

# Dual Language Enrollment

## Frequently Asked Questions

Office of Multilingual Education (OME)  
Framingham Public Schools  
Fall 2020

# How do students register for dual language?

- When students register for **Kindergarten**, parents indicate their ranked preference for school and language development programs. Dual language programs are ranked first, then GE/SEI programs. Families can choose none, one, two, three, or all four DL programs.
- Per federal law, FPS must screen students for English proficiency if their Home Language Survey and intake interview indicate another language is spoken at home.
  - FPS also assesses proficiency in Spanish and Portuguese for these students as applicable, our two most prevalent languages.
- Based on these assessment results and language intake interview, students choosing dual language are grouped into one of three language profile groupings for dual language lottery purposes.
- If the number of students who have indicated Dual Language as their preference is greater than the number of spots available in each category, PIC in conjunction with OME holds lotteries.
- Even though the number of programs and seats have grown, they are very popular and not all families may receive a seat in their first choice program or school. Every year is different!

# How do lotteries work?

- We hold various lotteries for our Spanish and Portuguese DL programs.
  - Lotteries are grouped by language profile groupings
    - Students with Spanish/Portuguese as their primary language
    - Students identified as bilingual at various levels in both program languages
    - Students with English or a non-program language as their primary language
- Depending on how parents have ranked their preferences for schools and the spots available, they may be assigned to their 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th DL choice (as applicable) or be bumped out of DL entirely and placed into a GE/SEI school assignment.
  - For example, if a family in the Portuguese group ranks Wilson DL 1st choice, Potter Rd DL 2nd, then Brophy DL 3rd and they do not get a place at Wilson or Potter, they could receive a seat in the Brophy DL English group and WL at the others.
- At the strand DL schools, families with Sibling Guarantee are guaranteed a seat at the school, not necessarily the program. There is also a home district preference at Brophy, Potter, and Wilson, so students in the sibling and home district categories are placed first, then others as space allows. All the first choice requests are filled first, then 2nd choice etc. if seats and students remain.
- In addition, seats are held open on the Spanish and Portuguese groups at each school for students arriving after the lottery.

# Are there waitlists for dual language?

- Yes, if K students do not receive their top choice(s) of DL, they are placed on a waitlist specific to their language profile
- There is a process with OME and PIC to maintain lists and call families district-wide as seats open and to inform them of their options. Families can either accept or decline the seat at that time if they wish to remain in their current school.

# If there is no waitlist, can students enter dual language?

- If there are spots open in the appropriate language groups, newly registering students can opt to join dual language. After day one of grade 2, non-native Spanish/Portuguese speakers cannot enter DL unless they can pass a placement test in S/P.
  - Example: A newly registering 1st grade student with English as a home language may enter DL at Potter Rd if there is no waitlist remaining *and* if there are English seats available. (There could be empty seats that are not English seats, so the student would not be able to enter.)
- Please note that the profile of the waiting list categories varies by program. Students may be on multiple waiting lists at the same time which makes the lists seem longer than they actually are.

## Do the waitlists expire?

- Yes. The waitlists remain in place through K, first grade, and expire on the first day of school in second grade. This is very different from GE/SEI waiting lists.

## Who can enter dual language after second grade?

- Once the waitlists expire, the remaining spots are reserved through 5th grade for the following groups of students:
  - Students new to US schools who are native speakers of Spanish or Portuguese and who screen at the Entering Level (1) on the WIDA Screener (“newcomers”)
  - Students who are bilingual in both program languages
  - As DL seats become more limited, spaces will in almost all cases be reserved for newcomer ELs and may not be available for bilingual students. There is no waitlist in grade 2+.

## Can teachers recommend students in SEI to join DLE?

- There should never be a discussion with a family about changing a program unless it's been discussed first with OME and school leadership. Typically students do not transfer from SEI into DL as DL seats are reserved for newcomers. Families may have also specifically chosen SEI for their child at registration and we want to respect their wishes, so please reach out to us first. Again, most requests will be denied.

# Can schools recommend students in SEI to join DLE?

- There is a district-based entrance process for all DL program seats.
  - While waitlists for Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and program transfers between SEI and TBE have traditionally been school-based, enrollment and placement for DLE is fully district based from K-12. OME and PIC make the final decision on assignment and seat allocation in collaboration with school leaders as appropriate.
- All families in the district are able to apply for a seat in a different language development program or school during the Parent Information Center (PIC) transfer period
  - However, seats in Grades 2-5 DL programs, except in the rarest of circumstances, will almost never be assigned to students who have been in the US/in SEI programs, or have an English proficiency level above WIDA Entering (1).
  - Please see the PIC website for more information about the transfer process.
- There should **never** be a discussion with a student or family about changing an ELE program of any kind unless it's been discussed first with the Office of Multilingual Education (OME) and school leadership.
  - Please contact your school's Language Development Coach with any questions related to student program placement.
  - Teachers should not encourage current families to apply for a transfer into DL as most requests will be denied.

# Why does dual language enrollment work this way?

- The district-based enrollment and assignment process helps us to ensure equity and an asset-based educational experience for our students identified as English Learners (ELs)
  - FPS has a successful history with Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs.
    - These programs are being converted to DL so that we move from a “transitional” period of leveraging bilingualism that ends after a few years to a long term (K-12) commitment to building bilingualism & biliteracy, high academic achievement in both program languages, and developing sociocultural and global competence.
  - Decades of longitudinal research show that Dual Language Education improves outcomes and closes the opportunity gap for students of all backgrounds, but especially English Learners.
    - This is due to the strong connection between having access to language and literacy development and grade level content in a home language and English over the course of a student’s entire K-12 education
  - Unlike TBE where students transitioned yearly into SEI classrooms leaving open TBE seats for new students, DL seats are very “sticky” in that we see much less turnover and greater student retention.
  - Therefore, limited DL seats must be prioritized for ELs, especially newcomers entering in later grades who would otherwise be placed in all English SEI classrooms.
  - See Collier & Thomas, 2004; Steele, et al., 2017; Lindholm-Leary & Block, 2010; Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Valentino & Reardon, 2015

# Questions?

The student assignment process can seem complicated, but we have attempted to be as equitable as possible while still allowing for discussion of individual cases. Please reach out to your school administration, language development coach, OME, and PIC for support!

