

DUAL-LANGUAGE IMMERSION

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WHAT IS A DUAL-LANGUAGE IMMERSION (DLI) PROGRAM?

Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs use two languages for literacy and content instruction.

The programs provide the same academic content and address the same state standards as traditional educational programs where instruction is in only one language. Elementary DLI programs provide instruction in the two languages over an extended period, from kindergarten through fifth grade. Instruction is in the DLI program “target language” (a language other than English) at least 50% of the time. All DPS DLI programs use Spanish as the target language.

HOW ARE DLI PROGRAMS STRUCTURED?

The DPS DLI programs are structured around three pillars:

- 1) the development of fluency in two languages in both written and verbal forms
- 2) high academic achievement in both languages, and
- 3) the development of sociocultural competence.

Aligned with these principles, DPS offers two-way immersion programs that combine students from two language groups (ideally, 50% students who primarily speak English at home and 50% students who primarily speak Spanish at home). This allows both groups of students to collaborate and build language and sociocultural skills together. Students start Kindergarten with 90% of instruction occurring in Spanish and 10% in English. First grade transitions to 80% and 20% and so on until students reach 50% and 50% where the language distribution stays consistent. As a result, families should be prepared to commit to DLI instruction for grades K-5.

HOW DOES OUR DPS DLI PROGRAMS BENEFIT STUDENTS?

The benefits of DLI instruction for all students are well documented and include higher academic performance, greater cognitive development in mental flexibility, creativity, and divergent thinking, high levels of proficiency in English and the target language, development of positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors, and enhanced career opportunities. Specifically for English Learners (ELs), former ELs, or heritage language learners, a two-way immersion program is highly effective at closing student achievement gaps.

HOW DO I KNOW IF DLI IS RIGHT FOR MY FAMILY?

All students can potentially be successful in a DLI program environment including those entering Kindergarten who have no prior Spanish exposure. A DLI classroom is a highly collaborative environment where students must engage and communicate with peers using a wide range of language skills. Families should be prepared to commit to DLI for the entire K-5 grade span to ensure student success.



RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

- > [Extensive FAQs and Resources from the NCDPI](#)
- > [English Learners in North Carolina Dual Language Programs](#)
- > [Guiding Principles from the Center for Applied Linguistics](#)



Dr. Rita Rathbone, Magnet Specialist
rita_rathbone@dpsnc.net / (919) 560-2000 x22806

Victor Hiraldo, DLI Coordinator (hablo español)
victor_hiraldo@dpsnc.net / (984) 227-1573



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