

# Herricks Public Schools

## An Overview of the Spanish Language Immersion Program

### Frequently asked Questions (FAQ)

**Q: *What is an immersion program? What does it look like?***

A: An immersion program is a form of dual language education that provides an enriched education by teaching students core academic content in two languages: English and the targeted immersion language (i.e., Spanish). The district has a 50/50 one-way model. The language immersion program at Herricks is a voluntary program for those parents who would like to involve their children in learning a new language while also following the traditional Herricks elementary curriculum. Students learn in English during one half of the day, and in Spanish during the other half of the day at the elementary level. Elementary immersion students learn math and science, and at times, history, in Spanish. All other subjects are taught in English. Immersion students follow the same curriculum as their English-only counterparts. The only difference is that immersion students spend half their school day learning in Spanish. The result is that these students learn the math and science content and acquire Spanish language proficiency at the same time. Our data suggests that students in the immersion program do just as well as their classmates who are in all English-speaking classes.

As students progress to Herricks Middle School, they will take specially-designed Spanish classes that will strengthen and expand their proficiency in the language. As a means of offering another opportunity to use the Spanish language, Social Studies 6, 7 & 8 are taught in Spanish. At Herricks High School, students are provided with accelerated Spanish courses to meet their needs in grade 9-12.

Our program follows other national immersion / dual language models. Our program is a carefully articulated K-12 program and the only such one in New York State. More information is provide at our parent informational meetings that are mandatory, if any family is interested in learning more about the program.

**Q. What are the goals of the program?**

A. The K-12 program goals are:

- Ensure that our children are truly bilingual
- Develop greater cross-cultural understanding and acceptance
- Prepare them to live, work and thrive in a global community
- Develop the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity
- Develop strong literacy skills in both English and Spanish
- Speaking and listening skills are a focus for our Kindergarten students

**Q. Is the program available at Grades K-12?**

A: Yes, as stated in this document, students can continue in the immersion program from the elementary level to the middle and high school. Families must be aware that they are making a Gr. K-12 commitment to the immersion program. To learn more, please visit:

<https://www.herricks.org/Domain/107>

**Q. What are the benefits of the program?**

A: According to research, one can define several advantages associated with immersion programs.

- A greater measure of cognitive flexibility and creative/divergent thinking skills.
- Literacy development in both English and Spanish.
- Development of more intense listening skills.
- Transfer skills in many curriculum areas. Vocabulary development in English is especially enhanced by learning a romance language at an early age.
- Development of fluency in a world language in a natural setting, with fluency being the by-product of an elementary school education.
- Development of a greater degree of cross-cultural acceptance through the understanding that the diverse peoples of the world speak diverse languages, and that learning a world language can bring us into touch with the world around us in a very personal way.

**Q: Where are the programs located? Is bus transportation provided?**

A: The Spanish immersion program is housed at Denton Avenue Elementary School. The program continues to Herricks Middle School and High School. Bus transportation to and from a school is determined by mileage.

**Q: Is the Herricks immersion program available at grades Gr. K-12?**

A: Yes. Students can continue in the immersion program at middle and high school. Families must be aware that they are making a Gr. K-12 commitment to the immersion program. All students entering Kindergarten in Herricks in September 2023 are eligible to enter the Language Immersion Program in Kindergarten at Denton. The current limit is 48 students a year. Should we have more than 48 students interested in participating in the program than space allows, participants will be selected by lottery. Anyone interested in the program must attend one of three mandatory meetings that are held in March/April.

**Q: What are the requirements to be considered for an immersion program?**

A: All students are eligible to participate in our language immersion program. There is no test nor is there any pre-requisite. All kinds of learners have been shown to be successful in an immersion environment! Families interested in the program must attend one of the three mandatory informational meetings and submit a commitment letter.

**Q: What if I wish to withdraw my child from the immersion program?**

A: The teacher and parents will meet to discuss whatever issues there may be. If it is determined that the child would prefer to leave the program, an appropriate time will be discussed and the child will be exited from the program and the child will return to her/his home school.

If you have any further questions, please contact via email the following administrators: Mr. Fratto, Director of Language Immersion, at [ffratto@herricks.org](mailto:ffratto@herricks.org) or Mr. Dominick Tolipano, principal of Denton Ave, at [dtolipano@herricks.org](mailto:dtolipano@herricks.org)