

Dear APS Immersion School Community—

I am sharing some updates with you on the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) visioning process.

At the Jan. 20 School Board meeting, APS staff presented the DLI Task Force recommendations to strengthen the DLI program. Staff requested School Board Action on recommendation #1 to move from a partial dual language immersion to a full early dual language immersion program starting the fall of 2023 in kindergarten to 1st grade. The School Board is scheduled to take action on this recommendation at its Feb. 17 meeting and the remaining recommendations will be considered in the upcoming budget or planning processes.

Dual Language Immersion Task Force Recommendations:

- 1. Shift the Dual Language Immersion from a partial instructional immersion program into a full early dual language immersion program starting the fall of 2023 with kindergarten and 1st grade;**
2. Hire a division-level Dual Language Immersion Coordinator;
3. Hire one Spanish reading specialist for each elementary school;
4. Purchase Spanish Language core materials for all dual language classrooms;
5. Expand access to the DLI program;
6. Fund a Dual Language Immersion Professional Learning plan;
7. Procure an assessment infrastructure that measures both languages of instruction;
8. Increase course offerings at Wakefield High school; and
9. Recruit, hire and retain bilingual/biliterate staff.

What is full early Dual Language Immersion?

In a full early dual language immersion program, instruction is delivered in Spanish for 80% of the school day and 20% in English starting in kindergarten. Beginning in 4th grade, instruction in English and Spanish is equal, with students receiving 50% of instruction in both languages. **In both models, the student composition remains the same with a goal of 50% Spanish speakers and 50% English speakers in the program.**

See the tables below for the breakdown of instructional time in English and Spanish across grades in the proposed full early dual language immersion program compared to the current partial dual language immersion program

Instructional Time in Full Early DLI (Proposed Model)

Grades	K-1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Spanish Instruction	80%	80%	70%	50%	50%
English Instruction	20%	20%	30%	50%	50%

Instructional Time in Partial DLI (Current Model in APS)

Grades	K-1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Spanish Instruction	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
English Instruction	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%

What is the rationale for the move to full early Dual Language immersion?

- It better supports closing the current achievement gap.
- Students in full dual language immersion programs, including Native Spanish speakers, outperform their peers in monolingual schools on standardized tests beginning in middle school.
- While some parents initially fear that immersion may have a negative impact on their child’s English Language Development, research shows that full immersion enhances English skills.
- For Spanish speakers, strengthening literacy in their native language contributes to higher levels of literacy in the second language (English). This is known as transferability of literacy skills.
- It makes students more marketable for future employment through enhanced language skills.

Please visit the [the APS Engage Immersion Visioning webpage](#) for additional information and send any questions and comments to engage@apsva.us.

Sincerely,

Bridget Loft
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Office of Academics