

Menlo Park City School District

Fall 2010 Kindergarten Option

Spanish Immersion Program

District Commitment

On December 11, 2007, the Board of Education authorized and directed the initiation of a Spanish Immersion program. The first Kindergarten class began in fall 2008 at Encinal School. Dependent upon enrollment, Kindergarten immersion classes will be available at both Encinal and Laurel in 2010. This program is an option available to all incoming kindergarten students in the district.

General Description and Program Goals

Dual language instruction is an educational model in which English speaking students and Spanish speaking students are combined in the same classroom for academic content instruction in both target languages.

The goals of the Spanish Immersion program are to promote:

- Bilingual proficiency
- Literacy in two languages
- Academic achievement in all curricular standards in two languages
- Positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors for all students.

Program Structure

Research indicates that most students need significant exposure to a second language to promote high levels of proficiency and achievement. The district's immersion program offers a 90-10 model where kindergarten students receive approximately 90% of their school day in Spanish and 10% in English. As students move through the grades, there are incremental increases of instructional time in English. By the fifth grade, instruction is delivered in both English and Spanish equally. This is the standard for many dual language programs.

Parent Commitment

The district's ability to support a strand of Spanish Immersion in grades K through 5 depends on a firm, multi-year commitment by parents. Parents will be asked to:

- Make a six year commitment to the program, grades K through 5
- Participate in district activities which will support the educational program of their students
- Provide a home environment and opportunities beyond the school day that reinforce the language goals of the program
- Participate fully in the broader school and district communities and their support organizations

Future Considerations

Parents who enroll their children in the immersion program should recognize themselves as pioneers of a new educational strand in the district. The long term plan for this educational option in Menlo Park is under development. Parents should be aware of the following:

- Classes may become multi-graded in future years depending on enrollment (combination classes.)
- The program could be terminated for financial reasons if enrollment is not adequate.
- Beginning in fall 2008 and thereafter, the composition of the class must maintain a balance of Spanish and English speaking students.
- In the future, classes may be located on different campuses or become an alternative magnet school

2010 Registration Process for Spanish Immersion Kindergarten

Since applications may exceed space in the program, student enrollment may be determined by lottery. The target for the composition of a class is ten Spanish speakers and ten English speakers. This ratio may be adjusted depending on the number of Spanish speaking applicants. Consequently, there will be a separate lottery for each language group. Spanish speakers are children who are fluent in Spanish (and may be fluent in English or other languages.) English speakers are children who are fluent in English, but not in Spanish.

Process

- Complete Kindergarten registration at assigned school of attendance by February 26, 2010. Students who apply to participate in the immersion program retain a space at the assigned school of attendance until selected through lottery to enter the program.
- Return Immersion program application materials to the assigned school of attendance by February 26, 2010. (The application includes a Kindergarten Lottery Card for everyone and a Language Survey for Spanish speaking students. These forms are available in each elementary school office.)
- Attend a **mandatory** parent information meeting on either **January 26 or February 23, 2010 from 7 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** in the District Office Board Room.
- Spanish speaking applicants will demonstrate language fluency through personal interview.
- A lottery will be conducted in March for all district applicants. Classes will be balanced by gender and language.

For more information about the Spanish Immersion program or if you have questions, please contact Tami Girsky, Administrator on Special Assignment, at 321-7140 x5601 or tgirsky@mpcsd.org.