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From: **Joanne Clyde** <JCLYDE@isbe.net>

Date: Wed, Sep 2, 2026 at 4:08 PM

Subject: RE: Clarification Regarding Dual Language Academy Model

To: Illescas, Antonio (Tony) <aillescas@d47.org>, Jennifer Lee <JLEE@isbe.net>, John Crosley-Corcoran <JCROSLEY@isbe.net>

Cc: Dr. Kathy Hinz <khinz@d47.org>, Anastasia Gruper <acgruper@d47.org>

Good afternoon Tony,

Thank you for your patience, please see below answers to your questions in **red**. Are there any updates on this situation since the board meeting? Please let me know if there is any additional way we can support.

Warmest regards,

Joanne Clyde

Director

Multilingual / Language Development Department

Illinois State Board of Education

[555 W. Monroe Street, Suite 900](#)

[Chicago, IL 60661](#)

jclyde@isbe.net

[\(312\) 814-3850](tel:(312)814-3850)



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From: Illescas, Antonio (Tony) <aillescas@d47.org>

Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 1:35 PM

To: Joanne Clyde <JCLYDE@isbe.net>; Jennifer Lee <JLEE@isbe.net>; John Crosley-Corcoran <JCROSLEY@isbe.net>

Cc: Dr. Kathy Hinz <khinz@d47.org>; Anastasia Gruper <acgruper@d47.org>

Subject: Clarification Regarding Dual Language Academy Model

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Good afternoon,

I am reaching out to ask for clarification and guidance from ISBE's Multilingual/Language Development Department regarding a statement that was made during public comment at our Board of Education meeting on Monday evening.

Crystal Lake District 47 is currently reviewing several elementary boundary recommendations. One recommendation being discussed is the creation of a Multilingual/Dual Language Academy by converting one of our current K-5 elementary buildings into a centralized site for our K-5 Dual Language classrooms.

To clarify, this would not be a separate building only for English learners, nor would it be intended to isolate students by language background, race, ethnicity, or national origin. The intent would be to bring our existing K-5 Dual Language classrooms, which are currently spread across multiple buildings, into one school in order to strengthen program coherence, staffing, language allocation, instructional support, and biliteracy development. After students leave the 5th grade, depending on address/boundary, they would attend one of our two 6-8 DL middle schools (we have a 3rd middle school which does not offer DL).

The academy model being discussed would include:

- A two-way Dual Language program serving Spanish-speaking, English-speaking (via a lottery process), and multilingual students.
- Certified bilingual/ESL staff and Dual Language teachers assigned to support the program.
- Consistent K-5 language allocation and biliteracy expectations across classrooms.
- Spanish Language Arts and English Language Arts instruction aligned to district curriculum and applicable Illinois standards.
- Spanish literacy supports such as Estrellita, Lunita, Benchmark Gramática/Taller resources, and other Spanish-side instructional materials.
- Continued implementation of WIDA standards and English language development supports for ELs.
- Access to the full elementary program, including math, science, social sciences, specials, intervention, enrichment, MTSS, special education, and related services.
- Family communication, interpretation/translation, and BPAC engagement consistent with state and federal requirements.
- A goal of improving consistency, collaboration, staffing sustainability (we have to bring many teachers from Spain due to turnover and they can only be here for a certain amount of time), and long-term biliteracy outcomes for students.

During public comment, a community member stated that they had spoken with someone at ISBE and were told that this type of model would not be legal. The person also stated that it would likely take the state a couple of years to conduct an audit, after which the district would lose funding. In addition, the person characterized the model as segregation and stated that it would be considered discriminatory.

We also shared several examples of districts in Northern Illinois that appear to have centralized or language-focused dual language school models, including Winston Campus in CCSD15 Palatine, Hawthorn School of Dual Language in District 73 Vernon Hills, Oak Terrace in North Shore District 112/Highland Park, School District U-46 in Elgin, and Washington Dual Language Academy in District 89 Maywood. Some members of the public pushed back on those examples and stated that they are not the same as the model our district is considering. We understand that each district's model may differ in areas such as enrollment, program design, language allocation, grade configuration, transportation, and whether the school serves only dual language students or a broader student population. For that reason, we would appreciate ISBE's guidance on whether compliance question is the existence of a centralized dual language site itself, or whether compliance depends on the specific design elements, safeguards, and access structures built into the model.

Because these statements were attributed to ISBE, I wanted to reach out directly to verify the state's position and avoid relying on secondhand information.

Could ISBE please clarify the following?

- Is a centralized K-5 Dual Language academy model permissible in Illinois if it is implemented with equitable access, appropriate staffing, full curriculum access, and continued compliance with TBE/TPI, Title III, and civil rights requirements? **A centralized K-5 Dual Language Academy model is not prohibited in Illinois, provided it is designed and implemented in compliance with applicable State and federal requirements.**

- Does ISBE view a centralized Dual Language academy model as inherently segregative or discriminatory, or would that determination depend on how the model is designed, staffed, communicated, and implemented? **A centralized dual language academy model is not inherently segregative or discriminatory. Whether a program is segregative or discriminatory would depend on how the model is designed, staffed, communicated, and implemented as well as how the method and manner for placing English Learner (EL) students in the program is articulated and actually implemented. The district should work with its own legal counsel to determine whether the program's design and implementation comply with applicable State and federal civil rights requirements.**
- Are there specific compliance considerations ISBE would expect the district to address since this model is being pursued, such as enrollment procedures, language group balance, parent choice, transportation, access to services, staffing, curriculum, or reporting? **Schools and Districts must maintain compliance with [105 ILCS 5/ Article 14-C](#) and [23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 228](#) with regards to English Learners, as well as applicable federal requirements.**
- Is there any ISBE guidance or rule that would support the statement that this model would automatically result in a loss of bilingual/EL funding after an audit? **ISBE is not aware of any provision that de facto results in the loss of bilingual/EL funding solely because a district implements a centralized Dual Language Academy. Funding issues would depend on the district's compliance with applicable funding and program requirements.**
- Are there examples, guidance documents, or contacts you would recommend we review as we continue evaluating this recommendation? **The agency is in the process of developing a comprehensive Dual Language Guidance document. [Drafts 1 and 2 are available on our website](#). While the final draft is not yet available, District 47 may find the citations listed within the document drafts to be helpful resources. With regards to compliance, the agency recommends regular cross-checking of district plans for EL services at the Dual Language Academy with [105 ILCS 5/ Article 14-C](#) and [23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 228](#). The department also has a [Self-Assessment checklist](#) that districts may use as they regularly review their programming. As always, the Multilingual / Language Development Department's principal consultants are available to provide programmatic technical assistance and answer questions regarding English Learner and Dual Language programming. Please do not hesitate to reach out.**

Our goal is to ensure that any recommendation brought forward is educationally sound, legally compliant, equitable for students and families, and aligned with ISBE expectations. We are not asking ISBE to endorse a local boundary recommendation, but we would appreciate clarification regarding whether this type of DL academy structure is allowable and what safeguards or design elements ISBE would expect.

Thank you for your time and guidance.

Tony Illescas

Director of Multilingual Learners
 Crystal Lake Elementary District 47
[300 Commerce Dr. Crystal Lake, IL 60014](#)
[815.788.5035](tel:815.788.5035) | d47.org



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