



# Spanish Immersion Guidelines

2018-2019

*“El que habla dos lenguas vale por dos.”  
“He who speaks two languages is worth twice as much.”*

# Comal Independent School District

## Spanish Immersion Principals

Amy Malone, *Rahe Bulverde Elementary School*

Krista Moffatt, *Hoffmann Lane Elementary School*

## Central Office Support Staff

Kerry Gain, *Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Academic Services*

Carina Merkle, *Bilingual & ESL Coordinator*

## Board of Trustees

Cody Mueller, *President*

Amy Freund, *Vice President*

Marty Bartlett, *Secretary*

David Drastata, *Treasurer*

Denise Kern, *Trustee*

Stephen Smith, *Trustee*

Jason York, *Trustee*

## Superintendent of Schools

Andrew Kim

### ***DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT***

Comal ISD, where we encourage collaboration and communication, promote critical thinking, embrace high standards of accountability, and establish a winning tradition through perseverance and grit.

## Program Goals

- Students will have the opportunity to maintain and develop English while simultaneously acquiring proficiency in Spanish.
- Students will demonstrate academic achievement at or above grade level as measured by formal and informal assessments.
- Teachers will ensure student success in content knowledge and fluency in both languages.
- A partnership between parents, teachers, and administration will create bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural students.
- The District will recruit and retain highly qualified staff and provide sufficient resources to support program success.

## Spanish Immersion Vision Statement

*The **VISION** of Spanish Immersion is to develop children into bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural students who love learning and think critically.*



*Comal Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, color, national origin, or disability in providing education services, activities or programs. It is the intent and policy of this District to conduct its activities in compliance with all Federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, color, national origin, or disability.*

# Table of Contents

**General Information.....5**

**Spanish Immersion .....5**

    Program Design.....5

    Curriculum Scope and Sequence.....5

**Policies and Guidelines .....6**

    Eligibility.....6

    Selection Process.....7

    Transportation .....7

    Request to Withdraw.....7

**Program Accountability .....7**

    Program Fidelity.....8

**Spanish Immersion Summary .....8**

**Research.....9**

**Frequently Asked Questions .....10**



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

To be bilingual is to have greater access to the world. The ability to speak, read, and write in both English and Spanish is a particularly valuable skill in Texas. Census projections indicate that across the state, Spanish will be spoken by an increasingly higher percentage of Texans in the coming decades. In fact, it has been predicted that by the year 2030, approximately 40% of all U.S. school-age children will be non-English speaking. Subsequently, Spanish will hold a more prominent place in all aspects of our society, including business, medicine, education, and social work.

To be bilingual is to also acquire a greater appreciation for other cultures. Technology and free trade agreements between nations have made our world a much smaller place than it was even fifteen years ago. Great societies throughout the ages have each carried the hallmark of the appreciation of other cultures and this appreciation has often led to eras of peace and prosperity.

To be able to equip Comal ISD students with the tools to be bilingual, through a Spanish Immersion Program, is to invest in their future, the future of our society, and to foster cultural understanding.

## **SPANISH IMMERSION**

### **Program Design**

The Spanish Immersion program is designed for English-speaking students who wish to become fluent in Spanish. Students enter the program in first grade. Comal ISD employs a “90/10” Spanish immersion model. In 1st grade, 90% of the instruction is delivered in Spanish. English is gradually added from grade level to grade level until students are instructed 50% in Spanish and 50% in English by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are expected to continue in the program through fifth grade.

### **Curriculum Scope and Sequence**

Students in the Spanish Immersion Program in Comal ISD follow the same curriculum as established by the State of Texas and use district-based Curriculum Scope and Sequences which are aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Spanish Immersion students are expected to master Texas English Language Arts as well as other grade level state standards.

Time allotted for the language of instruction per subject matter may vary to meet the unique needs of individual students. Spanish Immersion teachers follow a scope and sequence for Language Arts that is unique to meet the goals of the program. The scope and sequence for mathematics, science, and social studies match a traditional English speaking classroom with the only difference being Spanish as the language of instruction.

The inherent nature of these programs creates an active parent-school partnership, which is essential for the success of the program and the student.

This program is currently being offered at the following locations:

- Hoffmann Lane Elementary School  
4600 FM 306  
New Braunfels, TX 78132  
(830) 885-1799
  
- Rahe Bulverde Elementary School  
1715 East Ammann Road  
Bulverde, TX 78163  
(830) 885-1600

## **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Eligibility**

Students are eligible for the Spanish Immersion program based on the following criteria:

- Students are enrolled in Kindergarten in Comal ISD.
- Based on end of year results, students must score an independent level of 6 or above on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or or obtain a Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Rasch UnIT (RIT) score of 177. **This qualification criterion is effective beginning May 2018 and therefore is not retroactive of any years previous to the new qualifying standards.**
- Students from the home campus will make up 75% of the program with 25% chosen from the elementary schools in the same “feeder pattern.” (CISD has three feeder patterns: Canyon feeder, Smithson Valley feeder, and Canyon Lake feeder. Elementary and Middle school campuses which “feed” into the same high school are considered a feeder pattern). Students in the Canyon Lake feeder may apply to either the Hoffmann Lane Elementary or Rahe Bulverde Elementary Spanish Immersion Program and will be included as part of the 25% selected for the program.
- Multiple birth siblings (i.e. twins, triplets, etc.) and younger siblings who either have a sibling currently in the program or a sibling who completed the program through fifth grade must meet the requirement of an independent level of 6 or above on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or obtain a Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Rasch UnIT (RIT) score of 177.
- At least one parent/guardian will attend the Program Information Meeting during the spring semester in order for their child to be eligible for the selection process. Please note that this includes parents who already have children participating in the Spanish Immersion Program at Comal ISD.
- The parent/guardian will complete the application process within the designated timeline to be eligible for the selection process. Parents will only need to submit one application for multiplebirth siblings.
- Siblings of students accepted into our language programs are eligible for transfers.

- Students transferring from another district's Spanish Immersion program will be admitted based on availability of space and display reading, writing, and math proficiency in Spanish as determined by grade level assessments
- Students will transfer back to their home campus for middle school; however, students may opt to continue with their Spanish language development through our Comal ISD Advanced Language Program (CALP) in middle school.

## **Selection Process**

Students are selected to the Spanish Immersion Programs based on the following selection process:

- All applications shall be submitted by the deadline and will then be compiled for the lottery selection process by feeder pattern. No late applications will be accepted.
- Lottery selections occur on a scheduled date and will include 75% selected from the home campus and 25% from the "feeder pattern" campuses and the Canyon Lake feeder schools.
- Students not selected for the program will be placed on a waiting list in order of lottery drawing.
- Within the first two weeks of the start of school, any withdrawals from the program will be replaced with students on the waiting list in order of lottery drawing.

## **Transportation**

Spanish Immersion is an elective program; therefore, parents will be required to provide transportation for their child if the campus offering the Spanish Immersion program is not their child's home campus.

## **Request to Withdraw**

Parents and students admitted into the program have made a long-term commitment to remain in the program for its duration. Therefore, requests for withdrawal will only be considered due to extenuating circumstances and may go through a multi-step meeting process including conferences with the Campus Administration and or a representative from Central Office Support Staff.

## **PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY**

Spanish Immersion programs will be evaluated based on the following standards:

- Progress reporting will follow district timeline.
- Qualitative data will be gathered through student/parent/staff surveys to gather stakeholders' opinions and feelings, gauge program effectiveness, and increase positive impact in the community.
- Parent commitment and involvement, as defined in the parent contract, will be sustained for the duration of the contract term.

## Program Fidelity

To maintain a program with fidelity is to deliver it in the way it was implemented in the research which initially proved it was effective. As such, the program model for Spanish Immersion will include the following:

### SPANISH IMMERSION PROGRAM

- Five year commitment (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grades);
- Quality language instruction in Spanish and English;
- Core Instruction in Spanish: 90% in grades 1, with incremental percentage decreases in subsequent grades until they reach 50% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade;
- Follow grade level state curriculum (Refer to Spanish Immersion curriculum guidelines);
- Fully supported by school district administrators, educators, parents and community members. **Intervention outside of the classroom is not available in Spanish.**
- Highly qualified personnel; and
- Active parent-school partnership.\*

*Students enrolled in either a Dual Language or Spanish Immersion program must remain in that program.  
Student will not be allowed to transfer between the two programs*

**\* Parents are encouraged to participate in activities to support and increase their understanding of the program. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom after the first six weeks of school to allow students time to adjust to their new language environment.**

## SPANISH IMMERSION SUMMARY

The implementation of the Spanish Immersion programs has been an exciting instructional initiative in Comal ISD. These programs provide for an extraordinary learning and growing opportunity for the students and parents of our community. The necessary partnerships and shared commitment to excellence among stakeholders should ensure that the goals we have set forth will meet or exceed our expectations.

Comal ISD will continue to ensure adherence to fidelity of the programs. Additionally, we will evaluate the established design models and recommend any necessary changes. As of February 2018, 199 students are enrolled in the Spanish Immersion Program.

We look forward to ultimately celebrating the truest measure of success by producing bilingual, bicultural, and bi-literate children who are well-prepared for a bright future with full access to the world.



## RESEARCH

Spanish Immersion programs have existed in the United States for almost 40 years, although the most dramatic growth in the number of programs has occurred over the past 15 years.

Longitudinal research studies indicate that in well-implemented programs, both native English speakers and native Spanish speakers tend to do as well or better on standardized achievement tests than their peers learning in traditional settings.

In order to continually improve the Spanish Immersion Program, Comal ISD will review existing research on Spanish Immersion programs, seek and attend professional development opportunities, and conduct classroom observations of Spanish Immersion programs in neighboring districts. CISD has connected with an established network of professionals with whom we can consult, share, and exchange ideas as we strive to develop extraordinary language programs.

Further information regarding research-based language programs can be obtained by accessing the following websites:

- The University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition: [www.carla.umn.edu](http://www.carla.umn.edu)
- The Center for Applied Linguistics: [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org)
- The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence: <http://crede.berkeley.edu>
- Texas Association for Bilingual Education: [www.tabe.org](http://www.tabe.org)
- National Association for Bilingual Education: [www.nabe.org](http://www.nabe.org)
- Dr. Virginia Collier and Dr. Wayne Thomas at George Mason University, research on language acquisition: [www.thomasandcollier.com/Research%20Links.htm](http://www.thomasandcollier.com/Research%20Links.htm)
- Dr. Jim Cummins, language development researcher at the University of Toronto: <http://home.oise.utoronto.ca/~7Ejcummins/cummins.htm>
- Dr. Stephen Krashen, linguist, educational researcher at the University of Southern California: [www.sdkrashen.com/](http://www.sdkrashen.com/)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: *What about reading in English for the students learning Spanish as a second language?*

A: Your child will transfer reading skills to English once they have learned to read in Spanish. Parents should NOT attempt to formally teach their children to read in English. If a child is ready to read in English on his or her own, encourage this at home and deal with it in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. Nevertheless, it is very important that you read daily with your child.

Q: *Does it matter if no one speaks Spanish at home?*

A: The program was designed primarily for children of families who do not speak the second language. Teachers are aware of this when they send home notices or assign homework. Report cards are issued in English.

Q: *Is Spanish Immersion the right choice?*

A: One of the first questions often asked by parents is, “Is this the right choice for my child?” When trying to answer that question, it is important to remember the opportunities that you are offering your child by exposing him or her to another language and culture. Through the immersion program your child will be provided with the opportunity to become and develop the ability to communicate freely with persons who speak the immersion language. Being bilingual may enhance your child’s opportunities in the job market and make it easier to learn yet a third language. Taking part in the immersion program can be an exciting and stimulating experience for your child. Parents need to consider their personal commitment to bilingualism.

Q: *Are students in immersion programs screened?*

A: Reading development in the first language is a strong indicator of the student’s success in second language acquisition. Students must score an independent level of 6 or above on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or obtain a Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Rasch UnIT (RIT) score of 177

Q: *How will I know if my child is a good candidate for the Spanish Immersion Program?*

A: While most immersion educators believe that the program is suitable for learners of all ability levels, there is also general consensus that children with serious delays in first language development or auditory processing, auditory memory, or general auditory impairment should not be in an immersion program.

Q: *What happens if my child struggles with learning to read in English?*

A: The Spanish Immersion Program has unique aspects which may extend the process of identifying a student’s learning disability. The most appropriate time to show an academic delay is after one to two years of reading instruction. Since children begin Spanish reading in first grade, the optimal time for the school’s child study team to evaluate a child is usually at the beginning of second grade. Therefore, immersion students may not be eligible for some academic support programs until the formal introduction of English reading the second semester of second grade.

Q: *How can parents help?*

A: The following tips are helpful tips for supporting your child:

- Encourage your child by telling him/her how proud you are that he/she is learning a second language.
- Do not feel discouraged if, at the beginning your child cries or seems nervous about this new experience. Some students may experience some stress initially as this can be an overwhelming and exciting program. Parents need to be supportive and understanding of both their child and the teacher during the initial stages. Your child will need some time to adjust to this new challenge. However, if this anxiety continues beyond the first two months, please discuss it with the teacher. By the beginning of October, every child should be over the initial adjustment and be looking forward to going to school.
- When your child gets home, do not be upset if he or she does not feel like telling you all about the day at school. Children take the routines of school for granted and often are in need of a change of subject once they get home.
- Do not expect your child to start speaking the second language after the first few days and do not try to force him or her to do so. Your child will start to use the second language at his or her own individual pace.
- Become acquainted with your child's teacher and program through attending Back-to-School night and other evening events at the school.
- Be actively involved in your child's school.
- Keep informed about immersion education.
- Encourage, but do not force your child to speak the second language at home.
- Do not attempt to correct your child if you are uncertain of the correct expressions or pronunciations. Give your child the benefit of the doubt.
- Do not ask your child to translate. This requires skills not focused on in the Spanish Immersion program.
- Do not give in to the temptation to compare your child's progress to that of the neighbor children. No two teachers and no two students work at the same rate.
- Teach your child the songs and nursery rhymes that are part of his or her own heritage.
- Read stories to your child in English because English stories will not be heard at school in the beginning years of the immersion program.
- Take advantage of any opportunities to expose your child to the Spanish language and culture(s) outside of the school setting.
- Let your child know that you are pleased with his or her progress.