



New York State Seal of Biliteracy



*CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW ROCHELLE
DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS*

PRESENTERS:

Elena Dilion, Dual Language Programs Supervisor

Anthony DiCarlo, Trinity School Principal

Maggie Albers, Ward School Teacher and DL Coordinator



State Seal of Biliteracy



- **Background Information:**

The State Seal of Biliteracy, passed by the state legislature and signed into law by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo on July 31, 2012, was established to recognize high school graduates who have attained a “high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English.”

- **Intent of the legislation is to:**

- ✓ encourage the study of languages;
- ✓ Identify high school graduates with language and biliteracy skills for employers;
- ✓ provide universities with additional information about applicants seeking admission;
- ✓ provide students with twenty-first century skills;
- ✓ recognize the value of foreign and native language instruction in schools; and
- ✓ affirm the value of diversity in a multilingual society.



Question: Who will be eligible to receive the State Seal of Biliteracy?



Answer: Students who graduate from high school having **mastered** English and a second language.

Mastery: Defined as being able to speak, understand, read and write the language at grade level or almost grade level.

Students can acquire proficiency in a second language through different means. **Some examples:**

- ✓ A student arrives to the district having mastered a language other than English in their “home-country”.
- ✓ A student’s family speaks a language other than English at home and ensures that the student learns how to read and write it, in addition to speaking it and understanding it.
- ✓ A student learns a second language through the district’s Dual Language and World Language Programs.
- ✓ A student learns a second language in a private or independent Languages Institute, or by spending time in a country where the second language is spoken.



What does “data” show in regards to bilingualism?



“Being bilingual, it turns out, makes you smarter.” *New York Times*, “*Why Bilinguals Are Smarter*”, by [Yudhijit Bhattacharjee](#):

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-benefits-of-bilingualism.html?_r=0

Bilingualism:

- improves cognitive skills not related to language;
- shields against dementia in old age;
- constitutes a positive interference - it forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout that strengthens its cognitive muscles;
- makes individuals more adept at solving certain kinds of mental puzzles;
- improves the brain’s executive function (command system we use for planning, solving problems, focusing, remembering sequences, etc.); and
- develops a heightened ability to monitor the environment.



What does “data” show in regards to bilingualism?



“ ‘Bilinguals have to switch languages quite often — you may talk to your father in one language and to your mother in another language,’ says Albert Costa, a researcher at the University of Pompeu Fabra in Spain. ‘It requires keeping track of changes around you in the same way that we monitor our surroundings when driving’.” In a study comparing German-Italian bilinguals with Italian monolinguals on monitoring tasks, Mr. Costa and his colleagues found that the bilingual subjects not only performed better, but they also did so with less activity in parts of the brain involved in monitoring, indicating that they were more efficient at it.”

New York Times, “Why Bilinguals Are Smarter”,

by [Yudhijit Bhattacharjee](#)



Pre-K Blue and Red Circles Study



In [a 2004 study](#) by the psychologists Ellen Bialystok and Michelle Martin-Rhee, bilingual and monolingual preschoolers were asked to sort blue circles and red squares presented on a computer screen into two digital bins — one marked with a blue square and the other marked with a red circle.

In the first task, the children had to sort the shapes by color, placing blue circles in the bin marked with the blue square and red squares in the bin marked with the red circle. Both groups did this with comparable ease.

Next, the children were asked to sort by shape, which was more challenging because it required placing the images in a bin marked with a conflicting color. The bilinguals were quicker at performing this task.



Misconception on Bilingual Education



Educators and policy makers long considered a second language to be an **interference**, cognitively speaking, that hindered a child's academic and intellectual development.

They were not wrong about the interference: there is ample evidence that in a bilingual's brain both language systems are active even when he is using only one language, thus creating situations in which one system obstructs the other.

But this interference, researchers are finding out, isn't so much a handicap as a blessing in disguise. It forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout that strengthens its cognitive muscles.

New York Times, "Why Bilinguals Are Smarter", by [Yudhijit Bhattacharjee](#)



What is the District doing to take advantage of this opportunity?



CSDNR Offers:

- Dual Language Programs
- World (Foreign) Languages
- Spanish as a Heritage Language



What can you as parent/student do to take advantage of this opportunity?



- When it is possible:
 - ✓ enroll your child(ren) in the languages programs the district offers;
 - ✓ if you speak a language other than English, teach it to your child(ren);
 - ✓ enroll your child(ren) in other language programs;
 - ✓ seek a language experience in another country.



Questions and Answers



THANK YOU!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL:

ELENA DILION

EDILION@NRED.ORG

(914) 576-8249

*Reference: New York Times,
“Why Bilinguals Are Smarter”, by
[YUDHIJIT BHATTACHARJEE](#)*