

## What are dual language immersion programs?

Dual language immersion (DLI) programs provide content and language instruction in both English and a partner language, including Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, French, and many other languages. DLI programs support native English speakers as they develop proficiency in the partner language and English learners (ELs) as they develop proficiency in English and the partner language, which may also be their home language. DLI programs vary in structure and implementation, but they typically start in kindergarten or first grade, and many continue into middle and high school.

## Why are dual language immersion programs important?



LANGUAGE  
PROFICIENCY



ACADEMIC  
OUTCOMES



SELF-  
CONFIDENCE



LONG-TERM  
EARNINGS

High-quality DLI programs are a key lever to ensure that every student has a pathway to multilingualism. DLI programs are especially critical for students classified as ELs, and there is emerging evidence that DLI programs increase language proficiency, academic outcomes, self-confidence, and long-term earnings, among other positive outcomes.<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

### Learning about evidence-based DLI programs through the OELA DLI Project

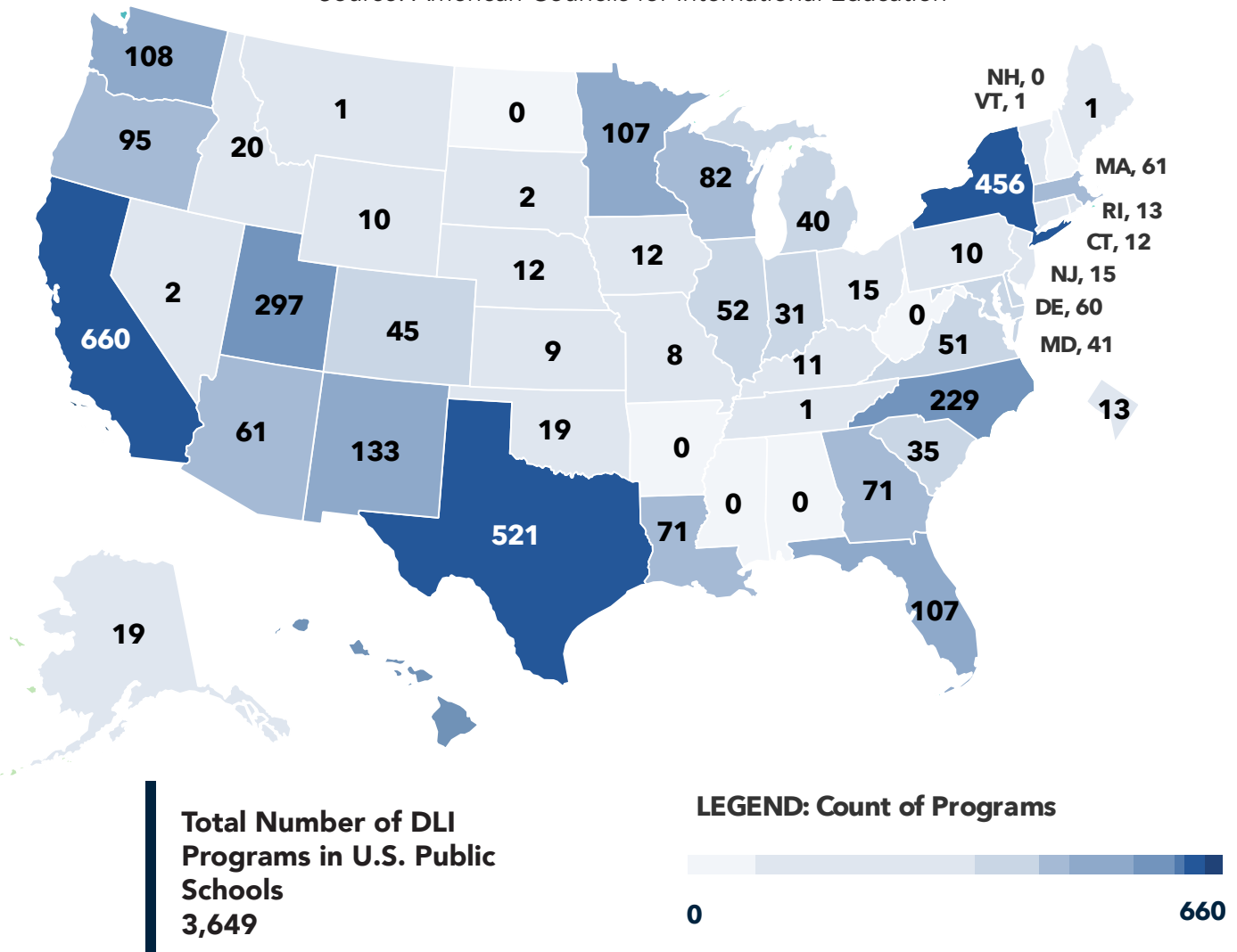
To learn about evidence-based DLI programs, the U.S. Department of Education collaborated with the Regional Comprehensive Centers and five state education agencies—California, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Utah.

The project collaboration synthesized insights from a national literature scan, site visits at 19 public DLI schools, and roundtable discussions with educators and community members. The findings informed the development of DLI playbooks for states to implement and grow DLI programs. Insights and examples from the project are included in this infographic.



# Number of Dual Language Immersion Programs in U.S. Public Schools by State in 2021–22

Source: American Councils for International Education



## Features that support dual language immersion programs<sup>6</sup>



STAFFING



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES



CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS



INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES



FUNDING



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Funding for dual language immersion programs



### How can state education agencies sustainably fund DLI programs for ELs besides using Title III funds?

#### Title III funding for DLI language instruction educational programs (LIEPs)

State education agencies (SEAs) receive Title III funding from the U.S. Department of Education for supplemental programs that support ELs and immigrant children and youth. States allocate and distribute their funds to local education agencies (LEAs) following a specific process. Some SEAs and LEAs use Title III funding to support DLI programs. The number of SEAs reporting ELs enrolled in Title III-funded DLI programs increased from 36 in SY 2019–20 to 38 in SY 2021–22.<sup>7, 8</sup> States that fund their DLI programs without Title III support are not represented on the map.

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

#### Philanthropy: New York

Some DLI programs in New York are funded through partnerships with philanthropic organizations.



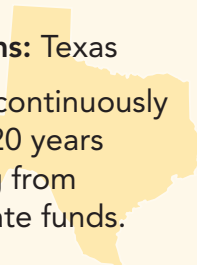
#### State grants: California

The [Dual Language Immersion Grant](#) provides funding to districts to expand or establish new DLI programs.



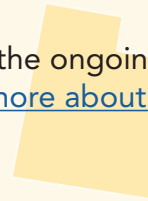
#### Mix of existing funding streams: Texas

[Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD](#) has continuously funded DLI programs for over 20 years using a strategic mix of funding from different Title programs and state funds.



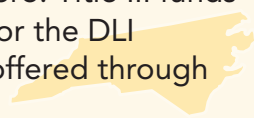
#### State legislation: Utah

Utah passed state legislation for the ongoing funding of DLI programs. [Learn more about House Bill 161.](#)



#### Grant funding and federal funding: North Carolina

[Project Ignite](#) offers grant funding for teachers earning an ESL add-on license from University of North Carolina-Greensboro. Title III funds are used for sponsorships for the DLI Administration Certificate offered through East Carolina University.



For more examples, see the DLI Foundational Conditions Playbook.

# Equity and English Learner participation

How can SEAs support ELs' equitable recruitment and participation in DLI programs?

DLI programs show promise in promoting EL students' academic achievement and the maintenance of their home language and culture. While DLI programs are popular for all students, it is important to ensure EL students have equitable access to such programs. Several SEAs have implemented promising practices to promote equitable participation in DLI programs through policy and action:<sup>9</sup>



**FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT**



**EQUITABLE  
TRANSLATION  
PRACTICES**



**PRIORITIZING  
ENROLLMENT  
OF ELs**



**ACCESS FOR  
NEWCOMER  
STUDENTS**



**MEANINGFUL  
INCLUSION OF ELs  
WITH DISABILITIES**

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

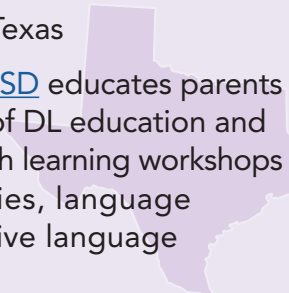
### Translation: New York

New York's [Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success](#) was translated into 26 languages.



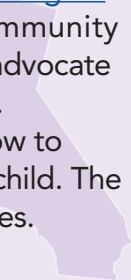
### Family engagement: Texas

[Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD](#) educates parents about the importance of DL education and empowers them through learning workshops about literacy strategies, language development, and native language maintenance.



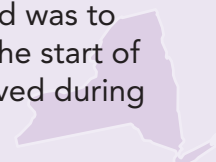
### Family engagement: California

California's [Parent's Guide to Multilingual Education](#) informs families and community members about how to successfully advocate for equitable access to DLI programs. The guide includes information on how to request a multilingual program for a child. The guide was translated into 10 languages.



### Newcomer student access: New York

[North Rockland Central School District](#) has DLI enrollment policies for integrating newcomer English learner students to ensure they have access to these programs. One strategy the district implemented was to maintain low DLI enrollment at the start of the year so newcomers who arrived during the school year could enroll.



For more information, please see the [DLI Policy Playbook](#).

# Teacher preparation and career pathways

How do SEAs prepare and recruit bilingual educators in sustainable ways?

To ensure that every student has a pathway to multilingualism, states, districts, and schools can increase access to high-quality DLI programs. However, many districts and schools face a shortage of qualified bilingual teachers. There are multiple options for recruiting and preparing bilingual DL educators. States can examine and adjust licensure systems and ensure consistent funding support for bilingual teacher preparation pathways. Districts can create “grow-your-own” (GYO) teacher programs and build partnerships with colleges and universities. Schools can improve working conditions and invest in professional learning to recruit and retain highly qualified bilingual staff, and families and communities can support and advocate for DLI.

SEAs and LEAs take several approaches to DLI teacher preparation and professional development:<sup>10</sup>

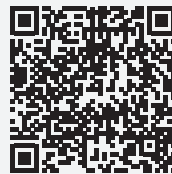
## Recruitment and teacher preparation

- Licensure systems
- Supplementary certificate pathways
- GYO teacher programs
- Funding support for teacher preparation
- International guest teachers

## Professional Development

- Joint training of DLI and English classroom counterparts
- Development funding
- Language development and cultural assets training
- Educational equity training
- Study groups and/or communities of practice

Interested in learning more about  
DL teacher preparation pathways?  
Watch these webinars.



## National Professional Development Grant

The [National Professional Development \(NPD\) program](#) offers competitive grants to educator preparation programs, in partnership with SEAs and LEAs, to provide EL-focused professional development, including preparing multilingual DLI educators<sup>11</sup> Since 2002, OELA has invested \$900 million to help professional educators meet high standards and obtain certifications to teach ELs.



### NPD Project Spotlights

Through its 2024 grant, [Kennesaw State's Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages \(TESOL\) program](#) plans to increase the number of and support for bi/multilingual teacher candidates (BTCs) in Georgia. Over the next five years, the school plans to enroll, support, and retain 160 BTCs through three GYO pathways.

One of the components of [Project ELEVATE](#), awarded to the University of Arkansas in 2022, is a GYO program that helps bilingual/bicultural paraprofessionals earn an associate of arts or Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education or integrated birth-kindergarten and special education with an ESL endorsement.

The [Bilingual Biliterate Literacy Project](#), awarded to Santa Clara University in 2021, provides online workshops in Spanish for pre-service K-8 DL educators in California and New Mexico.

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

### Texas

The **Texas Effective Dual Language Immersion Framework**, supporting bilingual students, includes a [section](#) on staffing and professional development.

### Utah

[Utah offers international educator licensing pathways for DLI instruction](#). The state has also outlined a three-year, competency-based professional growth trajectory for all DL teachers that requires them to participate in DLI state-sponsored professional development days.

### North Carolina

UNC-Greensboro offers a DL-focused, online, add-on [ESL teacher licensure](#). Additionally, a [DLI Administration Certificate](#) is available for administrators through East Carolina University.

### New York

State-supported [Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks](#) provide professional development to districts and schools to enhance EL outcomes. They focus on student identification, quality instruction, assessment, professional development, and parental involvement.

### California

California has a consortium of LEAs that work in partnership with [Sobrato Early Academic Language \(SEAL\)](#). The partnership is funded by a California Department of Education grant to support LEAs to "grow their own" bilingual teachers.<sup>12</sup>



For more information please see the [DLI Policy Playbook](#).

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> What Works Clearinghouse. (2023, December). *Dual language programs*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://whatworks.ed.gov>

<sup>2</sup> Steele, J. L., Slater, R. O., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Effects of dual-language immersion programs on student achievement: Evidence from lottery data. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 282S–306S.

<sup>3</sup> Morales, C. (2024, February 26). Dual language immersion programs and student achievement in early elementary grades. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737241228829>

<sup>4</sup> Block, N., & Vidaurre, L. (2019). Comparing attitudes of first-grade dual language immersion versus mainstream English students. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 42(2), 129–149.

<sup>5</sup> Rumbaut, R. (2014). English plus: Exploring the socio-economic benefits of bilingualism in Southern California. In R. Calahan & P. Gándara (Eds.), *The bilingual advantage: Language literacy and the US labor market*, (pp. 1-27). Multilingual Matters.

<sup>6</sup> These features were highlighted in the [DLI Project](#) through a summary of relevant literature.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, EDData SY 2019–20 FS116 DG849 and SY 2021–22 FS116 DG849, retrieved from [Ed Data Express](#)

<sup>8</sup> To read more about Title III-funded DLI programs, see Chapter 4 of the *Biennial Report to Congress*. <https://ncela.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/OELABiennialReportSYs2018-20b-508.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Examples of DLI funding sources came from the DLI Project round-table discussions, document review, and literature review.

<sup>10</sup> Examples of policies and actions for equitable access to DLI programs came from the [DLI Project](#) roundtable discussions, document review, and literature review.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of DLI teacher preparation came from the [DLI Project](#) roundtable discussions, document review, and literature review.

<sup>12</sup> To learn more about the SEAL partnership, see the following report: <https://edpreplab.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/SEAL-BTPDP-Policy-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

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