



## Bilingual/ESL Department Dual Language Bilingual Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What are the goals and benefits of a Dual Language Program?**

Dual Language students will develop strong skills and proficiency in two languages. They will become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural, and achieve academically at or above grade level in both languages. They will also acquire higher-order thinking skills and better problem-solving abilities, and learn to appreciate and respect other languages and cultures as well as develop intercultural relationships in the school and community.

Native English speakers will have the gift of developing Spanish as a second language at an early age while continuing to grow in English. Native Spanish speakers will be able to develop English as a second language while enriching their native language, Spanish. All children will learn appropriate academic skills while developing their bilingual/biliteracy proficiency.

Native English speakers and English-dominant students achieve at the same or higher levels in English compared to their English-only speaking peers in English-only classrooms. They develop very positive attitudes about students of other language and cultural backgrounds and positive attitudes about their heritage language and cultural background.

Native Spanish speakers will achieve at the same or higher levels in **English** than their peers enrolled in other programs.

For more information, visit the *Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition* at [www.carla.umn.edu](http://www.carla.umn.edu) or the *Center for Applied Linguistics* at [www.cal.org/twi](http://www.cal.org/twi).

**Q: What are the differences between Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and the Dual Bilingual Program?**

Dual Language Bilingual programs have the demographics to have English-dominant students and English Language Learners in an integrated bilingual classroom. There should be an approximate balance of students of each language background. The program is composed of Spanish-speaking English Language Learners and native English and/or English-dominant students. The program will begin at the Kindergarten (K) level and grow one grade each year. The goal of the Dual Bilingual Program is for students to become bilingual/biliterate. It is an additive program. It promotes native-language literacy skills and balanced bilingualism.

The Transitional Bilingual Program is for English Language Learners only. The program begins literacy in the student's native language (Spanish) and gradually increases English instruction while diminishing instruction in the native language. This is a subtractive program. The goal is to achieve English literacy only.

**Q: Will the Dual Bilingual Language program model replace the Transitional Bilingual Education program model?**

No. The Dual Language Bilingual Program will be the model for use in selected Kindergarten programs. The Transitional Bilingual Education Program will still be in place in the bilingual centers.

**Q: How will the ESL program serve Spanish-speaking students in the Dual Language Program?**

Bilingual students will receive ESL services during their regular reading time.

**Q: Are native English speakers and English-dominant students able to take part in the Dual Language Bilingual program?**

Yes, a minimum of 1/3 of interested and committed native English speakers or English-dominant students per classroom are needed in order to meet the required balance of peer language models for the program to be effective.

**Q: What if I change my mind and no longer want my child in the program?**

Since bilingual proficiency is a long-term commitment and available space for families is limited, we ask that you make the commitment to see the program at least through a full first year. When a child leaves the program, that space is immediately made available for the first child on the waiting list. Consequently, there is no guarantee of re-admittance.

**Q: Will my child progress through the general education curriculum at a slower rate than children in traditional classes because he/she is learning it in Spanish too?**

The curriculum implemented in the dual language classrooms is the School District's adopted curriculum and is taught through supportive, differentiated, and interactive teaching strategies that ensure that children learn the academic content while developing their first and second languages.

**Q: Will my child fall behind in basic skills like reading, writing and math because of the second language?**

No, national studies have shown that children in Dual Language programs, as a group, perform the same or better than their monolingual English speaking peers in achievement tests in math, reading and writing.

**Q: Can my child with special needs be in a Dual Language program?**

Special Education students can be admitted into the Dual Language program provided there is no conflict with the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

**Q: Can English Language Learners get enough English instruction in a Dual Language program to succeed in the second language?**

Yes, research indicates that in order for that to happen, English time must be carefully defined and implemented and that high quality curriculum and instruction are essential. In addition, research shows that when programs are fully implemented according to the program design, English learners in dual language programs score as well as or better than their peers in other programs in English tests. (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, *Dual Language Education*, Multilingual Matters LTD)

**Q: How can I help support my child in doing homework in the second language, particularly if I don't know that language? What kind of homework support can the program provide?**

Parents can support students at home by making sure that they have the right environment and tools to get homework done (e.g., a quiet space and enough time, paper, dictionaries in both languages, writing utensils, and art supplies such as construction paper, paste, tape, and colored makers). Parents can also ask questions about the homework in the language spoken at home, thus giving the students opportunities to explain the assignment in their first language. Parents can also read bilingual books with their child, write and watch movies in the second language.

**Q: What are some resources for parents of students who are in the Dual Language Program?**

*Center for Applied Linguistics* [www.cal.org/twi](http://www.cal.org/twi) provide resources to parents, including books and videos from organizations and from other Dual Language /TWI programs. *Dual Language Education of New Mexico (DLeNM)* <http://www.dlenm.org> provides resources and supports to parents and community on the section: *Advocacy, Family and Community*.

**Q: Where do parents apply?**

Parents will apply at the selected school or at the Trenton Board of Education (Bilingual/ESL Dept.)

**Q: Who can I contact for additional information?**

For additional information, please contact Regla Monkan, Supervisor of Bilingual Education at 609-656-4900 Ext. or email – [rmonkan@trenton.k12.nj.us](mailto:rmonkan@trenton.k12.nj.us) or Mildred Miranda, Supervisor of English as a Second Language at 609-656-4900 Ext. 5788 or e-mail – [mmiranda@trenton.k12.nj.us](mailto:mmiranda@trenton.k12.nj.us).