

## “Two Languages... Twice the Opportunity!”



## Henderson Elementary Dual Language Handbook

## Henderson’s Two-way Dual Language

The two-way Dual Language Program is a challenging educational approach in which students learn two languages in an instructional setting that integrates subject content presented in English and in Spanish.

### Program Goals

Primary goals of the Dual Language Program are:

- The development of fluency and literacy in English and Spanish for all students, with special attention given to English language learners participating in the program;
- The promotion of bilingualism, bi-literacy, cross-culture awareness and high academic achievement;
- To give students a multi-cultural understanding and respect for diversity; and
- To provide bilingual and bi-literate skills as assets for the individual and for society.



## The Model at Henderson

The students in the Dual Language Immersion Program at Henderson Elementary follow a 50/50 model. In the 50/50 model:

- English native speakers and Spanish native speakers are served.
- Language arts instruction is initially acquired in the student's native language.
- Language arts instruction in the student's second language will begin at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- Academic subjects are taught in both languages without translation.
- There is a strategic separation of languages.

The Henderson model is comprised of a maximum of 44 students in two classes at each grade level: 22 native English speakers and 22 native Spanish speakers.



## Student Selection

To qualify for the dual language class, students are evaluated in their native language in the following areas:

- Oral language: following directions, answering questions, naming pictures and retelling stories;
- Pre-literacy skills: letter names, sounds, sight words, numbers and colors; and
- Writing: names, words and numbers.

## Testing

Students in the two-way dual language classroom will be tested in both their native language and the second language, so that data can be collected on the student's progress in both languages. The student's benchmark assessments and district unit tests will play a major role in the decision for language of testing on state mandated assessments. The dual language coordinator, the classroom teacher, and the principal will meet before mandated state assessments to determine the language of testing for each student on an individual basis.



A student must have consistent passing grades on district assessments, which include unit tests and benchmarks to be allowed to test in their second language. If a student does not have passing scores on benchmark tests, he / she will be required to test in the language where the student's performance indicates most successful, or in their native language.

### Parent Participation

To ensure student achievement and success, it is necessary for families to commit to the Dual Language Program for six years (kindergarten through fifth grade).

Active parent support is extremely important to the long-term success of the Henderson Elementary Dual Language Program. Involvement in the classroom, helping your child with homework, attending parent workshops, and providing feedback are all necessary for student success.



### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How will my child understand if she / he does not speak the second language?**

A: The classroom teacher will make information meaningful through the use of visuals, objects, gestures, and specialized instructional strategies. The advantage of having a classroom with both native English and native Spanish speakers is that they can help each other understand, which also encourages social interaction. Students are not discouraged from speaking their native language to communicate. Students are, however, encouraged to speak in the language of instruction as they learn.

**Q: Will learning a second language interfere with my child's ability to learn basic reading, writing, and math skills?**

A: No. National studies have shown that children in dual language programs perform the same or better than their monolingual English-speaking peers on achievement tests in math, reading and writing (Thomas & Collier,



2001). Research also shows that students who acquire advanced levels of proficiency in two languages often experience cognitive and linguistic advantages, and perform better on tasks that require divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving.

**Q: Does it matter if no one at home speaks the second language?**

A: No. Continuous exposure to the native language at home is important. Read to your child daily and continue the literacy experiences you would naturally encourage. One of the advantages of this program is that the success rate of students with strong native language abilities is high. You may even notice your child beginning to read, in the second language by using the literacy skills learned in their native language, before formal second language reading instruction is presented.

**Q: How can I help my child with homework if I can't understand the language?**

A: Homework and school notices that are sent home are provided in English and in Spanish.



Communication will be in the language in which you are most comfortable. Parents can help support their child at home by making sure they have the right tools and environment to get homework done (e.g., a quiet space and enough time, paper, dictionaries in both languages, writing utensils, and art supplies such as construction paper, paste, tape, and colored markers).

**Q: How can parents help their child succeed in the Dual Language Program?**

A: Participate! One way is to provide continuous quality exposure to the child's native language at home. Read with your child in their native language. Discuss with your child what they are learning in school. You can also participate by volunteering in your child's classroom. You will have a better understanding of what happens in a dual language classroom, as well as have an opportunity to get to know other children and parents involved in the program.

**Q: What language will my child learn to read and write in first?**



A: In order to avoid confusion, the languages of instruction are separated. Formal reading instruction is presented in the students' native language until students master decoding skills and begin to focus on skills such as comprehension, synthesizing, and evaluating. These skills are usually acquired around second grade, which is why formal language arts instruction and the second language begin at that time. However, you should continue to read to your child daily in their native language. There is no need to discourage any attempts to read in either language.

**Q: Will my child learn the same curriculum as mainstream English speakers?**

A: Absolutely! Your child will be studying the same academic content. The standards and curriculum of the Dual Language Program are the same as for all students. The only difference is the language of instruction.

**Q: After I complete an Interest Form, is my child automatically in the Dual Language Program?**



A: No, the application is simply an authorization for us to contact you to set up an evaluation. Your child must complete a pre-literacy and an oral evaluation. Based on the results of this evaluation, you will be notified of denial or acceptance.

**Q: Does the evaluation guarantee placement in the Dual Language Program?**

A: No, after all the results are evaluated, you will be notified in writing of acceptance or denial.

**Q: When shall I expect to receive my acceptance / denial letter?**

A: Within 30 days after the last scheduled evaluation (Late June – early July).

**Q: After my child is accepted, what do I do?**

A: Sign and return the letter of acceptance by the deadline indicated on the letter to guarantee the placement offered.



**Q: What happens if I miss the deadline and don't return the acceptance letter by the due date?**

A: Due to the number of applicants, it will be assumed that you are no longer interested in the program and an acceptance letter will be sent to the next student on the waiting list. Therefore, you will lose the offer for placement in the Dual Language Program.

**Q: After my child is in the program, can he / she be dismissed from the program?**

A: Yes, every student will be in the program on a probationary status for the first six weeks of school. We will continue to monitor the progress of all students. At any point, if a student falls behind in their native language, we may consider dismissing him / her from the program.

**Q: When can I expect to receive my probationary status letter?**

A: You will receive the status of your child's dual language placement on the last day of the first six weeks, or sooner, if needed.

**Contact Information**

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