



SPANISH DUAL IMMERSION PARENT INTEREST BOOKLET

A Las Virgenes Unified School District Program



Sumac L-STEM Elementary
Las Virgenes Unified School District

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Program Overview

The Spanish Dual Language Immersion Program at Sumac L-STEM Elementary, is one of the choice programs of the Las Virgenes Unified School District. Choosing an elementary school program for your family is an important decision, and our goal is to support you and your child in that process. The Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education form the foundation of our program. The seven strands of the Sumac Dual Language Program are incorporated throughout this interest booklet.

This program is appropriate for:

- English Only/English Dominant Students
- Spanish Only/Spanish Dominant Students
- Spanish/English Bilingual Students

In this booklet you will find information about the benefits of immersion education, our program in LVUSD, and how to enroll. LVUSD is very proud of the Sumac Dual Immersion program and the resources in this booklet will help you understand why. Again, thank you for your interest in the Dual Immersion Program.

History and Research

General History

Dual Language Immersion Programs have been around since the 1960s. There is extensive research to support the positive outcomes for both native Spanish speaking and native English speaking children. The main sources of research used to create the Sumac Dual Language program are:

- <http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/>
- <http://www.cal.org/areas-of-impact/english-learners/bilingual-and-dual-language-education>
- <http://www.cal.org/twi/guidingprinciples.htm>

LVUSD History

Sumac Elementary opened the Dual Language program in 2011 in Kindergarten and we are proud to offer the program beginning in Journeys to fifth grade, making Sumac an enviable school for students, families, and our community. We are proud to have our first cohorts of students ready to continue their bilingual education at Lindero Canyon Middle School as 6th graders. Our program has become a shining beacon of Las Virgenes Unified School District as qualified teachers continue to enhance their students' knowledge of both English and Spanish. The Spanish Dual Immersion Program is open for enrollment to all LVUSD students and the greater community through an Inter-district permit process.



Research Supports Bilingual Education

Considerable research states that the benefits of the Immersion Bilingual Program are educational, cognitive, sociocultural, and economic (Calderon & Carreon, 2000; Cloud et al., 2000):

- *Educational:* Students acquire high levels of proficiency in both their first and second language while developing high level academic skills.
- *Cognitive:* Bilingual students are able to problem solve more creatively. Their knowledge of the structural properties of the language allows them to decode academic language more efficiently.
- *Sociocultural:* Bilingual people are able to understand and communicate with members of other cultural groups. They are also able to respect the values and customs of the speakers of other languages.
- *Economic:* There are jobs that call for bilingual or multilingual proficiency. Bilingual students' knowledge of another world language is a valuable resource that can contribute to the nation's economic relations with other countries.

Program Description and Goals

Our Spanish Dual Immersion program is a type of bilingual education for acquiring two languages by integrating native English speakers and native Spanish speakers in content and literacy instruction in both languages. Standard school subjects are taught in one of two languages. Beginning in kindergarten, the Spanish-speaking teacher teaches Spanish Language Arts and Social Studies while the English-speaking teacher teaches English Language Arts and Math. Sumac is a 50:50 model and students receive a common core standards education in both English and Spanish by highly qualified teachers.

Additionally, Sumac boasts a STEAM program where science is integrated in lessons in both classes. The target language is acquired and developed by using it as a *means* for instruction and not the *object* of instruction. In this manner, students become fluent and literate in *both* English and Spanish, while they follow the same curriculum that is taught only in English in non-immersion classes.

Goals of Dual Language Immersion

The goals of the Spanish Immersion program are bilingualism and biliteracy, high levels of academic achievement in both languages, and positive cross-cultural attitudes.

- *Bilingualism and Biliteracy:* Development of high levels of proficiency in the student's first language and in the second language.



- *High academic achievement:* Begin to develop proficiency at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages as they progress through fifth grade.
- California Content Standards are specifically taught in all academic areas with the same expectation of achievement in both languages.
- *Positive cross-cultural attitudes:* Demonstrate positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors, and high levels of self-esteem. This is partly achieved by holding Spanish Heritage programs, school-wide fairs such as Día de los Muertos, Día de los niños, listening/dancing/performing to Latin music from all 28 different Spanish-speaking countries, tasting foods from other countries
- *Build and sustain a strong home-school partnership.*

Guiding Principles

- Program Structure
- Instruction
- Assessment and Accountability
- Curriculum
- Staff Quality and Professional Development
- Family and Community
- Support and Resources

Program Structure

To accomplish its goals, the program follows a unique instructional design in which Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students are combined in the same classroom. Students will serve as language models to the other students as they acquire the languages. Currently Sumac follows a 50/50 simultaneous two-way Immersion model. This model emphasizes the use of both Spanish and English to provide a solid foundation for future academics. In grades K-5, an English and a Spanish teacher provide equal instruction in the two languages.

Language of Instruction

In this program, native English and Spanish speakers are learning the curriculum in either their first or second language, depending on grade level and subject area. Because many students learn content through a language they do not speak natively, techniques that make instruction more comprehensible are necessary. Teachers in the Spanish Immersion Program use a variety of strategies to “shelter” instruction and make it more understandable. In general, these strategies include the following:

- Hands-on activities/art/science
- Technology, iPADS, access to computers
- Online, interactive language acquisition opportunities
- Constant use of visuals such as real objects, pictures, posters, videos



- Music/movement, songs, chants, raps
- Student interactions in whole group discussions
- Slowing down speech, repetition, choral reading/responding
- Pantomiming and gesturing by teacher or students
- Thematic units of study which develop a concept in depth over weeks
- Peer interaction and cooperative learning activities
- Multiple cues that give students the opportunity to master concepts such as graphic presentation, followed by a discussion, an experiment, or a field trip.

Throughout the year, teachers collaborate to plan content standards based focused lessons that involve opportunities for students to work collaboratively during a variety of learning experiences. Additionally, the curriculum in the Immersion Program is aligned with the Las Virgenes Unified School District curriculum adoptions and the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Assessments and Accountability

The Immersion Program uses multiple forms of assessment to determine student's language fluency and academic abilities across all grade levels.

- We conduct reading, writing, and math assessments to measure students' academic progress throughout the year.
- Spanish Oral Language Assessment (SOLOM) is given at all grade levels
- Spanish IPT assessment is administered to track student's progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in all grade levels.
- State norm-referenced assessments for academics in English beginning in third grade to assess proficiency in state educational standards
- Assessment information for all academic areas is communicated with parents during conferences and progress report periods.
- Students who are considered to be learning English as second language will also take a state test , currently the California English Language Development Test for initial evaluations, and in the fall, the new ELPAC for annual assessments

Curriculum

The curriculum is standards-based and promotes the development of bilingual, biliterate and multicultural competencies for all students. After Sumac teachers piloted McGraw Hill Wonders/Maravillas last year, it was formally adopted for grades J-5. It is a comprehensive, research-based, content-centered program in both languages. Additionally, sets of leveled readers in both English and Spanish were purchased for every classroom. Our school library boasts the addition of leveled books in both languages as well.

Go Math was adopted by the district for grades K-5, and Next Generation Science standards are promoted through StemScopes. Sumac is also a STEM school and all students receive



instruction from a specialist in Art/Science. The 4th and 5th grade classes receive specialized Science instruction from Science Teachers in their classrooms. All students receive Physical Education, Music (in both languages), library, and computer.

High Quality Staff and Professional Development

Sumac also boasts an English Language Development Specialist who works closely with those students who are learning English. Students may receive small-group ELD during intervention time. We also have a Spanish and English Reading Specialists who provide support in both languages to those students during intervention time as well. Teachers collaborate weekly, even daily to ensure that no child gets left behind.

The Role of Parents

Family and Community

Families who are interested in enrolling their children in the Spanish Immersion Program are asked to commit to staying in the program for five to seven years so that students may obtain the maximum benefits of the immersion program from kinder through fifth grade. Current bilingual education research states that it can take up to seven to nine years to acquire a second language. Our program continues into middle and high schools.

All parents who enroll their children in the Spanish Immersion Program are encouraged to fully engage in their child's academic program by attending parent/teacher meetings and volunteering in the classroom and at the school. We also encourage families to seek Spanish cultural events beyond our school so that students can also learn about the Spanish speaking cultures.

There are many ways that parents can volunteer and participate in our school, including some of the following:

School-wide volunteer opportunities:

- Sumac School Site Council
- English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) for parents of students acquiring English as a second language
- Sumac Parent Faculty Association (PFA)
- Sumac's PumpkinPalooza Event
- Día de los Muertos
- International Music Festival

Classroom volunteer and participation opportunities (We encourage all parents to participate):

- Volunteer during Spanish instruction (if Spanish speaking)
- Volunteer during English instruction
- Volunteer by doing take home projects



- Volunteer during special classroom events
- Volunteer during library, science lab, or field trips
- Parent/ teacher conferences

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Has Spanish Immersion been proven to be an effective education paradigm?

A: Yes. In large-scale studies over many years, university researchers have documented a very high rate of success in achieving academic proficiency for both Spanish and English-speaking children in programs similar to ours. Typically, both Spanish and English speakers achieve native or near-native fluency in their new language. On standardized academic tests, ***both groups outperform their counterparts who have been educated in monolingual classrooms.*** Spanish speakers also outperform their counterparts who have been educated in traditional bilingual classrooms.

Q: What happens in the classroom?

A: Language is the vehicle for instruction in immersion classrooms. A visitor would not find a class conjugating verbs or memorizing prepared "dialogues." Rather, one would see children using the language --speaking, reading, writing, adding, subtracting, experimenting, singing, arguing, whispering and shouting --all in Spanish, under the guidance of a teacher, who has been specially trained to teach the language while using it.

Q: How do Spanish speakers specifically benefit from this program?

A: In a general education classroom, where English is the language of instruction, the native Spanish speakers might struggle initially when using English. However, in a ***Spanish Immersion program, these students gain self-confidence, because they understand the language of instruction.*** These students are also challenged to become language models by assisting the English speakers by translating and leading some group activities. Meanwhile, the native Spanish speakers are learning English by interacting with their peers. Spanish speakers get the chance to advance academically and socially while becoming bilingual. ***Native Spanish speakers can maintain their first language, Spanish, while learning a second language, English, at a time when their brains are most receptive to language learning.*** Spanish speakers also gain socially by making friendships across cultural, ethnic and linguistic boundaries.

Q: How do English speakers specifically benefit from this program?

A: English speakers get the chance to acquire a new language in the years when their brains are most receptive to language learning. Most ***become highly proficient in the target language, a standard that most adult Americans, who typically began to study a foreign language in middle or high school, can never hope to attain.*** English speakers also gain socially by making friendships across cultural, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries. Research



demonstrates that English speakers in language-immersion programs hold positive attitudes about people from other cultures.

Q: How do children who are already bilingual benefit from this program?

A: Dual Immersion programs allow bilingual children to continue to develop their speaking skills and to learn to read and write in both languages.

Q: Is this method of early language learning in wide use?

A: In short, yes. There are more than 300 elementary language Dual Immersion Programs throughout the United States, according to the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. There are Dual Immersion programs in many languages, but the most common by far is Spanish. The model was developed in the 1970s in Quebec, Canada, where it is still used extensively to develop bilingualism in French and English-speaking students.

Q: How did Las Virgenes' Spanish Immersion program get started?

A: Our program began in the 2011-2012 school year, based on The Guiding Principles of Dual Immersion.

Q: Who is the staff of the Las Virgenes Unified Spanish Immersion program?

A: All of our teachers are dedicated, creative, and trained in dual-immersion techniques. Those teachers who are teaching Spanish are completely fluent in English and Spanish.

Enrollment Procedures

Transitional Kinder, Kinder, and First grade Enrollment:

In order to apply for the Spanish Immersion program in grades Journeys - First grade registration packets should be picked up from the main office starting the second week of January.

Important Dates for the Spanish Immersion Registration:

- *Monthly School Tours starting in November - April*
- *Location: Library and Spanish Immersion Classrooms.*
- *School of Choice and Inter-District Permit Window Opens Mid-November, and closes on March.*

Second through Fifth grade enrollment:

In order to apply to the Spanish Immersion program in grades Second - Fifth grade, the student should be transferring from a similar Immersion Program. The student should be tested by the Dual Immersion team in order to be accepted into Sumac L-STEM Elementary. Once accepted, a registration packet should be picked up from the main office.



