AMAYA GARCIA AND CONOR P. WILLIAMS

STORIES FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL

BUILDING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS FROM PREK–3ʳᴰ GRADE IN WASHINGTON, DC

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About New America

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Series Introduction for the District Profiles

The demographics of American schools have been changing rapidly for some years now. One of the most telling changes in the last decade has been the increase in ethnic and linguistic diversity in school districts in communities that have not historically had large numbers of recent immigrants. None of the five counties with the fastest growth in Hispanic residents (from 2000 to 2011) are in areas with traditionally high numbers of immigrants: Luzerne County (PA), Sevier County (TN), Frederick County (VA), Paulding County (GA), and Henry County (GA).[1] While the number of language learners enrolled in U.S. schools grew by 18 percent from the 2000–01 school year to the 2010–11 school year, it grew by 610 percent in South Carolina, 306 percent in Kentucky, 255 percent in Nevada, and 230 percent in Delaware. Meanwhile, the language learner populations in Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, and North Carolina more than doubled over the same period.[2]

Educators and policymakers in these states—and many others—are grappling with this shift in a variety of ways. Few of them have experience supporting the linguistic and academic growth of linguistically diverse students. Some are exploring ways to use their investments in high-quality pre-K to support students who speak a language other than English at home. Others are wondering how they can prepare and support teachers working with these students. Still others are considering ways to support language learners' families through wraparound services and community investments. Most are trying to find ways to serve these students without segregating them from the rigor of mainstream academic instruction.

Fortunately, communities wrestling with new linguistic diversity in their schools do not have to invent their own best practices from scratch. There are districts across the country—earlier frontiers of integration—with a long history of supporting language learners in their schools. Some of these districts have already established education programs and services that support language learners and their families. The challenge, then, is to share institutional expertise and wisdom from places with experience serving these students well. This is the third in a series of district profiles from New America's Dual Language Learners National Work Group seeking to capture this knowledge and make it accessible for educators and policymakers across the country.

How New America Defines "Dual Language Learners" (DLLs)

A dual language learner (DLL) is a child between the ages of zero and eight years old who is in the process of learning English in addition to his or her home language(s). This student may or may not be enrolled in schools where instruction is conducted in both languages.

The profiles in this series use DLL to refer to these students for two reasons: 1) our research is focused on children in the PreK–3rd grades, where this term is generally the most accurate; and 2) to avoid confusion caused by labeling children based on various words associated with specific interventions or strategies (such as "dual-immersion") rather than on their language status.

Reforming Early Education, Birth Through Third Grade
State and Local Reports

From 2015 through 2016, the Early Education Initiative will be producing a series of reports from states and localities across the United States to provide an inside look at efforts to support children's learning from infancy and extending into the early grades. Access to the reports is available through Atlas (atlas. newamerica.org), the data and analysis tool designed for New America's Education Policy Program. Reports are forthcoming, or have already been published, in the following geographic areas.

The David Douglas School District in Portland, OR

Focused on supporting dual language learners' linguistic and academic development.

A report that provides analysis and ranks all 50 states and Washington, DC on progress in advancing early education policies will be published in November 2015.

The San Francisco Unified School District

Focused on aligning teaching and learning across grade levels.

California

Focused on improving the workforce.

Massachusetts

Focused on helping children achieve success in literacy.

Minnesota

Focused on helping children achieve success in literacy.

Washington, DC

Focused on supporting dual language learners' linguistic and academic development.

San Antonio, TX

Focused on supporting dual language learners' linguistic and academic development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the nation's capital, the District of Columbia is both a symbol of democracy and home of the institutions that shape the laws of our land. Yet Washington, DC is also a city with entrenched problems common to other urban jurisdictions such as intergenerational poverty, sharp racial segregation, and struggling schools. Like other cities, it is undergoing substantial changes due to rapid gentrification and the influx of young professionals eager to make their mark.

But there is another, less noticed, change happening in the city. Between the 2011 and 2013 school years, the District's dual language learner (DLL) population grew more rapidly than any U.S. state.[3] These changes are prompting local school districts to reimagine and redesign their approaches to serving these students.

The city has made substantial investments in early education and enabled the expansion of pre-K to all children whose parents wish to enroll them. In 2014, 69 percent of three-year-olds and 99 percent of four-year-olds in the District were enrolled in a publicly-funded pre-K program. The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has blended and braided local funds with Head Start funds to improve program quality and provide more students with the chance to benefit from the supports and services offered by Head Start. Taken together, these initiatives have substantial implications for DLLs; Head Start has provisions in place for language screening and assessment of dual language learners and for support of students' home languages in the classroom. And research has shown that quality pre-K, in general, is particularly effective for dual language learners.

DCPS has a long history with the dual immersion instructional model—programs that provide students with content-area instruction in English and another language—and has used a mix of federal resources (e.g., FLAP grants from the U.S. Department of Education) and grassroots efforts to expand these programs to several schools serving large populations of DLL students. Multiple studies have suggested that dual immersion programs particularly support DLLs' English language acquisition and academic achievement. Moreover, dual immersion programs help to elevate the status of home languages and maintain students' connection to their cultures. DCPS' Language Acquisition Division (LAD) provides programs with guidance and support to refine their dual immersion models to best meet the needs of their students and communities.

At Center City Public Charter Schools, district leaders and staff have implemented myriad changes to their instructional practices and used their autonomy as a charter school network to develop a range of programs to support the academic achievement and English language acquisition of their DLL students. Its ESL After the Bell program provides students with extended learning time and access to a project-based curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that gives students additional practice across the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. After this and other programs were put into place, DLLs' reading and math scores on the state standardized assessment increased by 30 percentage points between 2012 and 2013.

The work being undertaken at Center City Public Charter Schools, DCPS, and other local schools provides several useful lessons for helping individual schools and districts to better serve DLLs:

Lesson #1: Make investments in early education and maintain a strong focus on program quality. The District of Columbia has made a substantial investment in expanding pre-K to all three- and four-year-old children living in the city.[4] Building up a universal pre-K system required years of advocacy to get buy-in from city leaders willing to spearhead the charge, draft legislation, and get it passed. DCPS used a creative approach to blend local funds with Head Start funds to make quality control more systematic across all of its pre-K programs. It also adopted standard curricula, assessments, and a coaching model to align instruction with developmentally appropriate practices.

Upshot: While blending and braiding pre-K funding can create some oversight and compliance challenges, it can also support increased pre-K access and strong quality support systems.

Lesson #2: Design dual immersion programs to meet the needs and context of individual schools. Across DCPS and the public charter school sector, no two dual immersion programs look alike. Within DCPS, each program uses a different model because each operates in a unique context shaped by students, staff, and

leadership. Providing schools with flexibility allows them to design the best program they can feasibly implement to meet their specific students' needs.

Upshot: Districts implementing dual immersion programs should create a shared set of goals and "must haves," but provide schools with the flexibility to refine models that best meet their particular needs.

Lesson #3: Use strong school leadership to help sustain dual immersion programs. A principal's knowledge of the program, commitment to its vision and mission, willingness to evaluate and redesign the model and attention to implementation are key factors in helping to grow, improve, and sustain a dual immersion program. These assets require continuity of school—and district—leadership.

Upshot: Effective implementation of dual immersion programs requires steady leadership and sufficient resources.

Lesson #4: Provide all teachers with the support and training necessary to implement effective instruction for their DLL students. DCPS uses coaching to provide pre-K teachers working in dual immersion programs with differentiated supports and is expanding the program to include pre-K teachers working in non-immersion settings. Center City has a co-teaching model where classroom teachers collaborate with ESL teachers, providing them with key strategies for supporting English language acquisition. Professional learning communities can also provide a space for teachers to examine student data, develop instructional strategies, and learn more about research-based practices that can guide their work with DLL students.

Upshot: All teachers need to be prepared to support DLLs' success, and districts can use multiple strategies to help them develop these skills.

Lesson #5: Use school accountability to drive school improvement. Center City Public Charter Schools–Petworth campus was flagged by the state accountability system for performance gaps between DLL and non-DLL students. The charter network's leadership set out to identify these gaps, redesign the instructional model, and develop data-driven strategies to support DLLs. As a result, ESL After the Bell provides students with extended learning opportunities and project-based activities aligned to the Common Core State Standards that focus on developing their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. And IELLPs provide students with personalized learning goals and track their progress in meeting those goals.

Upshot: Districts should delve into their DLLs' performance data in order to identify instructional gaps, devise appropriate supports, and monitor student progress throughout the school year.

Lesson #6: Design and implement ESL program models that allow teachers to push into the classroom whenever possible. Center City's co-teaching model provides DLL students with targeted ESL instruction that is aligned to the lessons being covered in their content-area classes. Classroom teachers collaborate with ESL teachers to plan lessons and better differentiate instruction for DLLs.

Upshot: Co-teaching models should provide DLL students with the opportunity to be integrated in the mainstream classroom rather than segregated in separate ESL classes.

Figure 1

District of Columbia Student Demographic Characteristics PK-12th Grade [2014]

Source: Author's calculations based on data obtained via LearnDC:
http://www.learndc.org/schoolprofiles/view?s=dc#profile.

Asian
1%

Multiracial
2%

White
9%

Hispanic
17%

African-American
71%

Special Education
13%

Economically Disadvantaged
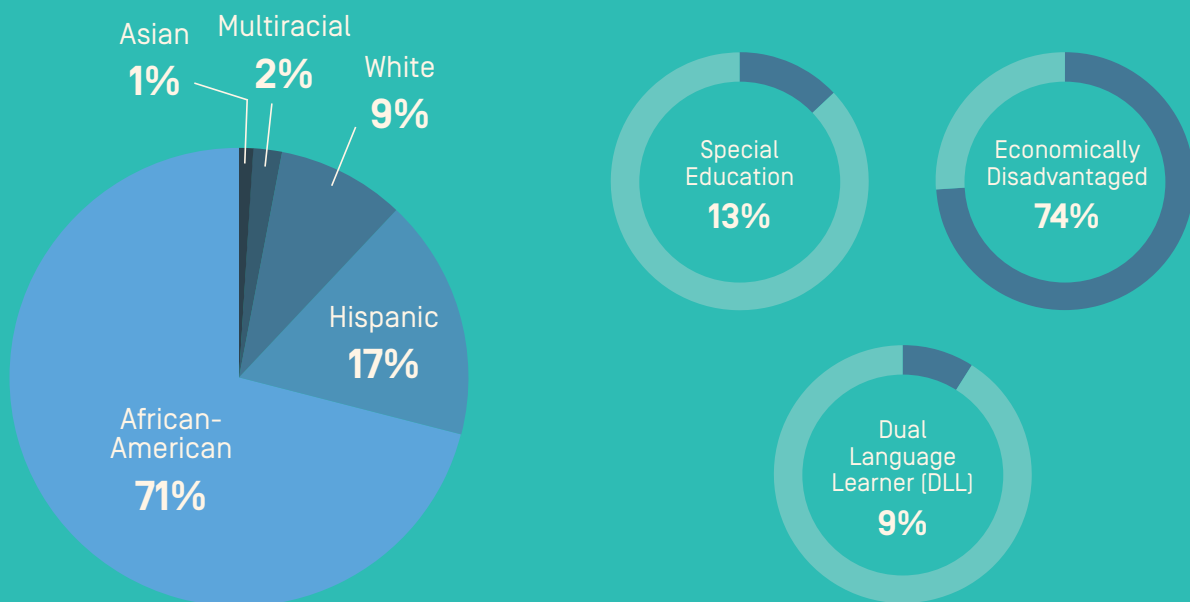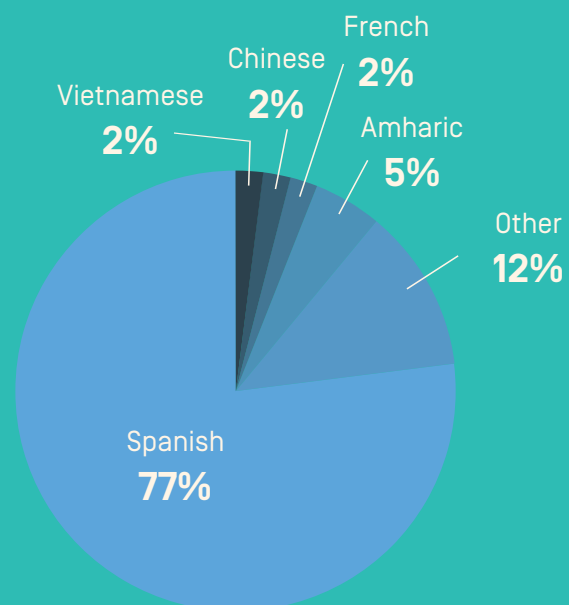**74%**

Dual Language Learner (DLL)
9%

Figure 2

Languages Spoken by DLLs in Washington, DC

Source: Migration Policy Institute; ELL Language Data Appendix 2012-2013.

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/language_portal/ELLlanguagedataappendix2012-2013.xlsx

Vietnamese
2%

Chinese
2%

French
2%

Amharic
5%

Other
12%

Spanish
77%

INTRODUCTION

Washington, DC is one of the United States' fastest changing cities—as well as a place with a deeply conflicted identity.[5] It is first and foremost a global urban hub positioned at the head of the wealthiest, most powerful country in human history. Yet it remains very much a *town* reflecting its original, 18th-century design, full of low-density row house neighborhoods and diagonal streets which stymie tourists lost in DC's puzzling street grid. And it is an urban community with many of the attendant problems related to desperate, intergenerational poverty and systemic racism. Finally, it is a city renewing itself through a recent influx of young, wealthy residents. Seemingly overnight, neighborhoods full of abandoned buildings and pockmarked streets are filled with pet washing stores and micro-roastery cafés catering to hip young professionals.

And yet, these visible changes obscure another major shift in DC community life. Between the 2011 and 2013 school years, the District's dual language learner (DLL) population grew more rapidly than in any U.S. state.[6] This may not attract the same attention as the city's rapid gentrification, but it is prompting educators across the city to substantially rethink their practice.

This paper explores how the city's growing DLL population fits within local efforts to improve educational outcomes for all students. We visited 12 DCPS and public charter schools in the city with high numbers of DLL students to learn more about programs (both dual immersion and English as a Second Language (ESL) models) that have led to improvements in these students' performance on standardized assessments and progress in learning English.

We describe three DC initiatives that could be particularly useful for districts serving DLLs across the country. First, the District has implemented a well-funded universal pre-K system that serves 69 percent of three-year-olds and 99 percent of four-year-olds in the city. Second, several DCPS schools and public charter schools offer dual immersion programs that begin in pre-K and provide instruction in both English and a home language. Third, the Center City Public Charter Schools built an ESL program model—after being flagged by DC's accountability system for substantial achievement gaps between DLL and non-DLL students—that led to significant growth in both the academic achievement and English language proficiency of its DLL students.

The intersection of the first two initiatives has potentially significant implications for dual language learners. Recent research documents both the positive impacts high-quality pre-K programs have on a range of outcomes for DLLs *and* the positive effects dual immersion programs have on DLLs' later academic achievement, English language proficiency, and maintenance of their home language.[7] Meanwhile, Center City's example shows how school-level autonomy and accountability can be used to drive *systemic* improvements in DLL instruction.

Taken together, the lessons drawn from these initiatives can be used to help policymakers, educators, and administrators—including those in Washington, DC—create frameworks and models for better serving DLLs that can be adapted to meet the context of individual schools.

Education Governance in Washington, DC

The DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (PERAA) established a new structure of education governance in the city, one that continues to evolve. Under the law, the mayor gained primary authority over the public school system, including its budget, facilities, and personnel—which included choosing who would run the city's school system on a daily basis.[8]

Under PERAA and more recent modifications, Washington, DC's educational governance structure follows this model:

1. The **District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)** is a cabinet-level agency run by a chancellor appointed by the city's mayor.

2. The **Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)** is charged with three major functions: 1) overseeing District-wide education strategy; 2) managing interagency and cross-sector coordination; and 3) oversight/support of OSSE, DCPS, PCSB, DC Parks and Recreation, and University of the District of Columbia (UDC). The agency recently created a city-wide school lottery system for determining school enrollment, conducted revision of district schools' enrollment boundaries, studied the adequacy of school funding in the city, and engaged in efforts to reduce truancy and re-engage youth.

3. While Washington, DC is not a state, the **Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)** serves the role of a state education agency for the purpose of engaging with federal education policy. OSSE manages myriad functions, including: oversight and compliance, assessments, accountability, child care licensing, child care subsidy programs, transportation, regulations, teacher certification and licensure, and development of a statewide longitudinal data system.[9]

4. PERAA replaced the Board of Education with a **State Board of Education (SBOE).** The State Board of Education is comprised of nine elected members responsible for approving state-level standards (e.g., CCSS, NGSS), regulations (e.g., truancy, residency verification), high school graduation requirements, and state accountability plan.

5. The **Public Charter School Board (PCSB)** has oversight over all charter schools and control over the approval or revocation of charters. The PSCB is a seven-member body appointed by the mayor. Charter schools are publicly-funded schools of choice that operate under different regulations than traditional public schools. In the District of Columbia, public charter schools are required to admit students via a public lottery if demand for the school exceeds the number of available seats. The city's charter school law also gives charter operators control over their budgets, operations and personnel, and the design of educational programs and school policies.

Mayoral control has sparked a number of changes in DC's education landscape. Most notably, the number of public charter schools has grown exponentially. In 2014, more than 37,000 (44 percent of DC's public school students) were enrolled in one of the city's 112 public charter schools, which are operated by over 60 organizations. (See Figure 3).

These changes have several implications for DLLs and their families. First, the growth of the public charter sector has expanded the school options available to include a larger array of instructional models (dual immersion, Montessori, expeditionary learning) to match the interests of families. And second, the governance structure provides public charter schools with the autonomy to design and develop instructional models and interventions that best fit the vision, mission, and needs of the school community.

Figure 3

District of Columbia: Number of Schools and Enrollment by Sector (2014) [10]

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

Total Number of Schools: **111**
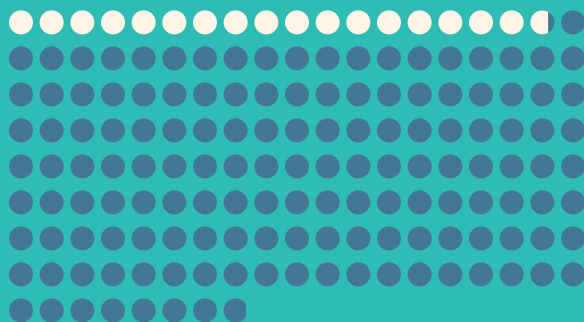
Total Enrollment: **47,548**
Total DLL Enrollment: **4,882**

District of Columbia Public Charter Schools (PCS)

Total Number of Schools: **112**
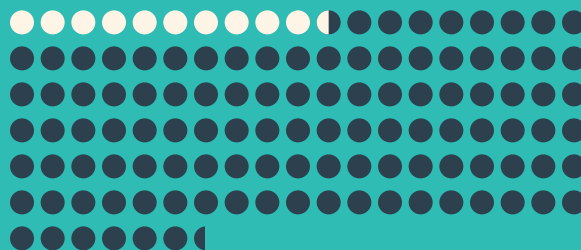
Total Enrollment: **37,684**
Total DLL Enrollment: **2,598**

However, the current governance structure has also led to an overall lack of coordination among local school districts with respect to DLLs' education. A 2015 National Research Council (NRC) evaluation of PERAA noted significant gaps in how the city's public education agencies support and monitor DLLs' education: "we could identify no significant mechanisms for coordination across DCPS and charter [schools] with respect to their education and supports. We were told by a city official that there are no basic protocols or guidelines that apply to all schools." [11] The lack of coordination means that the education offered to DLLs varies widely across schools and is dependent on the capacity of the local district to design appropriate instructional programs and supports.

UNIVERSAL PRE-K IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District's Path to a Universal Pre-K System

Most Americans have memories of starting school at around five years old, but in the District of Columbia, most children start school a year or two earlier. The overwhelming majority of these children attend programs offered at either a DCPS school or public charter school. Although the city has a mixed-delivery model—pre-K programs are offered by both schools and community-based organizations (CBO)—over 95 percent of public pre-K students in DC attend school-based programs.[12] In the 2013–14 school year, 69 percent of three-year-olds and 99 percent of four-year-olds were enrolled in a publicly-funded pre-K program.[13] Since DC has a universal model, any student is eligible to attend a public pre-K program, regardless of income level.

History and Political Will

Much of the city's success in expanding access to public pre-K stems from its *Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008*. The law mandated the systemic expansion of pre-K across the city "until pre-K programs are available to all children of pre-K age whose parents choose to send them to pre-K" and included provisions for strengthening existing programs.[14] The passage of that legislation was made possible by over 40 years of work and advocacy.

In her case study exploring the rise of universal pre-K in DC, Bernardine Watson notes that the city has long been a leader in early childhood education, serving as a pilot site for the federal Head Start program in 1964 and operating pre-K in its schools since 1972.[15] A 1989 report by the D.C. Committee on Public Education (COPE) helped set the stage for the 2008 legislation. The report focused on "critical problems" in public education and recommended the expansion of high-quality early education programs in order to "push young children to the forefront of the school system's reform agenda."[16]

Soon after, the city leveraged additional resources from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and Child Care Development Block Grant program to expand services, particularly for three-year-olds. From 1995 to 1999 the city's "federal allocation for child care increased from $10 million to $50 million... [and] the number of children served in the subsidy program [grew] from around 7,000 to 20,000," according to Watson.[17] By 2003, 70 percent of three- and four year olds in the city were enrolled in publicly-funded child care and early education.[18]

These programs varied from DCPS pre-K classrooms to Head Start to child care subsidy programs, which meant there was a lack of consistency between programs (e.g., in funding, quality, services) and no system for monitoring all programs. As highlighted in the 2004 *Road Map to Universal School Readiness in the District of Columbia*, "the District of Columbia provides early childhood services through a patchwork of providers and funding... Three- and four-year olds can be served through as many as six citywide agencies [including DC Public Schools, DC Public Charter Schools, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Office of Early Childhood Development] that subcontract to nearly 400 community providers."[19]

In 2006, the push for universal pre-K in DC got a substantial boost when the Pre-K for All DC Campaign launched with the financial support of the CityBridge Foundation, Pre-K Now, and other local donors. According to Watson, the campaign developed a well-articulated mission with supporting goals, principles, and a theory of change. It even commissioned a cost-benefit analysis of potential impacts of expanding pre-K, which estimated that an annual investment of $58.5 million would provide the district with benefits of $81.49 million via increases in tax revenues and reductions in special education, criminal justice and health care costs.[20] It also mobilized the support of local politicians, including newly-elected Mayor Adrian Fenty and City Council Chairman Vincent Gray, and developed a robust communication and outreach strategy to build up support across multiple sectors in the city. The work paid off. In the summer of 2007 Chairman Gray's staff, along with Pre-K for All, began drafting the "legislative framework" to help shape the bill that would become the *Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008*.[21]

Briya Public Charter School: A Dual Generation Approach to Pre-K *by Isabella Sanchez and Amaya Garcia*

Briya Public Charter School is the only public school in the District of Columbia to offer a dual-generation, family literacy approach to serving DLLs.[26] The family literacy element is centered around four components: early childhood education, adult education, parenting, and Parent and Child Together time (PACT).[27] As part of the dual generation model, the school offers infant/toddler care, a public pre-K program, and an adult education program. Families are provided with wraparound social and health services via a partnership with Mary's Center, a community health center that serves underserved populations. According to Cara Sklar, Director of Research and Policy at Briya, no matter what the client's point of entry, be it through Briya or Mary's Center, she will be referred to any service that she might need.[28]

Briya was founded in 1989 as an Even Start Multicultural Family Literacy Program that primarily served Central American and Vietnamese refugee families—most from low socio-economic backgrounds—who were immigrating in large numbers to DC.[29] As a federally-funded Even Start program, the center focused on delivering early childhood education, adult literacy, and parenting education to low-income families.[30] In 2005 it became a charter school called Education Strengthens Families.[31] This was a pioneering move at the time, when there were few other schools that offered adult education, and no schools that served the entire family.[32] In 2013 the school changed its name to Briya, which comes from the Spanish word brillar or to shine.[33]

Briya still serves a large number of immigrant families; 96 percent of the adult students enrolled in its programs are Limited English Proficient (LEP).[34] The majority of Briya's students are enrolled in the adult education programs, which have two components: family literacy and workforce development. Family literacy includes English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), computer literacy, and parenting classes. Workforce development initiatives include programs to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, to become a Registered Medical Assistant, and/or to earn a high school diploma.[35] In fact, some of Briya's early childhood teachers and assistants came through the school's CDA and ESOL programs.[36] Students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program receive on-site training at the Mary Center's health clinics and some are later hired to work there.

While parents are at school, their infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children get the preparation they need to succeed in kindergarten, through a project-based learning curriculum. But Briya's programs for infants and toddlers are much more than "daycare," asserts Lisa Luceno, Director of Early Childhood Education at Briya. They are part of a robust parent engagement model, where parents are seen as an invaluable component of their children's success and provided with a range of supports to facilitate their engagement in their children's learning. Parenting classes focus on developing literacy and language skills and on teaching parents techniques to support their children's development. For example, they learn how to choose appropriate books and strategies for reading those books. They also participate in Parent and Child Together Time (PACT), where they have an opportunity to spend time in the classroom and apply what they learned in their classes.

Not surprisingly, 93 percent of students enrolled in Briya's early childhood education programs are DLLs. The majority speak Spanish, but many other languages are also represented, including Bengali, Vietnamese, Amharic, Arabic, and Mandarin. Having bilingual teaching staff at Briya allows children in ECE programs to receive substantial home language support. For example, the pre-K classrooms have two teachers, one who provides instruction in English and one who provides instruction in Spanish. The rooms have charts, signs, and activities in both languages, Spanish in red and English in blue. Each classroom also has a special education teacher. Briya's ECE programs are rigorous; its project-based curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and DC's Early Learning Guidelines.

Student outcomes suggest that Briya's family literacy model is having a significant and positive impact on kindergarten readiness. The pre-K program uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system and tests students when they enter the program and when they leave the program. GOLD is an early childhood assessment tool teachers use to track students' development across a range of areas such as gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and languages. It uses national data sets to create benchmarks of what children should know at different ages and be able to do across all domains of development. Many of Briya's pre-K students enter the program performing below expectations for their age.[37] However, by the time children leave Briya, says Sklar, "they have made growth that either meets or exceeds expectations for children that age."[38]

This quilt hangs inside the front entrance to Briya Public Charter School's Georgia Avenue campus.

Designing and Implementing for Success

Today, the District of Columbia is one of the only U.S. cities with a universal pre-K program for three-and four-year-olds. Last year, DC's program enrolled more pre-kindergartners than CT, OH, AZ, MO, OR, WA, and many other states. That means that starting at age three, young DLLs (and non-DLLs) growing up in the city have access to a free, high-quality early childhood education program that operates for a minimum of 6.5 hours a day, five days a week.[22]

Research has documented the positive impact high-quality early education experiences have on DLLs' early literacy and math development.[23] A recent evaluation of Head Start's impact on DLLs found that the program led to significant growth in these children's receptive vocabulary in English (all the words they quickly recognize and understand) and early numeracy skills (basic number concepts).[24] Research has also documented that more time spent in high-quality early childhood education programs is related to improved social-emotional skills among DLLs.[25]

Building a high-quality program takes a significant investment, sufficient time. And a plan for how to scale up quality across pre-K programs. Once the *Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008* became law, leaders in DCPS' Early Childhood Education division set about designing and implementing strategies for ensuring that all pre-K programs would be high-quality.

DCPS School-Wide Head Start Model

In 2009, Miriam Calderon joined DCPS as the Director of Early Childhood Education and devised a plan for building out the school-wide Head Start model in place today. At that time, DCPS was receiving $11 million annually in Head Start funds to cover costs and services for the 1,782 students eligible for the program (Head Start income eligibility is set at equal to or below the federal poverty line), which meant that its efforts as a division were concentrated on 97 classrooms across 54 schools.[39] However, says Calderon, there were no resources available for boosting or supporting program quality. When the city began providing local pre-K funds in 2008, it meant that the District operated two distinct pre-K programs. Children from the poorest families were segregated in classrooms labeled Head Start, and some children who needed the more comprehensive services that are the hallmark of the Head Start model did not benefit from these services because they were in a classroom labeled pre-K. This led Calderon to wonder how to create a unified, equitable pre-K program for the District, one that blended and braided pre-K funds allocated by the city with federal Head Start dollars.[40]

So, Calderon approached the Office of Head Start with the following proposal: DCPS would use local funds to pay for pre-K seats and the Head Start funds to pay for program quality. Starting in the 2010–11 school year, the $11 million in Head Start funds would be spread out across all Title I schools—reaching 325 classrooms and an additional 2,900 students—with the understanding that the Head Start standards would apply in all of these classrooms. The Office of Head Start agreed, with two stipulations: that DCPS provide a monthly report showing that it was serving at least the required number of Head Start-eligible children, and that it could not draw down funds until demonstrating that it had met funded enrollment (of 1,782).[41] To date, DCPS has served thousands more Head Start-eligible children than it would have prior to the launch of the Head Start school-wide model, and it has done so in classrooms that are more economically integrated.

Since that year, the Early Childhood Education division at DCPS has worked diligently to implement and strengthen its school-wide Head Start model. These days, all of DCPS' pre-K classrooms use one of several curricula (Creative Curriculum, Tools of the Mind, or Montessori), a common assessment system (Teaching Strategies GOLD), and a common rubric to assess classroom quality.[42]

The expansion of Head Start to all Title I schools confers several advantages. First, all programs are held to the same standards, which can increase consistency across classrooms. Head Start has provisions for the screening and assessment of dual language learners and for the support of home languages in the classroom. Head Start regulations mandate that "when a majority of children speak the same language, at least one classroom staff member or home visitor interacting regularly with the children must speak their language." [43] Second, Calderon said, the program requirements mandated by Head Start serve as a "good lever to move principals" and form of accountability for district leadership to remain true to research-based practices in early childhood education.[44] Third, having a dedicated stream of funding to support program quality allows for the scaling up of large initiatives, such as establishing a formal curriculum for ECE programs or boosting the instructional support offered to teachers.

Calderon was also interested in providing teachers with more support to help them improve their practices and grow professionally.[45] And so she and her colleagues worked with local firm School Readiness Consulting to develop a coaching model and conduct the initial hiring and training of 25 coaches. The district's investment in coaching for pre-K teachers would not have been possible, Calderon said, "if we hadn't used Head Start resources differently. A coaching program is one of the single most expensive investments you make in program quality. We would have never been able to finance our coaching model out of a local investment." [46]

This initiative came just as DCPS was expanding its pre-K programs and piloting new curricula and assessments. Many teachers in these programs either had not attended a strong early education teacher preparation program or were working with three- and four-year-olds for the first time.[47] As a result, those in the Early Childhood Education division at DCPS felt it was important to build their own coaching model independent from the model used in K–12 in order to ensure that teachers and principals received training "focused on early childhood" and delivered by experts in early childhood instruction, Calderon said.[48]

The model for pre-K teachers includes a collaborative learning cycle, where coaches meet with the teaching team once a week, and an individual learning cycle, where coaches provide weekly one-on-one support to teachers, for three cycles of seven to nine weeks. Since each pre-K coach usually supports between 12 and 16 teachers across two to four schools, the team is able to provide targeted help (e.g., frequency, amount,

content) to meet teachers' needs. Goals for each teacher are identified through regular classroom observations. The content of coaching varies in order to provide the most useful support possible. Some teachers receive help setting up their classrooms and creating classroom routines and smooth transitions, while others work with coaches on lesson planning and using data to design differentiated instruction.

DCPS' early education team also created a bilingual coaching team to work with teachers in its pre-K dual immersion programs. Building this team took significant effort. During the first year of the Head Start school-wide model, "there weren't any bilingual people on the [coaching] team...No one bilingual had applied...it was a really, really hard time," said Florence Kreisman, Dual Language Manager, Early Childhood Education division at DCPS. This meant that teachers working in dual immersion programs were not being provided with the same level of coaching support as their peers teaching only in English. Fortunately, the team now has four bilingual coaches who can provide one-on-one support to teachers working in the dual immersion programs at Title I schools.

This school year (2015–16), the bilingual coaches will expand their work. They will be responsible for working with teachers in dual immersion programs and consulting in 14 schools that have a high population of DLL students, but no dual immersion program. These 14 schools have all seen a sharp increase in DLL enrollment over the past decade and have varying capacities to serve these students. According to Kreisman, the first year will consist mainly of observations, with coaches serving as "residents at these schools to get a lay of the land." Each member of the coaching team will consult at two to three schools and be tasked with devising strategies for building the capacity of instructional coaches to address the needs of their school's DLL students. Additionally, they will design professional development for teachers with the goal of building cultural competence and strategic approaches to engaging DLLs' families. This year, the coaching team has a new (fifth) member who has strong knowledge of ESL instruction and expertise in language acquisition.

DCPS is using these coaches' expertise in early childhood education and language acquisition to help ensure that more schools are equipped to support the academic achievement of their DLL students. This is a novel approach for the district; it allows DCPS to leverage bilingual coaches' language expertise to support better outcomes for DLLs across the system.

DUAL IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

On a busy morning in Sara Arranz' pre-K classroom, a small group of students is working with her on a study of balls, testing whether they bounce, and comparing their sizes and weights. Other students are swiping around on iPads reviewing letters, while another cluster of students is engaged in a lesson with an instructional aide. It is like any other classroom in Washington, DC's universal pre-K program, except instruction is taking place entirely in Spanish. Ms. Arranz teaches at Cleveland Elementary School, one of the eight DCPS schools that offers a dual immersion program.

Arranz' students start pre-K at three years old and spend their first two years of school completely immersed in Spanish. She is quick to point out her role as a language model. "First of all," she says emphatically, "I don't teach Spanish, I teach in Spanish."[49] She sees the bilingual advantage play out every day in her classroom, "You are smarter if you speak a different language because you develop a different part of your brain. You become much more creative, better problem solver, much more flexible. I see it, the way my kids face challenges and the way they find answers."[50]

The dual immersion program at Cleveland began in 2003. The majority of the school's current students are African-American and Latino, but as with many DCPS dual immersion programs, growing parental interest in these programs is changing the school's enrollment. As a consequence, each year Arranz has fewer native Spanish speakers in her class. "Next year I am going to have 15 [native English speakers] and five Spanish speakers," she says. "Every year I'm getting [fewer]." Native English-speaking families' interest in Cleveland's immersion model is challenging the school's goal of balancing classes equally between native speakers of each language.

Why Dual Immersion?

A growing research base suggests that dual immersion programs are particularly beneficial for DLLs compared to other methods of instruction. (For a short description of these methods, see sidebar on "Instructional models for supporting DLLs," page 17) Perhaps the most famous studies of the impact of dual language programs on DLL students' academic development come from George Mason University researchers Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas. In 2002, they examined the impact of Houston Independent School District's dual immersion programs on the academic achievement of DLL and non-DLL students.[51] Collier and Thomas found that Houston's two-way immersion programs effectively closed the achievement gap between DLLs and their native English-speaking peers. In fact, DCPS leaders sometimes say that one informal goal of their dual immersion programs is to "prove Thomas and Collier right."[52]

Starting early allows children to develop their two languages simultaneously and provides a boost to DLLs' acquisition of English. Research suggests that starting early with DLLs can help deepen (and speed) DLLs' English language development.[54] The city's universal pre-K system facilitates the creation of dual immersion programs that begin in early childhood and allows schools to build out programs that span eight full years before middle school. This provides young DLLs with the opportunity to progress on pace with the length of time it takes to develop both conversational (three to five years) and academic (four to seven years) proficiency in English.[55]

These trajectories are reflected in the average amount of time it takes for DLLs to be reclassified as proficient in English, or how long it takes them to shed the DLL label and be formally exited from language services. A 2015 study by Karen Thompson found that kindergartners who entered school as DLLs were typically reclassified within four to seven years.[56] Research has also documented that the impact of dual immersion on DLLs' achievement can take several years to become evident. Rachel Valentino and Sean Reardon tracked DLLs' English language arts (ELA) and math achievement trajectories from kindergarten entry through middle school and uncovered important differences in students' short-and long-term growth.[57] At the end of second grade, the ELA scores of students enrolled in dual immersion programs were significantly lower than the scores of those enrolled in English immersion programs. However, as the students

progressed, growth rates of students in dual immersion programs "far out-pace[d]" those of language learners in other programs.[58] In a different study, Reardon and Ilana Umansky found that DLL students enrolled in bilingual programs attained proficiency in English at higher rates in middle school and high school than DLL students enrolled in English immersion programs.[59]

Finally, dual immersion programs appear to support stronger multilingualism for DLLs: new research from the Houston Independent School District shows that DLLs in dual immersion programs retained and enhanced their Spanish language skills, among other positive outcomes.[60]

Researcher Jim Cummins has offered a conceptual model to explain why dual immersion programs may be particularly beneficial for DLLs. His Common Underlying Proficiency hypothesis posits that "experience with either language can promote the development of the proficiency underlying both languages."[61] In other words, learning how to read in Spanish teaches students language skills that can be applied to learning to read in English. Cummins' research has documented that bilingual children's reading scores in their first language and second language are related, and that proficiency in their first language helps children reach proficiency in their second language more quickly.

Design of Dual Immersion Programs in DC

Research on dual immersion has led to consensus on features that are essential to program success and sustainability, such as: student participation for a minimum of four to six years, a minimum of 50 percent of instruction in the target language, and effective bilingual teachers.[62] Many of these recommendations are reflected

Instructional Models for Supporting DLLs*

(These are rough definitions. Some of these terms are used in different ways in different parts of the country.)

- **Dual Immersion:** These programs take a number of forms, but generally consist of a mixed class of DLLs and native English-speakers receiving instruction in two languages. Some models begin with a 90 percent to 10 percent ratio of classroom instruction conducted in DLLs' home language to English, and shift towards a 50/50 balance over a period of years. Other dual-immersion programs begin at 50/50.

- **Maintenance or Developmental Bilingual:** These programs generally consist of a class of DLLs receiving instruction in both the home language and English, with an eye towards developing proficiency in both languages.

- **Transitional Bilingual:** These programs generally consist of a class of DLLs receiving instruction in both the home language and English with the goal of moving them into mainstream English instruction as quickly as possible. In Texas, this generally means the end of elementary school (in fifth or sixth grade).

- **English as a Second Language:** These programs usually provide instruction in English that is structured in such a way as to support English acquisition.

- **Push-In/Pull-out:** This model provides periodic, targeted instructional support from a specially-trained educator. Push-in services usually occur in the student's main classroom. Pull-out services usually involve tutoring outside the main classroom during the school day.

*Note: this sidebar is quoted—with slight modifications—from the DLL National Work Group's paper on states' policies around setting standards for formally ending DLLs' language services, "Chaos for Dual Language Learners: An Examination of State Policies for Exiting Children from Language Services in the PreK–3rd Grades."[53]

in the DCPS Language Acquisition Division (LAD)'s dual immersion program "non-negotiables."[63] Its programs must have:

- A minimum of 50 percent of content-area instruction offered in the target language so that both languages are substantively involved in academic instruction

- Instruction in the four language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in both languages throughout all grades beginning in kindergarten

- Evidence of cross-language "bridging" to build metalinguistic awareness and facilitate the transfer of conceptual knowledge[64]

- Clear separation of the two languages' usage at school (i.e., by location, time, or instructor)

- A commitment to building a long-term, uninterrupted program of no fewer than five years to capitalize on benefits of long-term study of both languages

- A model that ensures that students new to the partner language enter the program no later than first grade and ideally in early childhood

- Qualified instructors with at least near-native fluency in the languages of instruction and knowledge of language development practices

- Appropriate and equitable materials available in both target languages

These rules were put in place partly based on the results of a 2009 evaluation commissioned by LAD of its dual immersion programs that examined implementation across schools. The evaluation was a response to concerns of LAD staff "that implementation at some... schools was not consistent with best practice," said Katarina Brito, Dual Language Developer at DCPS LAD.[65] These non-negotiables are an attempt to bring some systematization to programs and to ensure a basic level of comparability, parity, and implementation across programs.

For many years, programs rarely collaborated or worked together. That changed in 2013, when DCPS put all of the dual immersion schools under the leadership of the same instructional superintendent, LaKimbre Brown. That means school leaders meet regularly, share ideas,

and advocate for the needs of dual immersion programs together.

DCPS LAD has set four primary goals for dual immersion programs. They aim to promote:

- Biliteracy

- Bilingualism

- Academic achievement at or above grade level

- Cultural competency

Despite these shared features and priorities, each dual immersion program in DCPS uses different instructional models (see sidebar: "District of Columbia Public Schools Dual Immersion Programs, 2014-2015," page 19), assessment practices, and curricula. That is intentional; DCPS provides its schools with the autonomy to design (and adjust) their own instructional models so that they can best meet the needs of their students and context.[66]

Bilingualism is the ability to speak and understand two languages fluently. The benefits of bilingualism include higher social skills, stronger logic and reasoning skills, and increased capacity for creative thinking.

Biliteracy refers to reading and writing proficiency in two languages. It includes the ability to communicate through written language and comprehend written ideas and thoughts. Biliteracy requires an integrated understanding of written symbols, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and grammar of both languages.

These programmatic differences may also be attributable to the fact that the district's dual immersion expansion has not been systematic. About half of the programs were created through school- and community-led efforts and have long operated with a great deal of autonomy. The rest are those that remain from a series of Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grants awarded

in 2002 and 2005 to LAD to develop and expand dual immersion in six DCPS schools, which were designed to provide states and local school districts with funding to develop and expand foreign language programs.[67]

The 2009 evaluation also led to a redesign of several programs and the closure of the dual immersion programs at two schools. Brito notes that the "administration at those schools was not very supportive" of their dual immersion programs.[68] In a 2008 journal article examining school-level factors that help sustain

dual immersion programs, Iliana Alanís and Mariel Rodríguez note that among the teachers they interviewed, "the principal's support and knowledge regarding dual language instruction had been crucial in program sustainability."[69] To explore the issue of principal leadership and program sustainability further, we turn to the stories of three DCPS dual immersion programs—Oyster-Adams Bilingual School, Powell Elementary School, and Bruce-Monroe at Park View Elementary School—that have each been in operation for over a decade.

District of Columbia Public Schools Dual Immersion Programs, 2014-2015

School	Percent DLL (2014)	Whole School?	Program Model
Bancroft Elementary	58%	Yes	**Two-Way Immersion** Pre-K: Full Spanish immersion K-5: 50/50 model where language used shifts by content area and units.
Bruce-Monroe @ Parkview	66%	Yes	**Two-Way Immersion** All grades: 50/50 shared unit model where students switch between English and Spanish every other day and rotate to different classrooms (and lead teachers).
Cleveland Elementary	19%	No	**Two-Way Immersion** Pre-K: Full Spanish immersion K-5: 50/50 model. All grades have literacy instruction in both languages. Grades K, 2, 4 receive math instruction in Spanish and Grades 1,3,5 receive math instruction in English.
Marie Reed Elementary	57%	No	**Two-Way Immersion** Pre-K: 90/10 model where Spanish is the primary language used for instruction. Kindergarten: 80/20 model where Spanish is the primary language of instruction. 1st-5th: 50/50 model. ELA instruction is primarily in English and Math instruction is in Spanish. Students receive some Spanish ELA focused on writing.
Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	15%	Yes	**Two-Way Immersion** Pre-K: 50/50 model where each classroom has a Spanish dominant and English dominant teacher. K-5: 50/50 model where language used varies by content area (e.g., Math is taught in Spanish)
Powell Elementary	61%	No	**Two-Way Immersion** Pre-K: 70/30 model where 70 percent of instruction is in English and 30 percent is in Spanish. K-5: 50/50 model where the language used in ELA and math instruction flips each week (one week in Spanish - one week in English)
Tyler Elementary	1%	No	**One-Way Immersion** Pre-K: 90% Spanish and 10% English K-5: 50/50 Model. Grades K – 2 language alternates by day, Grades 3 – 5 departmentalized with math in Spanish (plus literacy in Spanish)

The Expansion of Dual Immersion Programs in a Changing City

On a muggy evening in early June a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol, a group of parents and community advocates is gathered in the gym of a local school to learn about the educational benefits of bilingualism. They sit in awe as a bilingual fourth-grade student, enrolled in one of the city's dual immersion programs, speaks (first in Spanish and then English) about why learning a second language is so useful:

> Primero, aprendiendo un segundo idioma puede ayudarte tener conversaciones con personas que no hablan su idioma nativo. Segundo, aprendiendo otro idioma, como el Español, puede ayudarte con aprender otros lenguajes similares. Tercero, si sabes más de uno idioma puedes ir a muchos países y hablar esa idioma. Cuarto, saber idiomas puede ayudar su confidencia...Y más importante que todo si hablas más de una idioma su cerebro puede procesar cosas más buenas y rápida y también es más desarrollada.

> First, learning a second language can help you converse with people who don't speak your native language. Second, learning a second language, such as Spanish, can help you learn other similar languages. Third, if you know multiple languages you can travel to other countries and speak the language. Fourth, learning other languages can boost your confidence. And the most important reason is that research shows learning a second language can help you organize your mind and process things better and faster.[78]

The event was part of a grassroots effort—led by the DC Language Immersion Project—calling for the systemic expansion of dual immersion programs in the District of Columbia. The Project aims to raise awareness of the economic, educational, and cognitive benefits of bilingualism in an effort to get more schools across the city implement dual immersion programs.[79]

Currently, there are 15 dual immersion programs in the city, spanning eight DCPS schools (all offer Spanish as the partner language) and seven public charter schools (which offer Spanish, Chinese, Hebrew, and French programs). Demand for these programs is extremely high—the waiting list for the 32 three-year-old pre-K slots at Mundo Verde Public Charter School (a Spanish/English dual immersion school) tops 448—and many parents are eager for their children to reap the so-called "bilingual advantage."[80]

The DC Language Immersion Project aims to broaden access to these programs for children living east of the Anacostia River, in Wards 7 and 8 of the city. As a recent National Research Council report noted, the Anacostia River has historically served as a dividing line between the city's wealthy and low-income residents:

> The most affluent section (the city's Ward 3) has a median household income that is almost 200 percent of the citywide average; in contrast, the poorest neighborhoods have incomes that are 37 percent below the citywide average. The phrases "east of the river" (the Anacostia) and "west of the park" (Rock Creek Park) are understood by DC residents as euphemisms for the city's enduring race and class divide, a divide mirrored in the city's public schools.[81]

The vast majority of residents who live east of the river are African American and many of the public schools located in Wards 7 and 8 are chronically low-performing.[82] According to Vanessa Bertelli, co-founder of the DC Language Immersion Project, the current distribution of dual immersion programs is problematic, since "'these programs are currently concentrated in Northwest D.C. And therefore are not a viable option for people East of the [Anacostia] River.'"[83] That means that families living in other parts of the city who wish to access these programs "must have the resources or the time to travel across the District four times a day."[84]

It is true that Northwest DC is synonymous with wealth, since it contains many of the city's most affluent neighborhoods, but it is also home to neighborhoods like Brightwood and Columbia Heights, where the majority of the city's DLLs and their families live.[85] Some schools in

Figure 4

Percent of DC Children in Poverty, by Ward (2013)

Source: DC Action for Children, KIDS COUNT Data Center, http://datacenter.kidscount.org/.

4 — 18.4%
3 — 2.1%
1 — 21.9%
5 — 27.1%
2 — 5.1%
6 — 22%
7 — 40%
8 — 50.6%

0%   50%
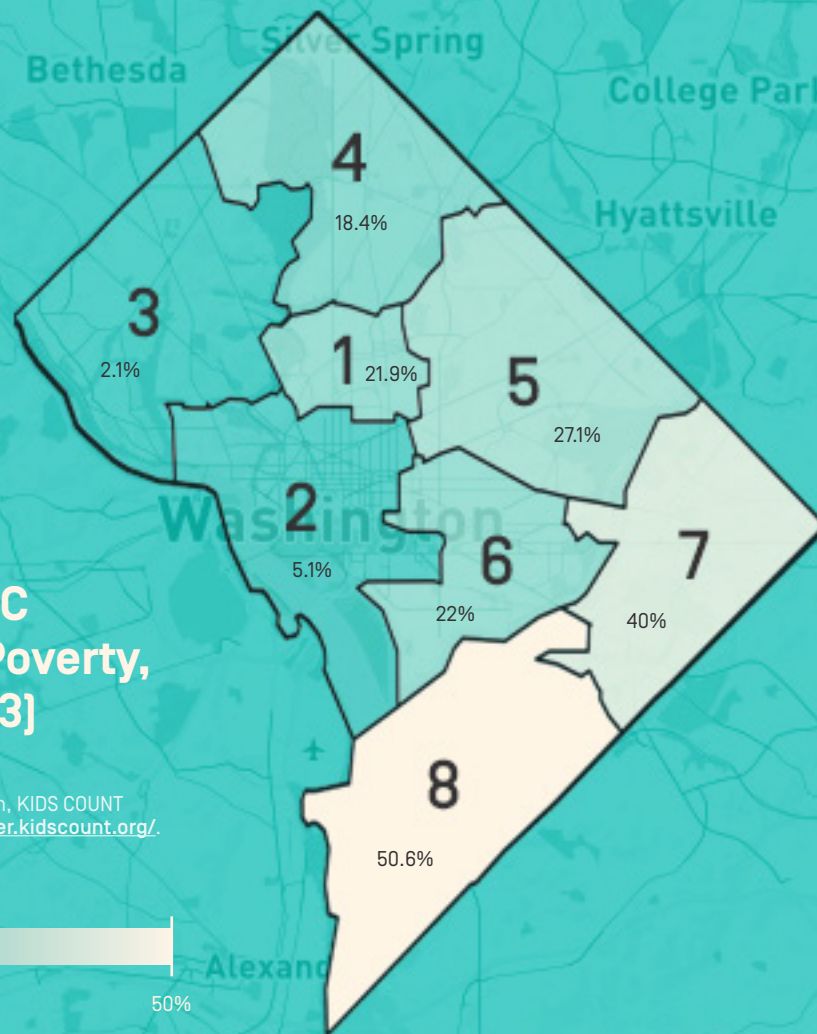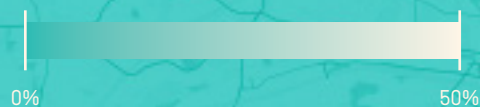
those neighborhoods have a dual immersion program, but many do not. In fact, only about one-third of DLLs in DCPS attend a school with a dual immersion program.

As Alethea Bustillo, principal of Bruce-Monroe Elementary School said, "it worries me—there's this big desire to say 'Oh, there's no dual immersion programs in Ward 8,' when we have all these other areas with high ELL populations where we don't have programs. We know this is the best service program for ELLs...we have to keep that in mind." [86]

Thus far, city leaders have been slow to further expand dual immersion programs. There are many competing priorities in an urban district with many persistently-underperforming schools. And so program expansions are largely a result of grassroots pressure. For example, Houston Elementary School, located in Ward 7, will launch a Spanish dual immersion program in the fall of 2016 thanks to parent advocacy and support from the school administrator. [87]

Oyster-Adams Bilingual School

DCPS' first dual immersion program began in 1971 at Oyster-Adams Bilingual School and grew out of "a grassroots effort coordinated by an active Hispanic community struggling to meet the needs of an increasing Latino population." [70] In fact, Oyster-Adams has the distinction of being one of the first two-way dual immersion programs in the country. [71] In the early 1990s, researcher Rebecca Freeman conducted a two-year ethnographic study of the school that examined the relationship between the program's implementation and successful outcomes for its language-minority students. [72] She wrote in 1994 that the school's planners were intentional about creating a bilingual program that gave Spanish (traditionally the minority language) equal status with English:

> The Oyster bilingual education program can best be understood as a language plan within an identity plan that aims to provide equal educational opportunities to its linguistically and culturally diverse student population by socializing its language minority and language majority students into seeing themselves and each other as equal. [73]

As such, the school implemented a so-called "two-way" immersion program—enrolling approximately equal numbers of DLLs and native English speakers—where students received 50 percent of their instruction in English and 50 percent of their instruction in Spanish. Since the program's inception, Oyster-Adams has become one of the city's most sought-after schools. The school's native Spanish-speaking dual language learners consistently outperform the city's average DLL proficiency rates on state assessments of both reading and math by a large margin. [74] In 2014, the average city-wide DLL proficiency rate in reading (for all grades and all students) was 50 percent. At Oyster-Adams, that number was 80 percent.

Oyster-Adams still uses the 50/50 model in its first through fifth grade classrooms. Students in these grades have their day split between two classrooms—one where English is the primary language of instruction and one where Spanish is the primary language of instruction. All classes are co-taught by two teachers who both speak English or who both speak Spanish. Additionally, the language of instruction is split among the content areas: language arts is taught in both English and Spanish (to help students develop literacy in both languages), math is

taught Spanish, and science and social studies are taught in English.

Despite the program's longevity, school leaders are continuously refining the model to better support students. For example, the school only began teaching all math courses in Spanish four years ago, which resulted in a 20-point increase in test scores in the first year after making the change. [75] And students in pre-kindergarten now stay in the same classroom with the same two teachers all day. One teacher is Spanish-dominant and the other is English-dominant. The pre-K classrooms are designed to create different settings for the two languages. The classrooms are set up in an "L" shape and have one area set aside for Spanish and one area set aside for English. Different colors are used for Spanish and English on the signs and instructional materials hanging on classroom walls.

The school's population of DLLs and low-income students has declined over the past 10 years. As with Cleveland Elementary's program, these changes seem to be due in large part to the influx of white, middle-income, English-speaking parents and the shrinking availability of affordable housing in the neighborhood surrounding the school. (See sidebar: "The Expansion of Dual Immersion Programs in a Changing City," page 20.) In response, Principal Mayra Canizales has taken steps to ensure that the school enrolls enough DLLs to maintain the program's original vision. In the last school lottery, she set aside 32 of the 40 available pre-K seats for "Spanish-dominant" students. [76] Canizales' aggressive push to keep her program balanced is indicative of her confidence at the helm of a prominent dual immersion program. School leadership is an integral, yet understudied, component of dual immersion program success and sustainability. [77]

Powell Elementary School

When Janeece Docal took over as principal of Powell Elementary in the fall of 2009, the school's future looked bleak. Powell had been struggling for years with low test scores and declining student enrollment, and was on the precipice of being closed. It had one of the highest percentages of DLL students in the city and was a place where, administrators say, there was "not [a lot] of good going on." [88] Powell has had a dual immersion program since 2005, but through interviews with parents and teachers, Docal learned that because "there wasn't a clear model," the instructional approach became "every teacher for themselves [sic]." [89] So she set out to develop

a new, aligned model with the input of the Language Acquisition Division at DCPS, parents, students, and staff, and lessons learned from observations of other dual immersion programs.

The first 50/50 program Docal put into place was based largely on staffing; it reflected the number of bilingual teachers working at the school. Each grade with a dual immersion strand had one Spanish classroom and one English classroom—and all subjects were taught in both languages on alternating days.[90] However, this structure created gaps in students' knowledge because teachers did not have sufficient time to collaborate on planning instruction across the two languages. As a result, the school worked with LAD staff to define a new model that placed more ephasis on bridging across languages.

Students still spend half of each day learning in English and the other half learning in Spanish, but the language used in their content classes changes week to week. For example, students' daily literacy block will be delivered in Spanish one week and in English the next. That means that students sometimes read stories in both languages. While this model still requires some collaborative planning, it is a more manageable load for teachers. Teachers participate in monthly meetings to look at student data and to discuss what is going well in their classes.[91] Additionally, teachers meet every week in professional learning communities.

Docal's moves changed the school's trajectory. Today, Powell Elementary is a shining star in DCPS. Since 2009 enrollment has surged to 446 students, proficiency rates have climbed by 15 percentage points in math and 23 percentage points in reading, and in 2013 the school was awarded second place in a Spanish Embassy competition for the best bilingual school in the U.S.[92] In 2014, Docal was recognized as DC Principal of the Year.[93] And yet, after leading the school for six years, she left Powell at the end of the 2014–15 school year (for family reasons). This is a major challenge for Powell, and for any dual immersion program, because of the role that school leadership and continuity plays in sustaining these programs.[94]

Bruce-Monroe at Park View Elementary School

At the end of the 2014–15 school year, DCPS lost another veteran dual immersion principal, Marta Palacios. She led Bruce-Monroe Elementary School at Park View for 15 years. Luckily, the new principal at Bruce-Monroe, Alethea Bustillo, has been working at the school in a

number of capacities since 1997 and is familiar with how the dual immersion program has grown and evolved over the years.

In the late 1990s, the DLL population at Bruce-Monroe was "exploding" yet the school had only five ESL teachers and one transitional bilingual kindergarten classroom. The school's administrators could see that the model was not serving DLLs well—there were retention disparities between non-DLL and DLL students (more DLL students were being held back) and the transitional bilingual classroom was fairly segregated. It quickly became Palacios' "mission to have dual language" available to all students and to see "Latino and African American students learning two languages together."[95]

In 2003, Bruce-Monroe leveraged its FLAP grant funds to buy materials and provide training and coaching to teachers working in dual immersion classrooms—and to gradually expand the program to the entire school. Teachers and administrators worked together to decide what the school's model would be, which, according to Bustillo, "took a little bit of time."[96] But the hard work paid off and by 2008 dual immersion was running in Bruce-Monroe's pre-K through fourth grade classrooms.

Around that time, DCPS Chancellor Michelle Rhee made the controversial move to close 23 under-enrolled schools—and Bruce-Monroe was designated to absorb some of the students affected by the closures.[97] In fact, Bruce-Monroe not only absorbed students from the closed Park View Elementary School but also moved into its former building. That was a difficult transition: Park View families were unfamiliar with dual immersion and some families coming from Bruce-Monroe "felt pushed out," says Bustillo. The school offered both an English strand and a dual immersion strand, but that division created "two identities and two communities."[98] Parents in the English strand expressed concern that the "dual language strand [had] way more resources. [The] English strand is getting less." To remedy these issues, school leaders began planning across the strands to create stronger alignment, but it was not enough. Instead, in the 2014–15 school year, Bruce-Monroe eliminated the English strand and implemented the dual immersion program school-wide.

The school's focus now is on skillful implementation of the dual immersion programs across all grade levels. For instance, the first grade teaching team has worked with coaches to increase alignment across English and Spanish instruction. Additionally, consistent curricula have been adopted—these include the Readers/Writers Workshop

model developed by Lucy Calkins, Singapore Math, and Creative Curriculum in pre-K. The program's 50/50 model has also evolved over the years to a shared unit model where students switch between English and Spanish every other day and rotate to different classrooms.

As Bustillo continues to think about ways that DLLs can be better served, especially at schools with small DLL populations or that historically have not had to serve these students, she asks, "can we be designated as a school for newcomers? Some schools are not equipped... [DLLs] are hidden in schools that don't have any experience with this population." [99] This is an idea that could prove powerful in a city where many teachers lack the training to support DLLs and where the district must contend with a scarce supply of bilingual educators able to provide these students with support in their home languages.

Bilingual Teacher Recruitment and Retention in DCPS Dual Immersion Programs

The District's struggles to find enough multilingual teachers mean that expanding dual immersion programs citywide is anything but simple. As already mentioned, one important DCPS priority for all of its dual immersion programs (PK–12th grade) is "Qualified instructors with at least near-native fluency in the language of instruction and knowledge of language development practices." But what does it mean to be qualified? And how does the answer to this question influence how the district recruits bilingual teachers? How do documented shortages in qualified bilingual teacher candidates come into play? [100]

The city's pool of qualified bilingual teachers is, to an important degree, within its control. Its own teacher licensure laws define its pool of "qualified instructors." Many individuals working within DCPS view current requirements as barriers to recruiting linguistically diverse educators who will be able to build long-term teaching careers in the District.[101] In order to obtain a regular teaching license candidates must have: a Bachelor's degree, completion of an approved teacher preparation program, and passing scores on both the Praxis I and II.

Consider this example: the requirement that all teachers pass the Praxis exam in English shrinks the pool of bilingual candidates. Many of DCPS' dual immersion programs employ bilingual paraprofessionals who are eager to become certified teachers, but are unable to pass the Praxis I and II. In many cases, their struggles with

the assessments are due solely to their still-developing English proficiency.

This rule is not set in stone—it is broadly within DC's control. After all, since teachers in DCPS dual immersion programs need to work in Spanish, not English, LAD has suggested that the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education consider adopting a Spanish language teacher licensure exam such as the Programa de Pruebas para la Certificación de Maestros (PCMAS) used in Puerto Rico.

As a result of these—and other—limitations to its pool of teachers with diverse language backgrounds, DCPS relies on the Spanish Embassy's Visiting Teachers from Spain program. In spring 2015, the District hired eight teachers from Spain. This brought the district-wide total up to 30. These teachers are expected to become fully licensed within their first year, says Brito: "they are all fully licensed in Spain and have all the coursework and experience necessary but need time here to pass the five Praxis exams needed for full licensure." [102]

The system's reliance on teachers from abroad is problematic for several reasons. First, teachers who come via the Spanish Embassy's program have only a one- to three-year window in the U.S., because of visa restrictions. In effect, DPCS has a rotating cycle of Spanish teachers. It hires about eight to ten teachers per year and about that many leave each year. The length of time these teachers spend working in DC depends on whether they are able to secure a visa to stay beyond three years (traditionally, DCPS has only sponsored visiting teacher visas for three years, which can make it difficult for them to stay in the district long-term.) [103] To be fair, DCPS is caught in a tough spot, since sponsoring visas is expensive and the application process is often unpredictable.

Teachers arriving from Spain, or other countries, also contend with working in a system that might not align well with their training and pedagogical understanding. Cultural differences also sometimes arise, since most of DLL students in DC are from Central America. Those differences can make the transition into the classroom more difficult and have a negative impact on teacher retention. "I think that [these] teachers are leaving because the cultural [differences] and the shock [are] huge. I come from another country, period. So that's one thing. And it's another system of education," says Sara Arranz, who became a DCPS teacher via the Spanish Embassy's program.[104]
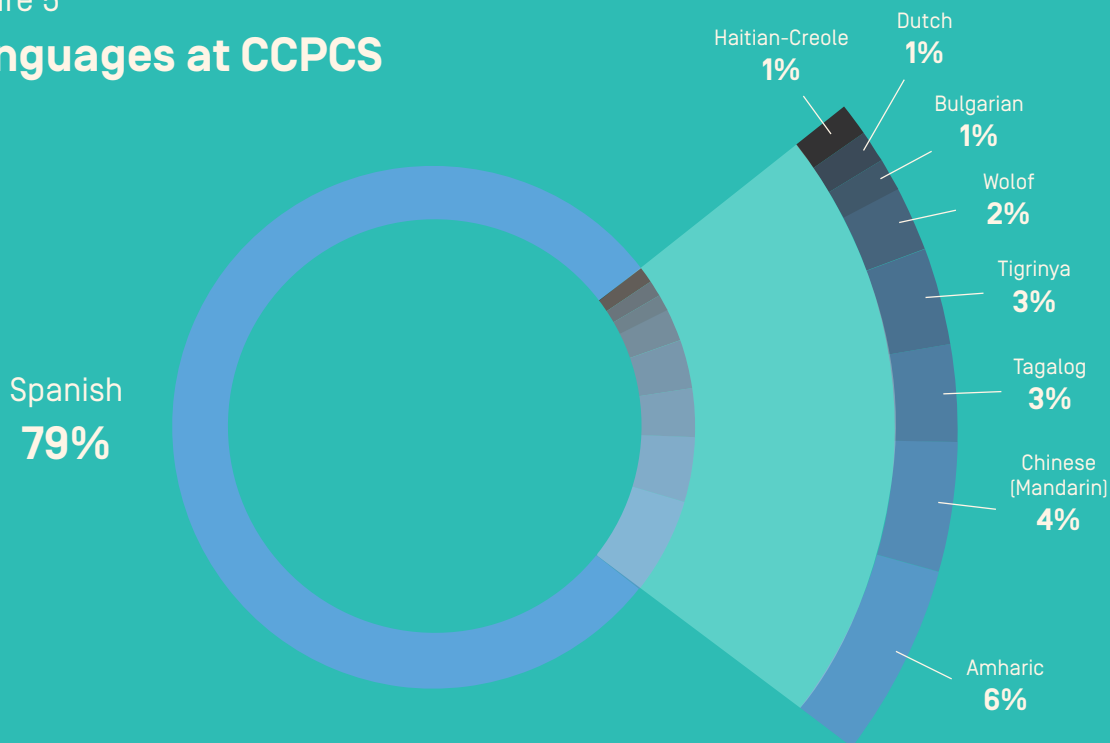
CENTER CITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS: AN INTENTIONAL FOCUS ON SUPPORTING DLLS

The majority of DLLs attending school in the District of Columbia are not enrolled in dual immersion or bilingual education programs, but rather in ESL programs that provide targeted instruction and support in learning English. But what does a good ESL program look like? And how can schools (or districts) design programs that best meet the needs of their DLL students? In 2010, Center City Public Schools—a network of charter schools with six PreK–8th grade campuses across the District of Columbia—set out to answer these questions by

instituting a set of systemic and replicable improvements in quality instructional delivery that helped not only boost the achievement of its DLL students, but build their schools' capacity for serving these children and their families.

In 2014, Center City's schools enrolled 1,483 students, the majority of whom were African American or Latino (95 percent) or low-income (66 percent). Only nine percent of Center City students are formally classified as DLLs,

Figure 5
Languages at CCPCS

Spanish **79%**

Haitian-Creole **1%**

Dutch **1%**

Bulgarian **1%**

Wolof **2%**

Tigrinya **3%**

Tagalog **3%**

Chinese (Mandarin) **4%**

Amharic **6%**

Courtesy of Alicia Passante, Center City Public Charter Schools.

but they are concentrated at three of the six campuses— Brightwood, Petworth, and Shaw. The majority of these students speak Spanish, but there are growing numbers of students whose home language is Amharic or Mandarin. (See Figure 5.)

Each Center City campus enrolls an average of 245 students and has only one classroom per grade level. Part of this is due to the fact that Center City's buildings are former private Catholic schools. "We wanted to continue to provide our families with the small, neighborhood-based school environment that the Catholic school provided," said Alicia Passante, ESL Manager at Center City.

DC's various education accountability systems sometimes provide schools with conflicting signals about their effectiveness. As a result, in 2012, Center City's Petworth campus was simultaneously ranked as a highly successful school by the Performance Management Framework (which the Public Charter School Board uses to evaluate the performance of the city's public charter schools) and flagged by the state accountability system due to performance gaps between DLLs and their non-DLL peers. According to Passante, that moment served to highlight weaknesses in ESL instruction: "clearly there was something going on where the kids were receiving really high-quality instruction and [DLLs] just weren't getting it."[105]

Tracking the Evolution of Center City's ESL Program Model

Even before 2012, Center City staff and leadership recognized the need to develop a stronger ESL program model. When Passante first came to Center City PCS in 2010 as an ESL teacher at both the Petworth and Brightwood campuses, she noted that, "it was kind of just push-in support, help them however you can." No one in the central office was in charge of overseeing the ESL program. "We had a timeline of things that we needed to hand in order to be compliant," Passante said, "but that's really all programmatically that we had."[106] Others described the role of ESL teachers at that time as being similar to specialists who would come in and provide teachers with occasional support when needed.[107]

As a result, the first initiative undertaken by the Center City central office was to change the staffing model used at its schools with large DLL populations. "In the beginning our teachers were spread really thin," said Passante. "They were working across caseloads [of] 30

kids. When you have a span that wide, really there's only twenty minutes here and there when you can really get into the classrooms, and what can you do in twenty minutes that can really move students?" So Center City hired more staff and assigned ESL teachers to work with specific grade bands (PreK–1; 2–5, 6–8) in order to provide more targeted support and facilitate stronger teacher-student relationships. The district made this change without having to raise any extra funds. "We got creative and…we were just smarter about how we used the amazing teachers we already have," said Cristine Doran, Director of Finance and Facilities.[108]

The network also implemented a co-teaching model that allowed ESL teachers to provide small group support within the classroom. The co-teaching model allows classroom teachers and ESL teachers to "focus on co-planning and collaborating to deliver well-planned, differentiated lessons with a reduced teacher-student ratio," said Doran.[109] At Center City, ESL teachers pre-teach content to DLLs before it is introduced to everyone in class. Passante describes the model as "pulling the students [and] giving them the background information that they need in order to access the lesson. Giving them the vocabulary that they need…[and] building their background knowledge so they can actually know about what they're going to be learning about."[110] Instructors also focus on building students' academic language skills and giving students multiple opportunities to "read, write, speak, and listen" about the class content. On Center City campuses, many classrooms have multiple adults working with students in small groups. Students rotate frequently between teachers and stations to work on different skills and objectives.

Kindergarten students work with the ESL teacher to build vocabulary using pictures and kinesthetic techniques. Before reading a book together, students are introduced to six vocabulary words and each word is paired to a picture. They are asked to read the word and guess it's meaning based on the picture. The teachers and students talk together until they are able to figure out the meaning. Each word is paired to an action—so for the word "intertwined," the students and teachers intertwined their own fingers together—and the child is asked to perform that action each time the word appears in the book. Students are also asked to use each new vocabulary word in a sentence. Preteaching vocabulary helps to increase DLLs' comprehension of written texts.[111]

Research has documented that instruction that draws on multiple learning domains (kinesthetic, oral, verbal, visual, etc.) can be especially powerful for learning
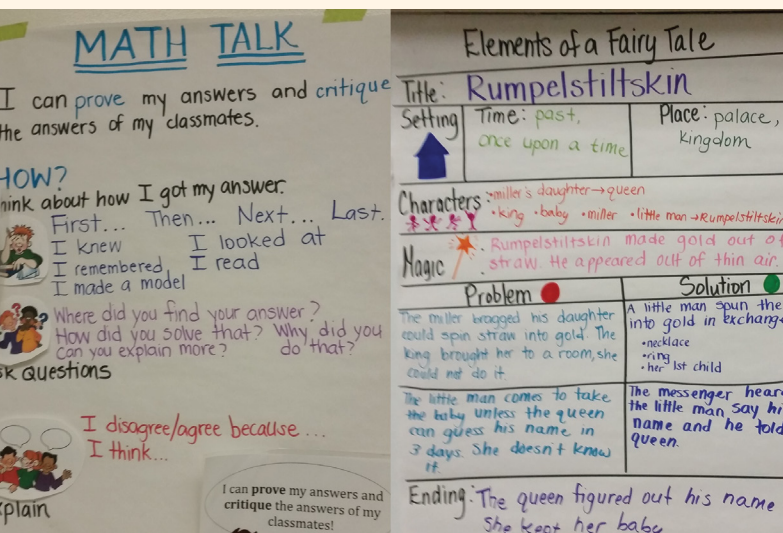
Sentence Starters and Graphic Organizer from a first grade classroom at Center City–Brightwood campus.

languages. In a review of effective instructional practices for DLLs, researchers Russell Gersten and Scott Baker note that "visuals are especially successful in English-language development because they help students visualize the abstractions of language…visual aids such as graphic organizers, concept and story maps, and word banks give students a concrete system to process, reflect on, and integrate information."[112] Many teachers use sentence frames, sentence starters, and graphic organizers to help facilitate students' understanding. (See photo above.) These techniques provide students with scaffolding to help them respond both orally and in writing. (For more on teacher scaffolding of students' language development, see the DLL National Work Group's profile of the David Douglas School District, *A Voice for All: Oregon's David Douglas School District Builds a Better PreK–3rd Grade System for Dual Language Learners*.)

Additionally, teachers provide students with opportunities to engage in "turn and talk" activities to help them practice using academic language. Turn and talk is a common ESL activity: the teacher will introduce a topic or a question and then have students talk with a partner about their thoughts on the topic or question. At Center City, teachers are encouraged to cut back on the amount of time they spend standing in front of students and talking. "Teachers are so wrapped up in what they need to say and what they need to do and how they present the information [but] when you really think about the things in the class, that's not the most important

thing at all. The most important thing for them to do is facilitate a conversation or some kind of activity in which the students are kind of the ones doing the saying and doing the thinking," explains Passante.

Center City's emphasis on students "producing language" is in line with research on how to best support DLLs. In fact, oral language development is an essential building block of students' reading skills and overall success in school.[113] In a summary of two prominent research reviews conducted on best practices for educating DLLs, Stanford professor Claude Goldenberg concluded:

> It is evident that improving oral English proficiency is a must. ELLs' language limitations begin to impede their progress most noticeably as they move beyond the early stages of reading, and vocabulary and content knowledge become increasingly relevant for continued reading (and general academic) success—usually around third grade. This is why it is critical that teachers work to develop ELLs' oral English, particularly vocabulary, and their content knowledge from the time they start school.[114]

Providing DLLs—and non-DLLs—with regular opportunities to talk helps accelerate their oral language development. And this provides a strong foundation for going from social language development to full academic language proficiency.

These staffing and instructional changes are not the only innovations developed by Center City to boost the achievement of DLL students. In 2012, Center City developed ESL After the Bell, an afterschool program developed to provide language learners with project-based activities to help support the development of English proficiency and work towards meeting state standards. The program was designed in response to the performance gaps between DLL and non-DLL students at the Petworth campus.
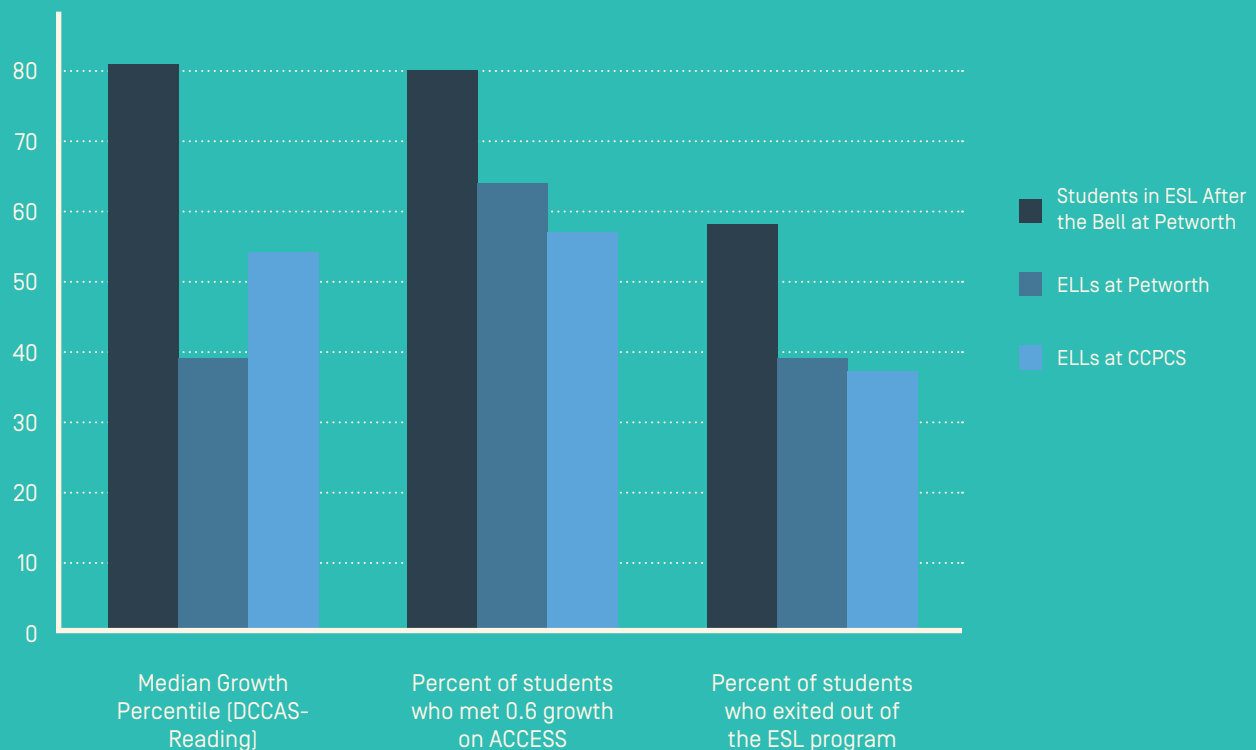
ESL After the Bell was created by former Director of Language Acquisition Megan Sands. Passante recounts how Sands and her colleagues at the Center City central office sought to use their Title III funds more meaningfully. They asked themselves, "what can we create…and see the actual impact of that goes beyond just providing more [professional development] or staff or buying extra books that are going to sit on a shelf somewhere?" The idea they came up with was ESL After the Bell.

The program's activities are scaffolded to support students' access to challenging, interesting content while meeting them at their level of English language development. In one case, students each selected a country to study and wrote about what they had learned. The second and third graders were provided with sentence frames that helped them highlight the country's population and common foods. Fourth and fifth grade students interviewed immigrants and wrote about their experiences moving to and living in the U.S. These projects were designed to help students "use reading, writing, listening, speaking, and collaborative skills to build knowledge about a topic," said Passante.[115]

In the first year of implementation, the program was only offered at the Petworth campus and designed to help close the performance gaps identified by the state's accountability system. Every DLL student in grades K–8 who was receiving DLL services was invited to participate in the program, which ran after school for two hours a day, four days a week, for four months. The program curriculum was designed to target specific standards and gaps. Center City educators wanted to ensure that the project-based curriculum was aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Passante and her team "did a really deep dive" into the academic standards and used data from interim assessments to identify gaps in DLLs' performance (specifically, they flagged any standard on which DLL students were performing at least 10 percent lower than their peers), and "designed the curriculum around targeting those standards."[116]

Figure 6
ESL After the Bell Data - Program Effectiveness

Legend:
- Students in ESL After the Bell at Petworth
- ELLs at Petworth
- ELLs at CCPCS

X-axis categories:
- Median Growth Percentile (DCCAS-Reading)
- Percent of students who met 0.6 growth on ACCESS
- Percent of students who exited out of the ESL program

The program was exhausting—it was a long day for students and teachers who stayed at school for nine hours a day, four days a week—but that hard work produced impressive results. (See Figure 6.) After the first year of ESL After the Bell, the math and reading proficiency rates of DLL students at Petworth rose by 30 and 35 percentage points, respectively, and half of DLL students exited formal DLL classification (including a substantial number of long-term DLLs who had been receiving services for more than three years). Moreover, participation in the program improved students' attendance and built their confidence. "We correlated the attendance to their attendance in school, and the kids, they didn't miss school anymore," beamed Passante. "And they were raising their hands in class and they just all came out of their shell. And after that year, we were like, we have to do this again." [117]

In the second year of the program, 2013–14, the model changed to include both English and Spanish instruction and was scaled back to first- to eighth-grade students. Students still attended the program four days a week, but received two days of ESL support and two days of Spanish instruction. "Parents loved it because it was an opportunity for [their child] to learn in their native language," said Passante. "A lot of our parents are first generation immigrants…so that just kind of built the bridge of relationships with families because it also showed them that we value them and where they come from."

Research on family engagement suggests that DLLs' families often face obstacles when interacting with schools due to linguistic and cultural differences. Breaking down these barriers includes helping families see that their culture and language is valued at the school and that "their home language is a strength, not a deficit" for their children's learning, according to researchers Linda C. Halgunseth, Gisela Jia, and Oscar A. Barbarin.[118] Providing home language support also helps maintain students' connections to their culture and extended families. According to DLL researcher Linda Espinosa, "children who do not develop and maintain proficiency in their home language may lose their ability to communicate with parents and family members and risk becoming estranged from their cultural and linguistic heritage." [119]

Center City's teachers endeavor to support students' home languages in their classrooms to the extent possible. We heard the story of one fifth grade student, Brian, who had arrived in the U.S. from El Salvador at the beginning of the year.[120] He and his little brother had
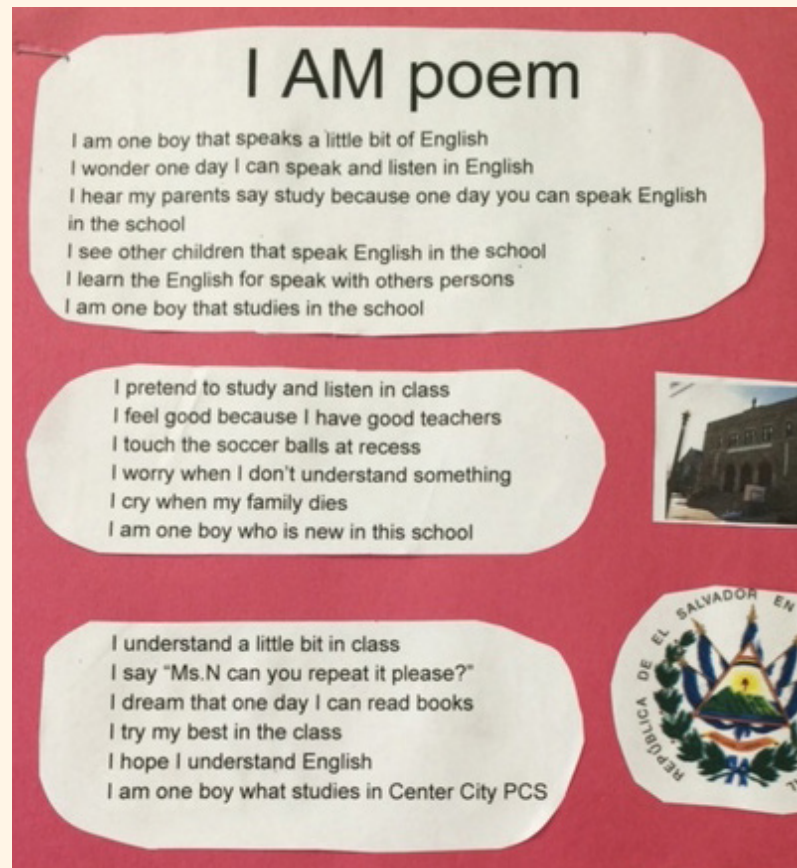
Brian's "I AM" poem. Courtesy of Alicia Passante.

been sent to live with their aunt, while their parents stayed behind. Brian did not speak or understand much English when he arrived at the school, but his teacher quickly realized that he had strong Spanish literacy skills that could help him keep pace with the rest of the class. The school bought Brian books in Spanish, which allowed him to read the same stories as the rest of his peers. It worked. By the end of his first year at Center City, Brian had made five times the amount of expected growth in English and moved from a "beginner" level to a "developing" level of proficiency on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment (See Figure 7 for more information on this assessment).[121]

Center City administrators explain that they often shape their language arts instruction around books for which they can purchase Spanish translations. Personalized learning goals are a core priority in their model. Schools use Individualized English Language Learner Plans (IELLPs) to set goals and track student progress in

meeting those goals. IELLPs are developed by first looking at a student's language assessment data (on the WIDA ACCESS) to identify her baseline score (See Figure 7 below for more information on WIDA.). Next the instructional team sets a goal for the student that is at least one instructional level above where she is in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.[122]

That means each DLL student has sixteen objectives to meet by the end of the year that are tailored to his individual needs. "If a student is a level five in speaking, [his] goal would be a level six. But if [he's] a level one in reading then [his] goal in reading would be a level two. So, it's not just, oh we're going to get [him] level sixes in everything, because that's not the reality of what [his] needs are," said Passante.[123] This information is used to drive teachers' instruction and lesson planning. For example, if a group of students scores low in the writing domain, teachers can integrate writing tasks into their reading and math assignments. A student's progress reaching goals is tracked using examples of his work

from lessons that were designed to measure those specific skills and competencies. By the end of the school year, the IELLP essentially becomes a portfolio of a student's work that provides documentation of his growth.

After implementing the ESL After the Bell program and IELLP system, reading and math scores increased 30 percentage points at Center City's Petworth campus in 2013.[124] ESL After the Bell also proved to be successful in improving student engagement and as a tool for parents to become engaged with what their children are learning in school.

But, what other strategies do Center City schools use to work with their linguistically diverse families? That work has been more challenging. Many parents have low language skills, even in their home language, and varying levels of English proficiency. All Center City schools with high DLL populations hire bilingual office administrators to ensure that parents can have questions answered and receive assistance with enrolling/re-enrolling their

Figure 7

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs

Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 Reaching

WIDA has developed an exam called ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) to monitor ELLs' progress in acquiring English. It assesses students' abilities to speak, read, write, and listen in English, across major content areas. Students are given a composite score as well as scores in the individual domains.

Students in grades 1–12 are assigned a composite score that places them in an associated proficiency level ranging from 1 to 6, while kindergarten students are placed in levels ranging from 1 to 5. The levels indicate progression from knowing little to no English (levels 1 and 2), developing intermediate to high levels of English skills (levels 3, 4, and 5), to acquiring grade-level English skills and becoming English-proficient (level 6). In DC, a level 5 or above indicates that students are ready to exit ELL status.

children. One school with a growing number of Mandarin and Amharic speakers recently hired a full-time counselor who speaks Mandarin and a teacher who speaks Amharic.

In the 2014–15 school year, three Center City schools (Shaw, Brightwood, and Petworth) partnered with DC's Flamboyan Foundation to develop more robust parent engagement strategies via its Family Engagement Partnership.[125] Flamboyan's model is built around teacher home visits and parent-teacher communication. Teachers in participating schools receive training and funding to conduct home visits in order to build strong relationships with parents and families. Additionally, schools hold Academic Parent–Teacher Team meetings where all parents in a class meet together with the teacher to discuss expectations, share information on the academic skills students need to be successful, review data on their students' progress, and get resources/materials for learning activities at home. Parents and teachers work together to set performance goals for their children/ students.

Nazo Burgy, principal of Center City–Petworth, noted in the spring that over half of families at her school received a home visit at the start of the school year. However, many of the Spanish-speaking families did not receive a home visit because there were not translators available.[126] Burgy plans to ensure that more Spanish-speaking families are able to participate in home visits in the next school year.

The work that Center City schools have engaged in over the past three years to improve outcomes for their DLL students would not have been possible without charter school autonomy. Public charter schools have control over their curricula, programs, hiring, and budgets. Consider the fact that, when Passante and her colleagues wanted to expand ESL After the Bell to serve three campuses (a large new expense for the network), "all I had to do was ask for it…We are a small community and…I have full confidence that I can go to our Senior Leadership Team and say, 'I really think that this is what could really help move these kids at this campus.' We do anything that we can to make it work." [127]

That willingness to improve practices and programs to better address student needs is part of the culture of Center City. Its small school model ensures that every

"Every single adult that walks into those schools knows every single student's name. Even at the central office, it's not like we look at our data spreadsheet of all of our assessment data and we see kids that are in red and we're like, 'Oh no, that student is not meeting our benchmark.' We're like, 'Oh no, that's Johnny.' And we know what Johnny's whole story is and the supports that he needs."

– Alicia Passante, ESL Manager at Center City Public Charter Schools

staff member at each school knows each child. Many of the central office staff began their careers working at one of Center City's campuses and they maintain strong connections to the schools. As Passante said, "every single adult that walks into those schools knows every single student's name. Even at the central office, it's not like we look at our data spreadsheet of all of our assessment data and we see kids that are in red and we're like, 'Oh no, that student is not meeting our benchmark.' We're like, 'Oh no, that's Johnny.' And we know what Johnny's whole story is and the supports that he needs." This knowledge allows teachers, school administrators, and central office staff to design differentiated supports and district-wide initiatives around the needs of their students.

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

The District of Columbia's public education system has much to envy: high levels of per-pupil funding, a robust universal pre-K system, abundant school choice, and a governance structure that provides local districts with autonomy. The schools featured here represent some of the highlights and strengths of DC's best reform efforts for supporting DLLs' linguistic and academic development.

The dual immersion programs offered by DCPS provide DLLs with an opportunity to develop their home language and English language skills simultaneously. But they also help DLLs and their families to recognize their home languages as assets for the school community. In the words of Katarina Brito, the motivation behind DCPS dual immersion programs is to "protect the dignity of home language and prove that dual [immersion] is the best model for math, literacy, and content knowledge." [128] The district is making deliberate investments in ensuring that DLLs graduate from DCPS bilingual, biliterate, and with strong academic skills.

Center City Public Charter Schools has used its autonomy to create programs and services that address the needs of DLL students on each of its campuses. As David Osborne wrote in his examination of education reform in DC, the city's charter schools are set up so that "the extraordinary measures necessary to effectively educate poor, minority children are not only easier to implement, they are virtually required if schools are to survive." [129] Luckily, the "extraordinary measures" taken by Center City to improve the academic achievement of its DLLs include replicable strategies, like using data and student work to set rigorous goals for each DLL, track student progress, and design instructional interventions.

The stories shared here provide important lessons on how districts and schools can better support the learning and academic achievement of their DLLs, but they also represent pockets of excellence in a public education system that provides insufficient monitoring and guidance on how to address the educational needs of DLLs across all campuses. [130] And so, the lessons below extend not only to school districts across the country, but also to schools across the District of Columbia:

Lesson #1: Make investments in early education and maintain a strong focus on program quality. The District of Columbia has made a substantial investment in expanding pre-K to all three- and four-year-old children living in the city. [131] Building up a universal pre-K system required years of advocacy to get buy-in from city leaders willing to spearhead the charge, draft legislation, and get it passed. DCPS used a creative approach to blend local funds with Head Start funds to make quality control more systematic across all of its pre-K programs. It also adopted standard curricula, assessments, and a coaching model to align instruction with developmentally appropriate practices.

Upshot: While blending and braiding pre-K funding can create some oversight and compliance challenges, it can also support increased pre-K access and strong quality support systems.

Lesson #2: Design dual immersion programs to meet the needs and context of individual schools. Across DCPS and the public charter school sector, no two dual immersion programs look alike. Within DCPS, each program uses a different model because each operates in a unique context shaped by students, staff, and leadership. Providing schools with flexibility allows them to design the best program they can feasibly implement to meet their specific students' needs.

Upshot: Districts implementing dual immersion programs should create a shared set of goals and "must haves," but provide schools with the flexibility to refine models that best meet their particular needs.

Lesson #3: Use strong school leadership to help sustain dual immersion programs. A principal's knowledge of the program, commitment to its vision and mission, willingness to evaluate and redesign the model and attention to implementation are key factors in helping to grow, improve, and sustain a dual immersion program. These assets require continuity of school—and district—leadership.

Upshot: Effective implementation of dual immersion programs requires steady leadership and sufficient resources.

Lesson #4: Provide all teachers with the support and training necessary to implement effective instruction for their DLL students. DCPS uses coaching to provide pre-K teachers working in dual immersion programs with differentiated supports and is expanding the program to include pre-K teachers working in non-immersion settings. Center City has a co-teaching model where classroom teachers collaborate with ESL teachers, providing them with key strategies for supporting English language acquisition. Professional learning communities can also provide a space for teachers to examine student data, develop instructional strategies, and learn more about research-based practices that can guide their work with DLL students.

Upshot: All teachers need to be prepared to support DLLs' success, and districts can use multiple strategies to help them develop these skills.

Lesson #5: Use school accountability to drive school improvement. Center City Public Schools–Petworth campus was flagged by the state accountability system for performance gaps between DLL and non-DLL students. The charter network's leadership set out to identify these gaps, redesign the instructional model, and develop data-driven strategies to support DLLs. As a result, ESL After the Bell provides students with extended learning opportunities and project-based activities aligned to the Common Core State Standards that focus on developing their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. And IELLPs provide students with personalized learning goals and track their progress in meeting those goals.

Upshot: Districts should delve into their DLLs' performance data in order to identify instructional gaps, devise appropriate supports, and monitor student progress throughout the school year.

Lesson #6: Design and implement ESL program models that allow teachers to push into the classroom whenever possible. Center City's co-teaching model provides DLL students with targeted ESL instruction that is aligned to the lessons being covered in their content-area classes. Classroom teachers collaborate with ESL teachers to plan lessons and better differentiate instruction for DLLs.

Upshot: Co-teaching models should provide DLL students with the opportunity to be integrated in the mainstream classroom rather than segregated in separate ESL classes.

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