

Egg Harbor Township Schools

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Egg Harbor Township School District Receives NJDOE's World Languages Model Program Honor

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP – Egg Harbor Township School District's *Español para Hispanohablantes* program was designated a Model Program by the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) World Languages Model Programs Initiative on June 11 at an awards ceremony held in Trenton.

The award is given based upon the competitive application process, a full-day site visitation by the state, as well as interviews with administrators, teachers, parents and students in the program.

What began as a new option for high school Spanish speakers 20 years ago has evolved into a grade 5-12 program, including College Prep, Honors and AP level courses. Through the Hispanohablantes program, Egg Harbor Township School District offers Spanish classes for heritage and native Spanish speakers. The focus of the curriculum in each level is on developing students' literacy skills in Spanish.

"As a Model Program, Egg Harbor Township School District will serve as a resource for other districts in the state and enable educators to witness first hand exemplary practices in world language instruction and assessment," said David G. Greer, Ed.D., the state's director/coordinator of world languages in the office of academics, in a letter to the district announcing the award.

"Spanish speakers in EHT have the opportunity to take classes designed especially for them that develop literacy skills in Spanish," said Dr. Michele Schreiner, Egg Harbor Township's supervisor of world languages and ESL. Hispanohablantes course offerings begin in 5th grade at Dr. Joyanne D. Miller Elementary School where students who already speak Spanish begin to learn how to read the language, according to Dr. Schreiner. "Students begin to develop phonemic awareness, and work in learning centers on literacy skills just like they do in their English and language arts classes," she said.

This is the first time students are told "your Spanish is not only important, it's an asset and we want you to do it, to develop it," said Jenny Dilks, middle school teacher. "The program provides an environment where

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we nurture the language but also the pride of being Hispanic,” she added.

“It’s an opportunity where our students have relevant learning experiences that prepare them for the global society, and we feel that’s important to their education and we’re very proud to offer that,” said Dr. Kim Gruccio, Egg Harbor Township’s superintendent of schools.

The high school program offers College Prep, Honors and Advanced Placement level courses in Hispanohablantes 1, 2, and 3, and AP Spanish Literature where students improve writing proficiency and begin to read more critically while exploring the AP global themes.

In their senior year, EHTHS students in the AP Spanish Literature course take two AP exams, both AP Spanish Literature and AP Spanish Language. Students who score a 3 or higher on each exam earn 3 college credits for a total of 6 credits. Students in the AP Spanish Literature course also take the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) proficiency assessment. They are able to graduate with the Seal of Biliteracy if they score Intermediate-Mid or better on all four sections of the AAPPL.

“We have approximately nine sections of the course and about 200 students,” said EHTHS Principal Dr. Terry Charlton. “One of the things we’ve noticed is that because it’s offered in middle school, students coming to high school are much more prepared and therefore we’ve upgraded the rigor in our high school level program so much so that many of our students now are awarded the state seal of biliteracy which is a huge advantage for them as they go out to compete in the global economy,” added Charlton.

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, district, or state in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. It encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and can be evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions offices.

For more information please contact Dr. Michele Schreiner at (609) 653-0100 x1696 or via email to schreinem@eht.k12.nj.us.

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