

Exciting Beginnings To DLI Program At Leesburg Elementary

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Press Release

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Solemar Rosario and Heidi Class are the Kindergarten DLI Teachers at Leesburg Elementary.

WARSAW — Exciting things are happening in the kindergarten hallway at Leesburg Elementary School. This school year marks the first year the Spanish Dual Language Immersion Program is being implemented into the building. Visitors who would walk down the hallway, couldn't help but hear students counting and singing not just in English, but in Spanish as well.

There are two kindergarten classes in the DLI program. Each class spends half the day with Solemar Rosario in the Spanish room and half the day with Heidi Class in the English room. The students' demographics include one-third native Spanish speakers, which allows the program to be a two-way program. Students are not just learning Spanish from Rosario, but also from peers. This also allows native-Spanish speakers the opportunity to remain bi-literate and bilingual.

Class, the kindergarten English teacher in the program, said "Prior to DLI, many of our native Spanish speakers were not retaining their Spanish when they came to school. We value the opportunity for our students to be bilingual and have a vast understanding of academics in two languages. This is going to be an incredible program for everyone involved."

Rosario, the kindergarten Spanish teacher, came to Leesburg after being a teacher in Puerto Rico for 18 years, 11 of which was in kindergarten. Nate Polston, principal at Leesburg Elementary, said, “We are incredibly lucky to have Señora Rosario with us. It’s amazing to see her teach math skills in Spanish, and how seamlessly the kindergarten students follow along. Her enthusiasm for teaching and the Spanish language is contagious.”

Brent and Ashley Doty, parents of a DLI student at Leesburg, said they felt fortunate for this opportunity for their son to learn a different language by immersion. “We felt this would open up so many more opportunities for him in the future and enhance his learning exponentially,” the couple said. “We are excited to watch him grow and develop as he is challenged in a second language and given an opportunity we did not have access to as children.”

Shelly Rosario wanted her son to be a part of the DLI program at Leesburg so he could connect more with his family. “The opportunity for our son to learn a second language means so much to our family,” she said. “My husband is bilingual and some of his extended family speaks mainly Spanish. It will give him a great opportunity to connect with his family in a more meaningful way through language. We are so impressed with how much he has already learned in the first four weeks of school. His enunciation of the Spanish words that he has learned is amazing. We are so proud of him and the program at Leesburg.”