



English-Spanish Dual Language

Frequently asked questions about the English-Spanish Dual Language Program in School District 54



Q What are District 54's goals in relation to the Dual Language Programs?

A The goals are as follows.

- District 54 will ensure the success of the whole child by providing comprehensive approaches and programming, grounded in the belief that each child deserves to be Healthy, Safe, Engaged, Supported and Challenged.
- District 54 will perform in the top 10% of all schools in reading and math growth and proficiency as measured by state and local assessments.
- District 54 will close the achievement gap for all students in reading and math as measured by state and local assessments.

Q What are the expectations of the English-Spanish Dual Language Program?

A Students will be able to

- Use two languages comfortably and effectively in social situations appropriate for their age level;
- Communicate effectively through reading and writing in two languages at a level appropriate for their age;
- Perform academically at grade level commensurate with their monolingual English-speaking peers; and
- Demonstrate an appreciation of cultural diversity and cross-cultural competence across a variety of social situations.

Q What are the benefits for my child in the Dual Language Program?

A Spanish learners will develop Spanish proficiency at an early age while continuing to grow in English. Native Spanish-speaking children will develop English proficiency while enriching their native language. All children will learn appropriate academic skills while developing target language proficiency. Moreover, your child will be able to develop social skills that allow him to develop cross-cultural friendships. In addition, brain research has shown that bilingual speakers have the opportunity to develop more cognitive flexibility through their bilingualism.

Q Where is the English-Spanish Dual Language Program located in School District 54?

A The English-Spanish Dual Language Program will be offered at eight schools during the 2020-21 school year.

- Hanover Highlands Elementary School in Hanover Park
- Enders-Salk Elementary School, Keller Junior High and Frost Junior High in Schaumburg
- Link Elementary School and Mead Junior High in Elk Grove Village
- MacArthur International Spanish Academy and Eisenhower Junior High in Hoffman Estates

Q What are the criteria for admission into the program?

A The dual language program is open to all families in School District 54, with priorities in admission given to the children who live within the neighborhood school's boundaries and for siblings of students in that school's dual language program.

If there is more interest than available space, students will be placed on a waiting list and invited into the program as openings become available.

New residents with children at any grade level may request that their child receive a language assessment to determine if the child's English/Spanish language proficiency is at an appropriate level for entry into the program. The child's name will be added to the waiting list. Due to the immersion nature of Spanish language instruction in the dual language program, monolingual students will only be admitted at the kindergarten and first-grade levels. English-learner students will be assessed to determine the best placement for each child.

Q What if I change my mind after my child is in the program and want to pull him out?

A Since acquiring bilingual proficiency is a long-term process and available space for families is limited, parents are asked to commit to program participation for at least a full year. When a child is pulled from the program, that space is immediately made available for the next student 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 is learning in Spanish too?

A No. The dual language classes implement School District 54's curriculum at the same rate as other classes. Through careful scaffolding and interactive approaches, children learn the academic content while developing their respective languages.

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

A No. National studies have shown that children in dual language programs, as a group, perform as well or better than their respective peers on achievement tests in math, reading and writing. Assessment results of dual language students in School District 54 show the same outcome.

Q Will my child have the same classmates every year? Will that lead to social isolation?

A Your child will be with essentially the same group of classmates from kindergarten through sixth grade. However, grade-level teams collaborate to include all students in academic projects, field trips, daily recess and extracurricular activities. Dual Language students have opportunities to interact with all students at their grade level.

Q Who are the teachers for these classes? What qualifications do they have?

A Teachers teaching dual language classes have the appropriate State of Illinois certification to be considered highly qualified. Target language teachers have native or near-native proficiency in both English and Spanish. Dual language partner teachers work as a team to monitor the quality of instruction and to implement the most effective teaching strategies in their classrooms.

Q Will my child learn to read and write in English or Spanish first?

A Children are taught to read, write, listen and speak simultaneously in both English and Spanish using a balanced literacy approach beginning in kindergarten. The District 54 goal for dual language and immersion programs is for all children to be reading at grade level or higher by third grade in English and in the target language. Students continue to increase their proficiency in Spanish and English as they progress through the grade levels.

Q Can I observe one of the Dual Language classes or get more information before making my decision?

A Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, District 54 is not allowing visitors to observe the programs this year. However, each school has links to video tours, virtual chats with the principal and applications on our website at sd54.org/openenrollment. For additional questions, you may call the school and speak to the principal:

Sonia Esquivel at MacArthur – (847) 357-6650

Mike Henry at Enders-Salk – (847) 357-6400

Dr. Quinn Wulbecker at Link – (847) 357-5300

Dr. Amy Thompson at Hanover Highlands – (630) 736-4230

For information about the English-Spanish Dual Language Program at the junior high level, please call the principal at the respective school:

C.J. Schmid at Frost – (847) 357-6800

Heather Wilson at Eisenhower – (847) 357-5500

Scott Ross at Mead – (847) 357-6000

Tom Barbini at Keller – (847) 357-6500