

Program Description

Language immersion is the most effective method for developing second-language ability with young learners in a school environment. Students begin the process when they enter at the kindergarten level. A full-day kindergarten program exposes students to all of the required kindergarten learning objectives *in a foreign language*, called the ‘*target language*.’ At EIS, students participate in either French or Spanish immersion. With the exception of one 45-minute daily period for PE, art or music, all instruction is presented entirely in the target language (Spanish *or* French).

The process of ‘immersing’ students in another language for classroom learning allows students to naturally learn the target language. Teachers for immersion classrooms are either native speakers of the target language, or demonstrate near-native proficiency. Since students begin the process at an early age (5 or 6), their brains are primed, physiologically, for language learning. Students learn the second language proficiently and with a near-perfect accent.

This ‘full’ immersion approach continues until the mid-point of second grade, at which time English reading/language arts is introduced into the curriculum for about an hour each day. The English portion of the curriculum is gradually increased in third grade, and reaches a 50/50 balance in grades four and five. Students may choose to continue the process with a daily advanced foreign language class at the middle school level, available at Tulsa Public Schools’ Thoreau Demonstration Academy.