

SPANISH INSTRUCTION IN THE MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



OVERVIEW

The Elementary Spanish Program started in Milton more than 20 years ago as an increasing body of research was documenting the undeniable advantage of learning a second language at an early age. The American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languagesⁱ offers a clear summary of the latest research on foreign language acquisition. Such an education:

1. Has a powerful effect on children's mental development and cognitive skills
2. Supports academic achievement in other disciplinesⁱⁱ
3. Develops near native pronunciation and intonation as well as communicative skills
4. Improves students' understanding of their own native language
5. Gives students an advantage in language requirements for college
6. Positively affects students' attitudes and beliefs about other cultures and other people
7. Increases job opportunities in numerous careers and fields

Why Spanish?

- Spanish is the third most spoken language in the world, after Mandarin Chinese and English
- There is a large population of native Spanish-speakers in the USA
- Spanish is an official language of the United Nations, the European Union and other international organizations
- Because of its Latin roots, Spanish is one of the easiest languages for English speakers to learnⁱⁱⁱ

Beginning with a head start!

In grades one and two, classes meet on a weekly basis for 30 minutes. In grades three, four and five, classes meet on a weekly basis for 90 minutes. Students who have completed all five years at the elementary level are placed in *Spanish 1-B* in Middle School. Thanks to the Elementary Spanish Program, students are able to complete the equivalent of two years of High School Spanish at the Middle School.

Spanish students entering Middle School may also choose Latin as their language. The language that is chosen in grade six will remain the same through eighth grade.

Spanish at the High School

Students who complete three years of Spanish in Middle School will have completed the equivalent of two years of High School Spanish and will generally enter *Spanish 3*. All students may also elect to take a second foreign language during all four years at the High School. Students who began studying Spanish in the elementary schools may also be placed in year two of a second foreign language. Students who are motivated and who have studied one foreign language for a number of years are generally able to successfully transfer their linguistic skills to the study of another language.^{iv}

ⁱ ACTFL: <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3653#FLES>. See also: CAL Center for Applied Linguistic at <http://www.cal.org/topics/fl/>, and Nanduti at http://www.cal.org/earlylang/benefits/benefits_of_being_bilingual.html

ⁱⁱ There is documented positive correlation between Math and Verbal SAT scores and the study of foreign languages.

ⁱⁱⁱ See more details at <http://www.vivaelespanol.org/why-spanish.php> (Viva El Espanol books are currently used in Milton Elementary Spanish program.)

^{iv} See detailed description of curriculum at: http://www.edline.net/pages/Milton_Public_Schools (Select Departments)