

The Spanish Immersion Program



Vision

LMS offers a Spanish Immersion Program at the Locust Grove Campus. This program — focused for English-speaking students beginning in grade one — equips them to read, write, and speak in the Spanish language.

As a missional center for the church, our vision includes the belief that learning another language and culture is crucial to being a missional church both locally and globally. Through language and culture we are able to join God at work bringing healing and hope to the world that God loves.

Why Immersion?

Immersion programs are the fastest growing and most effective type of foreign language instruction currently available. The goal of language immersion is for students to become proficient in a second language while developing increased cultural awareness. Students develop proficiency in the second language by hearing it and using it to learn all of their school subjects rather than by studying the language by itself.

Why begin a language in first grade?

The young child's brain is developmentally ready to learn language. There is a window of opportunity in which a child learns a language naturally. After this period, the brain is less receptive and the job is much more difficult.

Objectives:

- The student will develop Spanish proficiency and improve understanding of her/his native language.
- The student will grow in global awareness, cultural sensitivity and appreciation of other cultures.
- The student will develop academic skills that transfer to other academic disciplines.
- The student will grow in her/his cognitive ability such as divergent thinking, verbal abilities, listening skills, general reasoning and concept formation.
- That student will be on grade level as measured by achievement tests in the intermediate grades.
- The student will improve her/his linguistic abilities.
- The student will develop greater ability to creatively solve problems.
- The student will develop enhanced ability to acquire a third and fourth language.
- The student will develop an important 21st century career skill of communicating in a second language.
- The student will grow in respect and love for persons of other languages and cultures by learning their culture and language.



What will the school day be like?

The Spanish Immersion Program will follow the LMS elementary curriculum except that classroom instruction will be in Spanish. The teacher will speak Spanish using gestures, facial expressions and objects to help communicate their meaning. To draw students into using Spanish, teachers will use songs, useful phrases, chants and rhymes, and carefully structure the day with familiar routines. Classroom decorations and learning tools will also be in Spanish. Students may communicate with the teacher and each other in English, but students will increasingly choose to use Spanish. Specials in music, art, physical education, etc. will be taught in English.

How will learning in Spanish affect English language literacy?

Research shows that the immersion experience enhances English language development (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000). During the primary years, students' English language development may lag temporarily while instruction is in Spanish. However, by fifth grade immersion students perform as well as — or better — than their English-only peers. It is important for parents to expect and accept a short-term lag in order to achieve a long-term benefit.

How long will it take to become proficient in Spanish?

After 2 or 3 years in the immersion program, reading and listening skills are comparable to native speakers of the same age. However, speaking and writing skills will lag behind native speakers and will not be as grammatically accurate or complex (Johnson & Swain, 1997). Native-like proficiency in every skill area is unlikely. However, immersion students will have a strong base upon which to continue moving toward full proficiency through formal Spanish courses in middle school and high school.

What role do parents play?

Like all parents, parents of children in the Spanish Immersion Program should provide experiences that help their child develop English language skills. Parents need to read to their children in English and engage in activities to reinforce what they are learning in school.



Families are also asked to make a long-term commitment to the Spanish Immersion Program. A long-term commitment is necessary for the child to experience the benefits of the program.

Some other expectations for parents are:

- Develop a realistic understanding of the immersion program
- Provide experiences outside school to develop English language skills
- Be sure your child attends school regularly
- Volunteer in the classroom and in the school. Many volunteer opportunities are available. Parent involvement in school activities greatly encourages children to succeed in school.

Beginning foreign language instruction early sets the stage for students to develop advanced levels of proficiencies in one or more languages. In addition, younger learners still possess the capacity to develop near native-like pronunciation and intonation in a new language. Finally, young learners have a natural curiosity about learning which is evident when they engage in learning a new language. They also are open and accepting of people who speak other languages and come from other cultures.

— American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



Who is eligible?

The Spanish Immersion Program is open to any first-grade child whose family values learning a second language during the elementary school years.

How do we register?

Parents who are interested in enrolling their children should complete a Commitment Form to reserve a place in the program. Enrollment will not be considered complete until the school's usual application form is completed, submitted and accepted, along with a \$100 registration fee.

What other ways to learn Spanish are offered at the elementary level?

Locust Grove Campus continues to have Spanish Enrichment/Appreciation as a standard part of the elementary curriculum, starting in PreK, for students not in the Spanish Immersion Program. The Kraybill Campus and the New Danville Campus also have Spanish Enrichment/Appreciation as a standard part of the elementary curriculum, starting in PreK.



Locust Grove Campus (PreK-8)

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OPEN TO FIRST GRADE STUDENTS

Spanish Immersion Program

at the Locust Grove Campus



Spanish Immersion students will meet all academic standards of Lancaster Mennonite School and will develop proficiency in Spanish language communication. As students learn in Spanish, they grow in understanding Latino, Latin American and Spanish cultures. This program will prepare students to be life-long learners who are transformed through Christ to change our world.



LANCASTER MENNONITE SCHOOL