

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pomona Unified Launches English-Mandarin Immersion Program at Pantera Elementary School

POMONA – One class of Pantera Elementary kindergarteners will learn how to read, write and communicate effectively in both English and Mandarin through the introduction of the Pomona Unified School District’s latest dual-language immersion program.

Launching on Aug. 12, the first day of school for Pomona Unified students, the new program will provide Mandarin and English language instruction to 25 kindergarten students, ensuring they receive an exciting and challenging educational opportunity where they will gain the bilingual skills needed to succeed in a 21st century world.

The inaugural class at Pantera, at 801 Pantera Drive in Diamond Bar, is already full, but Pomona Unified is accepting sign-ups for the 2016-17 academic year.

“Pomona Unified is incorporating this new English-Mandarin dual-immersion program to provide our students the tools they need to succeed in a globally competitive and multicultural market, all while improving their literacy skills and engaging in the District’s rigorous core curriculum,” Board of Education President Andrew Wong said.

The program follows a 50:50 model, where 50 percent of instruction will occur in the target language of Mandarin and 50 percent of instruction will be in English, including 30 minutes of daily English language development dedicated to English learners. The class is comprised of native English speakers and native Mandarin speakers, enabling both sets of students to interact and learn new vocabulary skills.

“This program presents our students with a unique opportunity to speak multiple languages both inside and beyond the walls of a traditional classroom,” said Pantera Elementary School Principal Todd Riffell. “Students’ education will be enhanced because of the cultural awareness, acceptance and rich language that is shared and exchanged between students enrolled in these classrooms.”

As students advance in the program, they will demonstrate proficiency in both languages, navigating complex material in English and Mandarin. Students enrolled in this program also have the chance to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy on their high school diplomas.

As part of the District's 2015-18 Local Control and Accountability Plan, Pomona Unified is also expanding its English-Spanish language immersion program, which just completed its first year at Westmont Elementary, to Montvue Elementary School this fall.

"Pomona's dual-language program embraces and acknowledges the rich cultural diversity of our community," Superintendent Richard Martinez said. "By the time students reach the sixth-grade, they will have spent seven academic years immersed in bilingual, bicultural and biliterate studies, which will prove invaluable as they continue their education."

For more information on the program, visit www.pusd.org/DLI.

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OUR MISSION: The Pomona Unified School District provides a well-rounded and challenging educational program of the highest quality, empowering students to lead productive, fulfilling lives as lifelong learners. Supported on a foundation of integrity and respect, students will gain academic excellence and take personal and community pride as responsible citizens and productive participants in a diverse society and global economy.



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