

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS/DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION

Overview

In accordance with Superintendent SMART Goal 3 and Policy 2090, the Board of Directors has asked that Seattle Public Schools undertake a systematic review of district programs and services. The goal of program review is to improve decision-making by deepening understanding of program design, implementation, results/outcomes, and cost/benefits. International Education/Dual-Language Immersion and Advanced Learning were both selected for review for the 2016-17 school year.

The program review for International Education includes three phases of work: 1) Descriptive Analysis; 2) Implementation Analysis; and 3) Outcomes/Impact Analysis. Phase 1 was delivered in June 2017; Phases 2 and 3 were delivered in October 2017.

Background on International Schools & Dual Language Immersion (DLI)

In May 2012, the School Board adopted School Board [Policy No 277 International Education](#), which defines three unique characteristics of International Education in Seattle:

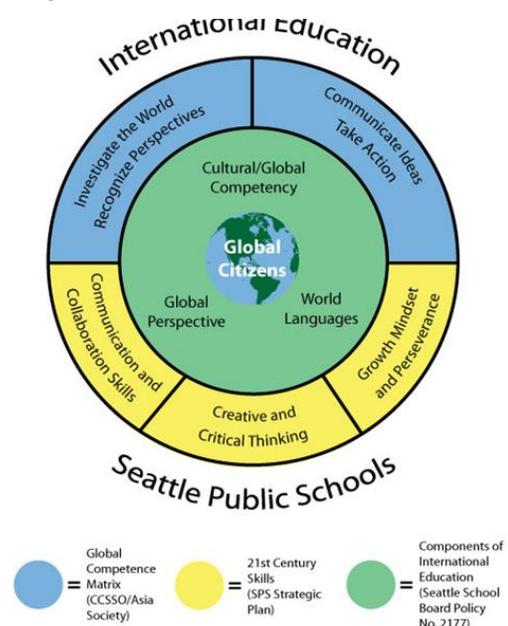
- World Languages
- Global Perspective
- Cultural/Global Competency

There are currently 10 international schools, located in three distinct regional pathways.

Table i. Seattle Public Schools International Schools

International School	Year Designated
Northwest Region (Spanish, Japanese)	
John Stanford International School (K-5)	2000
McDonald International School (K-5)	2012
Hamilton International Middle School	2001
Ingraham International High School	2013
Southwest Region (Spanish)	
Concord International School (K-5)	2009
Denny International Middle School	2009
Chief Sealth International High School	2010
Southeast Region (Spanish, Mandarin)	
Beacon Hill International School (K-5)	2008
Dearborn Park International School (K-5)	2014
Mercer International Middle School	2014

Figure i. SPS International Education Model



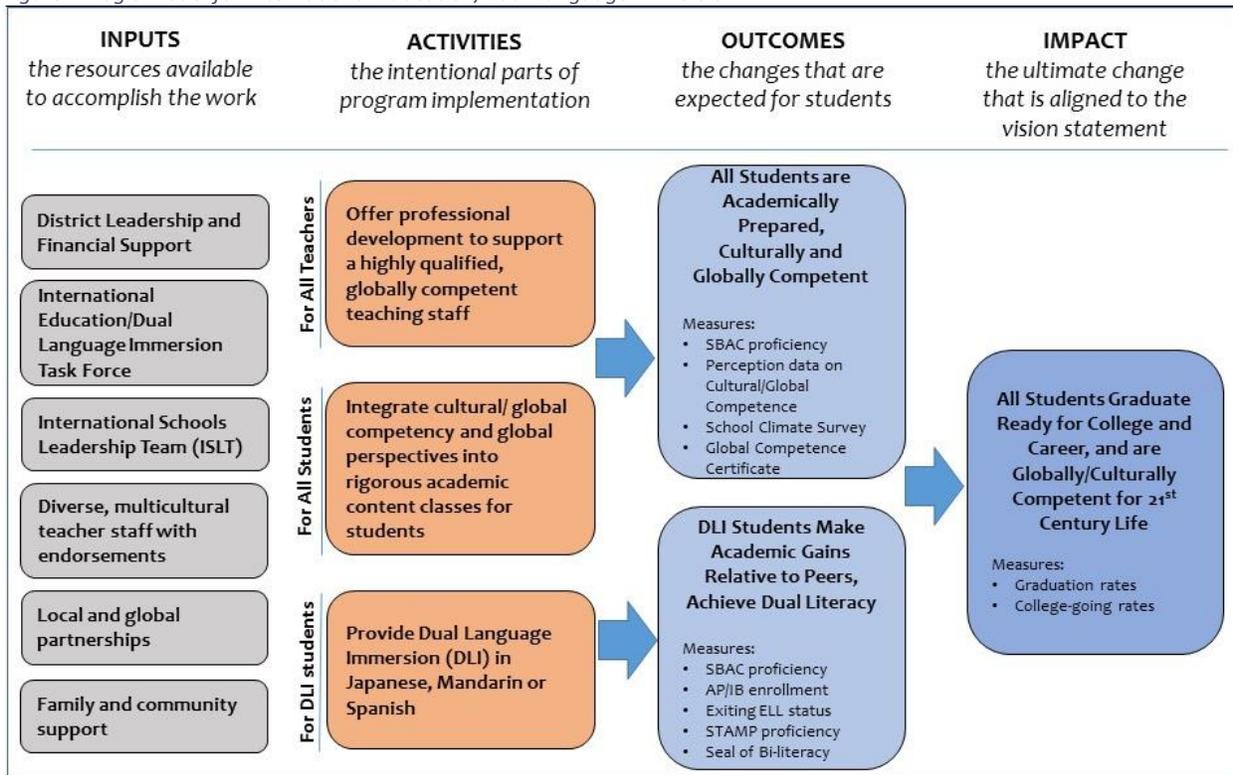
Program Review Methodology

Our program review examines the implementation and effect of this increasingly popular education model in the context of the ten International Schools in SPS. Key research questions of interest are:

1. *Do International Schools on the whole lead to academic preparedness, as well as cultural and global competence for students?*
2. *Do Dual Language Immersion programs in particular lead to biliteracy and academic gains for students relative to their non-DLI peers?*

Below is the logic model that guides this program review.

Figure ii. Logic Model for International Education/Dual Language Immersion



Our analyses highlight data from four main sources:



Student-level data analyses, including descriptive information of enrollment, student performance, and biliteracy; impact analyses for DLI program effects.



A survey of teachers administered to over 500 International School teachers, with a supplement for DLI teachers that included measures of DLI implementation fidelity.



Interviews with all International School principals and in-depth site visits at five International Schools, including focus groups with students and teachers.



Summary of district budget data pertaining to International School program allocations, grants, and staffing mitigation.

Findings Summary

Descriptive Data

- **International Schools serve a higher percentage of Historically Underserved students in the district.** In 2016-17, Historically Underserved (Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander) students represented 36% of students in International Schools, compared to 29% of students overall. However, the distribution of Historically Underserved students in International Schools varies by feeder system pathway and designation of the schools as either neighborhood schools or “option” schools.
- **Compared to the district overall, International Schools have higher percentages of current and exited English Language Learner (ELL) students (33% vs. 23%).** However, International Schools have about the same percentage of students receiving Special Education services.
- **Descriptive data on biliteracy suggest that the majority of students are adequately progressing in learning their partner language.** In 5th Grade Spanish DLI, the vast majority are meeting or exceeding targets for proficiency in all four tested areas: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. A majority of 5th Grade Japanese and Mandarin DLI students are meeting or exceeding targets in Listening, Speaking, and Writing, but fewer are meeting targets in Reading.

Implementation Findings

- **Stakeholders want a district-supported vision for the future of International Schools.** Specifically, they want district leaders to define how they see international schools fitting into the fabric of Seattle Public Schools. Strong district support, they say, would involve creating intentional structures for collaboration and best practice implementation (for example, supporting and extending the International Schools Leadership Team), providing targeted curriculum support and materials for immersion classes, and recognizing the specific staffing needs of international schools.
- **Stakeholders believe that “cultural and global competence” is just good teaching.** Principals, teachers, and students all expressed that integrating cultural and global competence should be common practice in all SPS schools, not just the 10 international schools. However, they say that publicly stating these ideals allow their school to more intentionally commit to these practices. They also suggest that the district look to international schools as exemplars of the successful integration of these values and practices.
- **Dual Language Immersion models differ widely among schools.** The ten International Schools differ widely in their approach to Dual Language immersion according to the school model (option school vs. neighborhood school), student population (student demographics, ELL status), school level (elementary vs. secondary), and languages for DLI (Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese).
- **Implementation of DLI is moderately aligned to nationally-recognized best practices.** Using the Fidelity Checklist, we found that teachers’ reports of DLI implementation were as high as 78% on

certain items, but as low as 19% on others. Considering that the Fidelity Checklist has not yet been distributed to schools or established as a district expectation of school practices, observed variation in agreement is not a reflection of “low” or “poor” implementation of DLI. Rather, it is a signal to school and district leaders about how they might improve practices in the future to better align their practices to national, literature-based best practices.

- **Stakeholders believe in DLI as a gap closing practice, particularly for ELL/Heritage language students.** Principals and teachers, particularly those in the southeast and southwest pathways, believe that DLI is a gap closing measure for this group of students.
- **Fundraising sources and expenditures vary from school to school.** Schools have support from central office staff in the form of one FTE administrator and a small budget for professional development, but rely on various sources of external funding (e.g. levy grants, PTA funds) to support the costs of DLI and International School programs. Additionally, some schools have requested above-model staffing allocations to account for the nature of the DLI staffing model.

Impact Analysis Findings

- **Impact analysis findings demonstrate statistically significant, positive effects on student achievement for students enrolled in all three DLI language programs, although results vary by year and subject.**

Table ii. Cross-sectional student achievement analysis

	ELA 2016-17	Math 2016-17	ELA 2015-16	Math 2015-16
Japanese DLI	No Effect	✓ (.14)	No Effect	✓ (.18)
Mandarin DLI	✓ (.23)	✓ (.37)	No Effect	✓ (.26)
Spanish DLI	✓ (.16)	✓ (.21)	✓ (.19)	✓ (.23)

- **We found statistically significant, positive effects on Math (.29 effect size) achievement in both years and in ELA achievement (.18 effect size) in 2016-17 for Hispanic/Latino students in the Spanish DLI program.** The effects of the DLI program, where they exist, are the same magnitude for different student groups (ELL, low-income, heritage speakers).

Table iii. Cross-sectional student achievement -- Hispanic Students

	ELA 2016-17	Math 2016-17	ELA 2015-16	Math 2015-16
Spanish DLI	✓ (.18)	✓ (.29)	No Effect	✓ (.29)

- **Longitudinal analysis – following cohorts of students across multiple years – did not reveal statistically significant effects of DLI enrollment on student achievement or ELL reclassification rates.** We do see descriptive evidence that DLI ELL students on average spend more time in ELL program than non-DLI students.
- **We did not find any statistically significant differences on probability of graduating High School between our treatment and control groups.** Due to difficulties of flagging DLI students in secondary schools, we could only examine the effects of attending an International School on graduation, regardless of DLI status.