

**History:** With the opening of the 2009/2010 school year, Mt. Vernon School in the Lemon Grove School District, launched the first Dual Language Immersion Program for Spanish and English speaking students beginning with kindergarten, first and second grade. Each year this program will grow to include an additional grade level until it eventually includes K - 6th grade. This goal will be reached in the 2013/2014 school year.

**Goals:** To develop bilingualism and biliteracy. Students acquire high levels of English and Spanish proficiency while meeting academic content standards in both languages. Students develop understanding and appreciation of other cultures in our society.

**Mission Statement:** Mt. Vernon Dual Immersion Language Program is committed to provide academically challenging and language rich standards-based curriculum to ensure all students will become bilingual, biliterate and bicultural. Children of all races, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds will be prepared to contribute to a complex, diverse global community.

**Definition:** Also known as *two-way immersion* or *two-way bilingual education*, these programs are designed to serve both *language minority* and *language majority* students concurrently. Two language groups are put together and instruction is delivered through both languages. For example, in the U.S., native English-speakers might learn Spanish as a foreign language while continuing to develop their English literacy skills and Spanish-

speaking ELLs (English Language Learners) learn English while developing literacy in Spanish. The goals of the program are for both groups to become biliterate, succeed academically, and develop cross-cultural understanding (Howard, 2001).

**The Model:** The 50/50 Model is a scientifically researched based program that has been a highly successful dual language program.

In the 50/50 model, students learn their academics in two separate languages. Half of the academics are in English and half in Spanish. This starts in Kindergarten and goes all the way through 8th grade. This model is most suitable for a multicultural community such as Lemon Grove.



## Dual Immersion Academy (DIA)

Mount Vernon  
Elementary  
School

8350 Mt. Vernon Street  
Lemon Grove, CA 91945  
619-825-5613  
[www.lgsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.lgsd.k12.ca.us)

## **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***Can we expect academic excellence from the program?***

The program is driven by curriculum via language instruction. Dual Immersion teachers use the state academic standards for grade level content and instruction so that students are learning the same content as they would in an English only classroom. They are simply learning these core academic subjects in Spanish as well.

### ***How will my child benefit from this program?***

Children become bilingual and biliterate in this program and gain a sense of cultural awareness for their own and other cultures. This program prepares young people to contribute to a complex, diverse, democratic society. They are also challenged academically. There have been numerous studies documenting the cognitive benefits of learning a second language at a young age. Most experts agree that the earlier a child is introduced to a second language, the greater the chances are that the child will become truly proficient in the language. Research has shown that bilingual students perform better than monolingual students on tasks that call for divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving.

### ***What is the typical experience for a child upon first entering the Dual Immersion Program?***

There is an initial adjustment period for children when they first enter the program. Your child may ask, "Why is the teacher talking to me in a language I can't understand?" A combination of activities, lots of singing, and skillful sign language help children to feel comfortable and competent in the Immersion environment by the second or third month of Kindergarten.

### ***Will my child be fluent after 5th grade?***

It takes five full years to develop written and oral proficiency in the Immersion classroom. Typically, children soak up the foreign language for the first two years of the program and their listening comprehension exceeds their ability to express the language orally. In first grade, they use the phonetic skills they have built to begin reading in Spanish. Teachers implementing the Spanish part of the program communicate only in Spanish. Teachers implementing the English part of the program communicate only in English. The exception is that students are able to produce orally in both languages.

### ***How can I explain this program to my child?***

Becoming proficient in another language is a long-term goal, so we have to keep reminding children of the gains they are achieving and what an extraordinary thing they are doing by participating in this program. If parents maintain a positive attitude about the program, children will as well.

### ***What if I don't speak Spanish?***

Parents do not need to speak Spanish for their children to succeed in the Dual Immersion program. Show your child that you value the ability to speak a second language. Attend cultural events that feature music, dance, and food from a country or countries where Spanish is spoken. If possible, provide some books, videos, or other materials in Spanish. At the same time, continue to reinforce English language development skills at home by reading and discussing books together.

If a child comes from a Spanish speaking home, they can continue to re-enforce the language at home and read to his/her child.