



# Spanish Immersion Program

## Bellevue School District K-12

**Would you like your child to be bilingual and challenged academically? This program may be for you!**

### **What is Spanish Immersion?**

Launched in 1986, the Spanish Immersion Program is an option for students in Bellevue Public Schools. It gives elementary students an opportunity to complete the Bellevue School District curriculum in a nontraditional and exciting way—by immersing them in the Spanish language and culture from kindergarten through 12th grade. Students in the program become proficient in both Spanish and English, while learning the same curriculum content as their peers outside the program. How is this accomplished? With lots of hard work, parental involvement, and a dedicated staff!

### **How does this program differ from other Bellevue Schools?**

Students in the Spanish Immersion Program are taught the standard Bellevue School District curriculum, but receive instruction in Spanish. They learn to understand, speak, read and write Spanish in addition to English. Classroom teachers have native or near-native ability in the Spanish language and are chosen for their skills and their commitment to the goals of the program. By 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students from Puesta del

Sol test at average or above grade level in core academic areas.

At the elementary level (K-5), students receive the majority of their instruction in Spanish. Teachers speak Spanish to the students, while making sure they understand instructions and receive answers to their questions. English reading and language arts are introduced in mid-third grade.

In middle school, students take two classes in Spanish each year, Social Studies and Spanish Language, Literature and Culture. Students receive high school elective credit for three years of Spanish Language, Literature and Culture. The rest of their classes are taught in English.

Students in high school take one Spanish Immersion class each year; AP Spanish Language in grade 9, Introduction to Hispanic Literature and Art in grade 10, AP Spanish Literature in grade 11 and Hispanic Cinema in grade 12. Students can earn college credits for AP courses. Students completing the Spanish Immersion program will also receive an International Spanish Academies Diploma.

### **What if no one at home speaks Spanish?**

That's just fine. Most of our parents do not speak Spanish. Many learn some Spanish over the years. Report cards, notices and newsletters are issued in English. Spanish homework assignments are not translated into English and it is not expected that parents will assist in Spanish homework activities.

### **Why choose the Spanish Immersion Program for my child?**

Studies have found that learning a second language at an early age has many benefits: There is a positive effect on brain development and intellectual growth.

Students gain flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.

It opens the door to other cultures and helps children understand and appreciate people from other countries.

Students acquire Spanish language fluency. Spanish Immersion produces successful learners who perform well on tests (i.e. WASL).

Students have increased job opportunities in many careers where knowledge of another

language is an asset.

### **How will Spanish Immersion affect my child's English skills?**

English language instruction begins in third grade. At that point, many students are behind their English-only peers in English reading and writing ability. However, by 4th grade their English skills are equal to or better than their peers.

Studies show that Spanish Immersion students perform in English language arts, math and other areas as well as and often better than their monolingual peers on standardized achievement tests administered in English.

### **Are students in the Immersion Program screened for admission?**

Children are not screened or pre-selected on the basis of IQ or other variables. However, parents of children with auditory problems, language delays or other challenges to learning should seriously consider the appropriateness of this program for their child. They may wish to consult with the elementary school counselor or principal to discuss their concerns.

### **What should parents think about when considering this program?**

The best decision can be made by thoroughly exploring all aspects of the program and speaking with parents and students to learn about the benefits of language immersion.

Enrolling a child in this program should be viewed as a commitment at least through Grade 5. The goals of the program are best met when students stay with language immersion until they graduate from high school. It is not in the best interest of students or the program for students to be enrolled for only a one or two year "experience."

### **When do I enroll my child?**

Enrollment begins in February for the following fall's kindergarten class. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available, a lottery is conducted to determine admission. Students whose applications are not drawn during the lottery process will be placed on a waiting list and contacted by the school if space becomes available.

### **Can I enroll my child after kindergarten?**

Most students enter the program in kindergarten. If openings occur during Grades 1 through 5, students may test in to those grades. Entry is by test-in/evaluation only. Students must be at grade level in all areas and will take a written and oral test in Spanish.

### **Is transportation available?**

Bus transportation is available from centralized locations for students living within the Bellevue School District. There is no charge for students who qualify for free or reduced lunches. Other students within the District are currently charged for bus service. Transportation is not provided for students living outside the Bellevue School District.

### **Who do I contact for more information?**

More details are available from the school office at Puesta del Sol Elementary School or at [www.bsd405.org](http://www.bsd405.org) then click Schools.

### **Spanish Immersion Schools:**

#### **Puesta del Sol Elementary School (K-5)**

3810—132nd Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98006  
425-456-6100

#### **Tillicum Middle School (6-8)**

16020 SE 16th Street  
Bellevue, WA 98008  
425-456-6700

#### **Newport High School (9-12)**

4333—128th Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98006  
425-456-7400