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From the community:

Woodland Prepared to Welcome New Group of Kindergarteners Into Dual Language

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Woodland District 50 Schools is preparing to enter into its sixth year of providing incoming kindergarteners with an opportunity to participate in a research-based program to develop bilingual and biliterate students.

Called Dual Language, the program places English speaking students and native Spanish speaking students in the same classroom where they learn to read, write, speak and listen in Spanish and English. Students are immersed in English for half of the day and in Spanish for half of the day with partner teachers.

Dual Language began in the fall of 2012 with kindergarten and each year another grade level has been added so a student who entered kindergarten in 2012 will be entering fifth grade in the 2017-2018 school year. For the current school year there are just over 850 students participating.

"The goal of the program is to give parents an option for their children when they enter kindergarten and be part of a two-way immersion experience that helps prepare them for the multilingual and multicultural society in which we live," said Elizabeth A. Szepesi, Coordinator of Bilingual Education and Dual Language.

Parents with children entering kindergarten in the 2017-2018 school year are encouraged to attend one of two meetings about kindergarten options, including the Dual Language Program. One meeting will be held Jan. 31 and the other Feb. 16 at Woodland Primary School, 17366 W. Gages Lake Road, Gages Lake. Both meetings are from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and only for parents. No daycare options will be available.

Registration for all kindergarteners is on March 11 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Woodland Primary School. Those families interested in the Dual Language program must complete a pre-registration form at this time. This is the only way to receive a number used for a lottery held on at 9:30 a.m. April 3 at the Woodland Educational Support Center, 1105 N. Hunt Club Road, Gurnee. Parents with a lottery number may be present, but it is not required. A random number generator program is used to conduct the lottery and results will be posted on the Woodland District 50 website.

The Kindergarten/Dual Language Incoming Parent Night is 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. May 1 at Woodland Primary School. The meeting outlines specific information based on the program in which a kindergartener is enrolled. Dual Language families will be in the gym and full-day kindergarten families will be in the multi-purpose room.

Letters confirming whether a child is in the Dual Language Program or general education will be mailed April 17. Parents must accept or reject the placement in writing by May 15, 2017. Without the acceptance in writing from a parent, that spot goes to a child on the waiting list.

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