



Spanish Immersion Frequently Asked Questions

What is a language immersion program?

- A language immersion program is a proven method of educating children by immersing them in a second or “target” language so they become bilingual.
- In a language immersion program, the classroom environment becomes the setting for language acquisition through subject content instruction, educational discourse, and social interactions.

Who is eligible to participate in Metro Christian Academy’s Spanish Immersion program?

- Metro Christian Academy is offering a Spanish Immersion enrollment option for children entering Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st grades for 2019-2020.
- Pending interest and space, Metro plans to offer one Spanish Immersion section and two English sections for each of the respective grades.

How will Spanish Immersion work at Metro Christian Academy?

- The model of the program is referred to as an early total one-way immersion program and is considered dual-language immersion.
- In the Spanish immersion sections, children will be fully immersed in the Spanish language. Students become bilingual by learning the subject content in Spanish, which includes Bible, History, Language Arts, Science, and Math.
- From the start, 100% of the language spoken by the teacher inside the classroom will be Spanish.
- Specials, lunch, recess, Chapel, etc., will remain in English.
- Beginning in 3rd grade, students will receive some English-specific instruction.

When is Spanish Immersion enrollment available?

- Enrollment in Spanish Immersion is offered simultaneously to standard enrollment.

Is there an application for Spanish Immersion participation?

- The application process and criteria for Spanish Immersion admission is the same as Metro’s standard application process.
- Admission standards will not be compromised to admit additional students.

Are there additional costs associated with Spanish Immersion participation?

- Upon receiving the reenrollment contract, in addition to the grade level tuition, families will see a required Spanish Immersion fee of \$1000 per student enrolling in the Spanish Immersion program.
- A deposit will be required to reserve space.
- Fees and deposits will be refunded if we reach maximum enrollment, or if enrollment numbers are not adequate.

Are there space limitations for Spanish Immersion classes?

- Space is limited, so participation will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis; with priority consideration given to current Metro Christian Academy students.

Will Spanish Immersion affect class sizes for the English track?

- Optimal class sizes for both Spanish Immersion and English track will remain the same.
- Once class sizes are capped (for Spanish Immersion or English), we will begin waiting lists.

Will students from the Spanish Immersion track get opportunities to interact with students in English track classes?

- As much as possible, there will be continued opportunities for shared interaction within the grade levels. All field trips, special projects, class activities, etc., will be for both Spanish Immersion and English track students.
- When possible, we will consider ways to blend student populations during specials classes.
- Spanish Immersion students are still 100% a part of our community, they just happen to be learning content in a different language.

Add.a.lingua – Who are they?

- Metro will be partnering with add.a.lingua, an organization distinguished by their excellence in dual-language immersion education in Christian schools across the country.
- The add.a.lingua team includes educators, linguists, and professors who love children, language, and culture.
- Add.a.lingua experts help partner schools build new immersion programs from the ground up.
- The experts at add.a.lingua provide:
 - professional development
 - curriculum resources and instructional strategies
 - ongoing consultation and strategic advice
 - teacher training

Who hires the Spanish Immersion instructors?

- A team of Metro Christian Academy administrators and teachers will hire the immersion instructors; however, our add.a.lingua consultants will help with screening, interview templates, and teacher competencies.

How will the addition of Spanish Immersion effect current MCA instructors?

- According to the add.a.lingua professionals, all of their partner schools have been successful in keeping existing teachers; however, there may be occasions when teachers may need to change teaching assignments.

Why is language immersion most effective beginning at a young age?

- Babies are born as “world citizens,” able to distinguish any sound in spoken language.
- Toddlers learn through interaction with their families and their immediate surroundings.
- School-age children make sense of new concepts by relating those new concepts to what they already know.

- Students before the age of puberty more easily attain native-like proficiency.

Why is the Spanish language a good choice for an immersion program?

- In the United States, 1 of 7 persons is Hispanic.
- Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the world.
- Spanish is a “gateway” language that will train the brain, thus making it easier to learn other languages.

Why would families choose Spanish immersion as an educational option?

- Research shows that children are able to learn one, two, or multiple languages early in life, and they do so with ease.
- Learning more than one language gives children cognitive advantages and increases cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Does learning to read and write in Spanish before English negatively impact a student’s academic progress?

- Research indicates that students in a language immersion program often times score higher on standardized reading tests in English than those students who are only taught in one language.
- Throughout the language acquisition process, immersion students may be able to read better in one language than the other. However, this is a normal part of learning to read, and eventually immersion students typically read at or above grade level in both languages.

How will implementing a language immersion program in a school benefit a community?

- A language immersion program equips students to become Americans who are linguistically and culturally aware, increasing global competitiveness and communication.
- A language immersion program expands students’ potential career opportunities in our increasingly shrinking and diverse world market.
- A language immersion program fosters an inherent understanding of the world that prompts us to naturally cross linguistic and cultural boundaries.

What are the goals of language immersion?

- Academic achievement equal to or greater than monolingual peers
- High degree of proficiency in the immersion language
- Increased cross-cultural sensitivity

How can parents support their children at home?

- The most important thing a parent can do is to read to your child in English. This does NOT mean that you teach your child to read in English. If you can commit to reading to them in English, and exposing them to English in a variety of social settings, you can trust the immersion model.

Is there research that supports dual language education?

- Students in Canada and Europe have benefitted from language immersion programs for many years. Research from these countries and the United States demonstrates the benefits of bilingual education.

- Beyond the practical aspect of speaking multiple languages, bilingual education improves key elements of brain performance. Learning a second language at a young age changes the development of a child's brain, particularly in the areas of right-brain/left-brain integration and executive function, which includes working memory, mental flexibility, and self-control.
- Students in language immersion programs demonstrate high levels of resilience, perseverance, and creative problem solving.