

Atlanta Public Schools Dual Language Immersion Program

The APS Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Program provides a rich, bilingual experience for young learners when their minds are developmentally best able to acquire a second language (L2). The APS DLI Program follows the Georgia Dual Language Immersion Program model that uses a two teacher, 50-50 model, in which students spend half of their school day in English and the other half of the day in the second language. One teacher instructs exclusively in English for half of the day, while the other teacher instructs exclusively in the second language for the remainder of the day. All DLI Program schools begin in kindergarten and add a grade level each subsequent year. Currently, the second language of all APS DLI programs is Spanish. The language of the DLI program is determined with district level and local school collaboration via parent interest surveys and analysis of local school language demographics.

The Benefits of Dual Language Immersion

Second Language Skills: DLI students achieve higher proficiency in the second language than with traditional Foreign Language instruction.

Cognitive Skills: DLI students typically develop greater cognitive flexibility, demonstrating increased attention and memory, superior problem-solving skills as well as an enhanced understanding of their primary language.

Performance on Standardized Tests: DLI students perform as well as or better than English-only students on standardized tests in English, including students from a range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as with diverse cognitive and linguistic abilities.

Intercultural Competency: DLI students are more aware of and generally show more positive attitudes towards other cultures and an appreciation of other people.

Long-Term Benefits: DLI students are better prepared to be global citizens and 21st Century job markets.

Higher Attendance-Rates and Fewer Drop-Outs: Students from DLI programs have higher attendance rates and lower drop-out rates compared to regular programs.

DLI Program Model

From kindergarten through fifth grade, the second language curriculum includes literacy and the majority of the content subjects (math, science, and social studies). The English curriculum focuses on English language arts and the collaborative reinforcement of the content areas of math, science, and social studies. Specific proficiency goals for every Dual Language Immersion language are set at each grade level in all language domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teamwork and collaboration between the dual language immersion program teachers and their grade level peers is essential.

While the basics of DLI Program implementation are similar for all schools, there are distinct differences in programming as it pertains to the students served by the school. These program models, one-way immersion and two-way immersion, are distinguished by the native language of the student groups.

One-way Immersion program model serves one group:

This program serves a student population comprised of a predominant majority of native English language speakers with limited to no proficiency in the L2 (e.g. Chinese, French, Spanish, etc.).

Two-way Immersion program model serves two groups:

This program serves English speakers and L2 speakers. A 1:1 ratio is the ideal ratio to be maintained for these two language groups, but a minimum requirement is a 2:1 ratio, or at least one-third of students are native speakers of the second language. A high-quality instructional staff is key to the success of DLI programs. DLI program target language teachers and paraprofessionals must hold appropriate certification and have demonstrated native language proficiency in the target language.

Teacher Qualifications

1. **Teaching Certification:** Both English language and target language teachers are required to hold an Early Childhood Certificate with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
2. **Language:** Target Language Teachers (Chinese, French, and Spanish) are required to have Advanced-Mid or higher language proficiency as demonstrated by nationally normed and recognized language assessments. APS utilizes the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Instrument (OPI) and the Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) to assess the language proficiency of target language teacher. English teachers in two-way program are required to have the ESOL endorsement and serve as the designated ESOL teacher.

Planning for New Programs

Schools considering implementing a Dual Language Immersion program must understand the program requirements with regard to staffing, resources, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional learning. An effective DLI program requires careful planning, leadership, and support. To ensure feasibility and sustainability of the dual language immersion program, schools interested in implementing DLI will need to consider the following areas.

Dual Language Immersion Program Requirements and Responsibilities

	District	School
Staffing	DLI program is staffing neutral. The target language DLI teacher is not an additional grade level teacher, but a replacement teacher. For example, if a school has 4 kindergarten teachers, then in a DLI program school, one of those teachers would be the target language partner teacher. No additional staffing is provided within a school’s budget in order to implement the DLI program.	As the program rolls up a grade level each year, the local school is responsible for ensuring that a grade level position is allocated each year for a DLI target language teacher position. One-way immersion schools are encouraged to provide paraprofessional support in the target language classroom beyond kindergarten to assist in the continual development of the target language skills of the students.
Staff Selection	District staff will support hiring through the posting of pool positions, screening of applicants, utilization of HireVue, and the assessment of target language proficiency. All target language teachers will be assessed with the ACTFL OPI and WPT to ensure that language proficiency is Advanced-Mid or higher for both oral and written language.	Local schools will ensure that all DLI teachers meet district requirements with regard to certification and language proficiency (minimum of Advanced-Mid in oral and written language). All target language teachers must be native speakers of the language. Any parapro assigned to the target language DLI classroom must also be a native speaker of that language. Principals will work collaboratively with district coordinator on DLI teacher selection.
Instructional Resources	Instructional resources will be provided in the target language for phonics, language arts, reading, math, and science. As new resources are adopted for content areas, DLI teacher representation will be required on adoption committees and feedback	Instructional resources and supplies in the target language such as posters, wall charts, rugs, and other materials will be the responsibility of the school.

	District	School
	sessions.	
Curriculum	<p>The district provides curricular units for the core content areas. These units are provided in English and establish the district level expectations for the content areas.</p> <p>For supplemental support, GADOE has an agreement with the state of Utah for access to curricular units and lessons developed for DLI in target languages.</p>	<p>Curricular units and lessons should be in line with signature programming. DLI teachers should collaborate with grade level colleagues to ensure that the same standards are covered and that all students achieve the identical grade level expectations for each content area.</p>
Instruction	<p>The district provides guidance on Instructional Practices for all classrooms.</p>	<p>DLI teachers are held to the same instructional practices as all teachers; however, effective DLI implementation requires the integration of additional research-based practices for second language acquisition. These practices must be embedded to ensure mastery of target language and content.</p> <p>Local schools will ensure the integrity of language instruction and will hold teachers accountable for remaining in the target language within the classroom. For example, the Spanish DLI classroom must be an all Spanish environment in which all instruction from the teacher (and parapro, when applicable) occurs exclusively in Spanish and all materials posted on the walls and on the boards are also only in Spanish.</p>
Assessment	<p>All district assessments for core content areas such as SLOs and benchmarks are provided in English. As all state-mandated assessments in Georgia are in English, these assessments will remain in English. The district will explore the implementation of a valid, and reliable measure of target language proficiency.</p>	<p>All classroom assessments in the target language classroom should be in the target language. DLI partner teachers should collaborate with each other and with grade level peers to ensure content assessments are in line with grade level expectations for all students.</p> <p>DLI target teachers</p>
Professional Learning	<p>The district will provide professional learning and support to the DLI program. Professional Learning opportunities will focus on effective DLI implementation, second language acquisition strategies, and resource utilization. Quarterly DLI PLC sessions will provide DLI teachers the opportunity to collaborate, expand</p>	<p>Local schools must provide time for DLI partner teachers to collaborate with each other and with grade level peers. As the DLI program expands to grade levels, a local school DLI PLC should be established to ensure effective vertical articulation of programming.</p> <p>Local schools will support district DLI PLCs and professional learning</p>

	District	School
	<p>knowledge and skills as well as grow professionally in effective DLI implementation.</p> <p>The DLI Leadership PLC will include local school principals and the district coordinator and will provide time for collaboration, planning, and expansion of knowledge and understanding of effective DLI implementation.</p> <p>The district will support the attendance of DLI school principals to DLI leadership training opportunities such as the Delaware Summer Institute for Novice DLI Principals.</p>	<p>opportunities through attendance and active participation.</p>
Scheduling	<p>The district will work with GADOE to establish course numbers for DLI programs that represent content taught in a language other than English.</p>	<p>Local schools will schedule both teachers on the course numbers for course content areas that are shared using the “primary” and “secondary” teacher fields in Infinite Campus. Local schools will create a schedule that ensures a daily, uninterrupted 2 – 2.5 hour block of time with each DLI teacher.</p>
Support Services	<p>The district coordinator will provide guidance and support to DLI schools and other programs.</p>	<p>Local schools will ensure that students receive the support services for which they qualify. Support services that require a student to be pulled from a class or that require a teacher to co-teach the class, must occur on the English side of the DLI program. This protects the integrity of the language instruction in the DLI program.</p>
Substitutes	<p>The district coordinator will provide a list of substitutes that are proficient in the target language.</p>	<p>Local schools will utilize, to the extent possible, substitutes in the target language DL classroom who are proficient in the language.</p>
Parent Community Outreach	<p>The district coordinator will provide presentations and support documents designed for parents/guardians interested in the DLI program or who have students in the DLI program. The Office of ESOL & World Language will provide translated versions of communications and presentations to ensure that all parents understand the DLI program. In addition, Office of ESOL & World Language staff will provide interpretation support for parents whose home language is other than English.</p>	<p>Local schools will actively engage the parents and guardians of the DLI program by providing supports such as parenting meetings, newsletters, DLI Parent Support Groups, etc.</p>

APS Dual Language Immersion Implementation Checklist

Schools considering the DLI program should utilize the following APS DLI Program checklist to assess their readiness for DLI program implementation.

Implementation Questions		
Will the program be a one-way or a two-way DLI program?	If this will be a two-way program, how many English Learners are enrolled in the school?	If this is a one-way program, which language/s will be considered?
Is Dual Language Immersion included in the Cluster Plan?		
Are the feeder middle and high schools actively involved in the decision to begin the DLI program at the school?		

Setting the Foundation	Comments
Has a team been formed to plan and oversee the foundational work for the DLI program at the school?	
Has a clear and succinct message been prepared to describe the mission of the program at the school?	
Have information sessions for parents and community been held?	
Has the “What APS Parents Need to Know about DLI” been shared with parents and the community?	
Has a Parent Interest Survey been disseminated? Do the results of the Parent Interest Survey indicate sufficient interest level for incoming kindergarten parents?	
Has the principal and leadership team received professional learning about DLI?	
Has school staff received information about DLI and had their questions/concerns addressed?	
Have members of the DLI Leadership team conducted site visits to other DLI programs?	
Have key community members been identified that can support the program?	
Has a member of the school staff been designated to address questions from parents regarding the DLI program?	
Two-way program only: Has a Spanish-speaking member of the school staff been designated to address questions from limited English, Spanish-speaking, parents regarding the DLI program?	
Are there teachers currently in the building who are interested in serving as the English partner teacher? (Two-way programs: Do these teachers currently hold the ESOL Endorsement)	
Are there teachers currently in the building who are qualified to serve as the target language partner teacher? (These teachers must hold ECE and have native fluency in the target language as demonstrated by the ACTFL OPI and WPT assessments.)	

Adapted from Hamayan, E., Genesee, F., and Cloud, N. (2013). Dual language instruction: from A to Z Practical Guidance for teachers and administrators. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.