History

With the opening of Heritage in July 2001, the Heritage staff launched the first Spanish Immersion Program in the Chula Vista School District beginning with Kinder, 1st, and 2nd Grade. Each year we have added a grade level and now offer Spanish Immersion from Kinder through 6th Grade.

Goals

Our goal is to develop Bilingualism and Biliteracy for every student. Students acquire high levels of English and Spanish language proficiency while meeting academic content standards in both languages. Students develop understanding and appreciation of other cultures in our society.

Mission Statement

The Heritage Dual Immersion Program is committed to providing academically challenging and language rich standards-based curriculum to ensure all students will become bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural. Children of all races, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds will be prepared to contribute to a complex and diverse global community.

Definition

Also known as Two-Way Immersion or Two-Way Bilingual Education, these programs are designed to serve both language minority and language majority students concurrently. Two language groups are put together and instruction is delivered through both languages. **For example,** in the US, native English-speakers might learn Spanish as a foreign language while continuing to develop their English literacy skills and Spanish-speaking ELLs (English Language Learners) learn English while developing literacy in Spanish. The goals of the program are for both groups to become biliterate, succeed academically, and develop cross-cultural understanding (Howard, 2001).

The Model: The Two-Way Immersion Program followed at Heritage Elementary is a 90/10 Model that is a scientifically researched based program. This model has been proven to be a highly successful Dual Language Program.

In a 90-10 Immersion Program, the target language (in this case Spanish) begins with a higher percentage at kindergarten. The amount of English taught progresses through the grades until eventually reaching equal time (50% Spanish-50% English) by 5th and 6th grades. This program design supports student transition into Rancho Del Rey Middle School's Dual Language Immersion Program.

Kinder:	90% Spanish, 10% English
1st Grade:	90% Spanish, 10% English
2nd Grade:	80% Spanish, 20% English
3rd Grade:	70% Spanish, 30% English
4th Grade:	60% Spanish, 40% English
5th Grade:	50% Spanish, 50% English
6th Grade:	50% Spanish, 50% English

INSTRUCTION IN THE 90/10 MODEL IS DELIVERED THROUGH BOTH LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, ONLY ONE LANGUAGE AT A TIME IS USED FOR INSTRUCTION. THE TWO-WAY IMMERSION PROGRAM COMBINES A MAINTENANCE BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION MODEL AND MINIMALLY LAST FROM 5-7 YEARS.

What if I don't speak Spanish?

Parents do not need to speak Spanish for their children to succeed in the Dual Immersion Program. Show your child that you value the ability to speak a second language. Attend cultural events that feature music, dance or food from a country or countries where Spanish is spoken. If possible, provide some books, videos, or other materials in Spanish. At the same time, continue to reinforce English language development skills at home by reading and discussing books together.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Can we expect academic excellence from the program?

The program is driven by curriculum via language instruction. Dual Immersion teachers use the state academic standards for grade level content and instruction so that students are learning the same content as they would in an English only classroom.

They are simply learning these core academic subjects in Spanish.

How will my child benefit from this program?

Children become bilingual and bi-literate in this program and gain a sense of cultural awareness for their own and other cultures. This program prepares young people to contribute to a complex, diverse, democratic society. They are also challenged academically. There have been numerous studies documenting the cognitive benefits of learning a second language at a young age. Most experts agree that the earlier a child is introduced to a second language, the greater the chances are that the child will become truly proficient in the language. Research has also shown that bilingual students perform better than monolingual students on tasks that call for divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving.

What is the typical experience for a child upon first entering the Dual Immersion Program?

There is an initial adjustment period for children when they first enter the program. Your child may ask, "Why is the teacher talking to me in a language I can't understand?" A combination of activities, lots of singing, and scaffolded intruction help children to feel comfortable and competent in the Immersion environment by the second month of Kindergarten.

Will my child be fluent after 5th grade?

It takes five full years to develop written and oral proficiency in the Immersion classroom. Typically, children soak up the language for the first two years of the program and their listening comprehension exceeds their ability to express the language orally. By the middle of Kindergarten, Immersion students use the phonetic skills they have learned to begin reading in Spanish. While in Kinder, students are permitted to ask and answer questions in English. By the middle of Kindergarten, Kinder teachers begin to encourage students to "produce" oral Spanish. By Second Grade, students use Spanish as their primary language of communication, with the teacher and their peers.

How can I explain this program to my child?

Becoming proficient in another language is a long-term goal, so we have to keep reminding children of the gains they are achieving and what an extraordinary thing they are doing by participating in this program. If parents maintain a positive attitude about the program, children will as well.

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Dual Language
Immersion Program

HERITAGE

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