



## Inter-American Magnet School

851 W. Waveland  
Chicago, IL 60613

### Q & A for Inter-American Lottery Application and Language Questionnaire

#### Why do I need to select a language queue for the lottery for my child?

It is very important in a dual language program that 50% of the students are Spanish models for the classroom and the other 50% are the English models for the classroom. The students are models for each other in the classroom.

#### What if my child understands Spanish but doesn't speak Spanish?

If your child only understands Spanish, then he/she does not qualify as a Spanish model of the language. We need students who are speaking Spanish so that when the class is in Spanish, he/she is answering the teacher in Spanish. During the language assessment, your child will need to be speaking Spanish in order to qualify as a Spanish model for our dual language program.

#### What if my child speaks both Spanish and English?

This is wonderful. You will find that a dual language program will continue to support the rich language development and learning that you are providing your child at home. Observe your child's language skills and select the language queue that you think your child is the strongest model for.

#### What language skills does my child need to enter grades 3 – 8?

Since your child will be studying all academic subjects in unit cycles for 5 weeks in Spanish and 5 weeks in English. Academic skills that are taught during these unit cycles are not re-taught, so it is very important that your child is already coming into the school with literacy skills in English and Spanish. Students will need to know how to read and write Spanish in order to not lose ground in any academic area.

#### How do I know if my child is a good candidate for a dual language school?

The most important factor in determining a child's success in a dual language program is the child's motivation to learn both Spanish and English. If you and your child have already taken steps to celebrate your cultural heritage and language and learn about a new culture and/or language, then your child will feel right at home in a dual language school. Remember that children are motivated about what impacts their life today. While you might be thinking about how being bilingual will help your child later on in life, a child needs to know how it is helping him/her today? How does growing and learning in a dual language school that is strongly embedded in the culture and history of Spanish speakers in all of Latin America motivate you and your child today?

#### Can my child just opt out of the Spanish part of the school day?

No, all children here are learning in an environment in which being bilingual is celebrated every day. Since your child's academic skill instruction will be taught in either Spanish or English depending on how the unit is organized for that quarter, the academic content and skills are not re-taught in the other language. Therefore, it wouldn't be possible to have a student participate in half of their instructional day.

#### What kind of language support model does the school use to help my child learn the new language?

Dual language models are applying the immersion model of language acquisition. In this model, we are teaching the child a new language by providing them meaningful opportunities to get meaning and express themselves in the new language. In this model, the students will have class in only one language and the child will need to use his/her strategies to figure out what the teacher is saying and what he/she needs to learn. Over time, the child begins to understand more of the new language until he/she becomes proficient in the new language. This process of language acquisition takes time and effort but it is a very natural way of learning a new language. For this reason, the teacher or classmates will not be translating for the student who is still learning the language.

#### Will my child be graded in both languages?

Yes, all children will receive a grade in Spanish Reading and Writing and English Reading and Writing. Students will receive one grade in Math, Science and Social Studies, but these courses will be taught in 5 week cycles of Spanish and English. In grades K-5, students are taught and graded in Math in only Spanish. Students receive only one grade in Listening and Speaking for both languages.

#### What if I pick the Spanish lottery queue and Spanish is not my child's dominant language?

Every child who gains a seat at Inter-American will be screened to confirm their dominant language by Inter-American personnel. If the results of your child's screener indicate that s/he is not Spanish dominant he or she will forfeit the Spanish seat. If this occurs the child will only be eligible for a waitlist slot for an English dominant seat. If you are not sure your child will qualify as Spanish dominant contact a (773) 534-5490 for further information on making an appropriate selection.