

EXPANDING DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR PARENTS & EDUCATORS

What is Dual Language Education?

Dual Language Education offers a unique and enriching opportunity for students to develop proficiency in English and another language such as; Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Polish while mastering the same academic standards as students in English-only classrooms. Dual Language Education programs are offered in two models:

One-Way Dual Language:

Serves English Learners (ELs) or students who speak the same language. All students share the same home language and begin instruction in that language, while gradually blending in English through ESL instruction.

Two-Way Dual Language:

Integrates English Learners and English only speakers to promote language development and cultural learning. Instruction time is split between both languages (English and ELs home language).

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Dual Language Education has many advantages as supported by research:

01.

Academic & Cognitive Benefits

- Students typically perform at or above grade level in English and other language assessments
- Students in Dual Language Education programs display enhanced cognitive function, linguistic awareness and problem solving skills
- Dual Language Education can narrow the achievement gap between English Learners and their English only speaking peers

02.

Cultural Competence

- Students build empathy, cultural awareness, and sense of global citizenship
- English Learners gain positive cultural identity, as their home language is validated alongside English

03.

Economic Advantages

- Students who graduate bilingual often have additional employment opportunities and higher earning potential
- For communities, Dual Language Education can enhance workforce and support economic vitality

STARTING A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Here is how schools and families can work together to launch a Dual Language Program

Planning & Program Design



- Select a model: One-Way or Two-Way, consider the student population, teacher qualifications, current curriculum
- Set goals: Develop academic milestones including language proficiency goals for both languages, and a timeline for implementation



Staffing and Curriculum

- Develop a recruitment and retainment plan for bilingual educators inclusive of professional development for instruction in two languages
- Adopt a standards based curriculum that provides equal instructional time for both languages

Family and Community Engagement

- Engage with existing parent committees or councils (ex. Bilingual Parent Advisory Councils, Title I Parent Councils) to guide development and host informational events
- Host community workshops, cultural celebrations, and other engagement activities to promote multilingual benefits

Funding and Partnerships

- Leverage existing bilingual education funding to build Dual Language Education programs (State EBF funds for English Learners, Title III federal funding, state bilingual grant funds to recruit bilingual teachers or fund bilingual endorsement coursework)
- Partner with universities for teacher training and with local organizations for cultural engagement opportunities



Monitor Progress

- Track student progress through assessments in English and home language (state or local assessments).
- Use student data to inform decisions on language ratio, instructional strategies, and curriculum



CALL TO ACTION FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

Parents Can:

- **Advocate:** Engage school leaders, promote Dual Language Education through parent councils and committees and highlight student needs
- **Volunteer:** Support schools with literacy by assisting in classrooms and participate in cultural events
- **Spread the Word:** Encourage schools to embrace diversity in order for student enrollment to support Dual Language Education program



Schools can:

- **Form committees** including parents, teachers, and members of community for planning
- **Communicate** in multiple languages about Dual Language education program progress and local events
- **Celebrate** language and cultural diversity through school assemblies in multiple languages

Dual Language Education is a research based, equality-driven, and community-building model for education. Dual Language Programs empower students to master two languages, support cognitive and cultural development, and graduate with more professional opportunities.

Through strategic planning, inclusive partnerships, and sustained commitment, Illinois schools can successfully expand Dual Language Education for the benefit of students, families, and our community.