



# **Academia Bilingüe**

— at Three Fires Elementary —





I'm learning to read in another language.

Estoy aprendiendo a leer en otro idioma.



¡Me encanta andar en bicicleta!

I love riding my bike!

## DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

**Howell Public Schools' Dual Language Immersion Program**, was launched in 2023. It was developed in response to requests from many parents.

### What is Dual Language Learning?

Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students are combined in one classroom. The concept is this:

- > Young Spanish speakers will learn effectively in the language spoken at home and provide peer support for English-speaking students
- > Young English speakers will learn Spanish at school and provide peer support for Spanish-speaking students
- > Both groups will become fully bilingual in English and Spanish, among the world's most prevalent and useful languages
- > The same core subjects are taught as in other Howell Public Schools classrooms.

### In which grades and school will the program be offered?

By the 2027–28 school year, the curriculum will be taught from kindergarten through fifth grade. Each year, students “move up the ladder” to the next grade, continuing their academic progress and bilingual proficiency.

After fifth grade, students go to a middle school in the district. Students may continue advanced courses in English and Spanish throughout middle and high school, with the goal of earning a nationally recognized Seal of Biliteracy award at graduation.

### What are the potential benefits to students?

**Fluency:** Establishing fluency in a second language is easier at an earlier age.

**Teamwork:** Students learn from each other.

**Awareness:** Students gain a greater understanding of other languages and cultures.



*Subjects such as music, art, technology, and physical education will be taught in English. Teachers will collaborate with parents of Spanish-speaking students to provide cultural-specific art and music experiences.*

### **How is coursework structured?**

In kindergarten and first grade, 90% of instruction focuses on developing fluency in Spanish and teaching subject knowledge and life skills. Core subjects—language, math, science, and social studies—are taught in Spanish. About 10% of coursework includes specials classes such as Art, Music, Physical Education, and Technology, and may also include specific English language skills that do not transfer from Spanish. In subsequent grades, English instruction increases until students are taught equally in both languages by the fifth grade.

### **Who will teach the classes?**

Dual Language teachers must have a Michigan Elementary certification and be fluent in Spanish. A bilingual endorsement and experience in a Spanish-speaking country are preferred qualifications. Teacher's aides must also be fluent in Spanish.

### **Could English-speaking students fall behind in their learning?**

Research shows that students in dual language programs test higher than their English-only peers by upper elementary or middle school grades, despite some students struggling with English language testing in early grades.<sup>1</sup>

There is no research showing that using two languages will harm a child's learning. In fact, many children worldwide grow up speaking two languages at an early age without any sign of learning delays.<sup>2</sup>

*1 The promise of bilingual and dual immersion education, Ilana Umansky, Rachel Valentino, and Sean Reardon. CEPA Working Paper No. 15-11, Stanford University Center for Education Policy Analysis.*

*2 Raising Bilingual Children: Common Parental Concerns and Current Research, Kendall King and Lyn Fogle, Georgetown University.*



**I like  
my new  
teacher.**

**Me gusta mi nueva  
maestra.**

### **What is the ratio of Spanish to English speakers?**

Participation of both English speaking and Spanish speaking students is encouraged. Such 'dual language two way immersion' programs reflect research showing that combining both groups of students results in the best academic outcomes for both. The goal for all students is fluency and literacy in both English and Spanish. While we welcome participation of both English speaking and Spanish speaking students, there is no guarantee that Spanish speaking students will be part of any particular class of immersion students.

### **Who can enroll?**

Based on the experience of other immersion programs across the state, we are prepared to use a lottery process if necessary. The lottery will be held in the spring for all interested families.

### **What is the application process?**

Go to [HowellSchools.com/DualLanguage](https://HowellSchools.com/DualLanguage) to complete an application form. For specific questions, call Karen at 517.548.6232.



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