

What should parents consider before enrolling a child in La Academia?

- ▶ Are you comfortable with second languages and other cultures? As the parent of a child in a dual language immersion program, you may not understand most of the homework. There will be ways of interacting you may not understand. If you like the idea of learning along with your child and don't mind asking questions when you don't understand, this program may be a good fit for your family.
- ▶ Does the idea of your child learning to read and write in Spanish before English make you nervous or excite you? We will concentrate on Spanish in Kindergarten through second grade. Formal training in reading and writing in English does not begin until the middle of second grade.
- ▶ What are the characteristics of students who are successful in a dual language program? Successful programs around the country have identified several characteristics of successful dual language students: They enjoy learning new things. They like meeting and interacting with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

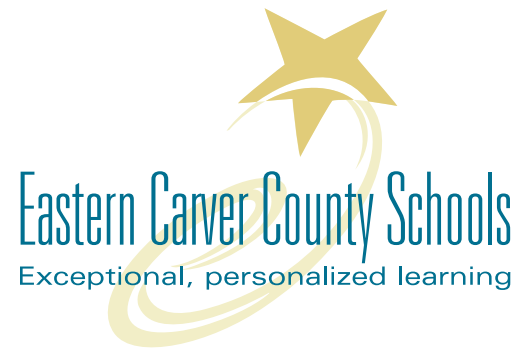
They have parents who strongly support the program and transmit their enthusiasm to their children. Finally, successful students embrace the philosophy of dual language education; they persevere during challenging times and learn to take risks in speaking and writing a second language.
- ▶ Are you flexible? La Academia will be a fluid, dynamic program as we begin next fall. We expect to evaluate and change as we go along.
- ▶ Are you willing to make a commitment? La Academia is not a one-year program. We expect to add a grade every year through fifth grade. We are asking families who sign up for La Academia to continue in the dual immersion program for the entire elementary sequence.

How do I find additional information on La Academia?

Eastern Carver County Schools invites parents interested in enrolling their child in La Academia to attend one of four information meetings. Attendance is required of parents who enroll their child in the dual language immersion program.

La Academia Meetings – All meetings take place in the Multipurpose Room at the Kindergarten Center, 110600 Village Road, Chaska

Monday, January 16	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 17	7:30 a.m.
Wednesday, January 18	1:30 p.m.
Thursday, January 19	6:00 p.m.



**La Academia is located at the
Kindergarten Center
110600 Village Road
Chaska, Minnesota 55318
www.district112.org**



**Introducing
Eastern Carver County Schools'
All-day, Dual Language
Kindergarten Program**

Parent Information Guide



What is a dual language immersion program?

In a dual language immersion program, students receive instruction in both English and a partner language. In La Academia, our regular kindergarten program will be taught in English and Spanish.

La Academia is a two-way immersion (TWI) program that combines students from two language groups for instruction in both of their languages. Each class will include at least one-third Spanish-speaking students and at least one-third English-speaking students. In a two-way dual language program, all students have the opportunity to be both first language models and second language learners.

How much time is spent during a school day in each language?

La Academia's kindergarten instruction will begin with 90% of the core academic instruction taught in Spanish and 10% in English. The percentages shift over the course of elementary school to 50%-50% at 5th grade.

Will children study the same curriculum as kindergartners not enrolled in La Academia?

Yes. La Academia will cover the same curriculum and hold the same standards for success as in our traditional kindergarten program. Teachers will be licensed elementary teachers proficient in Spanish and English.

What are the goals of a dual language immersion program?

The Center of Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. suggests four central goals for a dual language immersion program.

- ▶ **Students will develop high levels of proficiency in their first language.** This means that native English speakers will be proficient in their speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities in English; their performance will not be compromised by attending a bilingual program. The same will be true for Spanish-speaking students. There will be no need to forego the development of their native language as they become proficient in English.
- ▶ **All students will develop high levels of proficiency in a second language.** Native English speaking students will become proficient in Spanish while native Spanish-speakers will become proficient in English. The goal of this program will be to develop bilingual speakers in both languages.
- ▶ **Academic performance for all students will ultimately be at or above grade level.** Academic expectations are not diluted for dual language students; we will expect the same level of performance for all students.
- ▶ **All students will demonstrate positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors.** Because students study in an environment that is integrated linguistically, ethnically, and socio-economically, they learn first-hand about cultures different than their own. Our teachers will work intentionally and continuously toward intercultural competency for all students in our program.

How big will the program be?

Enrollment in the program's first year is limited to two sections of 25 students each. We are expecting at least one-third of the children in each class to be Spanish-speaking and at least one-third of the class to be English-speaking. Both sections will be housed at the Kindergarten Center.

Do any other school districts use a dual language immersion approach?

Yes. Dual immersion programs can be found across the country. Working with CARLA (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition) at the University of Minnesota, Eastern Carver County Schools chose the two-way dual language approach as the best fit for our student population. We visited other dual language immersion programs in the Twin Cities to learn about the benefits to students.

How does a typical school day in a dual language immersion program differ from the traditional school day?

A typical day in a dual language immersion program looks very similar to a traditional classroom. Students work toward the same academic standards, attend specialist classes, and go to lunch and recess. Students have access to Club Care before and after school. Teachers in dual language immersion may be especially animated as they use unique methods and strategies to help students learn a new language... lots of gestures, pantomimes, songs, props, and other instructional tools essential for success in a dual language program.

La Academia is located at the Kindergarten Center,
110600 Village Road, Chaska.
For more information, please call 952.556.6182.