

North Kitsap Dual Language Program Frequently Asked Questions

Would you like your child to be proficient in two languages?

This program may be for you.

Where is North Kitsap's Dual Language program located?

Our Dual Language program is offered at Vinland Elementary School, 22104 Rhododendron Lane, Poulsbo, WA.

What is Dual Language?

The Dual Language program gives elementary students an opportunity to complete North Kitsap School District curriculum in a nontraditional way by adding Spanish language and culture from kindergarten through fifth grade. Students in the program become proficient in both Spanish and English, while learning the same curriculum content as their peers outside the program. How is this accomplished? With lots of hard work, parental involvement, and a dedicated staff!

How does this program differ from an immersion program?

Students in the program are taught the standard North Kitsap District curriculum, but receive instruction part of the day in Spanish. They learn to understand, speak, read and write Spanish in addition to English. Classroom teachers have near-native ability in the Spanish language and are chosen for their skills and their commitment to the goals of the program. By the fifth grade, our goal is for our Dual Language students to have met or exceeded state standards in English and be literate in Spanish as measured by our district language scales.

Our program is an "Additive Model." We begin by building academic skills in the student's first language. When our native English-speakers demonstrate competence in English, we add Spanish oral language development. Then we build academic skills in the second language of Spanish. In this program, math is always taught in English. Science and Social Studies are taught in Spanish, in increasing amounts as they move up toward 5th grade.

What if no one at home speaks Spanish?

That's just fine. Most of our parents do not speak Spanish. Many learn some Spanish over the years. Report cards, notices and newsletters are issued in English. Spanish homework assignments are not translated into English and it is not expected that parents will assist in Spanish homework activities.

Why choose the Dual Language program for my child?

Studies have found that learning a second language at an early age has many benefits:

- There is a positive effect on brain development and intellectual growth.
- Students gain flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.
- It opens the door to other cultures and helps children understand and appreciate people from other countries.
- Students acquire Spanish language fluency.
- Students have increased job opportunities in many careers where knowledge of another language is an asset.

Are students in the Dual Language program screened for admission?

This program is open to all interested students. If, as a parent, you have concerns about the appropriateness of this program, please consult with the principal to discuss your concerns when applying or as your student progresses through the program.

What should parents think about when considering this program?

Enrolling a child in this program should be viewed as a commitment at least through grade five. The goals of the program are best met when students stay with this additive model through fifth grade.

When do I enroll my child, and how are students selected for admission?

Enrollment begins in the spring for the following fall's kindergarten class. A limited number of spaces in kindergarten will be reserved for students from families where Spanish is the primary language. If the number of applicants exceeds the remaining number of spaces available, a lottery will be conducted based on the following priorities:

1. Parents reside within North Kitsap School District attendance area.
2. Parents reside outside North Kitsap School District.

Additionally, a kindergarten pre-screening may be administered to students to help create heterogeneous classrooms.

Other considerations:

- Students who are not admitted for kindergarten will be placed on a waiting list for that year and contacted by the school if space becomes available.
- In addition to these priorities, gender balance will be considered when forming classes and determining admission.
- Space will be reserved through September 1 each year for the addition of Spanish speakers to our dual language classrooms. This will ensure ample opportunities for our English speakers to work with Spanish-speaking students, and also provide good support for our English Language Learners.
- Target class size for dual language classrooms will be at or above class size in non-dual language classrooms. This allows for any attrition that may occur during the year or through a 6-year cycle (K-5).

Can I enroll my child after kindergarten?

Most students enter the program in kindergarten. If openings occur during grades one through five, students may be admitted on an individual basis according to the above priorities as well as standard school procedures for providing gender-balanced, heterogeneous classrooms.

Assessments

Students in the Dual Language program are issued standard NKSD report cards each trimester. In addition, native English-speaking students will receive annual progress reports documenting their child's progress in Spanish literacy (reading and writing).

Who do I contact for more information?

More details are available from the school office at Vinland Elementary School, (360) 779-8990 or email lhunter@nkschools.org