

Rolling Terrace Elementary School
705 Bayfield Street
Takoma Park, MD 20912
301-431-7600

SPANISH IMMERSION PROGRAM

Rationale

Language education that starts early and involves children in daily communication and content learning allows children to develop an additional language as naturally as they learned their first language. Learning a second language allows students to communicate with more people. Studies indicate that learning a second language helps children to be more creative, and better at solving problems. Furthermore, other studies have found that students who participate in an immersion program score the same or better than their peers on achievement tests. However, learning a language is a process and fluency is gained over years, not days or semesters. One way language immersion programs in the United States are by definition foreign language programs, programs to learn a second (non-English) language. Given the diversity of our population at Rolling Terrace Elementary School, some of our immersion students may also speak Spanish or other languages at home, in addition to English.

Program Description

At Rolling Terrace E.S., we have a partial Spanish immersion program. The instructional language, Spanish, is learned as a result of learning the curricular content in Spanish. Our students receive instruction in English for some of the curricular areas and Spanish for the other curricular areas. Kindergarten classes are the only exception. In kindergarten, Spanish immersion students remain with their Spanish teacher all day and receive instruction in all subject areas in Spanish. The goals of the program are to develop the abilities of students to understand, speak, read, and write in both English and Spanish. Students are accepted into the program based on parents' interest and program space. No Spanish is required for entry in kindergarten and first grade. For entry into the program after first grade the student must show command of Spanish commensurate with the children already enrolled in the specific grade level. An immersion teacher interviews and administers an assessment to a prospective student; a team of educators meet and make a recommendation to the principal on admittance to the program.

Kindergarten (Full day program)

The kindergarten program is a specialized program in which the language of instruction for the entire day is Spanish (except for specialists). The goal is to immerse the children in a second language environment while teaching the Montgomery County Public Schools curriculum. Utilizing Spanish for instruction for the whole day helps to avoid the confusion that students would encounter by having to shift languages and teachers half-way through the day. Children are permitted to use English, but the teacher uses Spanish in almost all situations. Many visual aids, "big books", hands-on materials, and much body language are used to insure the children's understanding. As the children develop basic Spanish classroom vocabulary, they are encouraged to use these new expressions.

First – Third Grades (Partial immersion)

Beginning in first grade, the immersion students have two teachers. They will go part of the day to study the reading/language arts and social studies curricula from the English teacher. The other part of the day they will be with the immersion teacher studying the math and science curricula in Spanish. Immersion

lessons are purposefully planned to maximize language learning through the content areas covered. Teachers include culture lessons and reading and writing experiences in the curricular area lessons.

During these years, children are increasingly expected to use more of the new language to communicate (orally and in writing) about the subject area and in their classroom experiences. Parents are encouraged to reinforce the new learning at home, allowing students to share their Spanish language experiences and deepening concept understanding in their home language.

Fourth Grade (Partial immersion)

Fourth grade- the immersion students will continue with the partial immersion program in fourth grade. However, students will be considered for compacted math based on wide range of data. While we believe students will be well-served in the C2.0 Grade 4 Math, there will be some students who demonstrate readiness for above-level content and will have access to the Curriculum 2.0 compacted Grades 4/5 course. For now, the compacted math is given in English. Those who are included in the compacted math will not have math in Spanish and will continue science in Spanish.

Fifth Grade (Partial immersion)

In fifth grade, in preparation for the middle school world studies Spanish immersion curriculum, the majority of time in immersion is dedicated to science. Teachers include culture lessons and reading and writing experiences in the curricular area lessons. The students will go to an English teacher for Reading/language arts, social studies and math.

Evaluation and Reporting

Students receive the regular report cards and grades quarterly for the subjects that are thought in Spanish as well as in English. Students receive the same report cards as the rest of the students in the school with specific comments about the academic progress in the area of Spanish. Students take the same standardized assessments in English as their classmates who are not in the Spanish Immersion Program. In addition, in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade some works in the content area are specifically graded to evaluate the development of the language.

Enrollment

Admission to the Foreign Language Immersion Programs is limited. Selection for the programs is based on a lottery system for students in kindergarten and Grade 1. Admission for all other grades is determined by lottery, language proficiency and available space. The parents of children in the Rolling Terrace E.S. attendance area still need to go through the school system's lottery process, but they will receive preference in the lottery. Multiple birth siblings requesting the same program will be treated as a single request. There is a preference for younger siblings to join the program. All students including students from the attendance area and siblings wishing to participate in the program **must** complete an Immersion Interest Form.

Exiting the program

On rare occasions, Spanish immersion is not deemed the best program for a particular child. If there are concerns about first language development or language processing difficulties, immersion might add an unnecessary level of difficulty and frustration for a child. Close communication between the child's parents, teachers, and other school professionals can help plan appropriately for each child.

Parent involvement

Parental involvement is important for the success of every child in the school system. A child in the immersion program needs parents that are involved in the school, communicate with the teachers, show interest in the language of instruction, and continue to read and develop English language skills in the areas taught in Spanish.