



**EVANSTON/SKOKIE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes

**TO: Evanston/Skokie District 65 School Board**

**CC: Dr. Angel Turner, Superintendent**

**FROM: Amy Correa, Director of Multilingual Services**

**DATE: November 18, 2024**

**RE: Community Questions on Dual Language Middle School**

**Objective:**    \_\_\_ Information        \_\_\_ Discussion        \_\_X\_\_ Follow-up        \_\_\_ Decision

This memo is an FAQ response to community questions about the Dual Language Middle School program at Dr. Bessie Rhodes School of Global Studies.

**Background:**

As part of our commitment to transparency and community engagement, I am responding to questions raised by the community regarding the current and future status of the Dual Language program at Dr. Bessie Rhodes School of Global Studies. Below are detailed responses to the key concerns raised.

**Questions and Responses:**

1. What additional support can the district provide to the Dual Language program at Rhodes?

The Multilingual team, along with other curricular departments, has been providing ongoing support to the Dual Language program and to the principal at Rhodes. Given the recent changes at the school, we acknowledge that the need for support may shift. We will revisit and adjust the support for both the school and the Dual Language program based on the needs of our educators and students.

2. How is the 6th grade Dual Language program progressing? Will these students continue into 7th grade?

The 6th grade Dual Language program is progressing as planned, with no indications that students will leave the program as they move into 7th grade. As part of our long-term

commitment to the program, we will continue with the planned rollout of the Dual Language Middle School program, which was shared in spring 2024. An update on the district's Dual Language Expansion, specifically SAP III, will be presented during the regular board meeting on November 18, 2024.

We are confident that families will remain in the Dual Language program as their children transition into 7th grade. Additionally, we are pleased that ETHS has voted to implement a Dual Language program at the high school level, further supporting the continuity of this program.

The district has made and will continue to make significant investments in the Dual Language program, including curriculum development, professional learning for teachers, and the recruitment of highly qualified educators. Furthermore, we have a comprehensive contingency plan in place, which ensures that the program will move forward as scheduled.

3. There is only one strand for the 5th grade. Will that be sufficient to support a 6th grade class next year?

The 5th grade at Rhodes last year had 27 students, which is comparable to the number of students currently enrolled in the 6th grade Dual Language program (21 students). Given this enrollment pattern, we anticipate that there will be sufficient students to support the 6th grade class for the 2024-2025 school year.

4. If the 7th and 8th grades are closed, what happens when the current 6th graders rise to 7th grade?

If the 7th and 8th grades are temporarily closed, the district is prepared to ensure that appropriate staffing and resources are in place for the current 6th graders when they transition to 7th grade. Fine Arts, Physical Education, and Library (FAPEL) educators will continue to be assigned based on enrollment and needs, and staffing decisions will be made in collaboration with Bessie Rhodes school leaders and district administration. These positions are districtwide and will be assigned appropriately, ensuring a consistent educational experience for all students.

5. What recruitment efforts were made this year for staffing the Dual Language program? How might recruitment efforts differ next year, especially for staffing a school that is closing?

The district has made significant efforts to recruit bilingual, highly qualified teachers for the Dual Language program. In January 2024, the Multilingual team screened and interviewed 53 bilingual candidates for various positions, including those for the middle school Dual Language

program. Seven candidates were identified as having middle school certifications, and five of these candidates were recommended for hire by the Rhodes administration. Unfortunately, none of these teachers were hired for the Dual Language positions during this cycle.

Looking ahead to the winter of the 2024-2025 school year, the district will continue its recruitment efforts, which include strengthening partnerships with universities, attending job fairs, and exploring international educator placement agencies. Additionally, we anticipate that any new Dual Language teachers will follow the program as it moves to Haven Middle School in the 2026-2027 school year.

6. Is the district making investments to support the success of the Dual Language program?

Yes, the district has made several key investments to support the success of the Dual Language Middle School program, including:

- Development and implementation of a Spanish Language Arts (SLA) curriculum
- Translation of curricular resources to enhance rigor and language proficiency
- Ongoing professional development for educators
- Close collaboration with various district departments and administrative support
- Continued efforts to build a pipeline for bilingual, Dual Language-certified educators, in collaboration with Human Relations
- Regular meetings with the Dual Language Committee to review progress and adjust programming as necessary

7. Are contingency plans in place for the Dual Language Middle School program, and is it being placed on hold?

The district is moving forward with the planned six-year trajectory for the Dual Language Middle School program. Contingency plans are in place to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our students, regardless of changes in enrollment or staffing. The program will not be put on hold, and we remain committed to its continued success.

We appreciate the continued support of the school board and the community as we work together to ensure that our Dual Language program thrives and provides a valuable, bilingual education for all students.