The Downtown / Midtown French-English Dual-Language Program Parent Groups

in association with

La Petite Ecole, EFNY & the French Embassy

present

The Road Map to Creating a French-English Dual-Language Program in New York City
French Dual Language Program - Road Map

1 - creating the family base: outreach & data committees
2 - finding the school: location committee
3 - building the program: curriculum committee

Phase 1 - Creating the family base

Outreach & Data committees:

DATA: finding children, and gather family data:

Objectives: 30 families*: 15 French-speaking / 15 non-French-speaking

*entering Kindergarten the same year located in district 1 & 2:

I. Determine the number of children by school zone considered francophone/English Language Learners, mother tongue is French.
II. Determine the number of children by school zone considered Bilingual French/English who can be counted as Ls* even if they understand English.
III. Determine the number of children by school zone considered Anglophone whose family are committed to French dual language education.

Minimum classes to be viable to starts: 18 students
Minimum for a principal to start a K class and take the project seriously: 30 students
*English Language Learners also called ELL or “Ls”

FAMILY OUTREACH:

Find & inform incoming K families throughout downtown

Email Parent Form of, Post flyers at, and attend:

a. Head-start program
b. Private Preschools and Daycares
c. Listed Day Care program at the New York department of health and mental hygiene
d. Public Schools families with siblings
e. Parents Associations
f. Religious institutions
g. Newspaper and blogs
h. Parents greater community
i. Engage in conversation with parents at local playgrounds
j. Post at and inform owners of “French-like” local businesses.
k. More sources/ downtown directories.
l. Create a web page for the online sign up form, knowledge base and external links.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH:
Creating a support base in the community

Meet, attend community meeting and inform the public about the DLP initiative.
Key players to contact and meet:

a. Dept of Education, ELLs office. Meeting with them is not a prerequisite to meeting with principals. It however can be informative and useful and we should try to book an appointment ASAP.
b. Principals/ parent coordinators
c. Parent advocate (districts 1 & 2),
d. Superintendent (superintendents, district 1 & 2 = the boss of all principals).
e. Community education council (CEC 2 &1)
f. Community boards
g. City Council members - (Source: nycitycouncil.gov)

Location committee:

a. Organize small gathering at local coffee shop and bakeries to understand each school paradigm, potential and needs using the first wave of parents’ interests.
b. Identify motivated incoming parent families with siblings already in the school who have connection to the school principal and parent coordinator.

Curriculum committee:

a. Create and share a "knowledge base" to compile the benefits of dual language education.
b. Organizing parent information meetings with parents in the area.
c. Visit existing dual language program in NYC to learn best practices and share their findings at DLP meetings.
d. Meet and invite Parents and Teachers from existing dual language program in NYC to share their experiences
Phase 2 - Create a local rationale for the Creation of French Dual Language Program & finding the school

Outreach & Data committees & Location committee, Curriculum committee:
Mission: Organize a small gathering with one parent from each committee and a zoned parent to meet the Principal in the public school where we have identify a large number of incoming K families or a strong interest from the school administration:

Built a local strategy to convincing a Principal and the community:

It is indeed very difficult to sell a French DLP to very successful, oversubscribed schools (which is the case of most Downtown public schools...)

Hence the need to expend a list of arguments and key points (in construction, suggestions welcome):

Principal's own motivation based argument:
- For a new principal seeking recognition, a French DLP would be a way to leave one's mark, by adopting a cultural hedge, the distinctiveness of bilingualism.
- French DLPs have been running successfully in a number of schools, shaped by a body of seasoned professionals. The principal and the school would benefit from this existing and successful track-record. PS 58 and PS 84’s principals agreed on talking to incoming principal to share their insights. They are both very enthusiastic about DLPs. It has changed their school for the best.

Education argument:
- Create a lifelong gift of a second language to all children of the community.
- A critical number of francophone “Ls” need dual language instruction in order to learn to speak English.
- Overcrowding is not a curriculum!/ Once you have entered an overcrowded school what is your children going to learn?
- Increase education choice and quality in downtown public school.
- Francophone culture is spread out.
- Safeguard francophone families their language & cultural heritage, share & benefit the all community.

Community based arguments:

- 400 francophone children south of 23rd street entering K in the next 3 years according to the French Embassy.

- Safeguard francophone families their language heritage, share & benefit the all community.

- It would benefit the whole school community (by gaining some very motivated parents, by adding their fund-raising capabilities to the school’s, by taking advantage of the French take on healthy everyday food / leveraging on the French community help to build better cafeteria, food workshop etc).

- 3 New elementary public schools have being incubated in the past 3 years (Ps276, Spruce & PS 343), it is time for parents to turn their energy and attention towards instructions and curriculum.

- Dual Language can give a new school or an under-utilized school a new identity or a new departure.

- Having more education choices in district 2 public school will help relieve overcrowding.

- No French Dual language program below 92nd street in Manhattan

- Since March 5th our grassroots initiative has mobilized more than 80 families to create a French Dual Language program downtown.

Budget based arguments:

- Each new seat = additional $ from the DOE. $200,000/year for a class of 24 students.
- A DLP comes with a DOE grant ($20,000 to $25,000) and additional financial and logistical help from the French Government.
- French Embassy can provide resources and finance about 10% of the DLP schoolbooks.
- Incoming families interested in a French DLP have a high fundraising potential.

Present the data to a principal and a school community:
a. contact school principal to present the data and the project.
b. Detailed list and repartition by year and school zone of Incoming families
c. Explain the modalities of securing a Dual language grant from the DOE*
d. Explain the modalities of securing a grant from the French Embassy and other francophone countries agencies.
e. Explain Benefits to the Children and the Community

* Department of Education

After having met with a responsive principal, ask new players such as Embassy and consulate officials, elected officials, to attend and bring you support during your second meeting with the school.

Phase 3 - Building and planning a successful Dual Language program on day 1

Once the principal is on board, we must:

- Start the teacher & teacher assistant hiring process (Teacher and TA committee)
- Obtain accreditation from the DOE (Space committee)
- Secure families: organize tours of the school and enroll families (outreach & data committee)
- Start fundraising and source donations to build a French library (Library Committee)
- Obtain French education materials (Curriculum & Library Committee)
- Help chosen public school write grant to obtain Dual language grant from the DOE (Space& Library committee)
- Hire a dual language specialist to train teacher and teacher assistant.
- Build curriculum with school and Office of ELL form the DOE (Curriculum & Library Committee)