



INTERNATIONAL SPANISH ACADEMIES: CONCEPT

International Spanish Academies (ISAs) are part of an international cooperative educational project in English and Spanish between public schools in the U.S. and Canada and the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain.

The **goals** of the project are as follows:

- To develop a quality Spanish-English bilingual education program which will promote high academic standards for all students.
- To provide students with the values of multicultural education.
- To foster international relations and the understanding between cultures.
- To prepare students to achieve high academic oral and written competence in both languages.

Resources and Programs offered by the Ministry, through the Office of Education and Science of the Embassy of Spain, to the Schools, as ISAs

- Access to double academic accreditation.
- Participation in the following programs:
 - Specialized visiting teachers.
 - Courses for teachers and school administrators in Spanish universities.
 - Scholarships for summer institutes.
 - Language and culture assistants.
 - School exchanges.
- Professional development for teachers.
 - Organization of an annual seminar for constituted ISAs.
 - Specific activities for professional development for teachers in the United States and Canada that will be organized by the Education and Science Advisors.
 - Pedagogical consultation.



- Materials and teaching resources.
 - Creation of a database of classroom materials and resources for ISAs through the “Materiales” journal and other on-line publications.
- Connection with other Spanish and International organizations devoted to the promotion of the Spanish language and culture.
 - Participation in an ISA network in North America.
 - The selected International Spanish Academies will form a network of schools of recognized academic excellence, even if that means restrictive selection criteria must be used.

Schools which can set up an International Spanish Academy

Elementary, middle or high schools that initiate or are implementing a quality educational program in English and in Spanish.

Schools implementing a Spanish-English Two-way Dual Language Immersion program.

Enrollment at kindergarten or first grade is possible if the students are not bilingual, but some knowledge of the second language, either English or Spanish, is necessary for enrollment at higher grades.

The involvement of families and the school community is of crucial importance for the success of these programs. Families and staff have to be committed to creating bilingual students through their strong support of the program.

Curriculum proposal

The International Spanish Academies will offer an integrated curriculum that may be articulated at the higher levels with other internationally recognized programs, such as the International High School Diploma.

The languages of instruction will be English and Spanish (see table 1 for ratios). The school districts and/or schools may determine the exact ratio as long as they guarantee that students attain oral and written competence in both languages for both academic purposes and interpersonal communication.

The curriculum will include two components:



1. **A general component** consisting of the same content required of all students of the school district, state, or province (in the case of Canada), that is the school district's curriculum using its own assessment system. The difference is that instruction will be delivered partly in Spanish.
2. **A specific component** of Spanish language and cultures of Spanish-speaking nations that will take into account the national standards for Spanish learning and the minimum contents established for each educational level by Spanish legislation:
 - Communication in the Spanish language.
 - Cultures of Spanish-speaking nations.
 - Connections with other content areas.
 - Comparisons of languages and cultures.
 - Communities: Use of the language both within and outside of the school environment.

The specific component does not necessarily imply an increase in the instructional load and it will be aligned with the general curriculum of the school district or school. The means for carrying out this alignment will be decided by the school that opts to become an International Spanish Academy.

Table 1

| Grade | <i>Percentage of Spanish as language of instruction.</i> | <i>Specific Content. Mandatory: Spanish language and culture of the Spanish-speaking countries.</i> |
|--------------|---|---|
| K -5 | Between 50% and 100% of instructional time | Reading and Writing. Knowledge of environment (Social and/or Science Studies). |
| 6-8 | Approximately 40% of instructional time | Language and Communication. Literature and Art. Social and Sciences Studies |
| 9-12 | Approximately 30% of instructional time | Language and Communication. Literature and Art. Economic, Social and International Relations in contemporary world. |

Legal Framework

The ISA program will reflect the provisions of the Act of September 23, 1998 passed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain, which sets the legal basis for the signing of agreements with the institutions referred to in article 7.1.d) of Royal Decree 1027/1993, of June 25, which regulates the Ministry's educative action abroad.

In order to guarantee the completion of at least one full educational cycle, the agreements will have a minimum duration of 4 years. These agreements may be expanded or terminated by mutual agreement.



Supervision and Evaluation

The Counselor of Education and Science, or the person designated by him or her, will supervise the observance of the provisions made by the cooperation agreement between the ISA and the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain.

In order to guarantee the quality of the program, the school will submit an annual evaluation and activities report within the month following the end of each school year to attest to the attainment of the proposed objectives and the requirements set out in the agreement.

International Spanish Academy Register

The ISAs will be registered as such in the School Register of the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain.