

Notes from DL Parent Advisory Group

October 4, 2017

In Attendance

- Sandy Bell - Elmwood
- Sarah Madrid - River Woods
- Melissa Soline - Elmwood
- Ginny Mezo - Mill Street
- Sandy Monroy - Steeple Run
- Carley Freeman - Mill Street
- Jill Trainer - Beebe (at the end)
- Jen Hester - Chief Academic Officer for School District 203
- Marion Friebus-Flaman - Director of Language Acquisition
- Gabriela Velazquez - Dual Language Coordinator

Agenda

- Introductions
- Norms
- Celebrations
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Priority Work

Norms

- Actively listen and participate
- Stay focused on what is best for the students
- Assume good intent

Everyone in agreement. Question came about having a mission and vision for DLPAG. The purpose of the group was originally defined as: to establish a means of communication among parents, teachers and administration of the Dual Language program.

- Inform parents on key components of the program.
- Express ideas that promote parent involvement.
- Plan activities that would bring the whole Dual community together.

Celebrations

Gave a short description on the overall celebration.

- Summer activities - Parents' feedback was very positive. They Tuesday and Thursday in the afternoon was hard because of family time or other activities. Had to change schedules due to this.
- Summer learning pilot - Parents' feedback was very positive. Students enjoyed and were eager to use their Spanish. Kids wanted to attend the pilot everyday. Parents did not feel the Spanish stress.
There were questions about translanguaging. Translanguaging allows students to process information in two languages.
- 10 years of the Dual Language Program - There is a desire to celebrate. The fair seems to be the best venue. Could pioneers in the program talk about their experience?

- Full implementation at all sites -

Roles and Responsibilities -

Roles

- Key Communicator

Responsibilities

- Communicate information to DL parents at school, and principal
- Set up networking opportunities for DL parents (in collaboration with the principal)
- Integrate de DL voice into the school improvement process
 - Home & School
 - Presence at school activities
 - SFCP

Questions/feedback

- Shall we create a mission and vision?
- People are starting to tell things to DLPAG members so they relay the message.
- Instructional assistant - There was a misunderstanding about why some classrooms do not have an aid. K-3 have an assistant. Some schools have those assistants share with 4th and 5th grade. Other classrooms have other assistants for specific purposes in the same way that Gen Ed sometimes has assistants.
- DLPAG would like to have the minutes in the website so everyone can refer to them. Future practice: Send to everyone at the meeting first to make sure that the ideas align to what was discussed and decided, and then share to the community via the website.

Priority Work

Mentoring

- Elmwood has a school wide parent mentor program. The goal is to have a go-to person.
- Ideas are to pair people up, according to their family profile so they can receive support. A survey might be necessary to find out what their needs are. Questions like “Would you prefer someone to support in Spanish?” Maybe we need a Google form for parents to fill out when they accept enrollment so we know how to pair families? Knowledge on: transitions, social interactions, summer activities, logistical pieces, language support, practical experiences. Families to volunteer to be mentors. Possibility to be a mentor and a mentee.
- How will we work some of the logistics? We need a small group to collect the information and pairing. Will be needed across schools especially within the transitions.
- Ideas from DLPAG on Mentoring needs:

Pairing Families

1. Pair older DL students with younger DL students
2. Pair an English speaking family and Spanish speaking family to learn from one another
3. Different categories of families (1 Spanish at home; 1 English at home; DL at home; another language)

Navigating the Program

1. Parents can talk to other parents about DL school life

2. Someone who calls me once a season and asks how I think it's going, do I have any questions and have I received all info I need?
3. Navigating registration
4. Share practical experiences (describe what your child's day looks like. How is it different from general education?)
5. A resource-a friend a little further along in DL.
6. Not just for new families and kindergarten (needs and info changes)
7. Helping family (students and parents) transition from one school to the next
8. Console people if their child is "not picking it up fast enough".
9. Phone calls? A personal meeting? Or email?
10. Volunteer-low commitment?
11. Families that have been in the program "mentor" those new to the program

Social interactions

1. Help to foster social interaction among families
2. Offer summer activities at a group to support each other in Spanish

Resources

1. Offer one-stop shop for info (class specific) i.e. Facebook page
2. Sharing language resources, tips, strategies
3. Offer support and encouragement from the language view (those with older kids)
4. Help them find or locate books/media so they can continue at home.
5. A resource for information, questions, etc.

Information nights

_____ Ideas from DLPAG about the information nights

Parent Education Night

- Presenting the current dual language research (for empowerment and parent support)
- Present the 1-stop shop for resources web page? People self-sufficient and can access anytime anywhere online
- Link to DL Advisory group notes and calendar of events. Event description so parents can pick and choose since they can't attend all.
- Format for event: concurrent sessions on the different topics you can hit all the info, promote smaller groups, but need more people presenting.
- Have an experienced student (10th grade) share positives!
- District achievements and end goal
- Videos of interactions at higher level
- How Dual Language is taught (process)-educate parents on how you teach dual language-the methods D203 is using, etc.
- Parent presenters
- Daily schedules
- Parent led Q+A (staff still involved)
- Look ahead—later Elementary, Jr. High, High School

4th-5th Mixer

- Younger sibling goes where?

- Opportunities for community engagement
- Daily schedule
- Parent perspective of J.H. DL experience
- Ask Jr. High parents what they wish they had known
- Resources to prepare DL students for the middle school work.
- Opportunities for social interactions outside of school.
- Format for the event: presentation with smaller break out groups
- Quick explanation of input –processing-output. Explain why it's ok to instruct in Spanish before you explain why it's beneficial.
- Opportunities for mentoring over the summer. Flexible time/days so parents have options. The summer program from last year may be doing this already just seemed some parents couldn't make meetings.
- Recap of DL. Jr. High info night (5min)
- Quick preview of High school DL
- Summary sent to current students.

Kinder Night

- Childcare
- Research and parent handbook accessible to make a decision
- Allow time for practical questions. This could happen in small groups facilitated by experienced parents or DL teachers, Admin, or other?
- Mentoring options
- What works best?
- Simultaneous translation or 2 groups:
- I have heard feedback regarding some frustration with length of time...agree!
- Parents are willing to stay, but they want time for their questions to be addressed.
- Hold it at the schools (smaller groups then)
- Have principals and/or teachers speak.
- Ask older Elementary Parents what they wish they had known.
- What to expect (results)
- Success stories
- Reassurance
- Video of high school students
- Type of support (resources) that'll be available in the program
- Practical info (daily schedule)
- No death by PowerPoint –fewer slides and fewer words
- After accepted to Kinder ask for-
- Find parent leader in K class to set up communication among K class
- One time a week get together (even go over old homework) over summer comforts people. 1 hr. was very manageable.
- A bigger venue-Mill Street? Per school? Why combine? What's the benefit?