

Dual Language FAQs

January 13, 2015

Q. What is Dual Language?

A. Dual Language is both an additive bilingual program for Spanish-speaking students and a foreign language immersion program for English-speaking students. In “two-way classrooms,” a combination of native Spanish speakers and native English speakers are taught together in an effort to develop full bilingualism and biliteracy for both groups of students.

Q. How does Dual Language work in elementary school?

A. All participating students receive instruction in language arts and content areas in English and Spanish throughout the day. The class is made up of English Language Learners and native English speaking students.

Q. What are the benefits of Dual Language instruction?

A. Studies have shown that children enrolled in dual language programs routinely outperform their peers on standardized tests and college-readiness exams such as the SAT. In addition, they can earn up to 20 percent more in wages as adults.

Q. Are there any other reasons to enroll my child in a Dual Language Program?

A. Being bilingual expands opportunities by enabling students to communicate and interact with more international people, giving them the skills and knowledge to function competently and confidently in a global society. Dual Language students display greater academic, cognitive, and social skills than those in monolingual classes.

Q. How is Dual Language different from other instruction for LEP students?

A. The Transitional Bilingual Program serves students identified as Spanish-speaking English Language Learners. The goal of the program is to transition students to English-only instruction. On the other hand, the goal of the Dual Language Program is to learn an additional language in order to become bilingual and biliterate.

Q. Are there any other program options for my ELL child?

A. The Dual Language Program will be the ONLY program for ELLs in schools that adopt it, and all efforts will be made to serve an equal number of native English speakers.

Q. How can I help my student succeed in the Dual Language Program at their school?

A. Family engagement is critical, and your child's school will have a support framework to engage parents in both languages. Continue reading to your child in your primary language. Maintain close communication with your child's teacher so that you are able to help them at home, as well as participate in activities organized by the school. Answer all your child's questions about language in order to support their language development.

Q. What do I have to do to enroll my child in the Dual Language Program at their school?

A. The program is offered at neighborhood schools throughout the district. The program officially begins in Kindergarten; therefore, it is open to incoming Kindergarten students. Some schools, however, choose to start the program in Pre-Kindergarten. Please contact your neighborhood school for more details, and refer to the [Multilingual Program Models page](#) for a list of campuses offering the program.

Q. What if I decide to withdraw my student from the Dual Language Program?

A. A commitment to keep your student enrolled in the program from Kindergarten through grade 5 is essential, and a commitment through grade 12 is encouraged to ensure that your child becomes bilingual and biliterate.

For additional information, please visit the HISD [Multilingual Education website](#).