

## School District U-46 Middle School Dual Language Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q: Why did School District U-46 implement 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 multicultural 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"> <li>• Healthy identity formation</li> <li>• Enhanced cognitive flexibility</li> <li>• Enhanced communication skills</li> <li>• Enhanced metalinguistic awareness</li> <li>• Expanded capacity to think divergently</li> <li>• Greater creativity</li> <li>• Healthier minds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased family cohesion</li> <li>• Enhanced communication</li> <li>• Smarter citizens:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong identity and confidence in their abilities</li> <li>• More flexible and creative thinkers</li> <li>• Better problem-solvers and communicators</li> <li>• More skilled at working across differences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater economic opportunities</li> <li>• Increased scientific/cultural creativity and knowledge development</li> <li>• More effective international collaboration and understanding</li> <li>• Enhanced communication among diverse populations</li> </ul>

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 55 percent of the students in U-46 have Spanish identified as their native language (Student Enrolment data in IC 2023).

The US is now the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world after Mexico, with approximately 42 million Spanish speakers (*Census Bureau, 2022*). Additionally, Spanish is not only the most spoken non-English language in the United States (US Census 2020), but it is also the second most spoken language in the world with estimates of 600 million native speakers worldwide (*Instituto Cervantes, 2022*).

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, 2015).

**Q: What is happening 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 Multilingual and Multicultural Education Program in School District U-46 transitioned 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, included 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 Multilingual Learners, according to the research by Dr. Thomas and Dr. Collier, 2017.

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

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

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

**Q: Where is the Dual Language Program located at the Middle School Level?**

In an effort to provide the majority of students with increased access to their neighborhood schools, four sites were selected. The following four middle schools house the Dual Language Program:

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

**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: 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 profiles 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"><li>● LANGUAGE ARTS</li><li>● SOCIAL STUDIES / HISTORY</li></ul>	SPANISH	In compliance with ISBE’s licensing regulations, the teaching and learning process is provided by licensed teachers with bilingual endorsement. The language of instruction is Spanish aligned to the standards, using support and differentiation strategies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● LANGUAGE ARTS</li><li>● SCIENCE</li><li>● MATH</li></ul>	ENGLISH	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.

The two classes where the language of instruction is Spanish are taught as a Spanish block. Students spend two consecutive class periods immersed in the rigor of academic Spanish, where they 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 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 language learners 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 eligible-EL-service 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 to obtain 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 Spanish Language Arts 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) curricula for both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades were developed by an SLA and have been approved by the U-46 Board of Education.

**Q: What curriculum is followed for Social Studies/History?**

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

**Q: How can I learn more about dual language education in U-46?**

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](mailto:griseldapirtle@u-46.org)) or Mario Pestaña, U-46 ELL Coordinator, at 847-888-5000 ext. 5078 ([mariopestana@u-46.org](mailto:mariopestana@u-46.org)).