



Gwinnett County Public Schools Dual Language Immersion Program Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is excited to offer Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs at 10 elementary schools: **Annistown (Spanish), Baldwin (Spanish), Bethesda (Spanish), Camp Creek (Spanish), Ivy Creek (Spanish), Level Creek (Spanish), Meadowcreek (Spanish), Mulberry (Spanish), Parsons (Korean), and Trip (French)**. Please carefully read the information below before registering your child for this program. The DLI program is intended for entering kindergarten students who plan to continue with the program through at least 5th grade. If you decide to register your student for this program, please complete the separate registration form found on the school's webpage.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Dual Language Immersion registration does not register your child for kindergarten. Kindergarten registration is a separate process. You must register your student for kindergarten at the school for which your child is zoned. If you are not sure which school your child is zoned to attend, go to "Find My School" on the GCPS website (www.gcpsk12.org). Watch the GCPS website for details about online registration for kindergarten and the documents (immunization and health forms, proof of age and residence, etc.) required for registration.
- Gwinnett's Dual Language Immersion program requires a long-term commitment on the part of both parents and students to ensure that students get the most benefit from the program. If you expect that your family will be unable to fulfill this commitment, due to a planned move or some other foreseeable reason, please consider whether this program is appropriate for your student.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

1. Please complete all sections of the DLI registration form online.
2. You will receive confirmation of receipt of the registration form via the email address you provide on the registration form.
3. It is possible that every student registering for this program will not be accepted due to limited space. If more registrations are received than space is available, a lottery will be held of all students whose registration forms were received by the registration deadline.
4. If there are an insufficient number of registrants, the program may be cancelled for the upcoming school year.
5. If a lottery is necessary, you will be informed of your child's registration status upon completion of this process.
6. Students living in the school's attendance zone (on the date DLI registration closes) will receive registration priority. **If a student is accepted to the program from outside of the attendance zone, transportation will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.** All rules of permissive transfer must be observed.
7. Kindergarten students who have a sibling enrolled in the program receive priority enrollment at the school where the eldest student is currently enrolled.
8. In the case of multiples (e.g., twins, triplets), if one student is selected by lottery to enroll in the program, the multiple sibling receives priority enrollment at the same school. All rules of permissive transfer must be observed.
9. Children of GCPS DLI teachers receive priority enrollment.
10. A waiting list will be maintained for both in-zone and out-of-zone students. Waiting lists expire at the end of the kindergarten year. After the kindergarten year, students wishing to enter a program must follow all rules of permissive transfer and demonstrate language skills equivalent to GCPS DLI targets.
11. Parents may register students for one DLI school. If multiple registrations for the same student are received, the most recent received will be used. Following lottery, if the student does not receive placement in the selected school, families may contact additional DLI schools to see where space might be available.



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INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

1. GCPS' 50/50 elementary school model calls for at least 50% of the school day to be spent learning GCPS' Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum in the target language. In middle and high school, DLI students have the chance to continue improving their language proficiency following a different model of more focused instruction in spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and syntax in the target language. In middle and high school, students can continue to learn the target language in a culture-rich immersion environment with additional focus on refining these language skills.
- In elementary school, a team of two teachers will work together. Students will have mathematics, science, and literacy (specific to the target language) with one teacher, using the target language. They will have language arts and social studies with the other teacher, using English. Through this collaboration, students will develop proficiency in both English and the target language. At a determined point during the school day, the teachers will switch groups of students so that all students receive instruction in both English and the target language daily.
 - GCPS honors its commitment to DLI parents and students with a seamless K-12 language program. As students move into middle school and on to high school, the instruction pivots from 50/50 content-based instruction to more focused instruction in the target language needed to develop advanced language proficiency including strong reading, writing, and conversational skills.
 - There is no additional cost to parents for this program.
 - This program is wholly voluntary. Dual Language Immersion is only one of many quality educational opportunities available to your student.
 - Students enter the program in the kindergarten year. On rare occasions, students may enter the program during 1st grade or later. Opportunities for late entry to the program in 1st grade will be based on available space and additional factors determined by the classroom teacher and the school principal. Program entry after 1st grade will be reserved for students transferring from another Dual Language Immersion school and/or students with a high level of native or heritage language proficiency in the targeted language. Determinations for enrollment will be solely at the discretion of the school administration.
 - Each year, the program will expand to the next grade level as students move through elementary school—kindergarten through 5th grade. GCPS currently is collaborating with middle and high school principals to plan for opportunities at the middle and high school levels.

WHAT TO EXPECT

While most of the daily successes and challenges in Dual Language Immersion are very similar to those in traditional classrooms, there are a few instances when they may differ.

- Research shows that children who have learned to speak their native language are capable of learning another language.
- Dual Language Immersion is a very challenging program. A child who is a good listener, flexible, and able to handle transitions is a good candidate for the Dual Language Immersion program. A child who is easily frustrated or has a hard time staying focused may have difficulty with the demands of DLI.
- Most students with disabilities thrive in Dual Language Immersion programs. However, research indicates that those students with poor listening comprehension may not be good candidates for this program. Many of these students have significant difficulty processing sounds into language (including their native language).
- Even with the challenging nature of the program, most DLI students are performing at or above grade level in all areas by 5th grade.



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- Students vary in the rate at which they learn and use a new language. It may take many months (and, in some cases, years) before a student will feel comfortable speaking his or her new language freely. Your student’s teacher will be able to provide you with updates on your student’s progress as well as guiding questions to help your child use the new language more at home.
- If a parent has concerns about his or her DLI student, the parent, teachers, and administrators will work to address concerns. However, a request to enter the formal process for withdrawal from the DLI program will be addressed only after the student has received the support and help that would be offered any child experiencing difficulties.

REMOVING STUDENTS FROM THE PROGRAM

- If parents decide not to participate in this program after enrolling, but before the start of the school year, it is their responsibility to contact the school offering the DLI program as soon as possible so that other students on the waiting list may be notified.
- If accepted into the program, the school reserves the right to recommend alternate placement if there is any concern about the child’s ability to be successful in this model as documented by academic, behavioral, or attendance data. Positive support and encouragement from home are important to a child’s success in this program.
- The formal process for withdrawal from the program for enrolled students is handled on an individual, case-by-case basis.

RESEARCH

Research supporting Dual Language Immersion is vast. For further reading, we recommend the extensive work of Dr. Roy Lyster, Dr. Myriam Met, Dr. Wayne P. Thomas, and Dr. Virginia P. Collier. In addition, please see below for a description of other benefits of Dual Language Immersion with recommendations of supporting research articles.

- ENHANCED COGNITIVE SKILLS

Immersion students, due to the demands, both conscious and unconscious, of processing two languages, typically develop greater cognitive flexibility and demonstrate increased attention control, better memory, and superior problem-solving skills while, at the same time, experiencing enhanced understanding of their primary language.

- Bamford, K., & Mizokawa, D. (1991). Additive-bilingual immersion education: Cognitive and language development. *Language Learning*, 41(3), 413-429.
- Maillat, D., & Serra, C. (2009). Immersion education and cognitive strategies: Can the obstacle be the advantage in a multilingual society? *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(2), 186-206.

- IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Immersion students perform as well as or better than non-immersion students on standardized tests of English and mathematics, even when these tests are administered in English.

- Robinson, D. W. (1998). The cognitive, academic, and attitudinal benefits of early language learning. In M. Met (Ed.), *Critical issues in early second language learning: Building for our children’s future* (pp. 37-56). Scott Foresman – Addison Wesley.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1982). Academic outcomes of immersion education. In M. Swain & Lapkin, *Evaluating bilingual education: A Canadian case study* (pp. 56-69). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

- NARROWING OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Partially as a result of the cognitive demands placed on students who learn content in two different languages, no other intervention model holds greater promise to narrow the achievement gap more effectively between high- and low performing populations than dual language immersion.



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- Collier, W. P., & Collier, V.P. (2012). *Dual language education for a transformed world* (pp. 44-46). Albuquerque: Fuente Press.
- Haj-Broussard, M.G. (2003). *Language, identity and achievement gap: Comparing experiences of African-American students in a French immersion and a regular education context (Doctoral Dissertation)*. Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.

- **HIGHER SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

Immersion students achieve higher levels of second language proficiency than through any other language development model. By the end of their K-12 program, students possess bilingualism and bi-literacy.

- Padilla, A., et. al., (2013). A Mandarin/English two-way immersion program: language proficiency and academic achievement. *Foreign Language Annals* 46(4), pp. 661-679.

- **ENHANCED GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

Immersion students are better prepared to collaborate and communicate across linguistic and political boundaries to solve problems as a result of the demands of their learning environments, and they evidence more positive attitudes toward other peoples and other cultures.

- Howard, E. (2002). Two-way Immersion: A Key to Global Awareness. *Educational Leadership*, 60(2), 62-64.
- Stewart, V. (2012). *A world-class education*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp. 136-141.

Thank you for considering the GCPS Dual Language Immersion program for your student. Communication and collaboration in the global marketplace will become increasingly valuable skills for our students as they prepare for college, careers, and citizenship after graduation. In GCPS, we are proud to offer these innovative programs for students. For further information, please contact the school directly:

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| Annistown Elementary School (Spanish) 770-979-2950 | Baldwin Elementary School (Spanish) 678-225-5500 | Bethesda Elementary School (Spanish) 770-921-2000 |
| Camp Creek Elementary School (Spanish) 770-921-1626 | Ivy Creek Elementary School (Spanish) 678-714-3655 | Level Creek Elementary School (Spanish) 770-904-7950 |
| Meadowcreek Elementary School (Spanish) 770-931-5701 | Mulberry Elementary School (Spanish) 678-226-7460 | Trip Elementary School (French) 678-639-3850 |
| | Parsons Elementary School (Korean) 678-957-3050 | |

No student shall be denied the opportunity to participate in any program or activity on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, religious belief, national origin, disability, or ethnic group.

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