



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield

Program Title: Dual Language Program at Scott Elementary

Program Category: Community Service and Community Outreach

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Elizabeth Stefanko

Title: Director, Elementary School Leadership

Department: Department of School Leadership

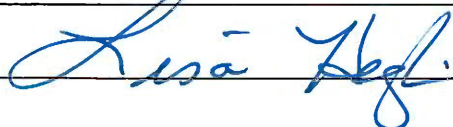
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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Lisa High

Title: Chesterfield Co Public Schools Deputy Superintendent

Signature: 

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(Community Service and Community Outreach Category)

**Executive Summary:**

Elizabeth Scott Elementary is in its sixth year of implementation of a two-way, dual immersion language (DLI) program. Currently, over fifty percent of the schools' student population participates in the program with plans to increase up to sixty percent participation over the next two school years. Due to the high percentage of students who enroll with Spanish as their first language, Spanish was chosen as the target language for the program. Students develop their biliteracy skills by engaging in meaningful learning experiences that deliver content in both languages with an emphasis on different cultural experiences when appropriate. Students in DLI programs have proven to have higher executive functioning skills, higher academic achievement, and higher socio-intercultural competence. By the time Elizabeth Scott Elementary 5th graders leave for middle school, they will be biliterate, bilingual and have an understanding and appreciation for cultures other than their own.

**Problem or need addressed by the program:**

As a Title 1 school, one is always looking for instructional practices and new ideas that will not only level the educational playing field for students but also provide them with a leg up in life. Approximately, 42% of students at Scott Elementary have started school with very limited exposure to English and/or are new to us from Spanish speaking countries. Our DLI program provides students an opportunity to have half of their school day taught in their first language. The impact of that experience was seen immediately. Spanish speaking students were more confident and felt more empowered to engage in their learning. This carried over to English class as well where they were more comfortable speaking to their teachers, even if it was in their native language, Spanish. Classroom behaviors improved and early literacy skills in English were mastered more quickly. The town of Chester, where Elizabeth Scott is located has a significantly high Hispanic population. For our native English speakers and families, the DLI

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program has opened doors to new friendships and has made a noticeable impact strengthening our school community as a whole.

**Program Description:**

After much research and discourse among administration, teachers and our county World Language Specialist, Dr. Bettina Staudt, a decision was made that we not only had the perfect population for a two-way dual language immersion program, but we also owed it to our students to find a way to provide them with an opportunity so amazing that it would set them apart from their peers across Chesterfield County. The end goal for our students would be to leave Scott Elementary School in 5th grade being biliterate, bilingual and empathetic towards different customs and cultures that are different from their own. It would also put a positive spotlight on students at our end of the county who don't always get recognized for the greatness that happens in Title 1 schools in the Bermuda District. The idea was pitched to Dr. Thomas Taylor, who was the Deputy Superintendent at the time and a known supporter of DLI. He thankfully gave us the green light to pursue this new endeavor during the upcoming school year. To help start us off on the right track, Dr. Taylor approved differentiated funding that would provide extra FTEs over the course of two years that would allow us to hire Spanish teachers specifically for the program. We have also been extremely lucky to receive support for our program from our school board representative, Ann Coker and Delegate Carrie Coyer, who is a big believer in DLI, since its inception. We are fortunate to have been able to staff our Spanish teachers through vacancies from transfers or attrition. Through careful planning with our school budget and Title 1 budget, we have been able to purchase materials and resources for our Spanish classes. Our PTA has also been supportive in purchasing Spanish books and online resources as needed. As our first cohort of students rose through the grade levels, their accomplishments in the classroom were so impressive that it caught the attention of the teachers and

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administration next door at Davis Middle School. After several school visits and their own personal childrens' experiences in the DLI program, discussions began between the two schools as to how we can continue the program in middle school. Thanks to the support we have received from the county's Curriculum and Instruction Department, Senior Cabinet, and new Superintendent, there is a plan in place that will allow our students to continue their DLI experiences in middle school next fall.

**Responding to Economic Downturn:**

With budget constraints over the past several years, we have had to work closely with my direct supervisor, Dr. Beth Stefanko, as well as with our human resource contact to get creative on how we could continue to staff highly qualified Spanish teachers to sustain and grow our program through fifth grade. To build a successful DLI program, there has to be a thoughtful approach to effective planning while including the foundational core tenets of a strong dual language immersion program. The best way to accomplish this is by visiting veteran DLI classrooms, attending DLI focused professional development and attending national conferences where you walk away with new strategies and ideas from DLI gurus from around the world. This takes money. Budget constraints have forced us to create our own professional learning as well as only send limited teachers to conferences off site.

**Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:**

As a Title 1 school, many students at Elizabeth Scott Elementary face a variety of challenges outside of school. One of which is exposure to people and cultures beyond their immediate homelife experiences. The DLI program at Scott is one way that we can provide real world learning experiences that will build background knowledge and more global exposure to our students who would otherwise never experience such things. Our DLI program is open to all

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students via a lottery system upon enrollment in kindergarten. The only criteria we look at to build the ideal classroom for the type of program we have is ensuring half of the children in class speak Spanish as their first language and the other half speak English as their primary language. The program does not exclude students with disabilities or students whose first language is not Spanish or English. Due to the diversity of our school population, class demographics include representation of all races, various performance levels (gifted and SPED) and socio-economic status. Anecdotal data that has been collected over the past six years reflects that ELLs are acquiring the English language faster than their peers in English-only classes; they are becoming more proficient in their native language and they perform at a higher level on state testing. Trends for our native English speakers are showing that more of the students are being flagged for gifted testing and they are out performing their English-only peers as well. The hope is that students will one day have the opportunity to receive the official Virginia Seal of Biliteracy during their high school career.

**Program Cost:**

If the county were to replicate the program on a larger scale, it would be most helpful if there was funding for the following:

- Translation of curriculum and accompanying materials into the target language
- Funding for software that makes manipulating PDFs in English easier for the target language
- FTEs for target language teachers to help get the program off the ground
- Funding for HR to be more active in recruiting target language teachers
- Books and online literacy resources
- Professional development opportunities for DLI teachers

National Conference attendance

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**Results/Success of the Program:**

Our program's success has far exceeded our initial expectations. In the supplemental section of this application, we linked a sampling of data that has been captured from this school year and last. The Language Arts data shows that our DLI students in grades K-2 this year are outperforming their English-only peers. This is a trend that we have consistently seen over the past five years in early literacy skills. Our third and fourth grade students are passing the Math and Reading SOL tests with pass rates in the mid 90% through 100% range. For the past two years, our DLI students have taken a bilingual assessment that tests their ability in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. We are pleased to see that there is a significant number of students who are scoring in the sixth- eighth grade ranges (as third graders). Lastly, one of our greatest success stories was when one of our veteran DLI teachers, Vivian Rivera, won the National Teacher of the Year for NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education) in 2024. This recognition allowed her to be celebrated at the NABE conference last spring where she was interviewed by radio stations and magazine reporters. She was also invited to sit down one-on-one with the US Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cordona, where she was given the opportunity to discuss the successes and challenges that DLI programs encounter on a daily basis.

**Worthiness of Award:**

The success of our dual language immersion program has been twofold. Not only are we growing biliterate, bilingual and culturally aware students who will one day be able to put those skills to work, but it also helped to strengthen the bridge between our Hispanic community and the rest of our school community. Our staff has embraced the program and has demonstrated it through their willingness to commit the extra time required to plan and implement effective

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lessons. Teachers continue to seek out professional development that will help them continue their learning. With the support of our families, we are preparing students for the future global market.

**Supplemental Materials:**

[DLI Data Summary](#)

[Photos](#)