

What are the Goals of the bilingual Program?

- Develop high levels of proficiency in Spanish and English
- Achieve grade level academic performance in Spanish and English
- Increase the use of foreign language among monolingual groups
- Develop children who will be more competitive in the global economy
- Take advantage of the optimal window of learning a second language during the primary years
- Nurture understanding of the different cultures living side by side in Menasha
- Give students an upper edge in high school, college, and the workplace
- Develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism
- Develop positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors

Why Bilingualism?

Two Languages Are Better Than One

Our world has changed dramatically over the last few decades and is becoming fully interconnected. Succeeding in the 21st century will require new ways of thinking, strong language skills and an open mind. Bilingualism carries concrete advantages and improves abilities for children who grow up speaking a second language.

Learning another language is a step towards joining the global community. When more than half the world's population is bilingual, mastering a second language teaches ways of interacting with the world.

Cognitive (Brain Based)

- **Bilingualism increases mental flexibility** for children. Bilinguals will have two or more words for a single object, concept or idea.
- Bilingual children are **more willing and able to learn a third language, and show an increased analytical orientation to language.**
- Children who study a second language **score higher on verbal standardized tests** conducted in English. Bilingual children also perform better in math and logic skills than children with just one language.
- Learning a second language helps children build **self-esteem, creativity, problem-solving skills, and math ability.**

Social/emotional/interpersonal

- Bilingual children maintain a **strong sense of their own identity** while developing **sensitivity towards other people and cultures.**
- Since bilinguals need to be aware of which language to speak in which situation, **a bilingual child is more aware of the needs of the listener.**

Professional

- Being taught in two languages gives children **a head start in competition for universities and jobs**. Job opportunities for a bilingual applicant are almost limitless.

Benefits of Early Immersion

In order to reap the full benefit of bilingualism, exposure to the second language should begin as early as possible. The chances of achieving full fluency in another language are much higher if study is begun during early childhood, since the human brain is wired to learn language during this critical period.

Immersion duplicates the conditions in which we all learn our first language—extended contact with a community of fluent speakers—and is by far the most effective method of language teaching.

What Does the Research Say About bilingual?

Multiple benefits exist for acquiring a second language during the primary years. Some of the benefits of learning a second language during the elementary years include:

- Children have the ability to learn and excel in the pronunciation of a foreign language (Krashen, et al., 1982)
- Participation in early foreign language shows positive results in areas of standardized testing (Armstrong & Rogers, 1997) Children who had studied a foreign language show greater cognitive development (Hakuta, 1990)
- Foreign language study has shown to increase listening skills, memory, and a greater understanding of one's own language (Lapkin, et al., 1990)
- Children studying foreign language have an improved self concept and sense of achievement in school (Caine & Caine, 1997)
- Children develop a sense of cultural pluralism, openness and appreciation of other cultures (Met, 1995)