County.

The program consists of four sessions which are offered weekly from 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m. During

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the sessions, participants meet with school leaders and school department directors, explore how their local school system works, learn how to resolve issues, and gain an understanding of available resources and support offered to students. Sessions are held at the school administration offices to ensure participants enjoy a welcoming atmosphere.

Each session starts with welcoming remarks by a school board member, dinner and icebreaker in which participants and presenters have the opportunity to enjoy a meal and get to know each other. This is followed by a presentation and question and answer period. Typically, the question and answer session is robust with dialogue going beyond the scheduled time.

The academy is free to participants and is open to individuals who live and work in Chesterfield County, individuals wishing to participate do not have to have children enrolled in the school division. Interpretation services are available/

Once a participant completes the course they become a member of the Learning With You alumni network

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

Like many suburban school divisions, Chesterfield has become a mosaic of cultures in both race/ethnicity as well as financial need. Considered a “minority majority” school division, fifty-six percent of the students in Chesterfield County non-white. Over 100 different languages are spoken in the homes of our students. According to the Virginia Department of Education school quality report, the fall membership by subgroups are as follows:

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White: 43.9%

Black: 26.4%

Hispanic: 20.7%

Asian: 3.2%

Multiple Races: 5.4%

American Indian: .2%

Native Hawaiian: .2%

Additionally, since 2010, the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch has doubled from 20% of students qualifying in 2010 to 40% being eligible in 2020. Over 103 languages are spoken in the homes of CCPS's students with 14% of the students receiving services as English Language Learners.

In addition, since 2010, Chesterfield's population has grown by 15.5% now totaling over 370,000 people and is the fourth most populated county in the state behind Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun counties. The economic opportunities afforded through economic development combined with relative affordable cost of living are drivers in the growth throughout the Richmond region with many choosing Chesterfield because of the strong public school system. While only 35% of residents have children enrolled in public schools, knowing about and advocating for a strong public education system is important for all residents as it is such a key driver. This is especially true for members of the multicultural community as often have a limited understanding of how public education and local government works. This knowledge is important in not only accessing resources and opportunities for their own families but also plays a key role in an individual's self-efficacy and ability to advocate for themselves and their

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community.

Committed to ensuring that every resident not only has a seat at the table but feels empowered to use their voice is the driving force behind Learning With You. Superintendent, Dr. Merv Daugherty often says, “All means all” backs up this saying by his support of programs such as Learning With You. This program is part of a commitment on behalf of the school division to not only provide equal access to students but to empower the voices of their community. Learning With You goes a step beyond merely sharing information as it affirms the participants as leaders within their community, ambassadors for the school division and elevates their voices in advocacy.

Program Cost:

Learning with You was a free program for all participants, including food, interpretation services, and materials.

CCPS staff provides their time and expertise as presenters. The organization and administration of the program is done through the Office of Family and Community Engagement who provides tangible collateral such as copies of presentation materials translated in what every language necessary, binders, sign in sheets, etc. Costs for materials are \$125 per four week session.

The FACE Office works with community partners for discounts on meals, and is able to provide meals for an average of \$300 per evening. The total cost for a four-session Learning With You program averages \$1500.

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Program Results/Success:

Two academies were held during the 2021-2022 school year. 55 participants from 12 home countries, including Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nigeria, Senegal, China, Peru, and the United States.

Often participants are those who are seen as leaders within their communities or are involved with organizations serving and supporting newcomers. Such organizations represented have been: Casa de la Salud, Families First, Robins Hope Foundation, and the African Community Network. They have proven leadership abilities, and have used the information and connections gained from Learning With You in their communities. Each graduate of Learning With You essentially becomes an invaluable resource in helping their community better understand and access school services and community resources.

At the conclusion of the program, participants are recognized during the Chesterfield County Public School Board meetings.

Members who have participated in Learning With You have gone on to school board advisory board positions, spoken at school board meetings during the public comment, and have carried their experience into the community working to organize families. The FACE team and anytime anywhere engagement has served as a bridge between all these important players in student success.

While this program is designed to connect members of our community with information and resources necessary to understand and better navigate our school division it has provided

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leadership and staff with valuable insight into the perspectives of our changing community.

These participants, who are now Learning with You alumni, are CCPS ambassadors in their communities, not only to share what they learned but to encourage their own people to attend future academies.

Two of the participants expressed marvelous examples of how the academy makes a difference in our community and their own during the graduation.

“Learning with You is very important because it is an efficient way to connect leaders who have not to find out their potential. Also, it allows community members to understand school processes, as well as to feel better and more comfortable with the school system and express their own opinions and ideas.

It is also a way to empower people to use the school resources. The immigrant community does not understand the importance of leadership because they did not have such opportunities in their own homes.”

Another participant stated: “It was very important to me to participate in Learning with You. I learned about all the different programs and services CCPS offers to its residents. There are many families, not just in CCPS but nationwide and not just Latinos, but people from many countries, cultures, and backgrounds who are great members of our community and want to succeed, but they need opportunities such as Learning with You. I am a Latina mom, and I have a child who has disabilities and thanks to the academy, I was able to gain knowledge about school programs, services, and benefits to better assist my son and my family.”

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Worthiness of an award:

CCPS is committed to providing every member of our community has access to the opportunities and resources provided by Chesterfield County Public Schools. This access is directly correlated to their understanding and awareness of their local government. Learning With You not only builds their understanding of available resources, which in turn supports better outcomes for their students, it also invites them as parents and community members into a space of advocacy.

The impact of Learning With You on the community is evidenced by their participation on school board advisory boards, PTA leadership boards and presenting during the public comment portion of the school board meetings.

Supplemental Materials:

- Website links and pictures (attached)

Supplemental Materials:

Current web application

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfhBxpjojoR_DRKK3y-3ytxCA6E6KTWffKNcmKn2R_PqP0EmA/viewform?fbclid=IwAR3nTragz2fldVeNkYwobXa2Z_tNX7I2Gpu7tiCfT5e-O1p6yiOkeY5Nldg

Spring 2022

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1X2FM7uqSoQNb_Qk7AhOU3yJgskI_5kxIXzfrHfBvHJc/edit?ts=615f022d

Fall 2021

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13zA70hY_O0oTcRKtyMQSFPpasnrczx9x6CLPDu7P4U/edit

Photographs:

Graduation



Welcome



Icebreaker

