



## METRO CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE THROUGH CHRIST

# 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.

### ***Why Spanish immersion at Metro Christian Academy?***

- Each new school year presents an opportunity to review our mission and seek God for ways to promote, enhance, and fulfill that mission. Part of our mission is to train and equip students to become servant-leaders.
- Bilingualism creates paths for leadership and service.
- Learning another language is like being offered a gift.

### ***Who is eligible to participate in Metro Christian Academy’s Spanish immersion program?***

- Metro Christian Academy began offering a Pre-K Spanish immersion enrollment option at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. An additional immersion section is added yearly as the immersion students transition to the next grade level.
- Pending interest and space, Metro will eventually offer one Spanish immersion section for each grade level from Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### ***How will Spanish immersion work at Metro Christian Academy?***

- Metro Christian Academy’s model is an early total one-way immersion program and is considered dual-language immersion.
- In the Spanish immersion sections, children are fully immersed in the Spanish language. Students become bilingual by learning the subject content in Spanish which includes reading/language arts, history, science, math, and Bible.
- 100% of the language spoken by the teacher inside the classroom is in Spanish.
- Specials (art, music, PE, library, STEM), lunch, recess, Chapel, etc., remain in English.
- Beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 MCA’s standard application process.
- Admission standards are identical for Spanish immersion and English learning tracks.

### ***Are there additional costs associated with Spanish immersion participation?***

- Upon receiving the enrollment 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.

### ***Are there space limitations for Spanish immersion classes?***

- Space is limited, so participation will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

### ***Will Spanish immersion effect class sizes for the English track?***

- Optimal class sizes for both Spanish immersion and English track 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 classes?***

- As much as possible, there are ongoing opportunities for shared interaction within the grade levels. Field trips, special projects, class activities, musical performances, etc., are arranged for both Spanish immersion and English track students.
- 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 is 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 and sustain immersion programs.
- 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?***

- The immersion instructors are hired by a team of Metro Christian Academy administrators and teachers; however, our add.a.lingua consultants 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 can 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 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 linguistically and culturally aware, increasing global 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 Spanish immersion children at home?***

- It is very important for parents to read to their Spanish immersion children in English. This does *not* mean teaching them to read in English. The immersion model can be trusted if parents commit to reading to their Spanish immersion children in English and exposing them to English in a variety of social settings.

***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.