

School District U-46
Middle School Dual Language Implementation
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Target Group: U-46 Educators

Q: Why is School District U-46 implementing the Dual Language Program at the middle school level?

The implementation of the Dual Language Program at the middle school level was part of the 80:20 Dual Language Project Charter from the onset. This strategically developed plan was initiated during the 2009-2010 school year in collaboration with different members of our educational community. The implementation timeline established for the 80:20 Dual Language Program included the roll up or phasing in of the program at the middle school level beginning in the 2016-17 school year for 7th grade students and the 2017-2018 school year for 8th grade students. In addition to this strategic plan, School District U-46’s Board of Education adopted the 80:20 Dual Language Policy in July 2014, which includes dual language programming from preschool through 12th grade.

Furthermore, as a dual language district, School District U-46 is committed to building upon our current elementary DL program, which begins in preschool and will continue through middle school in the next two years. This will provide our students with the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate citizens, with positive multi-cultural attitudes for success in our society.

Q: What are the benefits of bilingualism?

The benefits of bilingualism are overwhelmingly convincing. See the following chart by Thomas and Collier, which depicts the benefits of bilingualism across different contexts:

Who benefits when students achieve proficient bilingualism/multilingualism?		
Students	Families/Communities	The World
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy identity formation • Enhanced cognitive flexibility • Enhanced communication skills • Enhanced metalinguistic awareness • Expanded capacity to think divergently • Greater creativity • Healthier minds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased family cohesion • Enhanced communication • Smarter citizens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong identity and confidence in their abilities • More flexible and creative thinkers • Better problem-solvers and communicators • More skilled at working across differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater economic opportunities • Increased scientific/cultural creativity and knowledge development • More effective international collaboration and understanding • Enhanced communication among diverse populations

Creating Dual Language Schools For A Transformed World: Administrators Speak by Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas

- Because continued academic literacy development stops once the language stops, the longer students learn in both languages, the stronger the biliteracy development and the higher the academic outcomes for both groups.

- Bilingual proficiency is a long-term commitment and as noted above, the longer a child remains in the program, the stronger his/her biliteracy development and the rewards that come with it, including the opportunity to earn the Illinois Seal of Biliteracy on his/her diploma upon graduation. Upon completing the necessary requirements for the seal, this recognition provides students with a multitude of post-secondary opportunities in the workforce and with the pursuit of additional studies in college (Please click [here](#) for more information on the Seal of Biliteracy from the state or click [here](#) for an article on the Seal of Biliteracy as a Game Changer).

Q: Why maintain or learn Spanish instead of another language?

The Dual Language Program in School District U-46 was established to serve the ELL population of the district, which is predominantly composed of Spanish speakers. The U-46 student body is 50% Latino/Hispanic (IL School Report Card 2014 Data), and consequently approximately 50 percent of the students in U-46 have Spanish identified as their native language (IC data 2015).

According to a recent study by the prestigious *Instituto Cervantes (2015)*, the US is now the second largest Spanish speaking country in the world after Mexico, with approximately 53 million native Spanish speakers and their children. Additionally, Spanish is not only the most spoken non-English language in the United States (US Census 2010 and PEW Research Center, 2013), but it is also the second most spoken language in the world with estimates of 470 million native speakers worldwide or 559 million speakers, if one includes those with some command of the language (*Instituto Cervantes, 2015*).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that 50% of the world’s population is bilingual, and a Spanish/English bilingual person can communicate with 80% of the world’s population (Literacy Squared Training, Kathy Escamilla, 10.29.15).

In other words, the question shouldn’t be why Spanish, but rather, why not?

Q: Once the dual language program is implemented, what will happen with the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program for eligible Spanish speaking students?

Similar to the process at the elementary level, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, the English Language Learners Program in School District U-46 will begin the transition from the current Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program model in Spanish to the 80:20 Dual Language Program model for students at the 7th grade level. The following year, 2017-2018, will include 8th grade students. The Dual Language Program is not only a bilingual education model where both languages are developed academically, but it is also the only program model that closes the achievement gap for ELL students, according to the research by Dr. Thomas and Dr. Collier.

The Dual Language Program is a different model of serving ELL students although it is a form of bilingual education; it falls under the umbrella of TBE.

Q: Will there be programmatic changes for students from low-incidence languages, in other words, students whose native language is not Spanish?

No. ELL eligible students who speak a language other than Spanish, such as Polish, Urdu, Tagalog, etc. will continue to receive language educational services for which they are eligible, in accordance to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regulations.

Q: What are the school sites for the Dual Language Program at the Middle School Level?

In an effort to provide the majority of students with increased access to their neighborhood school, four sites have been selected. The following four middle schools will be welcoming the incoming dual language students for the 2016-2017 school year:

1. **Abbott*** Dual Language Middle School
2. **Ellis** Dual Language Middle School
3. **Kimball** Dual Language Middle School
4. **Larsen** Dual Language Middle School
5. **Tefft*** Dual Language Middle School

*Denotes new ELL sites

Q: Does that mean Canton Middle School will no longer house the bilingual program at its site?

For next year, 2016-2017, Canton Middle School will keep their 8th grade students to allow them the opportunity to complete their middle school education where they began their studies before the full transition to the new site. During school year 2017-2018, Canton Middle School will no longer house the bilingual program in School District U-46.

As a result, *Canton Middle School* will have ELL programming for only 8th grade students next school year (TBE/TPI).

Q: What will the middle school Dual Language implementation look like across the selected sites in the next two years?

See the table below for a visual representation of the middle school implementation during the next two years:

Middle School Dual Language Implementation SY 2016-2017			Middle School Dual Language Implementation SY 2017-2018		
School	DL 7 th Grade	TBE & TPI 8 ^{vo} Grade	School	DL 7 th Grade	DL & TPI 8 ^{vo} Grade
Abbott MS	✓		Abbott MS	✓	✓
Canton MS		✓	Canton MS		
Ellis MS	✓	✓	Ellis MS	✓	✓
Kimball MS	✓	✓	Kimball MS	✓	✓
Larsen MS	✓	✓	Larsen MS	✓	✓
Tefft MS	✓		Tefft MS	✓	✓

During the 2016-17 school year, all 8th grade ELL students (from a Spanish language background) will continue to be served under the TBE program.

Q: Will the bilingual Special Education (SPED) classrooms be housed at the same sites as the Dual Language schools?

Please contact the Special Education Department at 847-888-5000 for information or updates regarding Special Education classrooms.

Q: Will non-ELL students who have not been part of the 80:20 Dual Language Program in elementary school be allowed to enroll in the middle school program?

No. This program is designed for students who are moving up from the 6th grade in the elementary 80:20 Dual Language Program. The Dual Language Middle School Program in School District U-46 develops academic and linguistic skills of high rigor in both languages. It should not be confused with the study of Spanish as a foreign language. These students have already been developing bilingual and biliteracy skills for several years since enrollment at the elementary level. However, a student whose home/native language is Spanish and who is eligible to receive ELL services will be allowed to enroll at any time in the program according to ISBE regulations.

Q: What will happen to Spanish-speaking ELL students who are newcomers after 6th grade?

Students will be placed in the Dual Language program if that grade level has been phased in. In this case, 7th and 8th graders who are newcomers would be enrolled in the MS DL program. The Dual Language program is strategically designed to address and develop the academic and linguistic skills of ALL students based on their needs and strengths; this includes differentiated instruction for our newcomer students with a Spanish background. The teaching and learning process in a dual language

classroom is facilitated by bilingual/ESL licensed teachers, who are highly effective and in compliance with the licensing regulations of the state of Illinois.

A bilingual licensed teacher will also support the student’s learning through scaffolding and differentiating standard-based instruction in English according to the language performance definitions.

Q: What is the instructional program model for the Dual Language Program at the middle school level?

The following instructional program model is comprised of rigorous standards-based instruction where Spanish and English are the languages of instruction. Instruction is differentiated based on students’ academic and linguistic profile using strategies and methodologies designed to develop academic and linguistic skills in two languages.

SUBJECTS	LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION	DESCRIPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LANGUAGE ARTS • SOCIAL STUDIES / HISTORY 	SPANISH	<p>In compliance with ISBE’s licensing regulations, the teaching and learning process is provided by licensed teachers with the bilingual endorsement. The language of instruction is Spanish aligned to the standards, using support and differentiation strategies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LANGUAGE ARTS • SCIENCE • MATH 	ENGLISH	<p>In compliance with ISBE’s licensing regulations, the teaching and learning process is provided by licensed teachers, including those with the ESL endorsement, depending on students’ language profile. The language of instruction is English aligned to the standards, using support and differentiation strategies.</p>

You may refer to the ELL Department Dual Language Implementation Power Point on the ELL website (or click [HERE](#)) for the proposed instructional program chart.

The two classes where the language of instruction is Spanish will be taught as a Spanish block. Students will spend two consecutive class periods immersed in the rigor of academic Spanish, where they will study Spanish Language Arts and Social Studies/History. While these are two distinct subjects, many of the assignments and projects can integrate skills within the context of both disciplines. Dual language students will participate in all classes required by ISBE for 7th and 8th grade students (e.g., Physical Education, Health, etc.).

Q: Why offer Spanish language arts and social studies/history in Spanish?

The recommendation is that a minimum of one core content-area course and Spanish Language Arts be taught using the target language (i.e., Spanish) for continued biliteracy development at the middle school level. In comparison to other subjects, social studies is both a text rich and language-based

content area, thus providing both ELLs and Spanish Language Learners (SLLs) with increased opportunities to achieve higher levels of Spanish literacy and improve upon their biliteracy development. The Spanish Language Arts (SLA) class also meets ISBE's requirement for full-time TBE students. Additionally, the intentional and strategic use of the academic language of Spanish within the framework of language arts provides for a deep understanding of the linguistic features of Spanish on a broader spectrum. This is conducive to increasing the number of dual language students who will be college and career ready, fully bilingual, bi-literate and with more opportunities of obtaining the Illinois Seal of Biliteracy. Lastly, newcomers and ESL level 1 and 2 students will have the opportunity to participate in a program that addresses their language proficiency levels through sheltered instruction in both Spanish and English.

Furthermore, by offering a SLA class and an ESL/ELA class, dual language students have the opportunity to be exposed to two language arts classes and thus attain higher levels of literacy in both languages.

Q: Is there a curriculum for Spanish Language Arts?

The Spanish Language Arts (SLA) curriculum for both 7th and 8th grades were developed by an SLA and have been approved by the Board of Education. The committee was comprised of at least one ELL and DL teacher from the current ELL middle schools, two ELL instructional coaches, as well as building level and Educational Services Center (ESC) level administrators, which included literacy and dual language administrators.

Q: What curriculum will be followed for Social Studies/History?

The social studies and history curriculums will continue to be the curriculums adopted by the district. Students who receive Spanish instruction for Social Studies or History use resources adopted by the district.

Q: Will students be entering the middle school program at grade level?

Overall, national studies have shown that children in dual language programs, as a group, perform the same or better than their non-dual language peers enrolled in general education English only classrooms in the areas of math and reading (Thomas and Collier, 2010). As with any program, students will enter middle school with a wide array of strengths and areas, which require further development; some are at grade level, while others may be above or below. Instruction should be differentiated based on students' academic and linguistic profile that is highly impacted by students' years in the program. It is important to remember that second language acquisition is a long-term process, and ELL students (those who qualify for services) may enter the program at any grade level with varying degrees of academic and language development. Overall, however, the majority of the students will have been in a dual language program since early elementary. Hence, they are entering with 6-7 years of rigorous standard-based instruction in both languages.

Q: Is there a Spanish proficiency test for placing students at the middle school level?

There is currently not a test, equivalent to ACCESS, which is used to assess Spanish language proficiency. Hence, students will not be placed in levels in Spanish. This will also be used at the middle school level.

Teachers will also be able to refer to the students' reading levels on Infinite Campus (IC) as measured by Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) in Spanish and English.

Q: What is the teacher certification/endorsement requirement for the DL Program at the middle school level?

Please refer to the ELL Department Dual Language Middle School Implementation Power Point on the ELL website (or click [HERE](#)) for the proposed instructional program chart.

Q: How can I learn more about dual language education and the implementation of the Dual Language Program in U-46?

Current and updated dual language information can be found on the district's website (click [HERE](#)), which includes the following: research, updated events and information, links to dual language websites, resources, and communication to educators and parents.

Q: Who can I contact for additional information at the district level?

For additional information, please contact Griselda Pirtle, U-46 ELL Director, at 847-888-5000 ext. 4282 (griseldapirtle@u-46.org) or Mario Pestaña, U-46 ELL Coordinator, at 847-888-5000 ext. 5078 (mariopestana@u-46.org).