



Dual Language & Spanish Immersion Guidelines

2012-2013

*“El que habla dos lenguas vale por dos.”
“He who speaks two languages is worth twice as much.”*

Comal Independent School District

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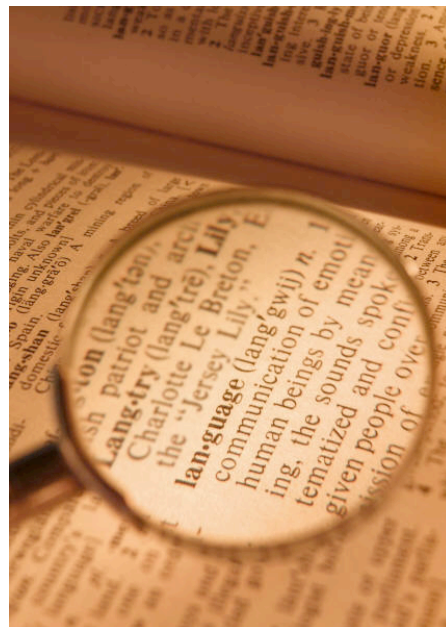
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District Mission Statement

The mission of the Comal Independent School District is to provide extensive learning opportunities for all students to ensure they become contributing members of our society.

Programs Goals

- Students are provided the opportunity to maintain and develop their first language while simultaneously acquiring proficiency in a second language.
- Students will demonstrate academic achievement at or above grade level as measured by formal and informal assessments.
- Teachers will ensure student success in content knowledge and fluency in both languages.
- A partnership between parents, teachers, and administration will create bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural students.
- The District will recruit and retain highly qualified staff and provide sufficient resources to support program success.

Dual Language & Spanish Immersion Vision Statement

The VISION of Dual Language and Spanish Immersion is to develop children into bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural students who love learning and think critically.



Comal Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, color, national origin, or disability in providing education services, activities or programs. It is the intent and policy of this District to conduct its activities in compliance with all Federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, color, national origin, or disability.

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General Information

To be bilingual is to have greater access to the world. The ability to speak, read, and write in both English and Spanish is a particularly valuable skill in Texas. Census projections indicate that across the state, Spanish will be spoken by an increasingly higher percentage of Texans in the coming decades. In fact, it has been predicted that by the year 2030, approximately 40% of all U.S. school-age children will be non-English speaking. Subsequently, Spanish will hold a more prominent place in all aspects of our society, including business, medicine, education, and social work.

To be bilingual is to also acquire a greater appreciation for other cultures. Technology and free trade agreements between nations have made our world a much smaller place than it was even fifteen years ago. Great societies throughout the ages have each carried the hallmark of the appreciation of other cultures, and this appreciation has often led to eras of peace and prosperity.

To be able to equip Comal ISD students with the tools to be bilingual, whether through a Dual Language or Immersion program, is to invest in their future and the future of our society, and to foster cultural understanding.

Dual Language

Program Design

A Dual Language Program is a bilingual educational program integrating English Language Learners and English-speaking students for instruction in two languages (English & Spanish). The purpose of Comal ISD Two-Way Dual Language Program is to develop fluency and literacy in English and Spanish in all the students participating in the program. Students of two different language groups are purposely mixed in the same educational environment to provide communicative and academic language development through an interactive and cross-cultural setting. Students are taught by a team of two teachers, one who teaches primarily in Spanish and one who teaches primarily in English. Students move between the two teachers in order to receive instruction in Spanish and English. This approach emphasizes equality of educational opportunity for both English and non-English-speaking children through an educational process that validates and fully develops both languages and instills a mutual respect for both language learners. Program participation begins in kindergarten and a subsequent grade level will be added each year as the student's progress through the grade levels. Students are expected to continue in the program until fifth grade.

This program is currently being offered at:

- Bill Brown Elementary School
- Clear Spring Elementary School
- Morningside Elementary School

Policies & Guidelines

Eligibility

Spanish-speaking students identified as English Language Learners (ELL) by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) are eligible to participate in the Dual Language Program, as recommended by the committee. Texas Education Code, Chapter 29, Subchapter B, Sec. 29.063.

English-speaking students are eligible for the Dual Language Program based on the following criteria:

- Students are enrolled in Kindergarten in Comal ISD
- Students from the home campus will make up 75% of the program with 25% chosen from the elementary schools in the same “feeder pattern.” (CISD has three feeder patterns: Canyon feeder, Smithson Valley feeder, and Canyon Lake feeder. Elementary and Middle school campuses which “feed” into the same high school are considered a feeder pattern.) Students in the Canyon Lake feeder may apply to either program and will be included as part of the 25% selected for the program.
- Younger siblings of students already selected for the program are automatically eligible, as well as multiple birth siblings (i.e. twins, triplets, etc.).
- Students transferring from another district’s Dual Language program will be admitted based on availability of space;
- At least one parent/guardian will attend the Program Information Meeting during the spring semester in order for their child to be eligible for the selection process;
- The parent/guardian will complete the application process within the designated timeline to be eligible for the selection process. Parents will only need to submit one application for multiple-birth siblings.
- Siblings of students accepted into our language programs are not eligible for transfers.
- Students will transfer back to their home campus for middle school.

Selection Process

English-speaking students are selected to the Dual Language Program based on the following selection process:

- All applications shall be submitted by the deadline and will then be compiled for the lottery selection process by feeder pattern;
- Lottery selections occur on a scheduled date and will include 75% selected from the home campus and 25% from the “feeder pattern” campuses and the Canyon Lake feeder schools;
- Students not selected for the program will be placed on a waiting list in order of lottery draw;
- Within the first two weeks of the start of school, any withdrawals from the program will be replaced with students on the waiting list in order of lottery draw.

Transportation

Dual Language for English-speakers is an elective program. Therefore, parents will be required to provide transportation for their child if the campus offering the Dual Language program is not their child's home campus.

Spanish-speaking students who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) are provided with transportation if the campus offering the Dual Language program is not the child's home campus according to State policy.

Request to withdraw

Parents and students admitted into the program have made a long-term commitment to remain in the program for its duration. Therefore, requests for withdrawal will only be considered due to extenuating circumstances and may go through a multi-step hearing process including conferences with the Campus Administration and the Assistant Superintendent for Academics.

Program Fidelity

To maintain a program with fidelity is to deliver it in the way it was implemented in the research which initially proved it was effective. As such, the program model for Dual Language will include the following:

DUAL LANGUAGE

- Six year commitment (K-5)
- Quality language instruction in Spanish and English
- K-1 instruction is 75% in their native language, 25% in their second language. For 2-5 grades instruction is 50% in their native Language and 50% in their second language
- Follow grade level state curriculum (Refer to Dual Language curriculum guidelines)
- Fully supported by school district administrators, educators, parents and community members. Special support programs are not easily implemented due to the design of the dual language model.
- Highly qualified personnel
- Active parent-school partnership*

Students enrolled in a Dual Language or Spanish Immersion program on one campus must remain at that campus. Students will not be allowed to transfer between the two programs (Dual Language and Spanish Immersion).

*** Parents are encouraged to participate in activities to support and increase their understanding of the program. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom after the first six weeks of school to allow students time to adjust to their new language environment.**

Program Accountability

Dual Language Program will be evaluated based on the following standards:

- Dual Language enrollees will complete a language assessment test in both languages, if applicable, prior to school beginning in August and at the end of the school year in May.
- English Language Learners' accountability will follow State guidelines for language acquisition and reporting through the LPAC Committee.
- Curriculum-Based Assessments will be administered in the appropriate language of instruction throughout the course of the school year.
- Progress reporting will follow district timeline.
- Qualitative data will be gathered through student/parent/staff surveys to gather stakeholders' opinions and feelings, gauge program effectiveness, and increase positive impact in the community.
- Parent commitment and involvement, as defined in the parent contract, will be sustained for the duration of the contract term.

Spanish Immersion

Program Design

The Spanish Immersion program is designed for English-speaking students who wish to become fluent in Spanish. Students enter the program in first grade. Comal ISD uses a “90/10” immersion model. In 1st grade, 90% of the instruction is delivered in Spanish. English is added in gradually from grade level to grade level until students are instructed 50% in Spanish and 50% in English by the 5th grade. Students are expected to continue in the program through fifth grade.

Curriculum

Students in the Spanish Immersion Program in Comal ISD follow the same curriculum as established by the State of Texas and use district-based Scope and Sequences. Spanish Immersion students are expected to master Texas English and Spanish Language Arts Standards as well as other state standards.

Curriculum Scope and Sequence

The time on the language of instruction per subject matter may vary to meet the needs of individual students. Spanish Immersion teachers follow a Scope and Sequence for Language Arts that is unique to meet the goals of the program. The mathematics, science and social studies Scope and Sequences are the same as in a traditional English classroom the only difference is the language of instruction.

The inherent nature of these programs creates an active parent-school partnership, which is essential for the success of the program and the student.

This program is currently being offered at:

- Hoffmann Lane Elementary School
- Rahe Bulverde Elementary School

Policies & Guidelines

Eligibility

Students are eligible for the Spanish Immersion program based on the following criteria:

- Students are enrolled in Kindergarten in Comal ISD
- Students must meet a minimum instructional level 6 in DRA reading assessment and mastery of all TPRI objectives.
- Students from the home campus will make up 75% of the program with 25% chosen from the elementary schools in the same “feeder pattern.” (CISD has three feeder patterns: Canyon feeder, Smithson Valley feeder, and Canyon Lake feeder. Elementary and Middle school campuses which “feed” into the same high school are considered a feeder pattern.) Students in the Canyon Lake feeder may apply to either program and will be included as part of the 25% selected for the program.
- Younger siblings of students already selected for the program, as well as multiple birth siblings (i.e. twins, triplets, etc.) must meet DRA reading assessment requirement;
- Students transferring from another district’s Spanish Immersion program will be admitted based on availability of space;
- At least one parent/guardian will attend the Program Information Meeting during the spring semester in order for their child to be eligible for the selection process;
- The parent/guardian will complete the application process within the designated timeline to be eligible for the selection process. Parents will only need to submit one application for multiple-birth siblings.
- Siblings of students accepted into our language programs are not eligible for transfers.
- Students will transfer back to their home campus for middle school.

Selection Process

Students are selected to the Spanish Immersion Programs based on the following selection process:

- All applications shall be submitted by the deadline and will then be compiled for the lottery selection process by feeder pattern;
- Lottery selections occur on a scheduled date and will include 75% selected from the home campus and 25% from the “feeder pattern” campuses and the Canyon Lake feeder schools;
- Students not selected for the program will be placed on a waiting list in order of lottery draw;
- Within the first two weeks of the start of school, any withdrawals from the program will be replaced with students on the waiting list in order of lottery draw.

Transportation

Spanish Immersion is an elective program. Therefore, parents will be required to provide transportation for their child if the campus offering the Spanish Immersion program is not their child's home campus.

Request to Withdraw

Parents and students admitted into the program have made a long-term commitment to remain in the program for its duration. Therefore, requests for withdrawal will only be considered due to extenuating circumstances and may go through a multi-step hearing process including conferences with the Campus Administration and the Assistant Superintendent for Academics.

Program Fidelity

To maintain a program with fidelity is to deliver it in the way it was implemented in the research which initially proved it was effective. As such, the program model for Dual Language and Spanish Immersion will include the following:

SPANISH IMMERSION

- Five year commitment (1-5)
- Quality language instruction in Spanish and English
- Core Instruction in Spanish: 90% in grades 1 and 2, with incremental percentage decreases in subsequent grades
- Follow grade level state curriculum (Refer to Spanish Immersion curriculum guidelines)
- Fully supported by school district administrators, educators, parents and community members. Intervention outside of the classroom is not available in Spanish.
- Highly qualified personnel
- Active parent-school partnership*

Students enrolled in a Dual Language or Spanish Immersion program on one campus must remain at that campus. Students will not be allowed to transfer between the two programs (Dual Language and Spanish Immersion).

*** Parents are encouraged to participate in activities to support and increase their understanding of the program. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom after the first six weeks of school to allow students time to adjust to their new language environment.**

Research

Dual Language and Immersion programs have existed in the United States for almost 40 years, although the most dramatic growth in the number of programs has occurred over the past 15 years. Longitudinal research studies indicate that in well-implemented programs, both native English speakers and native Spanish speakers tend to do as well or better on standardized achievement tests than their peers learning in traditional settings.

In order to prepare for successful implementation, Comal ISD Task Force Committee members reviewed existing research on these programs, attended professional development opportunities, and conducted classroom observations in Dual Language and Spanish Immersion programs in neighboring districts. As a result, CISD has connected with an established network of professionals with whom we can consult, share, and exchange ideas as we strive to implement extraordinary language programs.

Further information regarding research-based language programs can be obtained by accessing the following websites:

- The University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition: www.carla.umn.edu
- The Center for Applied Linguistics: www.cal.org
- The National Dual Language Consortium: www.dual-language.org
- Texas Two-Way Dual Language Education: www.texastwoway.org
- The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence: <http://crede.berkeley.edu>
- Texas Association for Bilingual Education: www.tabe.org
- National Association for Bilingual Education: www.nabe.org
- Dr. Virginia Collier and Dr. Wayne Thomas at George Mason University, research on language acquisition: www.thomasandcollier.com/Research%20Links.htm
- Dr. Jim Cummins, language development researcher at the University of Toronto: <http://home.oise.utoronto.ca/~7Ejcummins/cummins.htm>
- Dr. Stephen Krashen, linguist, educational researcher at the University of Southern California: www.sdkrashen.com/

Frequently Asked Questions

Spanish Immersion

Q: *What about reading in English for the students learning Spanish as a second language?*

A: Your child will transfer reading skills to English once they have learned to read in Spanish. Parents should NOT attempt to formally teach their children to read in English. If a child is ready to read in English on his or her own, encourage this at home and deal with it in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. Nevertheless, it is very important that you read daily with your child.

Q: *Does it matter if no one speaks Spanish at home?*

A: The program was designed primarily for children of families who do not speak the second language. Teachers are aware of this when they send home notices or assign homework. Report cards are issued in English.

Q: *Is Spanish Immersion the right choice?*

A: One of the first questions often asked by parents is, “Is this the right choice for my child?” When trying to answer that question, it is important to remember the opportunities that you are offering your child by exposing him or her to another language and culture. Through the immersion program your child will be provided with the opportunity to become and develop the ability to communicate freely with persons who speak the immersion language. Being bilingual may enhance your child’s opportunities in the job market and make it easier to learn yet a third language. Taking part in the immersion program can be an exciting and stimulating experience for your child. Parents need to consider their personal commitment to bilingualism.

Q: *Are students in immersion programs screened?*

A: As in most immersion programs, at the entry level there is no screening process. While most immersion educators believe that the program is suitable for learners of all ability levels, there is also general consensus that children with serious delay in first language development or auditory processing, auditory memory, or general auditory impairment should not be in an immersion program.

In the child’s best interest during kindergarten a student should read instructional level 6 in DRA reading assessment. Reading development in the first language is a strong indicator of the student’s success in second language acquisition.

The immersion program has unique aspects, which may extend the process of identifying a student’s learning disability. The most appropriate time to show an academic delay is after one to two years of reading instruction. Since children begin Spanish reading in first grade, the optimal time for the school’s child study team to evaluate a child is usually at the beginning of second grade. Therefore, immersion students may not be eligible for some academic support programs until the formal introduction of English reading the second semester of second grade.

Spanish Immersion Frequently Asked Questions...continues

Q: *How can parents help?*

A:

- Encourage your child by telling him/her how proud you are that he/she is learning a second language.
- Do not feel discouraged if, at the beginning, your child cries or seems nervous about this new experience. Some students may experience some stress initially as this can be an overwhelming, albeit exciting program. Parents need to be supportive and understanding of both their child and the teacher during the initial stages. Your child will need some time to adjust to this new challenge. However, if this anxiety continues beyond the first two months, please discuss it with the teacher. By the beginning of October every child should be over the initial adjustment and be looking forward to going to school.
- When your child gets home, do not be upset if he or she does not feel like telling all about the day at school. Children take the routines of school for granted and often are in need of a change of subject once they get home.
- Do not expect your child to start speaking the second language after the first few days, and do not try to force him or her to do so. Your child will start to use the second language on his or her own individual pace.
- Become acquainted with your child's teacher and program through attending Back-to-School night.
- Be actively involved in your child's school.
- Keep informed about immersion education.
- Encourage but do not force your child to speak the second language at home.
- Do not attempt to correct your child if you are uncertain of the correct expression or pronunciation. Give your child the benefit of the doubt.
- Do not ask your child to translate. This requires skills not focused on in the Immersion program.
- Do not give in to the temptation to compare your child's progress to that of the neighbor children. No two teachers and no two students work at the same rate.
Teach your child the songs and nursery rhymes that are part of his or her own heritage. Read stories to your child in English because English stories will not be heard at school in the beginning years of the immersion program.
- Take advantage of any opportunities to expose your child to the immersion language and culture(s) outside of the school setting.
- Let your child know that you are pleased with his or her progress.

Frequently Asked Questions

Dual Language

Q: *When will my child start reading in their 2nd language?*

A: Your child will transfer reading skills from their 1st language to their 2nd language. The Dual Language program has been designed to follow the natural progression of language acquisition; oral language skills are first developed (listening and speaking), followed by reading and writing language skills.

Q: *How can parents help?*

A:

- Encourage your child by telling him/her how proud you are that he/she is learning a second language.
- Do not feel discouraged if, at the beginning, your child cries or seems nervous about this new experience. Some students may experience some stress initially as this can be an overwhelming, albeit exciting program. Parents need to be supportive and understanding of both their child and the teacher during the initial stages. Your child will need some time to adjust to this new challenge. However, if this anxiety continues beyond the first two months, please discuss it with the teacher. By the beginning of October every child should be over the initial adjustment and be looking forward to going to school.
- When your child gets home, do not be upset if he or she does not feel like telling all about the day at school. Children take the routines of school for granted and often are in need of a change of subject once they get home.
- Do not expect your child to start speaking the second language after the first few days, and do not try to force him or her to do so. Your child will start to use the second language on his or her own individual pace.
- Become acquainted with your child's teacher and program through attending Back-to-School night.
- Be actively involved in your child's school.
- Keep informed about dual language education.
- Encourage but do not force your child to speak the second language at home.
- Do not attempt to correct your child if you are uncertain of the correct expression or pronunciation. Give your child the benefit of the doubt.
- Do not ask your child to translate. This requires skills not focused on in the Dual Language program.
- Do not give in to the temptation to compare your child's progress to that of the neighbor children. No two teachers and no two students work at the same rate.
- Take advantage of any opportunities to expose your child to the dual language and culture(s) outside of the school setting.
- Let your child know that you are pleased with his or her progress.