

Pamela Totten-Alvarado
Kinsella School
65 Van Block Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

December 12, 2006

Dear Principal Totten-Alvarado,

Our names are Sarah Pitts and Theresa West, and we are students enrolled in a Child Development class at Trinity College. We recently completed a semester-long project in which we researched English as a Second Language programs in Hartford's public schools. Hartford city's public schools differ in the ELS programs offered, and also show immense variation in test scores on the three components of the Connecticut Mastery Tests. The 2004-2005 annual report by the superintendent of the school system reports that only 8.4 percent of Hartford's fourth grade students meet the state goal for testing. This is in contrast to the state's overall passing percentage of 41.2 percent, and should trigger a united call for the reevaluation of the policies and techniques surrounding bilingual education.

For decades discussion over ESL instruction has focused on the debate between bilingual programs taught in English and the native language, and immersion programs taught only in English. In recent years a third option called dual language or two-way immersion has emerged, which is similar to bilingual programs in the use of native and non-native languages, but is unique in that dual language programs include native English speakers that learn Spanish as a second language.

Attached to this letter we have included a variety of supplemental materials we hope will prove both informative and helpful in convincing you to establish a dual language program at Kinsella. We have included the following:

- A detailed description the dual language program at Moylan.
- Key components of numerous dual language programs.
- A detailed argument for dual language programs, which includes a comparison of dual language and bilingual programs.
- A comparison of Kinsella School and Moylan, a demographically comparable school with a successful dual language program.
- A resource sheet, including electronic and print sources.

Implementing a comprehensive and effective dual language program takes time, energy and financial resources. Despite the initial investment required, we are convinced and the research evidence suggests that a well implemented dual language program at Kinsella would allow your students to perform at their best. We hope the information included convinces you of this, and helps you begin the process of designing and implementing a dual language program at Kinsella.

Sincerely,

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Detailed Description of Dual Language Programs

General Information on Dual Language Programs:

- Dual language is a type of ESL instruction that is often considered a sub-sect of bilingual education.
- Instruction is conducted in two languages, English and a partner language, which would be Spanish at Kinsella.
- Dual language programs enroll English dominant students as well as ESL learners. All students acquire a second language while maintaining the native language. Roughly equal numbers are ideal, but many programs, including Moylan's, have fewer English dominant students and are still successful.
- Dual language programs are designed to make native and non-native English speakers proficient in both English and Spanish.
- Dual language programs vary from school to school. The percentage of the day spent in each language and the separation of native English and Spanish learners are the two biggest differences between programs.

Details on Moylan's Successful Dual Language Program:

- Moylan's dual language program was implemented in 1999.
- Students ideally enter the program in Kindergarten or 1st grade.
- The relative percentages of the two languages used and classroom organization both change as children enter higher grades.
- For the first three years, native English speakers are grouped together in a classroom that is paired up with a classroom of native Spanish speakers. The classrooms are separated most of the time and students are taught in their dominant language with the goal of acquiring more and more of the second language. Occasionally the paired up classrooms come together to receive instruction together and to interact in a variety of activities.
- By third grade the paired up classrooms merge, and instruction alternates between English and Spanish. A week's worth of material is taught in Spanish and again in English the following week.
- The buddy classroom program and the alternating weeks program both require joint planning time be scheduled for the teachers.
- One example of a lesson plan that has been used by teachers at Moylan is a pen pal program in which English dominant students exchanged letters written in the non-native language with Spanish dominant students. They then meet to discuss the letters in pairs. The program addresses one of the key goals of bilingual education; to encourage the transfer of skills, strategies, and knowledge across languages. It also encourages communication between cultures, and written and oral proficiency in the non-native language.

Key Aspects of Successful Dual Language Programs

Characteristics of Successful Programs:

- Dual language programs strive to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, grade level academic achievement, and positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors in all students.
- Successful programs establish a climate of respect and support in the classroom and in the cooperative activities in particular.
- The physical environment of the classroom should be rich in print. This includes word walls, labels for everyday items, and vocabulary lists that are tied to the content being studied in class.
- A general principle of language teaching today is to provide students with language they can understand and opportunities to use and practice that language.
 - Teachers should identify the vocabulary that students will need for each lesson and pre-teach this vocabulary before the lesson.
- Class activities should be designed to develop receptive skills and provide language practice and promote expressive language.
 - Strategies for encouraging communication include peer interaction and extending student responses by asking for clarification or asking follow-up questions.
 - Teachers have also found success prompting discussion by using sentence starters.
- In dual language classrooms it can be hard to distinguish between language proficiency and content knowledge, but developing both content and language objectives for each lesson or unit can help tease apart these two issues.
- Strong home-school connections are essential to the success of TWI programs. There are many things that programs and parents can do to help foster these connections.
 - Programs can promote positive home-school connections and ensure clear communication with parents by ensuring that all communications with parents are in both languages of instruction.
 - Programs can also sponsor periodic meetings to educate parents on dual language related topics such as program design, language acquisition, helping with homework, biliteracy development, and assessment practices.
- Special training is available for teachers in dual language programs, as well as a wealth of literature on the topic. See the included resource sheet for further information.

Detailed Argument for Dual Language Education

Evidence supporting dual language programs over other options is plentiful, and available from a variety of sources. Arguments supporting dual language programs are given below, and sources of supporting evidence are provided for many of these arguments. Please note that different sources refer to either Two-Way Immersion or dual language programs, but these are two names for the same thing.

- Scientific studies that have been reviewed by unbiased experts show that dual language education is the most successful model for helping English language learners succeed academically in school.
 - Studies examining the general effectiveness of dual language programs include, but are in no way limited to:
 - Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2001). *Dual language education*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
 - Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Santa Cruz, CA, and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.
 - Studies into the long-term achievements of dual language graduates in reading and math at late elementary or secondary levels show that, overall, both English language learners and native English speakers made significant progress in both languages.
 - Both native and non-native English speakers scored at or well above grade level in both languages by middle school and both groups performed at comparable or superior levels compared to same-native-language peers who graduated from other programs.
 - On norm-referenced standardized tests of reading and math achievement in English, native English speakers outscored their English-only peers in English-only classrooms.
 - English language learners who had learned English in a dual language program scored significantly higher than their English language learning peers who had studies in other kinds of programs in the state and also performed on a par with native English speaking students in English-only classrooms.
 - Studies supporting these claims include, but are no way limited to:
 - Cazabon, M., Nicoladis, E. & Lambert, W. E. (1998). *Becoming bilingual in the Amigos two-way immersion program*. Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.
 - Collier, V. P., & Thomas, (2004). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2(1), pp. 1-20.
 - Howard, E. R., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2003). *Trends in two-way immersion education: A review of the research* (Report No. 63). Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk.
 - Kirk-Senesac, B.V. (2002). Two-way bilingual immersion: A portrait of quality schooling. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 26

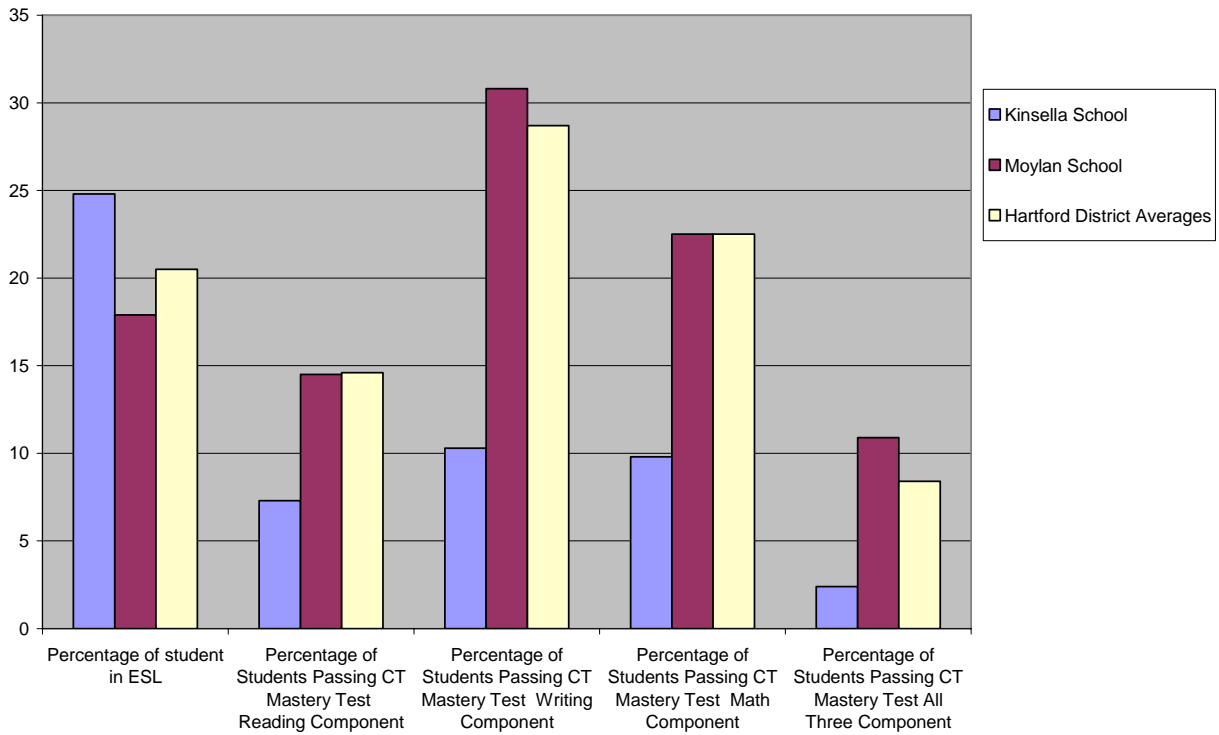
- Lindholm-Leary, K.J. (2005). *Review of Research and Best Practices on Effective Features of Dual Language Education Programs*. San José: San José State University.
 - Lindholm-Leary, K.J., & Borsato, G. (in press). Academic achievement. In F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. Saunders, & D. Christian (Eds). *Educating English language learners: A synthesis of research evidence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- The advantages are more or less the same for both native English speakers and English language learners, but the benefits may be stronger for English language learners, given the above evidence supporting dual language education as the most successful model for helping these students succeed academically.
 - Students in dual language programs become proficient in reading, writing and speaking two languages.
 - Research done in 2002 shows that proficiency in two languages helps students see their first language in a comparative perspective, which in turn helps them analyze and refine their language use.
 - Supporting Study: Cazabon, M., Lambert, W. A., & Heise-Baigorria, C. (2002). *Field-initiated bilingual education research project*. (Award number R306F960155-98). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
 - Theories of language acquisition and scientific research show that knowing more than one language increases a person's thinking abilities and mental flexibility.
 - All students have the opportunity to be both first language models and second language learners. The bilingual pairs at the core of Moylan's dual language program reinforce a native speaker's knowledge of the language and give him or her a heightened status in the classroom. For the non-native speaker, the bilingual pairing is an opportunity to practice the language in a more relaxed setting than in front of the entire class.
 - Pairs are the ideal group size for cooperative language learning because they ensure opportunities for more or less simultaneous participation, as opposed to the sequential participation that typically occurs in whole group instruction.
 - Pairs also maximize practice opportunities. In pairs, students participate at least 50% of the time if the activities are well constructed, whereas in whole class instruction an individual spends most of the time waiting for a turn to speak.
 - Students can remain in dual language programs throughout the duration of their education at Kinsella. This is in contrast to bilingual education. In accordance with Connecticut state law, students can only stay in bilingual programs a maximum of 30 months. After 30 months, if a student is unable to pass the English Mastery Exam, he or she enters Language Transition Support Service (LTSS).
 - An abundance of research shows that it takes five to seven years of instruction for non-native English speakers to perform on par with their native counterparts on standardized exams. 30 months is not long enough for children to become proficient in English.
 - LTSS is essentially a switch to immersion programs. There are two main problems with immersion programs, the first being that in immersion programs a student stops

developing a mastery of their native language. The second problem with immersion programs is that research shows that these programs are less successful than dual language programs.

- Research shows that there are fewer high school drop-outs amongst graduates of dual language programs than amongst graduates of other programs.
 - Supporting study: Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Santa Cruz, CA, and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.
- Students in TWI programs develop very positive attitudes about students of other language and cultural backgrounds, and positive attitudes toward themselves as learners. Research has found that students enrolled in dual language programs showed a great deal of diversity in the friendship choices that they made, and that the dual language educational experience produced students who became comfortable with speaking the second language and interacting with members of other ethnocultural groups.
 - Supporting Study: Cazabon, M., Lambert, W. A., & Heise-Baigorria, C. (2002). *Field-initiated bilingual education research project*. (Award number R306F960155-98). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
 - Parental Feedback: “My child has the opportunity to be bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. There are social and cognitive benefits to bilingualism. He gains a second language, a broader vocabulary, and multiple views of the world.”
- Students who graduate from dual language programs and maintain proficiency in Spanish may experience the benefits of this throughout their lives. Due to advances like the Internet, we currently live in a global society, and even within the United States of America our rich tapestry of culture and languages make multiculturalism and bilingualism valuable assets. These children will grow up to compete in a global market, and may find more job opportunities or higher wages as a result of being bilingual.
- Research has shown that there is no particular type of student who is unable to flourish in dual language programs. Students from different ethnic, social class, and language backgrounds, and with varying academic strengths and needs, have all benefited from dual language education.
 - Supporting Study: Howard, E. R., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2003). *Trends in two-way immersion education: A review of the research* (Report No. 63). Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk.

Comparison of Kinsella and Moylan

Comparison of Kinsella School to Moylan School and averages for the Hartford district



The above graph shows that Moylan outperforms Kinsella on all three portions of the Connecticut Mastery Test, and Kinsella performs below the district average for the city of Hartford. Although Moylan is larger than Kinsella, both schools are almost identical in the number of students enrolled in ESL, and the percentage of students coming from Non-English speaking homes.

There are numerous other factors which effect student performance, including the socioeconomic status of the student body, average class size, and student to teacher ratios. Strategic School Profiles for 2004-05 show that Moylan is in fact at a higher risk in all three of these categories. The data given in the table below identifies Moylan as a demographically comparable school with a successful dual language program, and suggests that a similar program would find similar success at Kinsella.

	Kinsella School	Moylan School
<i>Enrollment</i>	384	540
<i>Number of Students in ESL</i>	88	90
<i>Percentage of Students in ESL</i>	24.8	17.9
<i>Percentage of Students with Non-English Home Language</i>	61.7	66.6
<i>Average Class Size in Second Grade</i>	15.0	17.3
<i>Number of Students per Certified Teachers</i>	11.8	12.6
<i>Percentage of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals</i>	67.4	73.7

Additional Resources

Resources for specific supporting evidence are given in the supplemental section entitled Detailed Argument For Dual Language Education, and additional resources that we believe can be of value to Kinsella are given below. Please note that different sources refer to either Two-Way Immersion or dual language programs, but these are two names for the same thing.

Online Resources:

<http://www.dualu.org/>

Dual U, found on the website given above, is a dual language teacher training program that was developed by the Illinois Resource Center. Instruction is all online, and teachers can register for the online curriculum for \$150.

<http://www.cal.org/twi/toolkit/CI/sg.htm>

This site is a guide to teacher discussion groups about dual language programs. The guide includes readings and questions on seven topics, including assessment, lesson plans and addressing parent's concerns. When still in the ground stages of developing a dual language program discussion sessions with staff based off of this site will allow them to inform themselves and express concerns and input. This process can be repeated with parents once the school has established a formal plan for implementing a dual language program.

<http://www.cal.org/twi/toolkit/CI/lessons/intro.htm>

This site includes complete descriptions of six lesson plans taken from schools that have proven to have successful dual language programs. All six lessons include background information about the school they were implemented in, detailed descriptions of lesson plans, materials to use and a description of how to assess students' progress. Although these lesson plans could be implemented with minimal adaptations to Kinsella's classrooms, we also hope that reading these plans will spark discussion about and enthusiasm for the multitude of unique and effective teaching strategies available in a dual language program.

<http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0302cohen.html>

This online article, entitled Strategy Training for Second Language Learners, gives a complete description of how to provide learners with a set of tools that learners can use to excel in dual language programs.

<http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/intheirownwords.html>

This online article is entitled In Their Own Words: Two-Way Immersion Teachers Talk About Their Professional Experiences. It is rich with suggestions, arguments for dual language programs and a description of potential challenges, all coming out of personal experiences.

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/techReports/Report63.pdf>

This article, published by Johns Hopkins University and available online, is entitled Trends in Two-Way Immersion Education: A review of the Research. It is a summation of over 50 research studies on dual language programs, and presents the most comprehensive and coherent argument for dual language programs we have found.

<http://www.thecenterlibrary.org/cwis/index.php>

This website is an electronic toolkit available for dual language programs and includes numerous resources that can inform and aid teachers and administrators.

<http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaff/profiles/vcollier.htm>

The above website is Dr. Virginia P. Collier's profile at George Mason University, where she is a Professor of Bilingual/Multicultural/ESL Education. She is a well established and rightfully respected researcher and expert in her field. Dr. Collier is a strong supporter of dual language education, and the above profile lists her 20 most recent publications, the majority of which are on the topic of dual language programs. The list of publications includes links to online versions available for most of her publications.

Video Resources:

Silver, J. (1996). *Learning Together: Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs*. Washington, DC: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

This video, targeted towards parents, teachers and administrators, presents a clear and concise overview of the rationale for two-way bilingual immersion, common features of two-way programs, and discussion of criteria for successful implementation. Classroom scenes from two schools illustrate the discussion.

Printed Materials:

Calderón, M., & Slavin, R. (2001). Success for All in a two-way immersion school. In D. Christian & F. Genesee (Eds.), *Bilingual education* (pp. 27-40). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

The three dual language programs described in this text all come from Texas, are taught in English and Spanish and all use the same Success for All program run in Hartford.

Calderón, M. E., & Minaya-Rowe, L. (2003). *Designing and implementing two-way bilingual programs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

This book provides very detailed examples of successful instructional techniques for two-way classrooms. Chapter 6 describes the process of literacy development in two languages that is facilitated by drawing on students' background knowledge; building their vocabulary; and engaging in listening comprehension activities, different types of shared interactive reading, and independent reading. The section on writing instruction emphasizes the process writing approach, connecting students' writing to larger contexts, and including interactive discussions about writing in the classroom.

Cloud, N., Genesee, F., & Hamayan, E. (2000). *Dual language instruction: A handbook for enriched education*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

This book approaches instruction through the domains of oral language development, literacy development, and content teaching. Topics on literacy development include choosing teaching materials, building on oral language skills and cross-language transfer, and making instruction

appropriate for students at different developmental stages or at different stages of literacy acquisition. For content teaching, the authors outline how to set content, language, and general learning objectives and how to select materials and plan for evaluation. The book also includes a template for a unit and lesson plan and two model lessons.

Freeman, Y. S., Freeman, D. E., & Mercuri, S. P. (2005). *Dual language essentials for teachers and administrators*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The curriculum essentials discussed in this book involve integrating language and content, using thematic instruction, and connecting curriculum to students' lives as well as to content and language standards. The authors recommend establishing predictable routines, and discuss the interrelation of speaking, reading, and writing; the importance of teacher expectations; and cross-language transfer.

Rubinstein-Avila, E. (2003). Negotiating power and redefining literacy expertise: Buddy reading in a dual-immersion programme. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 26(1), 83-97.

This case study of paired reading in a two-way Portuguese-English second grade class shows the variety of strategies that students in English and Spanish dominant student pairs used a successful Texas program to make sense of the text. The study demonstrates the benefits of interactive reading in the dual language context.