



December 10, 2020

Dear Harris families,

I would like to take this opportunity to share important information with you regarding your child's Spanish language development. This fall, I have had several conversations with families of Spanish language learners, PTO members, teachers, parents of English language learners, Building Leadership Team, and PSD leadership. I have listened to all the stakeholders and I have reflected on the information that I have received.

This letter is intended to inform you, the parent of a 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish Language learner, about the AAPPL preassessment that your child recently took. For all Spanish language learner families (Kinder through Fifth grade), I also wanted to share with you our plans for next semester and to address concerns that a few of you have voiced this fall. A similar letter will be sent to the parents of our English language learner families reassuring them, that our Harris community remains dedicated to their child's education and how we will continue to support their child's English language development as we have done for 27 years.

I appreciate the feedback very much and I want you to know that we are dedicated to improving our practice as educators and sharing our work with families. Next semester, I will be sending out a more detailed document about the instructional model at Harris, including the # of minutes your children receive in both languages, the differences between a 50/50 model and a 90/10 model, how Harris meets the three pillars of dual language education and how we plan to promote dual language throughout a feeder system in PSD. I will also include the history of our program and future plans. I also intend to ask families to partner with us in specific ways so we can continue to offer our program to emergent bilinguals for years to come.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade SLD**

Since your child is identified as a 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade SLD learner (Spanish Language Development learner) at our school, they take part in an assessment to evaluate their proficiency level in Spanish each spring. Due to the COVID restrictions that were imposed on our school in March, we were only able to offer this assessment to last year's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. We offer this assessment to 5<sup>th</sup> graders before spring break as it is used to meet the criteria and body of evidence, we set forth for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Pathway Certificate of Biliteracy. If your child was a 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student last year, they were unable to take this assessment due to COVID.

This fall, I decided to have all current 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade SLD students take the AAPPL preassessment before Thanksgiving break. Our goal is for you and your child's teacher to understand where your child is at in their Spanish Language development this fall. Please remember that due to the pandemic, and moving in and out of phases, your child's score may be lower than typical. We are using this assessment as a diagnostic tool (preassessment) so we can

align our SLD instruction now and in second semester. Additionally, for the children that want more practice speaking Spanish, we have begun Spanish enrichment groups at the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades this month. In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms, our SLD block is offered in leveled groups, based on a child's current performance. These groups are fluid and will change as teachers utilize formative assessments in the classroom.

Our teachers ensure that your student has many opportunities to “show what they know” and meets a holistic body of evidence for their language development. You will see a separate “SLD Report Card” for first semester. Because this SLD report card is unique to Harris, you will have access to this SLD Report Card on Material Pick Up day, Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. The new PSD Standards Based Report Card will be available on Parent VUE on January 11, 2021. I encourage you to speak with your child's teacher if you have questions about either of the report cards.

### **Kinder through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade SLD**

In the primary grades, your child receives a dedicated block of SLD each week. Teachers in grades Kinder through 2nd grade have designed rubrics that follow the ACTFL standards. Teachers look for a body of evidence in order to tell you where your child is at in their partner language. For First and Second grade, this overall assessment will be seen in the SLD portion of your child's report card that you will receive via Material Pick Up day on Friday, January 8, 2021. For Kindergarten, your child will receive general comments on their progress in SLD on their Standards Based Report card. This PSD Standards Based Report Card will be available to you via Parent VUE on Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **AAPPL Assessment (3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade only)**

This fall, we have updated our website to include information about the SLD portion of our program. Please visit our website for specific information about the ACTFL standards that are used at Harris to build rubrics at each grade level. Please follow this link to our website, <https://har.psdschools.org/sld-spanish-language-development>

The **ACTFL** (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages “**AAPPL**,” was given to all **SLD learners in grades 3-5 in November 2020. We will offer this assessment again to all SLD learners in May of 2021.** By the end of the year, you will have a greater understanding of how much your child has grown in Spanish.

The *AAPPL* assessment offers valuable information and data about your student's language growth in the areas of *Interpersonal Listening and Speaking*, *Presentational Writing*, *Interpretive Reading*, and *Interpretive Listening*. This assessment will provide us with data to support student growth in their Spanish language proficiency and your child's teacher is using the current data to plan engaging lessons to support their growth. There are 4 assessments, and each assessment takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. A report explaining your student's *AAPPL* scores will be available to you on Material Pick Up day, next Thursday, December 17, 2020.

In this year of remote learning, I realize that there is concern about the decreased opportunities for your child to practice Spanish. Therefore, we have begun the following:

- Virtual Spanish Language Enrichment group, with Gloria Restrepo, Fridays 4<sup>th</sup> grade SLD students beginning in November 2020
- Virtual Spanish Language Enrichment group, with Gloria Restrepo, Fridays 5<sup>th</sup> grade SLD students beginning in November 2020
- Virtual Spanish Language Enrichment group, with Claudia Menendez, Fridays 3<sup>rd</sup> grade SLD students
- Virtual Spanish Language Conversation mini groups with CSU Spanish students, to begin in January 2021 – 4<sup>th</sup> grade SLD

I would like to take this moment to say that in no other elementary school in the district, is a child receiving the level and extent of Spanish that the children are receiving here at Harris. Our staff and students have created a beautiful community where your children play and learn together as they journey through their elementary career as emergent bilingual learners. We take great pride in our program and we are a dedicated staff of seasoned educators who have your child's interests at the forefront of our teaching. Thank you for recognizing this and entrusting your child's education to us.

If you have any specific questions about the *AAPPL* assessment, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or Martha Petty, our SLD Lead. You can find their emails here.

<https://har.psdschools.org/directory>

Sincerely,

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**SLD Team**

**Martha Petty, SLD Team Lead**

Rosie Navejas, Kindergarten  
Isabel Pinedo, First grade  
Monica Rogers, Second grade  
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Cesar Fuentes, Fourth grade  
Maria Burden, Fifth grade