

Once schools and school systems commit to establishing a dual language immersion (DLI) program, they must then begin to thoughtfully design the program's participant recruitment and retention policies. These policies will help to define and shape the DLI program and ensure a successful start.

This document serves as a guide for school and system administrators as they outline and establish participant recruitment and retention policies for their DLI programs. For additional planning and program related guidance, please contact the Department's World Languages Specialists at language.acquisition@la.gov.

Participant Recruitment

Recruiting families to participate in dual language immersion education programs is an important step in making any DLI program a reality. Schools and school systems should carefully consider what recruitment policies are necessary to clearly communicate expectations to prospective families.

When creating a DLI program strategy, schools and school systems should include policies and procedures that address

- the application process,
- sibling-status students,
- out-of-zone or transfer students,
- transportation,
- late-entry applicants, and
- program promotion.

Application Process

As a first step in establishing a DLI program recruitment strategy, schools and systems should define clear program application procedures. Consider the following questions when establishing the application process.

- What type of application will be provided to prospective families?
 - physical application forms
 - fillable online PDF application forms
 - online submissions forms, e.g., Google Form
 - a combination of the above
- When will the application be released?
- How, where, and to whom will participant applications be submitted?
- What is the application acceptance period?
- When is the application due date?
- What information is needed on the application?
 - student name
 - parent/guardian name(s)
 - birthdate
 - phone number
 - address
 - parent email address
 - grade entering
 - school term
 - zoned school
 - sibling-status with name, if applicable
- Who will review the applications?

- How will participants be evaluated?
 - What determines a participant's admittance to the program?
 - What constitutes denying a student access to the program?
- How will families be notified of their acceptance? Their denial?
- How long will families have to confirm their participation?
- If there are more applicants than space allows, how will applicants be waitlisted?

Sibling-Status Students

When possible, DLI programs should offer sibling-status entrance preference to students who have siblings already participating in, or who have completed, the program. By providing sibling-status entry, administrators can better ensure stable program participation. Sibling-status entry not only contributes to the stability of the program, but also to the linguistic community by creating opportunities for students to communicate in the target language outside of school.

When a sibling-status policy is outlined, schools and systems should be sure that the policy clearly addresses the following questions.

- What constitutes the term "sibling?"
- Will extended family members be offered sibling-status?
- In what instances can a student be denied sibling-status entry?

Out-of-Zone/Transfer Policy

In many cases, families wishing to enroll in a DLI program must attend a school that is not in their assigned school zone. Because of this, school systems should develop a clear policy and procedure for out-of-zone or transfer students. Consider the following questions.

- What additional paperwork will be required for students attending a DLI program outside of their school zone?
- What school and system level administrative members and staff should be made aware of transfer students?
- How do out-of-zone students impact the transportation needs or requirements of the DLI program's school?

Transportation Policy

Communicating to DLI families and prospective families a clear policy regarding transportation ensures that they are able to better prepare for DLI program participation. Consider these questions.

- What transportation opportunities are available to program participants?
- What transportation limitations or restrictions will participants face?
- How do zoning restrictions affect transportation availability?

Late Entry Applications

Traditionally, students enter dual language immersion beginning in grades pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. However, students may enter in grade one with the aid of language supports and RTI, when needed. In special circumstances, late entry is possible for students demonstrating on-level proficiency in the targeted language(s). Late-entry application policies should address these questions.

- Under what circumstances can a student be considered for late entry into the DLI program?
- What evaluation measures will be used to determine a student's qualifications for late entry?
- Who will evaluate the student?
- What provisions, if any, will be established for late entry students to remain in the program?
- What support will be provided to late-entry students?
- What measures will be created to document late-entry application, evaluation, determination, and support?

Program Promotion

Once application policies and procedures have been developed, schools and school systems will be charged with promoting their DLI program and application process. A successful year-one program launch publicity campaign is vital to the start of any DLI program. Program promotion campaigns should begin six to nine months before the opening of the program's application season.

Additionally, program administrators should investigate and incorporate multiple promotion avenues for reaching the community and potential participants. These may include the use of

- informational open houses,
- social media posts,
- print flyers and informational literature,
- local television and/or radio station interviews and commercials, and
- newspaper and online articles.

Program administrators should be aware that promotion campaigns will need to be launched yearly throughout the life of the initiative to continue growth and expansion of the DLI program. Administrators should also plan to refine publicity campaigns yearly and look for new and innovative ways to market the program to their community.

Participant Retention

Dual language programs are most successful and students, along with their families, are most satisfied with the language learning experience when schools and systems make a concerted effort to create linguistic communities. Building shared experiences through the partner language(s) and culture(s) into DLI programs gives students and their families a sense of belonging. This community environment actively encourages continued participation and enhances the dual language program experience.

Ideas for Enhancing the DLI Experience:

- DLI parent organization
- Family activity nights
- Schoolwide language/cultural fairs and activities
- Community outreach programs
- Cultural exchanges with schools from target language country

Parent/Guardian Initiated DLI Withdrawal Request

In rare instances, a parent may wish to withdraw his/her child from the DLI program. Keeping this possibility in mind, school administrators should develop a parental-initiated withdrawal request policy. When developing this policy, administrators should consider these questions.

- What process should be created for participants to initiate a withdrawal?
 - withdrawal form which includes reasons for withdrawal
 - parent meeting with DLI staff
 - additional system-required paperwork
- Who will need to sign off on the withdrawal?
- If the student will be attending another school in the school system, what additional paperwork should be completed?

School Initiated DLI Withdrawal Request

On occasion, program leaders must evaluate and consider a student's retention or removal from an immersion program. Guidelines for student retention and removal should be carefully considered and the policy outlined. Retention and removal guidelines should be made available to program participants upon entrance into, and throughout, their participation in the program.

Students should not be removed from a DLI program without proper due process and documented intervention attempts. Below is a sample due process policy outline that systems may modify to meet their individual program needs.

Step 1: Notification of Due Process

Upon a student's first infraction of a DLI program expectation— whether it be academic, behavioral, or other— the school should initiate the DLI program's due process policy. The initial stage of this policy should include, at minimum, the following:

- parental notification letter;
- notice placed in the student's academic file; and
- meeting with the student, parent, teacher, and DLI administration to explain the infraction and to develop an intervention plan.

Step 2: Notification of Second Infraction

This step should be initiated upon a second infraction and should include, at minimum, the following:

- parental notification letter;
- second notice placed in the student's academic file; and
- meeting with the student, parent, teacher, and DLI principal to review and modify the intervention plan.

Step 3: Notification of Probation

Upon a third infraction, the school should initiate the school system's probationary period policy. This policy should include some or all of the following

- a parental notification letter,
- notice of probationary status placed in the student's academic file,
- parent/guardian meeting(s) with DLI staff and administration,
- an MTSS (multi-tier system of supports) plan developed and agreed upon by the parent(s) and DLI staff to address concerns,
- student access to academic remediation interventions in applicable areas, and
- student access to behavioral interventions when applicable.

Step 4: Notification of Removal

If, at the end of a student's probationary period, he/she still does not meet the DLI program requirements for remaining in the program, the school may choose to remove the student from the DLI program. If this happens, the student and parent must be notified by means of both a written and emailed parental notification letter, as well as a scheduled parent and DLI staff meeting.

Step 5: Appeal Process

Any student recommended for removal from a DLI program should be afforded the opportunity to file an appeal. School systems should provide the participant with a detailed explanation of the appeal process and timeline for completion.

NOTE: In most cases, students should not be removed from the DLI program in the middle of the school year.