



# International Schools / Dual Language Immersion Overview

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# Contents

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International Education in Seattle: Remembering the Past, Understanding the Present, and Imagining the Future .....	3
Why International Schools Today? .....	7
Models for Dual Language Immersion Programs .....	8
Effectiveness of Dual Language Immersion .....	11

## International Education in Seattle: Remembering the Past, Understanding the Present, and Imagining the Future

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International Education in Seattle was an outgrowth of the late 1990's, reflecting the dual realities of globalization and the increasing number of students coming to school with home languages other than English. This was in the context of state and national education reform, the standards movement in education, and a desire to have all students achieve at higher levels by clearly identifying what students needed to know and be able to do.

In 1993, the Washington State Legislature had passed ESHB 1209, Education Reform---Improvement of Student Learning (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1209&year=1993>), which established the Commission on Student Learning, tasked with defining the standards ("Essential Academic Learning Requirements" or EALRs). The legislation did not clearly identify World Languages as a "content area" for which standards should be developed, and although the Commission considered the possibility of including World Languages in the Communications EALRs, the decision was made in 1995 to wait since the state simply did not have the capacity to offer or require World Language study, especially at the elementary level when it would be the most effective time for students to learn another language.

This work was just unfolding at the state level when the Seattle School Board recruited General John Stanford from Fulton County, Georgia, to come to Seattle as Superintendent. While much of the focus in education at this time was on basics, focusing on Reading and Writing and Mathematics, Supt. Stanford brought his global, multicultural, strategic experience to bear. When people in the district told him that it was impossible to educate all students because there were more than 120 languages spoken in Seattle, he viewed these languages as an asset and proposed opening an international school in Seattle where all languages would be welcome.



©The Seattle Times, June 25, 1997

General John Stanford was Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools 1995-1998.

"Jan. 25, 1996: Proposes expansion of popular programs and alternative schools with long wait-lists; an international language school for newcomers to the U.S. and for native English speakers wanting to learn a second language - and proposes making it mandatory for students to study a second language."

<http://old.seattletimes.com/special/stanford/>

Supt. Stanford believed that the best way to create a welcoming environment for English Language Learners in the schools was to make sure that everyone was a language learner. His dream of opening

an international school came to fruition in 2000, two years after his untimely death from leukemia in 1998.



Seattle’s first International School, named in honor of Superintendent John Stanford, opened in 2000 with a Spanish Language Immersion program in K-1. Japanese Language Immersion was added in 2001. Each year the programs expanded by one grade level. The school also featured a Bilingual Orientation Center (BOC) serving newly arrived English Language Learners.

In 2001, Hamilton International Middle School was designated by Superintendent Joseph Olchefske to be the continuation program for the John Stanford International School. Together, staff, parents, and community volunteers developed the district’s model for International Education, with a focus on **Academic Excellence** in all content areas, standards-based teaching of **World Languages**, and infusion of **Global Perspectives** throughout the curriculum, in an environment of **Innovative Teaching, Technology, and Partnerships**. At the center of the model was the intention of developing **Cultural & Global Competency** for all.



The model selected for teaching World Languages at the elementary level was partial immersion or the 50:50 time model, where half the day students spend learning content in the immersion language (Spanish or other languages). The content areas for immersion were selected to be Math and Science based on research of other successful partial immersion models across the country.

Over the years, the model was further refined, and the decision to offer language immersion, or Dual Language Immersion as it often called now, took on greater urgency in the district as research on the benefits of learning in two languages expanded.

With this attention to the importance of supporting ELL students to become bilingual/biliterate, both Concord Elementary School and Beacon Hill Elementary School launched as Two-Way Dual Language Programs in Spanish, where about half the children are native or heritage speakers of Spanish and half are not. The goal was to close the opportunity gap for these English Language Learner students.

“What is amazing is that dual language programs close the achievement gap not only for English learners but also for other groups as well. Latinos fluent in English, African Americans, and students of low socioeconomic status from all ethnic backgrounds have greatly improved their test scores within dual language classes, benefitting these groups more dramatically than other school reform models.”

Collier and Thomas, *Dual Language Education for a Transformed World*, page 113

So popular were these early International Schools in Seattle that Karen Kodama, founding principal of John Stanford International School, was brought to the central office by Supt. Maria Goodloe-Johnson in 2007 to develop K-12 international pathways in three regions of the city with a feeder pattern of two elementary international schools to one international middle school and an international high school (<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/school-to-be-seattles-2nd-international-elementary/> access 8/8/2016).

As Ms. Kodama noted, “The ultimate vision from my standpoint is that all of our students really should graduate bilingual so that they can compete globally.”

Three International Schools pathways were developed over the ensuing years:

#### **Northwest Seattle (with Spanish and Japanese Dual Language Immersion)**

- John Stanford International School (K-5) – designated International in 2000
- McDonald International School (K-5) – designated International in 2012
- Hamilton International Middle School – designated International in 2001
- Ingraham International High School – designated International in 2013

#### **Southwest Seattle (with Spanish Two-Way Dual Language Immersion)**

- Concord International School (K-5) – designated International in 2009
- *Second Elementary School (with Mandarin) To Be Designated*
- Denny International Middle School – designated International in 2009
- Chief Sealth International High School – designated International in 2010

#### **Southeast Seattle (with Spanish Two-Way and Mandarin Dual Language Immersion)**

- Beacon Hill International School (K-5) – designated International in 2008
- Dearborn Park International School (K-5) – designated International in 2014

- Mercer International Middle School – designated International in 2014
- *High School To Be Designated*

On May 16, 2012, the School Board adopted Policy #2177 International Education, which states:

The Seattle School District is dedicated to the academic achievement of each student. The Seattle School Board is committed to offering International Education opportunities for students in grades Kindergarten to 12.

The vision and mission of the district’s International Education program are:

*Vision:* To educate and prepare all students to achieve today and tomorrow in a global community and economy.

*Mission:* To create a culturally diverse community of lifelong learners who demonstrate advanced skills in communication, international language, technology, and whose performance exemplifies superior academic standards.

[http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_543/File/Migration/Admissions/2177.pdf](http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/Migration/Admissions/2177.pdf)  
accessed 4/24/2016

The School Board policy defines three unique characteristics of International Education in Seattle:

- **World Languages**
  - The District is committed to teaching world languages in an immersion setting for grades K-5 in addition to world language classes and immersion language classes offered at District middle and high schools.
- **Global Perspective**
  - Examining and evaluating global issues, problems, and challenges
  - Studying human differences and commonalities
  - Analyzing economic, technological, social, linguistic, ecological connections between the U.S. and the World
- **Cultural/Global Competency**
  - Global Competence Matrix: Investigate the World | Recognize Perspectives | Communicate Ideas | Take Action
  - Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World (Asia Society and CCSSO, published in 2011)

[http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_543/File/Migration/Admissions/2177.pdf](http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/Migration/Admissions/2177.pdf)  
accessed 8/9/2016



Based on these three characteristics and incorporating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills outlined in the district’s Strategic Plan (Communication and Collaboration Skills; Creative and Critical Thinking; and Growth Mindset and Perseverance), the International Schools Leadership Team teacher leaders revised Seattle’s International Education Model in 2015.

Over the years, Seattle’s International Schools have received many awards and much recognition. Enrollment in these schools has been in high demand. Looking to the future, there are both challenges and opportunities that the schools and the district face in order to provide equitable and sustainable pathways and assignment plans, to ensure the fidelity of program models, and to obtain the resources needed in terms of teachers and curriculum to provide a quality learning experience for all students.

## Why International Schools Today?

The same factors that inspired Superintendent John Stanford in the 1990’s to launch the effort to open Seattle’s first international school are still present today. Seattle still has more than 120 languages spoken in our schools. Washington is still the most trade-dependent state in the country. And the Legislature defines basic education as preparing students to be global citizens:

"A basic education is an evolving program of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to **become responsible and respectful global citizens**, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives." (emphasis added)

[RCW 28A.150.210: Basic Education---Goals of School Districts](#) (accessed 8/8/2016)

Seattle’s model of International Education has provided a vibrant context for offering Dual Language Immersion in three languages (Spanish, Japanese, and Mandarin) at the elementary, middle, and high school level for hundreds of students. Thousands of students since 2000 have benefited from the opportunities to develop cultural and global competence, working with teachers who have aspired to become global educators. This is the context in which it makes sense to consider the role of International Schools and Dual Language Immersion in Seattle Public Schools going forward.

# Models for Dual Language Immersion Programs

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One of the unique characteristics of Seattle’s International Schools is the commitment to helping students develop a high level of proficiency in a language other than English by providing a K-12 sequence of language study beginning in Seattle’s international elementary schools. As stated in the Seattle School Board Policy # 2177 International Education,

The District is committed to teaching world languages in an immersion setting for grades K-5 in addition to world language classes and immersion language classes offered at District middle and high schools.

The goals of world language programs are for students to:

- Communicate in languages other than English;
- Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures;
- Connect with other disciplines and acquire information;
- Develop insight into the nature of language and culture; and
- Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world

In addition, an International Education offers Heritage speakers opportunities to enhance literacy and academic skills in their native language.

The result of participation in a dual immersion program from kindergarten through grade 12 should be advanced level proficiency at the end of high school in two languages.

[http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_543/File/Migration/Admissions/2177.pdf](http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/Migration/Admissions/2177.pdf)  
accessed 8/9/2016

The policy refers to “teaching world languages in an **immersion** setting,” but what does that mean? The terminology around these types of programs has evolved over the past 20 years. At the time that Seattle launched its first International School with this type of language program, it was common to refer to the program as “language immersion” or “partial language immersion” since the students are “immersed” in the immersion language about 50% of the day. (Some schools in other districts offer “full immersion” or 80:20 time model, where 80% of the day is taught in the immersion language and 20% in English.)

Over the past decade, the term “dual language” or “dual language immersion” has become more common, especially if there are English Language Learners included in the program who are native or heritage speakers of the immersion language.

A Dual Immersion or Dual Language program is an instructional model that provides content-based instruction to students in two languages where the goal is for the students, over a number of years of participation in the program, to become proficient and literate in both languages, while also meeting high academic standards in all subject areas. Other terminology that is commonly used for one of the variations of this type of program model is Dual Language, Two-way Dual Language, One-way Dual Language, Partial Immersion, Full Immersion, etc. Typically, programs begin at kindergarten or 1st grade and continue through elementary school, and, if possible, into middle and high school.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/DualImmersion.aspx> accessed 8/9/2016

Based on the student population, a Dual Immersion program can be a:

- **Two-way model** – A balanced group of approximately 50% native/heritage speakers and 50% English speakers. This program model has been demonstrated in research (see [Appendix I](#)) to be the most successful in eliminating the achievement gap between the general student population and English Language Learners who participate in the program, regardless of whether or not they already speak the target language.

*Examples in Seattle: Spanish* – Concord International School, Denny International Middle School, and Chief Sealth International High School; Beacon Hill International School and Mercer International Middle School

- **One-way model** – Generally, a homogeneous group of native speakers of one of the two languages (could be all Spanish speakers learning in Spanish and English or, for example, all English native speakers learning in Japanese, Mandarin, or Spanish and English).

*Examples in Seattle: Spanish* – Some Spanish heritage language classes at Denny International Middle School and Chief Sealth International High School that were started before students from the Two-Way Dual Language program (which includes English native speakers) came up from Concord

- **“Mixed” model** – In Seattle’s urban schools, it is unlikely that any of the Dual Language Immersion programs would have a truly homogeneous group of native English speakers learning a second language. In most cases, there are at least a few native speakers of the target immersion language (but not enough to qualify as a “two-way model”), as well as students whose native language is neither English nor the immersion language.

*Examples in Seattle: Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin* – John Stanford International School (Spanish and Japanese), McDonald International School (Spanish and Japanese), Beacon Hill International School (Mandarin), Dearborn Park International School (Spanish and Mandarin), Hamilton International Middle School (Spanish and Japanese), Mercer International Middle School (Mandarin)

In addition, a two-way model may shift over time as attendance patterns change. In that case, the 50% balance of native speakers of the two languages may change to be a larger percentage of native/heritage Spanish speakers of the immersion (or “partner”) language or a larger percentage of native English (or other languages).

At the middle and high school levels, students from the elementary Dual Language Immersion programs may have the opportunity to participate in Dual Language Immersion Continuation programs. These are language programs geared to students who have completed a number of years in an immersion setting or are, perhaps, heritage speakers of the language. The programs incorporate language topics (including grammar) that would be covered in a typical world language classroom in middle or high school, but also provide continued experience in content-based instruction and project-based learning. The goal would be to offer **two periods a day** in the language, but at least one that is taught immersion style (90% or more in the target language with content-based instruction).

There are currently three International Middle Schools in Seattle serving Dual Language Immersion students. Each school has developed its program within certain constraints, such as availability of qualified teachers, number of periods per school day (6 vs. 7, for example), and number of students in the cohort coming from elementary school.

- **Hamilton International Middle School (NW)** offers Dual Language Immersion Continuation language courses in Spanish and Japanese Language Arts (**1 period per day**) taught by experienced world language teachers geared to preparing students for traditional high school world language classes. The Spanish classes have been able to attract a number of heritage Spanish students who joined the program in middle school.
- **Denny International Middle School (SW)** offers Dual Language Immersion Continuation language and Social Studies courses (**2 periods per day**) taught in Spanish geared to preparing students to be bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English and able to continue to take academic courses in Social Studies in Spanish in high school.
- **Mercer International Middle School (SE)** offers Dual Language Immersion Continuation language and Social Studies courses taught in Spanish or Mandarin geared to prepare students to be bilingual and biliterate in Spanish or Mandarin and English and able to continue to take academic courses in Spanish or Mandarin in high school. Initially, Mercer was able to offer **1 period per day** of Social Studies in Spanish or Mandarin but in Fall 2016, they expect to offer **2 periods per day** (Language and Social Studies classes) at least in Mandarin. The school also offers after school programs to further supplement language and literacy development.

The high school Immersion Continuation program models are still in development:

- **Ingraham International High School (NW)** offers International Baccalaureate (IB) level language courses for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. In 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Immersion Continuation students have been taking traditional Spanish and Japanese courses at Level 2 or Level 3 (**1 period per day**) typically. There have not been any content-based courses offered in Spanish or Japanese.
- **Chief Sealth International High School (SW)** developed its Dual Language Immersion Continuation program for heritage speakers of Spanish who had participated in Denny International Middle School's program from grades 6-8. Now, in Fall 2016, the first group of students who started in Dual Language Immersion in Spanish at Concord International School will be entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Chief Sealth, and they will have the opportunity to take both World History in Spanish and AP Spanish as a language course. In 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, they will continue to have opportunities for language study (through IB) as well as Social Studies or other similar classes in Spanish (**2 periods per day**).
- **Future International High Schools (not designated yet)** should aim to offer at least 1 period/day in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, preferably an AP level language course, as is the plan at Chief Sealth. It would also be desirable to offer World History in the immersion language, but that might not be realistic during the first year with a limited size cohort of students.

## Effectiveness of Dual Language Immersion

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Over the past several decades, there has been a growing body of research into the benefits of bilingualism. This has been one of the attractions for many parents to send their children to one of Seattle's International Schools with Dual Language Immersion (DL or DLI) programs. There has also been compelling evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of Dual Language Immersion as an instructional model that can not only close, but eliminate the opportunity gap for underrepresented populations. Here are a few highlights of this research.

### *Dual Language Education for a Transformed World*

<http://www.thomasandcollier.com/publications.html> accessed 8/10/2016

This 2012 book written by Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier offers some of the most comprehensive data about the performance of different groups on standardized tests of English and Math, comparing results of students in DLI programs with those of students not learning in two languages. Here are a few representative quotes:

Page 1

- “English learners in DL score very significantly higher on state tests as well as norm-reference tests than in ESL-only programs.”
- “English learners in DL master much more of the curriculum, academically and linguistically, than English learners in ESL-only programs. They experience full gap closure rather than partial gap closure.”
- “English learners in DL master English better than English learners in ESL-only programs (even though only have or less than half of their instruction is in English).”

Page 27

“... we have found in our research that **dual language education is the most powerful school reform for high academic achievement whatever the demographic mix.**”

Page 72

Reading achievement. “... **by the middle school years and sometimes sooner, two-ay dual language students, regardless of subgroup, are often at least one grade level ahead of their comparison group.**”

Page 75

“... **when English learners and African American students of low socioeconomic status participate in dual language programs, they score very strongly higher (in terms of practical significance) in EOG Reading in all grades, compared to English learners and African American students not attending dual language programs. The dual language program seems to strongly counteract the negative impact of low socio-economic status on school achievement.**”

## **“Study of Dual-Language Immersion in the Portland Public Schools” by the RAND Corporation and American Councils for International Education**

<http://www.opb.org/news/article/study-portland-immersion-students-become-better-readers-english-speakers/>

accessed 8/10/2016

This study compared language immersion students with other Portland students from 2004 through 2014 and found:

*Key Finding No. 1: Students randomly assigned to immersion outperformed their peers in English reading by about seven months in fifth grade and nine months in eighth grade.*

*Key Finding No. 2: Immersion students have 3-point lower rates of classification as English Language Learners (ELLs) by sixth grade, and this effect is larger (14 points) if students' native language matches the classroom partner language.*

Research Significance: “Portland Public Schools provides an excellent test bed for studying dual-language education at scale, in part because it allocates its popular immersion slots using a random assignment lottery process.”

## **“What the Research Says About Immersion”**

by Tara Williams Fortune, Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

University of Minnesota

[http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch\\_TaraFortune.html](http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch_TaraFortune.html) accessed 8/10/2016

“Over nearly half a century, research on language immersion education has heralded benefits such as academic achievement, language and literacy development in two or more languages, and cognitive skills.”

### **Academic Achievement**

“English proficient immersion students are capable of achieving as well as, and in some cases better than, non-immersion peers on standardized measures of reading and math.”

“This finding applies to students from a range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as diverse cognitive and linguistic abilities.”

### **Language and Literacy**

“This approach to second-language and literacy development proved itself to be the most successful school-based language program model available.”

“...students whose first language is not English become more balanced bilinguals and develop higher levels of bilingualism and biliteracy when compared with English proficient students or home language peers participating in other educational programming.”

“English learners' higher bilingual proficiency levels are also linked to higher levels of reading achievement in English, increased academic language proficiency, and successful schooling experiences in general.”

### **Cognitive Skill Development**

“Fully proficient bilinguals outperform monolinguals in the areas of divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving. Bilingual children develop the ability to solve problems that contain conflicting or misleading cues at an earlier age, and they can decipher them more quickly than monolinguals.”

### **Economic and Sociocultural**

“In the United States, world language abilities are increasingly important to national security, economic competitiveness, delivery of health care, and law enforcement.”

**Evidence Base for Universal Benefit of Dual Language  
Experiences and Instruction (Current Summer 2016)**  
*Support Maintenance, Investment, and Expansion of Dual Language Instruction*

(Resource List provided by Task Force member, Dr. Gina Lebedeva, University of Washington)

**The Astounding effectiveness of Dual Language Education For All.**

National Association of Bilingual Education, Journal of Research and Practice, 2:1, Winter 2004  
[http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding\\_Effectiveness\\_Dual\\_Language\\_Ed.pdf?864d7e](http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding_Effectiveness_Dual_Language_Ed.pdf?864d7e)

**The Benefits of Dual Language Education.** Rice University's Houston Education Research Consortium & Rice's Kinder Institute for Urban Research. 2015

<https://www.wanderingeducators.com/language/learning/benefits-dual-language-education.html>

**What the Research Says About Immersion:**

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

[http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch\\_TaraFortune.html](http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch_TaraFortune.html)

**Expanding Dual Language Programs and Bilingual Instruction to Improve Student Achievement and Close the Opportunity Gap .**

One America: Bilingual Instruction Fact Sheet:

[https://www.weareoneamerica.org/sites/weareoneamerica.org/files/Dual\\_Language\\_Bilingual\\_Instruction\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_v7.pdf](https://www.weareoneamerica.org/sites/weareoneamerica.org/files/Dual_Language_Bilingual_Instruction_Fact_Sheet_v7.pdf)

**Cognitive Advantages of Bilingualism**

Dana Foundation: Gateway to responsible information about the brain.

[http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2012/The\\_Cognitive\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Being\\_Bilingual/](http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2012/The_Cognitive_Benefits_of_Being_Bilingual/)

**Cognitive Benefit of Lifelong Bilingualism**

Society for Neuroscience

<https://www.sfn.org/Press-Room/News-Release-Archives/2013/Study-Shows-Cognitive-Benefit-of-Lifelong-Bilingualism>

**Center for Applied Linguistics: Two-Way Immersion**

[www.cal.org/twi](http://www.cal.org/twi)

**Center for Applied Linguistics: National Dual Language Forum**

<http://www.cal.org/ndlf/background/crede/>

**Dual Language Education, New Mexico**

<http://www.dlenm.org/>

**National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition**

<http://www.ncela.us/>

**Directory of Two-Way Immersion Programs in the US:**

<http://www2.cal.org/jsp/TWI/SchoolListings.jsp>

WA Association of Bilingual Education

<http://wabewa.org/>

(Special Interest Group: Dual Language WA: <http://duallanguagewa.org/>)

## **REFERENCES SPECIFIC TO EARLY LEARNING (Prenatal-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)**

**WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET: Supporting Dual Language Learners in Early Learning Settings (2016)**

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/02/fact-sheet-supporting-dual-language-learners-early-learning-settings>

**Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers (2013)**

*Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDE), for the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care.*

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/dllresearchpapers.pdf>

**PreK-3<sup>rd</sup>: Challenging Common Myths About Dual Language Learners: An Update to the Seminal 2008 Report.**

*Foundation for Child Development, Espinosa, Linda (2015).*

<http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Challenging%20Common%20Myths%20Update.pdf>

**A Call for Equity and Excellence for ELLs in WA State**

<http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/pubdocs/BEAC-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>