



**Alamo Heights ISD**  
**Spanish Immersion Program Guide**

## **AHISD Curriculum and Instruction Department**

We are dedicated to the goal of providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all AHISD students. We believe all students deserve rigorous curriculum and engaging instruction. Our goal is to provide the leadership, resources, support and professional development necessary to lead all students to high achievement.

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## Spanish Immersion Program at AHISD

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The AHISD Spanish Immersion Program is a one-way dual language immersion model that is designed for English-speaking students. Foreign language immersion is an approach to teaching another language that involves immersing students in the target language throughout the school day. Teachers speak only the target language to teach academic subjects, using a wide variety of instructional strategies. The goals of the one-way Spanish Immersion Program at AHISD are:

- To promote high academic achievement for all students
- To develop first and second language skills for bilingualism and biliteracy
- To promote cross-cultural understanding for all students

Language learning will take place primarily through content instruction in Spanish as well as initial literacy instruction. At the beginning of the program in first and second grades, students are fully immersed in the Spanish language for all instruction, and instruction in English in the area of ELA is introduced in 3rd-5th grades according to the chart found on pages 5 and 6. As students and teachers work to perform academic tasks, the students' language abilities are developed along with their knowledge of content area subject matter.

### Features of the AHISD Spanish Immersion Program:

- **Teaching Strategies for Language & Content** – Cooperative learning, thematic units, hands-on materials, language-rich environments with scaffolding for comprehension; varied opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and speaking in Spanish and English (e.g. building oracy, small group reading, Project GLAD strategies, *el dictado* structured writing lessons, etc.) (Lara, 2017).
- **Separation of Languages by Teachers & Students** – Teachers teach for extended periods of time in one designated language and encourage both first-language and second-language learners to communicate in the language of instruction to the best of their ability; teachers strategically support cross-linguistic connections with the “Bridge” – occasional, explicit contrastive analysis of Spanish and English vocabulary and grammatical features (Beeman & Urow, 2013).
- **Duration of Program** – The initial commitment to the program is for 5 years (Grades 1-5), however, it is recommended to continue in the program at the AHJS and AHHS. Students have more positive academic outcomes the longer they stay in language immersion programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2019).
- **Family & Community Involvement** – Parental and community support is important; a serious effort will be made to ensure that both languages and cultures are equally valued; families are included in school decision-making processes
- **Availability of Resources** – classroom materials, library resources and electronic resources in both languages will be available
- **Inclusion** – Children with learning differences and/or disabilities are welcome to participate in language immersion programs. Research shows that children of all abilities are capable of bilingualism. Students with diagnosed disabilities perform as well in bilingual programs as their peers with the same special needs in English programs (Kay-Raining Bird, 2016; Peña, 2016). It is highly recommended that families discuss participation in dual language with their child's teacher, administrator, and special education case manager (if applicable) to make an informed decision about immersion education and plan for instructional and linguistic supports and interventions that may be needed.

## Research-Based Program Features

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### **Students develop high levels of proficiency in both their first language and a second language**

- Elementary and secondary language immersion programs develop *additive bilingualism*; every participating student has the opportunity to gain a second language with no home language loss. This enrichment approach promotes full bilingualism and biliteracy (Howard et al., 2018).

### **Students' performance will be equal to or above that of their grade-level peers**

- Bilingualism can lead to cognitive advantages in executive functions such as attention and task-switching (Cummins, 2021).
- Students from English-speaking homes in dual language immersion programs have been shown to outperform their monolingually-educated counterparts, including students from diverse backgrounds (Lindholm-Leary, 2016).

### **Students will develop positive cross-cultural attitudes and gain an increased global awareness**

- Dual language immersion programs promote bilingualism, biliteracy, academic achievement, and multicultural awareness for all students (Howard et al., 2018).
- Dual language immersion programs have the most potential for truly preparing citizens who can make highly significant contributions to their own and our global societies (Thomas & Collier, 2019).

## Placing Students in the Spanish Immersion Program

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### INITIAL PLACEMENT in Spanish Immersion Classrooms:

In the spring of the Kindergarten year, students will be offered the opportunity to enroll in the Spanish Immersion Program for their first-grade year. Should there be more interest than spaces available, a lottery system will be conducted.

### Lottery System

1. In the Spring of the Kindergarten year, information is distributed about Dual Language and Spanish Immersion informational meetings. Parents of native English-speaking students who desire that their child be in the lottery must attend a publicized parent information meeting.
2. The number of lottery openings will be determined after placing Spanish Immersion class siblings of children already in the program from previous years.
3. Native English speakers must have attended Howard Early Childhood Center.
4. Parents of all Spanish Immersion students must sign a commitment form stating they will attend informational meetings and commit to their child's participation through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. **Parent Commitment forms** will be explained at the parent information meeting. Forms must be signed by both parents and returned to the Curriculum & Instruction Office by the set and publicized deadline.

### Admittance to Spanish Immersion after the close of the lottery:

The AHISD language program lottery closes officially for wait-list students after the conclusion of the second week of school. If the class size in a Dual Language or Spanish Immersion classroom decreases below minimum enrollment, then students may be assessed for Spanish proficiency to determine the appropriateness of admittance into a language class. Parents will need to submit a formal request for testing and students will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Upon placement in the class, parents will complete a program commitment form.

Assessment instruments include/ but are not limited to:

- Universal Screeners
- Reading and math grade level assessments
- Woodcock Munoz Language Survey (minimum Spanish level: Continuing Development)
- Writing Samples

# Language Allocations



## AHISD Elementary Spanish Immersion Program Language Allocations by Content Areas



Grade	Content Instruction in Spanish	Content Instruction in English
1st	<b>90% Spanish</b> All Subjects Spanish	<b>10% English</b> Morning Meeting
2nd	<b>90% Spanish</b> All Subjects Spanish	<b>10% English</b> Morning Meeting
3rd	<b>80% Spanish (Fall)</b> Spanish Language Arts Math Science Social Studies  <b>70% Spanish (Spring)</b> Spanish Language Arts Math Science Social Studies	<b>20% English (Fall)</b> English Language Arts <i>(Structured ELD Time)</i>  <b>30% English (Spring)</b> English Language Arts <i>(Structured ELD Time)</i>
4th	<b>60% Spanish</b> Spanish Language Arts Math Bridge to Spanish Science Social Studies	<b>40% English</b> English Language Arts <i>(Structured ELD Time)</i> Math Science Bridge to English
5th	<b>50% Spanish</b> Spanish Language Arts Math Bridge to Spanish Science	<b>50% English</b> Language Arts Bridge to English Math Science Bridge to English Social Studies

# Language Allocations



## AHISD Elementary Spanish Immersion Program Language of Assessments



Grade	Language of Screeners for English Home Language Speakers
1st	<b>MClass Reading:</b> BOY: English MOY: Spanish (dyslexia screener in English) EOY: Spanish & English  MAP Math: English
2nd	<b>MClass Reading:</b> BOY: Spanish MOY: Spanish EOY: Spanish & English  MAP Math: English
3rd	MAP Reading: English MAP Math: English STAAR: English EOY: Avant Spanish
4th	MAP Reading: English MAP Math: English STAAR: English
5th	MAP Reading: English MAP Math: English STAAR: English EOY: Avant Spanish



## Alamo Heights Junior School Program Offerings

Grade	Time	Spanish Instruction Subject Areas	Time	English Instruction Subject Areas
6th	Three academic periods	Reading Adv/GT Social Studies Adv/GT Science Adv/GT	Three or more academic periods	English, Math, Elective Classes
7th	Three academic periods	Spanish II Advanced * Texas History Adv/GT Science Adv/GT	Three or more academic periods	English Language Arts & Reading (ELAR), Math, Elective Classes
8th	Two academic periods	Spanish III Advanced * U.S. History Adv/GT	Four or more academic periods	Science, ELAR, Math, Elective Classes

\* *Fulfills high school world language credit requirements*

## Alamo Heights High School Program Offerings

Spanish Instruction Subject Areas	Global Seal of Biliiteracy Requirements	English Instruction Subject Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spanish IV On-Level</li> <li>● Spanish IV AP Language &amp; Culture</li> <li>● Spanish IV DC **</li> <li>● Spanish V AP Literature &amp; Culture</li> <li>● Spanish VI Immersion</li> <li>● <i>Additional elective seminars may be offered in Spanish. See the <a href="#">AHHS Academic Planning Guide</a> for current offerings and prerequisite requirements.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Functional Fluency certification:</b> Spanish IV AP Language &amp; Culture- Students must earn a 3 or 4 - OR - Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) score of Intermediate 4 or higher in all 4 testing categories (Speaking, Listening, Writing, &amp; Reading)</p> <p><b>Working Fluency certification:</b> Spanish IV AP Language and Culture- Students must earn a 5 - OR - AAPPL Advanced 1 or higher in all 4 testing categories (Speaking, Listening, Writing, &amp; Reading)</p>	<p><b>All other subject areas</b> (Teachers certified in ESL as needed)</p>

AP = Advanced Placement  
DC = Dual Credit \*\**Option to earn 4 college hours*

# Parent Commitment Form



## Alamo Heights Independent School District

7101 Broadway • San Antonio, Texas 78209 • Phone 210-824-2483

### SPANISH IMMERSION AND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM English-Proficient Parent Commitment Form

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Campus \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of younger brothers and sisters:

An important key to the success of children in an Immersion/Dual Language program is a positive working relationship between the school and the home. The District will devote the time, energy and resources needed to ensure the success of the program for which he/she was selected.

As parents of Immersion/Dual Language students, it is important for you to make commitments also. These include:

- *Understanding that there could be a lag in the acquisition of English reading and writing skills. This becomes particularly evident in second grade when students take national achievement tests. Research validates that this lag usually disappears by fifth grade.*
- *Agreeing to read in English every night at home to establish the foundation for English reading and writing skills*
- *Remaining in the Spanish Immersion or Dual Language class throughout the elementary years—grades 1-5*
- *Being supportive and understanding of both your child and the program*
- *Understanding that there will be 24-26 students in the Spanish Immersion classes. Dual language class size will be determined based upon the number of Emergent Bilingual student enrollment.*

I understand the commitments necessary for a successful program and request that my child be enrolled in the program.

Parent/Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
*(All parent/guardian signatures are required)*

**NOTE:** Falsification of information or records to the Alamo Heights Independent School District is a criminal offense under Penal Code 37.10 and enrolling the child under false documentation will result in immediate withdrawal of the student(s) and maintenance and operating expenses for the current year will be charged each student on a per school day basis. Education Code 25.002

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