



Board Meeting Date: 11/13/23

Title: Countryside Spanish Dual Language Update

Type: Discussion

Presenter(s): Frannie Becquer, Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming; Karen Bergman, Countryside Elementary School Principal; Caroline Linden, Countryside Elementary School Administrative Dean; Andy Beaton, Director of Strategic Projects

Description: As part of Strategic Initiative A, Advancement of Excellence, Growth, and Readiness, an update on Countryside's Spanish Dual Language program will be provided. This initiative aims to explore and develop additional pre-K-12 education programs that offer authentic and engaging learning experiences to meet the needs of future-ready learners and offer families attractive educational options.

Recommendation: No recommendation is being made at this time. This presentation is an informational update for the board.

Desired Outcome(s) from the Board: Thoroughly read material and prepare questions.

Attachments:

- Program Update
- [Countryside Dual Lang. Org Chart](#)
- [Slideshow](#)

Countryside Spanish Dual Language Update

Program Overview

Countryside Spanish Dual Language (SDL) is an educational approach that immerses students in Spanish and English for a portion of their school day. All Dual Language (DL) programs should have goals around bilingualism/biliteracy, academic achievement, and sociocultural competence. The core principles of Countryside SDL connected to Edina Public Schools' mission and vision and guide program development are:

- Culture: Develop positive cross-cultural attitudes and global understanding
- Language: Develop bilingual and biliterate proficiency in Spanish and English. Including the ability to speak, listen, read, and write in both languages fluently.
- Academics: Develop academic proficiency in Spanish and English that encourages creativity, fosters curiosity, and develops critical thinking skills.

DL programs have been shown to have several benefits for students, including:

- Improved academic achievement. Students who participate in dual language programming have been shown to score higher on standardized tests as they approach the middle school level, than their non-dual language counterparts
- Enhanced cognitive development. Students in dual language programming have been shown to have better problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and memory skills than non-dual Language students.
- Improved job prospects. Adults with bilingual skills are increasingly sought after by employers.

Countryside SDL started its 2nd year with two Kindergarten and two 1st-grade classes. The program will add two classes yearly until it reaches full capacity in the 2026-2027 school year.

Countryside Spanish Dual Language Program Support

Countryside SDL is supported and guided by the Spanish leadership team in three key areas: program development, biliteracy path, and instructional support. This team is comprised of district and building administration and collaborates with consultants at the Minnesota Department of Education.

Program Development: Create a clear vision and goals for the program and identify a language and content allocation plan.

Path to biliteracy: Set biliteracy goals for students, hire, supervise, and evaluate teachers, monitor fidelity of language allocation plan, and identify professional development specific for biliteracy.

Instructional support: Materials selection and support and provide coaching on materials.

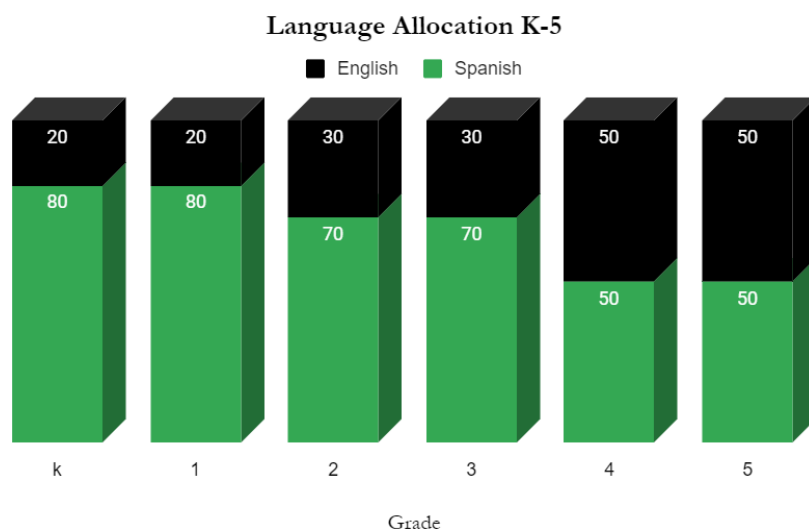
[Countryside Dual Language Org Chart](#)

Program Development

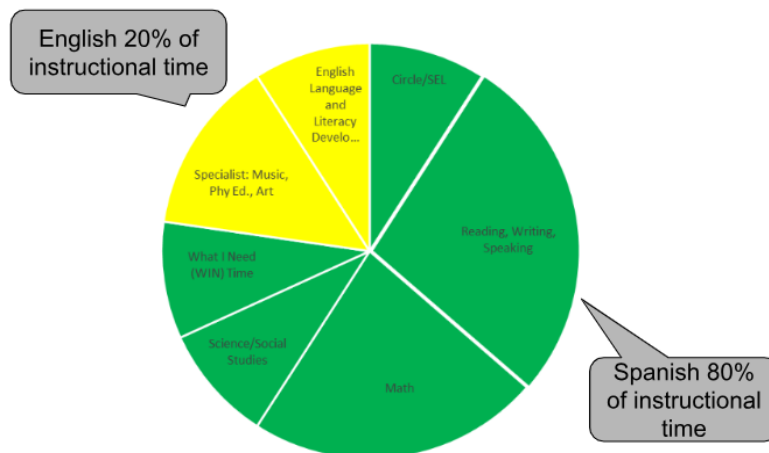
When developing a DL program, two key questions must be answered: what is the language allocation plan, and how is content allocated?

A language allocation plan outlines how much time will be spent in each language in a DL program. DL programs can choose between being 90/10, 80/20, 70/30 or 50/50. The first number refers to the % of instructional minutes spent in Spanish for all students in Kindergarten. The second number refers to instructional minutes spent in English for all students in Kindergarten. All DL programs roll up to 50/50 by 5th grade.

The language allocation plan for Countryside SDL is 80/20. After researching DL programs in the metro area, an 80/20 model was chosen. A 90/10 program model was not chosen because 10% of English would only include specialist instructional time and with no allocated time for English Language development classes. An 80/20 model allows for focused English Language development and Specialist English instruction. Lunch and Recess are not included in instructional minutes for language allocation purposes.



A content allocation plan for a dual language program is a strategic document that outlines how much time will be spent on instruction in each language and content area.



Enrollment

For a DL program to be successful, it is essential to have a balance of students who are

dominant in each language. This typically means having between 40% to 60% of students dominant in the English language. Countryside SDL aims for 50% Heritage Spanish (home language) speakers or students with previous Spanish experience and 50% other home language speakers.

Current enrollment for Countryside SDL:

Kindergarten Classes:

- 48 Total Students (24 per classroom)
- **27%** (13 students) are Heritage Spanish (home language) Speakers or have previous Spanish experience

Grade 1 Classes:

- 48 Total Students (24 per classroom)
- **19%** (9 students) are Heritage Spanish (home language) speakers or have previous Spanish experience
(Previously at 23%, but two families moved from the district/program since the kindergarten year)

Current Program at the Early Learning Center

The four Countryside SDL classrooms are currently located within the district's Early Learning Center. The two kindergarten classrooms are connected, and the two 1st-grade classrooms are connected. During the 22-23 school year, students were bussed to Countryside Elementary and then took a shuttle to the Early Learning Center. For the 23-24 school year, SDL students have bussing that drops them off and picks them up from the Early Learning Center.

Specialist teachers, the librarian, and multilingual and special education teachers support SDL classrooms at the Early Learning Center. Students are also bussed to Countryside Elementary to join in whole-building celebrations.

Construction Update

Four additions are in progress at Countryside: two classrooms for kindergarten SDL, six classrooms for grades 1-5, one classroom for site-based special services, and one multi-purpose room. Initial completion and transition were planned for winter break, but supply chain delays were reported on October 31, 2023. These delays directly impact the area of classrooms for grade 1 SDL. A revised timeline for a spring break move-in has been communicated with the families of Countryside SDL.

Next steps

1. Continue to recruit and train qualified teachers as the program grows to capacity. For next year, two additional 2nd grade teachers.
2. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to support their development as dual language teachers.
3. Develop a content allocation plan for 2nd and 3rd grade. Ensuring students have opportunities to develop their skills in both languages.
4. Initial planning for pathway to secondary learning.