



Elementary Programming Update

Bilingual Education Recommendation Committee

Background Information, Proposals, & Impact to Current Elementary Configuration

February 9, 2017

History Regarding the Bilingual Program Review Process:

This school year the Walla Walla School District Board of Education directed district administration to continue facilitating a thorough review of the current Bilingual Education Program. The district's bilingual education program primarily consists of a dual-language approach. This locally-supported, research-based and highly-regarded model brings together English and Spanish speaking students in mixed language classrooms beginning in kindergarten. The desired outcome is participating students become bilingual in both languages.

Program Improvements Needed:

Despite levels of program successes, the Board requested that the district identify and recommend program-wide improvements to address many concerns and deficiencies expressed by parents and staff alike over recent years. In order to ensure a thoughtful and inclusive process, an application period was advertised in order to develop a diverse committee of parents and staff to oversee the review and recommendation process. The committee was charged with developing recommendations by early March 2017 for program improvements based on the following criteria: research-based to best support the needs of English Language Learners (ELL's); financially sustainable and programmatically viable; ensure optimal learning environments for students who choose not to participate in bilingual programming; and attempt to capitalize on the opportunity to expose second language acquisition skills to native English language speakers, when feasible.

What Are Some of the Concerns and/or Deficiencies with the Current Program?

The Board of Directors has fielded numerous concerns from parents, staff, and community in recent years.

Program improvement focus areas:

- Increasing performance outcomes for non-English speaking students. For example, the district's Hispanic/Latino students continue to struggle in English proficiency attainment as they mature through school, lagging behind both their non-Hispanic WWPS counterparts as well as Hispanic state averages in state testing, college entrance exams, and post-secondary remediation rates.
- The "traditional" or single strand "English" classrooms (e.g. non-dual classrooms at Edison and Sharpstein) continue to be highly problematic as reported by staff and parents due to factors such as larger class sizes, high number of special population students, inability to separate and/or move students, and long-term student "tracking."
- With current programming spread across four of the six elementary schools to varying degrees, lack of program continuity/alignment, curriculum, collaboration, and professional development continues to be problematic.
- There are an increasing number of "Heritage" Hispanic/Latino students who are struggling in the current dual programming. Often 2nd and/or 3rd generation students, these are pupils entering kindergarten who may struggle in both English and Spanish, or who may have stronger English than Spanish skills despite their Hispanic/Latino heritage.
- Modest numbers of native English speaking students on the "English side" of dual are struggling to meet and/or maintain grade-level academic standards in English as they progress in age.
- Student performance/success varies between bilingual programs at schools due to differences in program delivery, student entrance criteria, and student demographics, creating discrepancies in program outcome when students exit elementary school.

How Can I Learn More About the Committee's Work? Visit our website at

<http://www.wwps.org/programs/bilingual/bilingual-education-recommendation-committee> to read more about the extensive work of the committee and how you can provide input at upcoming school site meetings and through additional survey opportunities.

Current Proposals & Impact to Elementary School Configuration

Definitions:

One-way Dual Programming: In this model, a classroom at each grade level (also referred to as a strand) consists of a homogeneous “one-language” classroom grouping of native Spanish speaking students. Children are predominantly instructed in their primary language (Spanish) in Kindergarten through 2nd grade in order to build native-language fluency, and begin transitioning to English mid-term through their elementary years. This research-based model is commonly implemented when there are a large number of non-native English speaking students in one school and/or setting. Currently, one strand of “one-way” dual programming is offered at Blue Ridge Elementary.

Two-way Dual Programming: The “two-way” dual model is a language-oriented program designed to build fluency in both Spanish and English. Native Spanish and English speaking students have an opportunity to develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in both languages. Heterogeneous groupings of Spanish and English students in a classroom provide students with opportunities to assist and learn from one another, allowing second language acquisition to occur naturally. Currently, a limited number of (strands) of “two-way” dual programming is offered at Sharpstein(2), Edison(2), and Green Park Elementary Schools(1).

Proposed Models for Consideration:

After six months of extensive study, research, and outreach, the Walla Walla Public Schools Bilingual Committee has identified two program models that meet the *Board of Education Charge* and address many of the deficiencies identified in current programming.

Initially three concepts were proposed for parents, community, and staff feedback in recent weeks. Following extensive review, one of the concepts (the “split-school” model that proposed to convert one elementary school to a blended “two-way” dual/traditional K-2 school and another to a similar 3-5 school) was abandoned as a result of significant staff and stakeholder concern.

The following two concepts are being proposed as draft models for further consideration, feedback, and refinement:

- **Model 1 (1-school “two-way” model):** Maintain current “one-way” dual program at Blue Ridge Elementary School and establish a comprehensive “two-way” dual school at either Sharpstein or Edison Elementary School.
 - Summary: Develop a comprehensive, wall-to-wall, “two-way” dual program by consolidating dual strands over time currently offered at Sharpstein, Edison, and Green Park Elementary Schools to either Sharpstein or Edison Elementary School. In this model, Blue Ridge maintains their current “one-way” programming.
- **Model 2 (2-school “two-way” model):** Convert Blue Ridge and another elementary school (Sharpstein or Edison) into comprehensive “two-way” dual schools.
 - Summary: Develop two comprehensive, wall-to-wall, “two-way” dual program schools by consolidating programming currently offered at Blue Ridge, Sharpstein, Edison, and Green Park Elementary Schools to two campuses (Blue Ridge and either Sharpstein or Edison Elementary School).

Frequently asked questions about the proposed models:

- Why did the committee not pick Green Park as a possible location for a comprehensive “two-way” dual school?
 - Green Park Elementary, due to its current attendance area population, only has one strand of dual programming (compared to two at Edison and Sharpstein), and exhibits the fewest “open enrolled” students. If Green Park were considered as the comprehensive site, significant impact to school resident attendance for both dual and non-dual students, transportation costs, possible impact to unique special education programming offered, and considerable staffing adjustments would occur.
- Why did the committee not choose between Sharpstein or Edison?
 - Both sites maintain similar levels of programming, students, and capacity to serve as the comprehensive “two-way” dual school. The committee is seeking stakeholder input to help inform their decision-making process regarding which site is most preferable.
- Which model provides the greatest number of seats in dual?
 - Model 1 represents a reduction by about 25 seats per grade level (about one classroom) of “two-way” dual seats for Spanish and English-speaking students. Spanish-speaking students who exhibit the greatest propensity for success in dual programming would receive priority. Spanish-speaking students not assigned to dual would receive English Language Development (ELD) support at their attendance-area school. See Enrollment information below for more details.
 - Model 2 represents an increase of approximately 50 seats in both Spanish/English seats in total dual programming over current levels.
- What about programming when my student reaches middle school?

- *Dual programming will be offered at both middle schools, in addition to proposals for providing middle school Spanish at both campuses beginning fall of 2017. Regardless of elementary dual programming location, students will be able to attend their attendance area middle school and receive the same access to quality middle school dual and Spanish programming.*

Proposed “Transition Plan” for Consideration

The Bilingual Committee would like additional feedback from parents, staff, and community, regarding how best to transition students and staff into the final model selected. Three options have been considered that require further input and refinement:

- **Option 1 (“Slow” Approach):**
 - Summary: Under this option, regardless of the program considered, the district would slowly phase into the comprehensive “two-way” dual school(s). Students currently enrolled in either dual or traditional(non-dual) classrooms at Blue Ridge, Sharpstein, Edison, and Green Park would be “grandfathered” and permitted to remain at their current school campus to complete their elementary career. Only kindergarten students beginning in the 2017-18 school year who request or are referred to dual programming would be assigned to a dual campus (Blue Ridge and either Sharpstein or Edison)
- **Option 2 (“Moderate” Approach):**
 - Summary: Under this option, an expedited transition would be considered that represents a moderate implementation transition. Under a moderate implementation, students currently in dual programming at grades K-1 would be consolidated over the summer and assigned to either Blue Ridge and either Sharpstein or Edison (depending on the model selected). This approach would also require the transition of students currently in K-1 non-dual traditional classrooms at Blue Ridge and Edison or Sharpstein (depending on the model selected), to also be relocated to a non-dual school. *The district is still investigating transportation implications and costs that will need to be considered if this approach is further developed.*
- **Option 3 (“Fast/Full Implementation” Approach):**
 - Summary: Under this option, a full implementation transition would be considered that represents an expedited process. Under this implementation, students currently in dual programming at grades K-4 would be consolidated over the summer and assigned to either Blue Ridge and either Sharpstein or Edison (depending on the model selected). This approach would also require the transition of K-4 students in non-dual traditional classrooms at Blue Ridge and Edison or Sharpstein (depending on the model selected), to also be relocated to a non-dual school. *The district is still investigating transportation implications and costs that will need to be considered if this approach is further developed.*

Frequently asked questions about transition planning:

- *Why would K-1 students in non-dual classes in the moderate approach (and K-4 with the fast approach), need to be relocated?*
 - *To make room for the consolidation of dual programming to one or two campuses (depending on the model), students in non-dual classes would need to relocate to non-dual schools.*
- *If my non-dual student is required to relocate to another campus, will the district provide transportation?*
 - *Yes. If a decision is made to implement the moderate or fast approach and non-dual students are required to relocate, the district would provide transportation to those affected students. Currently the district is researching both expedited proposals to understand cost implications. After evaluation, the district may discover one or both transitions are cost prohibitive.*
- *What would be some of the benefits of a moderate or fast rollout for students?*
 - *Accelerating the process would allow the district to address some of the traditional (non-dual) classroom challenges more expeditiously.*
 - *Fulfills final program model at a faster pace.*
- *What are some of the concerns of a moderate or fast rollout for students?*
 - *Possible social/emotional impact of moving dual and non-dual students to different schools after they have established themselves in their current campuses.*
 - *Instructional and academic level challenges when blending dual students currently enrolled in different schools and programs into one consolidated program.*

Proposed “Enrollment Plan” for Consideration

The Bilingual Committee would like additional feedback from parents, staff, and community, regarding how students are identified for dual programming consideration. Based on research performed on similar comprehensive school-wide models, a lottery approach is being recommended.

- Proposed “Lottery” Enrollment Process into district dual programming (regardless of the model selected):
 - The Walla Walla School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all requirements of the ADA.

- Final model chosen will be advertised following the anticipated March 7 Board Meeting adoption.
- Applications and academic screening (to assess student Spanish and/or English skills) from families interested in dual programming for their incoming kindergartener will occur from March 13th – 31st.
- As a district program, the district will assign students to dual kindergarten classes and schools (Model 2) in order to create a balanced program to support the success for all dual students.
- If more students are interested in dual programming than seats available (overall or in a building) a weighted lottery will be implemented, with the following weighting preference for families (A lottery is more likely if Model 1 is selected than Model 2 due to seat availability):
 - Sibling already in program
 - By law, child of district staff member
 - Building preference due to geographic location(Model 2)

Frequently asked questions about the proposed enrollment plan:

- *What if my attendance area school is converted to a dual school? Do I receive preferential treatment for dual admission?*
 - *No. As a district program, all students, regardless of attendance area, have similar access to program (see weighted lottery above for more detail).*
- *What if my attendance area school is converted to a dual school and I do not want dual programming, or my student is not selected for dual programming?*
 - *The district will provide transportation for your student to the nearest elementary school with appropriate space and will attempt to accommodate middle school feeder attendance and travel time considerations for your student.*