

## **MRSPA Classroom Mini-grant: Signed, Sealed, Delivered**

Awarded December 2021

Awarded to Emily Leedy, Malcolm Elementary, Charles County

This project was completed successfully with participation from 79 fifth grade students at Malcolm Elementary. Students spent instructional time learning about the parts of a letter and developing topics for communicating to their Pen Pal. We wrote our first letters in March to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Beall Elementary in Allegany County, Maryland. Students introduced themselves and shared information about life in Southern Maryland. Students also included questions to their Pen Pals in order to facilitate conversation.

Our classes were very excited to receive a response from their Pen Pals a few weeks later, in April. They were very eager to hold on to their responses. We took notes about what our Pen Pals shared and what questions they asked in return. Using these notes, Malcolm fifth graders wrote a second letter. Overall, students benefitted greatly from this meaningful writing project. They were personally invested in the purpose of the writing, editing, and revising of their own letters. They also really valued the opportunity to connect to someone from a different area. One student reflecting on the project said, "It was fun because I got to talk to somebody who I don't know, like talking to someone that you haven't seen forever. I got to know somebody that does different things than me."

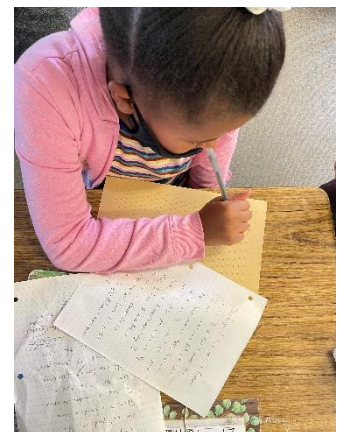
Funds from this project allowed us to purchase stationery and pens for composing our letters. We were also able to purchase Table Topic Conversation starters to facilitate discussions and brainstorm communication ideas for our letters. Funding also allowed us to purchase envelopes and stamps for our two letters per student as well as for stamps and envelopes for our partner school.



*Figure 1 Supplies for project*



*Figure 2 First round of letters ready for mailing*



*Figure 3 Student responding to her Pen Pal*