



Board Meeting Date: 11/19/24

Title: Countryside Spanish Dual Language Update

Type: Discussion

Presenter(s): Dr. Frannie Becquer, Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming; and Cynthia Maldonado, Countryside Elementary School Principal

Description: This report details the progress and future planning of the Countryside Spanish Dual Language (SDL) program, as guided by the Spanish Dual Language Leadership Team. Under the collaborative direction of Teaching and Learning leadership, the Assistant Superintendent, Countryside Elementary administration, and consultation with the Minnesota Department of Education, the program continues to evolve and strengthen. The report outlines the team's comprehensive work in program implementation, including current enrollment data, curriculum frameworks, and professional development initiatives. Most significantly, it details the leadership team's strategic planning for middle school expansion, presenting a four-phase implementation timeline from 2024 to 2028. Through careful oversight and planning, the leadership team continues to advance the program's mission of developing bilingual, bi-literate, and culturally competent students within Edina Public Schools.

Recommendation: No recommendation is being made at this time. This presentation is an informational update for the board.

Desired Outcome(s) from the Board: Thoroughly read information and be prepared to provide reactions..

Attachments:

[Slideshow Link](#)

Report follows

A. Program Overview

SDL is an immersive educational approach that strategically balances instruction in Spanish and English throughout the school day. The program follows an 80/20 model in kindergarten (80% Spanish, 20% English instruction), gradually transitioning to a 50/50 model by fifth grade. Currently operating with two sections per grade level from kindergarten through second grade, the program will reach full elementary capacity in the 2027-2028 school year.

B. Core Principles

The program is guided by three fundamental principles that align with Edina Public Schools' mission and vision:

- a. **Culture:** Developing positive cross-cultural attitudes and global understanding
- b. **Language:** Building bilingual and bi-literate proficiency in Spanish and English
- c. **Academics:** Fostering academic proficiency in both languages while encouraging creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking

These principles directly support Edina's Portrait of a Well-Rounded Graduate, which emphasizes that **globally competent individuals** possess a diverse and informed world perspective, embrace individual and cultural diversity, seek multicultural interactions, and may effectively communicate in two or more world languages.

The program also advances Strategic Plan A.1's commitment to providing students with a comprehensive curriculum that develops critical thinking skills and prepares them for their next level of education and life opportunities. Specifically, it fulfills the strategic initiative to *"explore and create additional PreK-12 programming that promotes authentic and engaging learning experiences for future-ready learners while providing attractive educational options to families"*.

C. Current Program Status

- a. Location and Facilities
 - i. The Spanish Dual Language program successfully transitioned to its permanent home at Countryside Elementary during the 2023-24 academic year. This allows for enhanced integration with the broader school community and establishes a stable foundation for continued growth.
- b. Enrollment and Demographics
 - i. Current enrollment maintains two sections per grade (K-2)
 - ii. Target ratio: 50% heritage Spanish speakers
 - iii. Current demographics:

1. Grade K-2: 13.3% Heritage Speakers, 86.7% English speakers

The number of heritage speakers at Countryside Elementary is presented as an aggregate for grades K-2, following data reporting practices where counts of student demographic groups with fewer than 20 students are excluded due to the number being identifiable

D. Curriculum and Instruction

- a. Transitioning K-1 from ARC (American Reading Company) to Benchmark Adelante in 2025-26 to align with 2nd grade and district literacy framework. Benchmark Adelante features built-in translanguaging supports that explicitly connect Spanish and English literacy development
- b. Strategic language instruction implemented through:
 - i. Daily literacy instruction in both Spanish and English
 1. Using strategic timing of when to teach certain sounds/concepts in each language
 - ii. Deliberate connection of shared sounds and literacy concepts across languages
 - iii. Structured 50-minute language blocks in 2nd grade for both Spanish and English
- c. Literacy assessment conducted in both languages using FastBridge

E. Professional Development

- a. CORE training planned for six teachers in 2024-25
 - i. Fulfills Science of Reading requirements under Minnesota's READ Act
 - ii. Specifically addresses how to implement Science of Reading principles within dual language immersion programming
 - iii. Ensures SDL teachers receive appropriate foundational reading instruction training adapted for bilingual contexts

F. Middle School Pathways Development

As the program continues to grow, thoughtful planning is underway for the middle school transition. The development process follows a strategic timeline:

- A. Research phase (2024 -2026)
 - i. Analyzing successful implementation models from surrounding districts
 - ii. Studying Edina Public Schools' French immersion pathway to middle school to leverage existing transition expertise
 - iii. Identifying best practices and lessons learned from established programs MN
- B. Development phase (2026-2027)
 - i. Board proposal for middle school implementation

- ii. Program structure recommendations
- iii. Resource and staffing considerations
- C. Implementation Planning (2027 -2028)
 - i. Detailed preparation of first cohort
 - ii. Staff development planning
- D. MS program launch (2028-2029)
 - i. Anticipated middle school entry of first SDL cohort
 - ii. Continued program refinement based on student needs
 - iii. Ongoing evaluation and adjustment

G. Conclusion

The Countryside Spanish Dual Language program continues to make substantial progress toward its goals of developing bilingual, biliterate, and culturally competent students. The program's careful planning and implementation provide a strong foundation for expansion into middle school, ensuring a comprehensive K-8 pathway for dual language education in Edina Public Schools.