
BENEFITS OF DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

A Dual Language Program provides instruction of literacy and academic content in two languages in order to foster bilingualism, biliteracy and enhanced awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. A true dual language program must extend for a minimum of five years and must enroll a balance of native English speakers and speakers of the partner language. The partner languages in the Amherst Public Schools' Dual Language Program will be English and Spanish. Dual Language programs have extensive benefits for all participating students in a variety of domains, including academic, social-emotional, cognition and cultural. Furthermore, there are additional benefits specific to both the English language learners and the monolingual English speakers who enter the program.

BENEFITS TO ALL PARTICIPANTS IN A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

- Students gain additional knowledge of their first language and have enhanced mental flexibility and meta-linguistic awareness (knowledge of how language works), which is important to reading acquisition.
- The ability to communicate with other ethnic and culture groups developed by Dual Language Program students helps them gain better understanding, appreciation and respect for other languages and cultures. The environment of dual language immersion programs can reduce prejudice and promote cross-cultural awareness and friendships.
- Dual Language programs are designed to help students become bilingual. Bilingual students:
 - Outperform monolingual students in the areas of divergent thinking, pattern recognition and problem solving,
 - Develop the ability to solve problems with conflicting or misleading cues at an earlier age;
 - Have a greater ability to focus on and use language productively; and
 - Exhibit enhanced sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal cues and show greater attention to listeners' needs.
- Dual language students are more likely than peers in monolingual programs to enroll in higher level mathematics courses, have better academic outcomes and choose to go to college immediately after high school.
- Dual language programs take advantage of the optimal time in which students acquire language skills.
- Bilingual instruction has been shown to increase student self-esteem and identity development.

- Dual language programs help decrease the dropout rate.

BENEFITS SPECIFIC TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

- ELL students gain strong literacy skills in their first language, which can be applied to acquisition of English literacy.
- Fully-developed proficiency in their first language allows ELL students to maintain communication ties with extended families and other social networks.
- By providing instruction in a way that gives equal importance to both the minority language and the majority language, with the goal of achieving competency in academic content in both languages, greater educational equity is achieved by giving the traditionally socially disadvantaged group equivalent status in the classroom.

BENEFITS SPECIFIC TO NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

- Research shows that English proficient immersion students outperform control students in monolingual programs on a variety of English language tests, including reading, writing and listening.
- With 21st century globalization, fluency in speaking a second language can dramatically improve students' future economic success.

Sources:

MABE Benefits of Dual Language Educational Programming

<https://www.massmabe.org/resources/What%20We%20Do/MABE%20Benefits%20of%20Dual%20Language%20Programming.pdf>

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http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch_TaraFortune.html

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<https://www.americancouncils.org/news/language-news/why-dual-language-immersion-approach-will-change-achievement-american-public>