



# I am CPS

A Culture of Transformation for Our Tomorrow



## I Care

---

“Once a child begins to flourish,  
it’s so rewarding.”

*Marie  
Kobayashi*

**Manager  
English Language  
Learners**

Marie Kobayashi, English Language Learners (ELL) Curriculum Manager, knows the power of communicating. “My parents were immigrants. My father was Japanese and my mother is Dominican, which makes me ‘Japinican!’ ”

Growing up, Marie often was the voice of her parents since she was the eldest and spoke English. “That can be a heavy burden for a child to carry, and, as a parent, it can be degrading. It strips away some of your parenting power.”

With a diverse population growing in Cincinnati Public Schools, Marie, along with other CPS leaders, collaborated with Princeton City Schools to develop a program — Future CLASS for Diverse Learners — that won funding via a \$14.5 million Ohio Straight A grant. Future CLASS is designed to overcome language barriers and empower ELL families.

Students at CPS’ Academy of World Languages alone represent over 30 languages. With this growth comes challenges.

“Many of our ELL students are refugees and have had their education interrupted,” Marie says. “Now they’re in a new culture, speaking a new language, and they have to keep up with rigorous academic standards. Once a child begins to flourish, it’s so rewarding.”

[mycps.cps-k12.org](http://mycps.cps-k12.org)

“Future CLASS addresses the whole child,” Marie explains. It’s a home/school collaboration that includes professional development for staff.

With the Rosetta Stone online language-learning program provided free by the grant, students and parents can strengthen English skills and CPS staff can learn foreign languages. More than 120 staff have completed Rosetta Stone training.

“When parents are greeted at the front office in their native tongue, they become at ease. It’s a relief for them to know their child is in a caring and nurturing place,” Marie says.

Marie recognizes that embracing the differences of others is what makes each of us unique. Her dedication in securing the Straight A Grant and her relationship-building skills within the ELL community embody the I Care values of the I am CPS cultural transformation.