

Notes from combined SCC/PTA meeting  
Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Jake Sigafus, World Languages Coordinator for Alpine School District, took a few minutes to introduce the Dual Immersion program. Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese and French dual immersion programs exist in Utah, but Valley View and another elementary school in American Fork are exploring the possibility of becoming the first German dual immersion programs in the state. Mr. Sigafus referred us to two helpful websites with more information about Dual Immersion:

[www.alpineschools.org/dual-immersion](http://www.alpineschools.org/dual-immersion)  
[www.utahdualimmersion.org](http://www.utahdualimmersion.org)

Mr. Sigafus presented three benefits of the Dual Immersion program. First, students build skills in a second language through a two-way model, in which students spend half of their school day in the target language and the other half-day in English. Most programs begin with two classes in 1st grade and use two teachers, one who instructs exclusively in the target language for half of the day and a second who teaches in English for the remainder of the day. The teachers swap classes halfway through the day. If Valley View implemented the program, one-third to one-half of the students would need to come from our boundaries, and the remainder would come from other interested families throughout Alpine School District. Parents would always have the option to choose whether their children participate in dual immersion or attend a traditional classroom. Most of the current Dual Immersion programs in the district (Spanish, Chinese, and Portuguese) have waiting lists for students to get into their programs. The program builds by adding Dual Immersion classrooms in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade during the second year, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade during the third year, and so on, until grades 1-6 each have two Dual Immersion classrooms.

A second benefit is that dual immersion language education develops cognitive ability. Dual immersion programs have existed long enough in the state to show that participating students have test scores equal to or better than their peers.

A third benefit is that students in dual immersion programs can take the AP test for their language in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and then take college level courses in high school, graduating with close to a minor in the language. Or they can take classes in a third language while in high school.

Mr. Sigafus emphasized that it is important to determine if a Dual Immersion program is a good fit for the school. He concluded by answering questions and distributing a handout showing the benefits of learning German in particular, which include many German connections in Utah, the importance of German in a global perspective, and college and career readiness and opportunities with German.