

Two-Way Spanish Immersion Offered at Two Schools

Approximately 500 students at Sugar Creek Elementary, Glacier Edge Elementary, and Badger Ridge Middle School are already beginning to prepare themselves to be competitive in the global marketplace. Each day as they report to their Two-Way Immersion (TWI) classrooms, they will learn to communicate, read, and write in Spanish and English as well as interact in a diverse society.

VASD's Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program is reaching more and more students each year. The goal of the program is to prepare students to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural while achieving high levels of success academically, linguistically, and socially. Presently, the TWI program encompasses grades K-6 and will continue to grow. The linguistic and cultural competency skills that students gain in the program will prepare them to graduate with the Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy.

TWI classrooms are open to students from all language backgrounds and cultures and are additive in nature, meaning that students learn in two languages from the moment in which they enter the program until they complete it. Children in TWI classrooms spend 50 percent of their day learning academic content in Spanish and 50 percent of their day learning in English.

Educational research supports the effectiveness of the Two-Way Immersion model for all students*. In addition to positive academic outcomes, there are benefits of bilingualism that reach far beyond the classroom. As reported in TIME magazine in July 2013, neurological studies show that bilingual brains function more efficiently and flexibly with higher levels of reasoning. Bilingualism also improves the ability to multitask, grasp ideas, and reconcile conflicts while delaying the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

The instructional approach in Two-Way Immersion classrooms is enrichment education for all students as they learn rigorous academic content in two languages while becoming cross-culturally competent. For more information about the TWI program, please contact Laurie Burgos, Director of Bilingual Programs & Instructional Equity, at (608) 845-4312.

Sources:

*Collier, V.P. & Thomas, W.P. (2013). *Dual Language Education for a Transformed World*. Albuquerque, NM: Fuente Press.

Kluger, J. (July 29, 2013). "The Power of the Bilingual Brain," *TIME Magazine*. Retrieved from: content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2147707,00.html