



# School District U-46

## Dual Language Frequently Asked Questions for U-46 Parents at the Elementary level



**Q: What are the goals and benefits of a Dual Language Program?**

Dual Language students will develop strong skills and proficiency in their first and second language. They will become bilingual and biliterate, achieve academically at or above grade level in both languages, acquire higher-order thinking skills and better problem-solving abilities, and develop multicultural competencies and intercultural relationships in the school and community, including appreciation and respect for other languages and cultures.

Native English speakers and English-dominant students will have the opportunity of developing Spanish as a second language at an early age while continuing to grow in English. They will achieve at the same or higher levels in English compared to their monolingual English-speaking peers in English-only general education classrooms.

Native Spanish speakers will be able to develop English as a second language while enriching their mother tongue, Spanish. They will achieve at the same or higher levels in English than their peers enrolled in other programs.

All children will learn appropriate academic skills while developing their bilingual proficiency. Moreover, your child will be able to develop social skills that allow him/her to make friends in a multicultural and multilingual world. They develop very positive attitudes about students of other languages and cultural backgrounds and positive attitudes about their heritage language and cultural background.

**Q: What is the difference between One-Way Dual Language and Two-Way Dual Language?**

They both have the same basic principles, but vary in the composition of the students in the class:

- One-Way Dual language programs are implemented where there is only one language group available. In U-46, the One-Way Dual language programs are composed of only English learners with a Spanish home language background.
- Two-Way Dual Language programs have the demographics to invite English-dominant students to join their EL peers in an integrated bilingual classroom. There should be an approximate balance of students of each language background, with no less than one-third of English-dominant students. In U-46, the Two-Way Dual Language programs are composed of English learners with a Spanish home language background and native English and/or English-dominant students.

**Q: What is the 80:20 Dual Language Program model design?**

Across all 30 elementary schools with the Dual Language Program, the district follows the 80:20 program model design. This means that 80% of the instructional day is in Spanish and 20% is in English in PreK and Kindergarten. As the grades go up, the percentage of Spanish and English changes, with 70% in Spanish and 30% in English in first grade, 60% in Spanish and 40% in English in second grade, and 50% in Spanish and 50% in English in 3rd grade. This 50:50 percentage is carried out until the end of sixth grade.

With the 80:20 Dual Language Program model design, there is a focus on developing biliteracy from the early grades. However, the initial literacy development occurs in Spanish, including for students who are native English speakers or English-dominant.

**Q: Will students in the Dual Language Program be able to continue with Dual Language education beyond elementary school?**

Yes, the U-46 DL Program is now available through high school. For more detailed information, please click [HERE](#) for the middle school DL FAQs and [HERE](#) for the high school DL FAQs.

**Q: What elementary schools have the 80:20 Dual Language Program?**

Thirty elementary schools, including the Early Learner Centers, currently have the Dual Language Program: *Century Oaks, Channing, Coleman, Creekside, Garfield, Glenbrook, Heritage, Hilltop, Hillcrest, Hanover Countryside, Highland, Harriet Gifford, Huff, Illinois Park, Independence, Laurel Hill, Lincoln, Lords Park, Lowrie, McKinley, Nature Ridge, Oakhill, Ontarioville, Otter Creek, Parkwood, Ridge Circle, Ronald O’Neal, Sunnysdale, Timber Trails, and Washington. Three additional sites have dual language preschool classrooms: More at 4, Centennial and Horizon.*

**Q: What elementary schools have the 80:20 Two-Way Dual Language Program?**

The schools with Two-Way Dual Language Programs are: *Century Oaks, Channing, Coleman, Creekside, Glenbrook, Hanover Countryside, Harriet Gifford, Heritage, Highland, Hillcrest, Hilltop, Huff, Laurel Hill, Lincoln, Lords Park, McKinley, Nature Ridge, Oakhill, Otter Creek, Timber Trails, and Washington.*

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**Q: Are native English speakers and English-dominant students able to participate in Dual Language (DL) program?**

Two-Way Dual Language programs have been established at schools where there is an ELL Program for Spanish speakers and enough interest and commitment of native English speakers or English-dominant students. A required minimum determined by the district of interested and committed native English speakers or English-dominant students per classroom is needed in order to meet the required balance of peer language models for an effective Two-Way Dual Language Program.

**Q: What if my child qualifies to receive ELL Services in Spanish, can he/she attend the 80:20 Dual Language Program?**

A: Students of the high incidence language Spanish who qualify to receive ELL Services are entitled to receive services through the 80:20 Dual Language Program model. **All EL Spanish-background students who accept services will attend the 80:20 Dual Language Program at their attendance elementary school.**

**Q: If my child does not qualify to receive ELL services and his/her homeschool offers the Two-Way DL program model, can I still submit the Dual Language Interest Form to have my child's name on the list?**

Parents can submit the Dual Language Interest Form to their child's attendance school at any time. If your child's attendance school does not offer the Two-Way Dual Language Program, you can submit the DL Interest Form online ([HERE](#)), in person to your child's school, or to the ELL Department on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the U-46 Educational Services Center located at 355 E Chicago St, Elgin, IL. If space is available according to the admission and entry criteria established by U-46, the child will be considered for placement in the Two-Way Dual Language Program at his/her home school.

**Q: What options are available for my child who does not qualify to receive English Language Learner services in Spanish and whose home school does not offer the Two-Way Dual Language Program model?**

Parents of native English and English-dominant kindergarten and first grade students whose attendance school does not offer the Two-Way Dual Language Program can apply to their assigned **Two-Way DL Satellite School**. Admission is based on space availability. If there is more interest than space, a lottery will be conducted. Upon admission, parents are expected to provide their own transportation to the assigned Two-Way Dual Language Satellite School. The district has established a Two-Way DL Feeder Pattern with assigned schools. For a complete list, please visit the Dual Language section on the ELL website at [www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org) ([HERE](#)).

**Q: Where can I obtain and submit the Dual Language Interest Form?**

Dual Language Interest Forms are available in the following locations:

- Online - On the Dual Language Program section of the ELL website at [www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org) ([HERE](#))
- At the Family Welcome Center located at 355 E Chicago St, Elgin, 2nd floor room 231
- At the ELL Department office located at 355 E Chicago St, Elgin, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor room 369
- At one of the thirty-three elementary sites that have the Dual Language Program (Click [HERE](#) to be directed to a complete list of schools)

**Q: What happens if I move to another school within the school district? Will my child be able to continue their dual language education?**

Our goal for dual language students moving within the U-46 attendance boundaries is for them to continue their education in the dual language program. Schools will work closely with parents and the ELL Department to ensure placement of such students (i.e., current U-46 students in the dual language program).

**Q: What if I change my mind and no longer want my child in the program?**

Since children go through different stages of second language acquisition, parents of native English or English-dominant students should make a long-term commitment to the Dual Language Program in order for their child to develop bilingual skills. Parents should communicate with the classroom teacher and the school principal on a regular basis if there are concerns about their child in order to determine how to better support the child. If parents still decide to remove the child from the program, that space is immediately made available for the first child on the waiting list.

**Q: If my child is a native English speaker or English-dominant, can I withdraw him/her from the DL Program?**

Parents are asked to sign the 80:20 Dual Language Parent Compact as their child attends the DL Program. Due to the nature of the 80:20 Dual Language Program model design, once parents of **native English or English-dominant students** withdraw their child from the Dual Language program, they are doing so with the clear understanding that they may not have the opportunity to re-enroll their child in the Dual Language program in the future.



**Q: My English-dormant son is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and he still isn't speaking much Spanish. Is the program working?**

Children develop languages at different rates. Usually, their listening abilities develop before their speaking abilities. Your son may be reading and writing in Spanish but not comfortable speaking outside of the classroom environment yet. Talking to your child's teacher will help you understand whether or not his Spanish language development is on track and what you can do to encourage him to speak more Spanish.

**Q: My fourth-grade daughter has been in the program and is already bilingual in Spanish and English. Should she stay in the program?**

Yes! While young children may be speaking fluently in two languages, they have not yet developed the reading and writing skills they need to be academically successful in both languages at high levels. The goal of the DL program is to support Spanish and English language and literacy development through 12th grade so they will be highly proficient in both languages and prepared to earn the Illinois Seal of Biliteracy in high school.

**Q: Will my child progress through the curriculum at a slower rate than children in general education classes because he/she is learning it in Spanish too?**

The curriculum implemented in the dual language classrooms is School District U-46's adopted curriculum and is taught through supportive, differentiated, and interactive teaching strategies, which ensure that children learn the academic content while developing their first and second languages. According to Thomas and Collier, "dual language classes are quite different from traditional language classes. Dual language students develop their second language by using it with their classmates as they study mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, music, art, and physical education. With the support of carefully planned instruction, the English learners and native English speakers acquire each other's languages through a process that is very *similar to the natural acquisition of their first language*. This is the best way to learn a language. The natural, subconscious, developmental process of language acquisition is always a complex and amazing feat! ... If they (English dominant students) stay in the program throughout Grades K-5, they will also typically reach grade-level achievement in their second language after 6 years of schooling through the two languages. In English, they will be scoring above grade level..." (Thomas and Collier, 2017)

**Q: Can my child with special needs be in a Dual Language program?**

In U-46, special education students can be admitted into the Dual Language program provided there is no conflict with the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The research evidence is mounting that students with special needs benefit so much from schooling through two languages that it is very worthwhile to provide them with the opportunity to enroll in the dual language program classes if the family and child are supportive of this idea. Thomas and Collier confirmed other studies that "...students with special needs can thrive in dual language classes..." and that "...special needs dual language students are doing better than their peers not in dual language... it enhances their success in school when parents choose to place their children in the dual language program." (Thomas and Collier, 2014)

**Q: Do English learners get enough English instruction in a 90:10 or 80:20 Dual Language program model?**

Research indicates that in order for that to happen, English time must be carefully defined and implemented and that high-quality curriculum and instruction are essential. In addition, research shows that when programs are fully implemented according to the program design, English learners in 90:10 or 80:20 models score as well as or better than their peers in other programs on English tests. (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, *Dual Language Education*, Multilingual Matters LTD)

**Q: How can students who speak only English learn when they are instructed for up to 80 percent of the day in a language they don't understand?**

Two-way immersion programs are based on years of research from the foreign language immersion models in Canada designed for English speakers learning French. This model, in which English-speaking students have been instructed in French for up to 100 percent of their day, shows students perform as well as or better on tests of English than their English-speaking peers who have been instructed only in English. Moreover, there are more than fifteen years of results on two-way immersion programs that show similar results in the United States. For more information, visit the *Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition* at [www.carla.umn.edu](http://www.carla.umn.edu) or the *Center for Applied Linguistics* at [www.cal.org/twi](http://www.cal.org/twi).

**Q: How can I help support my child in doing homework in the second language, particularly if I don't know that language?**

Parents can support students at home by making sure that they have the right environment and tools to complete the homework (e.g., a quiet space and enough time, paper, dictionaries in both languages, and school supplies). Parents can also ask questions about the homework in the language spoken at home, thus giving the students opportunities to explain the assignment in their first language. Additionally, parents can and should reach out to their child's teacher for creative options or ideas to support children at home with homework (e.g., Google translate, explanation of homework task for parents in the home language, visits to their local library for support and resources, etc.)



**Q: What is my role as a parent in a Dual Language Program?**

Parents quite often feel some anxiety about having their child educated in a language, which they themselves do not speak. They often worry about not being able to help with homework, or about not understanding their child’s difficulties. Dual Language teachers know that the children often come from monolingual homes and consider this when assigning homework. English dominant parents should expect some level of frustration to be expressed by their child. The calm support of parents facilitates the adjustment to a new language and instructional environment. It is important to realize that immersion provides a scholastic experience in Spanish. To attain a higher level of bilingualism parents should look for Spanish language experiences outside of school: Spanish television, radio, movies or other media, sports activities, summer camps, and get-togethers/“play dates” with their Spanish-speaking peers are among the many possibilities.

The three most effective ways that a parent can prepare their child to succeed in school are:

- reading together
- talking together
- answering your child’s questions about language.

Reading aloud with your child in your native language every day is very important. It creates an interest in books, it enlarges your child’s vocabulary and it broadens his/her experience. Visits to the zoo, shopping center, sports events, watching TV, cooking together and family chores all provide occasions for talking together. **Research clearly demonstrates that second language acquisition is dependent upon the first language development. When you strengthen your child’s native language, he/she becomes more successful in learning the second language.**

**Q: What are some resources for parents of students who are in the Dual Language Program?**

Center for Applied Linguistics ([www.cal.org/twi](http://www.cal.org/twi)) provide resources to parents, including books and videos from organizations and from other Dual Language /TWI programs. *Dual Language Education of New Mexico (DLeNM)* (<http://www.dlenm.org>) provides resources and supports to parents and community in the section: *Advocacy, Family, and Community*. [National Association of Bilingual Education](#), [California Association for Bilingual Education](#), [National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education](#), [Center for Applied Linguistics](#) Additional research and links are available on the U-46 English Language Learners’ webpage ([www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org)) under Department - *Dual Language*.

**Q: What do U-46 parents say about having their native English or English-dominant child in the 80:20 Two-way Dual Language Program in Kindergarten and first grade?**

“I love it! I see how excited he is about the program. He loves going to school and learning more about it. He comes home every day and tells me how much he’s learned. I like how enthusiastic he is about the program. He comes home and teaches Spanish to his older brother. He’s always teaching us what he learned in school.” **Kindergarten native English-speaking parent (Harriet Gifford)**

“At first I was skeptical about it, but now I’m really glad that I put her in it. I’m glad they’re offering it. And she’s picking up on Spanish really, really well... She loves it! ....As a parent, I’m really proud of her and I get excited about her. I have three other daughters: two that have taken 2 years in high school and a middle school daughter taking it, and I think my 1<sup>st</sup> grader learned more already!” **1<sup>st</sup> grade native English-speaking parent (Heritage Elementary)**

“My children have been in the program for 3 years now, Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and I have been very pleased with their progress. I knew they would easily learn English, simply because they are surrounded by it, yet I was surprised at how quickly and easily they applied reading lessons in Spanish to English. They are big readers and feel just as comfortable picking up English books as Spanish books. And thus they are already fulfilling my goal of them being comfortable to communicate in two different worlds all thanks to the Dual Language Program.” **Bilingual Parent (Huff Elementary)**

“We did almost 2 years’ worth of research on many of the districts that offer this type of program [dual language]. We visited many open schools days and fairs, got to talk to parents, teachers, principals and district level coordinators for bilingual education. Finally, we came across Nature Ridge Elementary in Bartlett. For our objectives, Nature Ridge was the hidden gem we were looking for... The school has exceeded our expectations. Our daughter loves the full day Kindergarten program and has improved her reading/writing skills in both Spanish and English. The entire staff at Nature Ridge is first class.” **Kindergarten parent (Nature Ridge Elementary)**

**Q: Who can I contact for additional information?**

For additional information, you can contact the **principal of your child’s school** or **the ELL Department** at 847-888-5000 ext. 5331 or 5332.

