Thank you for considering District 742’s Immersion Programs for your child. Our programs provide exciting and challenging educational opportunities that will prepare your child for the 21st century.

We realize that sending your child to kindergarten can be exciting but stressful as well, for both you and your child. The anxiety can be lessened if parents and children know what to expect. This information guide is intended to answer your questions about immersion programs in our district. We hope this guide will provide you with information you need to make a decision on whether an immersion program is right for your child.

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BENEFITS OF LEARNING 2 LANGUAGES

- Enhances academic and linguistic performance in both languages
- Cognitive advantages—physically enhances brain development
- Increases career and social opportunities
- Expands world view
- Scores statistically higher on SAT college entrance exam
- Increases attendance at colleges and universities
- Improves English language skills
- Enhances learning capacity for life

* College Entrance Examination Board, 1992

SPANISH IMMERSION

Cleanview Elementary (K-5)
7310 Highway 24, Clear Lake, 320-370-6510

South Junior High (4-8)
1120 13th Ave S, St. Cloud, 320-370-7230

Tech High School (9-12)
4200 33rd St S, St. Cloud, 320-370-8580

CHINESE IMMERSION

Madison Elementary (K-6)
2805 49th St N, St. Cloud, 320-370-6300

North Junior High (6-8)
1212 29th Ave N, St. Cloud, 320-370-7000

Apolo High School (9-12)
1020 44th Ave N, St. Cloud, 320-370-8650

LEARN MORE AT A LANGUAGE IMMERSION INFORMATION NIGHT!

Spanish Immersion
Cleanview Elementary
Thursday, Dec. 16, 6 pm

Chinese Immersion
Madison Elementary
Tuesday, Dec. 14, 6 pm

ENROLLMENT BEGINS JANUARY 10, 2022

Enrolling in kindergarten is required and is a separate enrollment process from preschool and early childhood screenings.

OPEN HOUSE

Join us at a Kindergarten Open House

Cleanview (Spanish)
Jan. 20, 3:30-6:30
Madison (Chinese)
Jan. 31, 5:00-6:30

ONLINE

Enroll your soon-to-be kindergartner from the comfort of your home by using our online enrollment feature available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Go to www.isd742.org/enrollment.

WELCOME CENTER

Welcome Center
District Administration Office
1201 2nd St S, Waite Park, MN 56387
Monday - Friday
7:30-4:30

320-370-8116 (English)
320-370-8117 (Spanish)
320-370-8118 (Somali)

Families who enroll their child in language immersion will receive communication the week of Feb. 15 to confirm enrollment or advise of a possible wait list. To date, all kindergartners who have enrolled in language immersion have been accepted into the program.

Language immersion is offered to all District 742 students as well as open enrollment students. Due to high demand, District 742 may need to use a lottery system for students interested in language immersion. Students with siblings currently enrolled in the program receive priority, but must still go through the enrollment process.

For questions contact the Welcome Center at 320-370-8116 or visit www.isd742.org/languageimmersion.
Learning a second language: enriches and enhances a child’s mental development, has a positive effect on intellectual growth and development.

WHY BEGIN A SECOND LANGUAGE IN KINDERGARTEN?

The young child’s brain is developmentally ready to learn language. A child’s brain has twice as many synapses (connections) in the brain as an adult. The young brain must use these connections or lose them. There is a window of opportunity in which a child learns a first language normally. After this period, the brain becomes slowly less receptive. Young children can learn as many spoken languages as you can allow them to hear systematically and regularly at the same time. Children just have this capacity. When children walk until high school to start studying a foreign language, the job is much harder.

THE CONCEPT

The language immersion concept has been used in schools for decades. Many schools in Canada have successfully implemented immersion programs with French as the second language. In reality, immersion has been used for thousands of years. For example, when a child is raised in an English-speaking environment, the child will become accomplished in the language and begin using it. Students learn the second language in a very similar way they learned their first language.

PROGRAM GOALS

There are three major goals for immersion students: to effectively communicate in Spanish or Chinese, to acquire the same English language arts and content area skills as students in English-only programs, and to acquire greater knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures.

PROGRAM COMPARISON

Curriculum used in immersion and other elementary programs is basically the same. The difference is that students learn through the Spanish or Chinese language rather than through English. Language immersion students also learn to understand, speak, read and write in Spanish and Chinese.

THE FIRST DAYS

Teachers will use English and Spanish or Chinese during the first weeks of school. Once students have demonstrated an understanding of school routines and safety, the teachers will switch to language immersion. At that time all instruction will be in the new language and, especially at the beginning, students are constantly encouraged to be aware of not only the spoken word, but also the actions and demonstrations by the teachers which will assist in the child’s understanding of the language.

FINE ARTS & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

At students, from Kindergarten to 5th grade, are given instruction by qualified art, physical education and music teachers. This instruction is delivered in the English language.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS

At the start of 3rd grade, some Spanish or Chinese immersion students may be slightly behind non-immersion students in English reading and language arts. However, by the end of 3rd grade, most immersion students do as well or better in English language arts skills as non-immersion students. Many students exceed non-immersion students in their language arts skills by the end of 5th grade. It is important to understand that the initial lag is temporary and to be expected.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Immersion programs include several special features that add to the child’s educational experience. One is the use of interns, often teacher candidates, from Spanish or Chinese speaking countries as part of the program. These interns assist with classroom activities. By working with them, students are exposed to native speakers in Spanish or Chinese.

INTERNATIONAL CULTURES

Instruction on international cultures is taught by integrating specific information into daily lessons, as well as using major themes as a focus. Instruction in French or Chinese focuses on fun, exciting learning about individual countries. Immersion programs offer a perform concert where students sing in the target language.

HOW DO CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM LANGUAGE IMMERSION?

The main benefit of immersion is the development of a second language. Students also develop greater listening and higher level thinking skills in addition to increased brain development by being immersed in a second language. Another benefit is increased awareness and appreciation of other cultures.

WHY LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE AT AN EARLY AGE?

Learning a second language at an early age has a positive effect on intellectual growth and enriches and enhances a child’s mental development.

Learning a second language:

• Leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.
• Improves a child’s understanding of his/her native language.
• Gives a child the ability to communicate with people s/he would otherwise not have the chance to know.
• Opens the door to other cultures and helps a child understand and appreciate people from other countries.
• Gives a student a head start in language requirements for college. It increases job opportunities in many careers where knowing another language is a real asset.

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FIFTH GRADE?
WHAT LEVEL OF SKILL IN SPANISH OR CHINESE WILL STUDENTS HAVE BY THE END OF FIFTH GRADE?

By the end of fifth grade, students will have received more than 4,000 hours of Spanish or Chinese instruction, and most will be functionally proficient at writing, reading and speaking Spanish or Chinese. Students will need to continue with their Spanish or Chinese studies in order to maintain and improve their skills.

WHAT ROLE DO PARENTS PLAY IN THE SCHOOL?

If a child seems to be frustrated or discouraged, it is important to discuss those feelings with the child. Many children feel they are the only one who does not understand. It is important to reassure them they are not alone. If the problem persists, it is very helpful to let the teacher know so that he or she can focus on the situation.

Because language immersion is seen as a unique concept, Spanish and Chinese may be labeled as the source of the frustrations. For the most part, the child probably would have the same frustrations if he or she were in an English-only classroom. Language immersion teachers create positive situations by focusing lessons around the students’ language level.

WHAT IF OUR CHILD BECOMES DISCOURAGED OR FRUSTRATED IN THE IMMERSION PROGRAM?

If a child seems to be frustrated or discouraged, it is important to discuss those feelings with the child. Many children feel they are the only one who does not understand. It is important to reassure them they are not alone. If the problem persists, it is very helpful to let the teacher know so that he or she can focus on the situation.

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WHAT ROLE DO PARENTS PLAY IN THE SCHOOL?

Like all parents, parents of children in immersion programs should maintain an active role in their children’s education by providing experiences that help develop their English language skills and enhance their cognitive and affective development. They should read to them daily in English and engage their child in activities where they need to apply what they are learning in class.

Families are also asked to make a long-term commitment to the immersion program for children to experience the greatest benefits an immersion education yields. Parents can support their child in these ways:

• Make a long-term commitment to immersion.
• Develop an understanding of immersion education.
• Provide experiences outside of school to develop English language skills.
• Encourage the use of the second language outside of school.
• Most importantly, be sure your child attends school everyday.
• Volunteer at school and in your child’s classroom.

Various volunteer opportunities exist in the school. Parent involvement in school activities shows the child that education is very important to the family.

IS IMMERSION EDUCATION RIGHT FOR ALL STUDENTS?

Most students are well-suited for immersion instruction, regardless of their academic ability level. Students who have difficulty learning to read Spanish or Chinese also would probably have difficulty learning to read English in a non-immersion setting. For children who have difficulty with auditory discrimination or auditory memory, or who have severe language delays, language immersion may not be the best fit.

DO CHILDREN NEED A BACKGROUND IN CHINESE OR SPANISH TO ENROLL IN THE PROGRAM?

No. The program is designed for children of families who do not speak Spanish or Chinese, but native speakers are also encouraged to enroll.

ARE STUDENTS SCREENED BEFORE BEING ADMITTED INTO THE PROGRAM?

In Minnesota, before entering kindergarten, all students must go through developmental preschool screening. There is no separate screening process for admission to immersion programs.

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HOW & WHEN DO STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH SKILLS?

In Kindergarten through second grade, all instruction is in Spanish or Chinese. Beginning in third grade, English reading and language arts are introduced for approximately 30-45 minutes per day. Except for this period of direct English instruction, all classroom activities continue to be carried out in Spanish or Chinese. The amount of English instruction increases as students move into the intermediate grades. Immersion students will acquire the same English skills as students in other elementary programs.

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Language Skills

HOW DO IMMERSION STUDENTS COMPARE TO NON-IMMERSION STUDENTS IN VERBAL SKILLS?

A great deal of research has been done on the development of English language skills by immersion students. Studies have consistently shown that immersion students do as well or better than comparable non-immersion students on measures of verbal and mathematics skills.

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WHY LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE AT AN EARLY AGE?
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Language immersion is a method of teaching a foreign language in which all instruction is conducted in that language. In reality, immersion has been used for thousands of years. For example, when a child is raised in an English-speaking environment, the child becomes accustomed to speaking the language and begins using it. Students learn the second language in a very similar way that they learned their first language.

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Benefits of Learning 2 Languages

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Many Ways to Enroll

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2. ONLINE
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3. WELCOME CENTER
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