Dual language programs vary in structure and implementation but often share three common goals for students: (1) to develop bilingualism and biliteracy, based on high levels of proficiency in two languages (English and a partner language); (2) to achieve academically at grade level or better in both languages; and (3) to develop an understanding and appreciation of multiple cultures, with positive cross-cultural attitudes toward fellow students, their families, and the community.

States With Self-Reported Dual Language Programs: SY 2016–17

Thirty-five states and the District of Columbia reported having a dual language program in the 2016–17 school year (SY). Fourteen states and Puerto Rico reported not having a dual language program. South Carolina did not provide a report.

There are two types of dual language programs: 1) Two-way programs serve English learners (ELs) and non-ELs by integrating both groups of students in the same classroom for academic instruction in both languages. 2) One-way programs also instruct students in two languages but serve predominantly students from the same language background — either ELs or native English speakers. When states report on dual language programs, they do not specify whether their dual language programs are one-way or two-way.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Report: Part I: SY 2016–17 (OMB #1810-0724). These data were reported by SEAs from the 50 states, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Languages Used in Dual Language Programs Nationally: SY 2016–17

Spanish was most commonly used as a partner language in dual language programs; 30 states reported using Spanish. The next most prevalent partner languages were Chinese/Mandarin (13 states), French (nine states), German (six states), and Vietnamese (four states).

Number of Partner Languages in Five States With Largest EL Populations That Reported Dual Language Programs: SY 2016–17

- California: 13
- Texas: 2
- New York: 3
- Washington: 4
- Virginia: 1

NOTE: This table is based on states’ self-reported data on the languages used in dual language programs during the 2016–17 school year. There may be more than one partner language in use per state. Illinois reported it had dual language programs but did not specify the partner language(s) offered.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

In 2015, seven states required dual language program teachers to hold a bilingual education teaching certificate or endorsement. Eight states issued guidance to districts on qualities to look for when hiring teachers to work in dual language programs.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Report: Part I: SY 2016–17 (OMB #1810-0724). These data were reported by SEAs from the 50 states, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.