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Media Contact: Kristin Conner, PIO

kconner@djud.net

Press Release

DJUSD Schools Highlighted as First Stop in California Department of Education Dual Language Immersion State Tour

Davis, CA – February 23, 2024 – Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) Superintendent Matt Best welcomed California Department of Education (CDE) Deputy Superintendent Sarah Neville Morgan and U.S. Department of Education Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director, Office of English Language Acquisition, Montserrat Garibay, on Tuesday for a visit to Marguerite Montgomery Elementary (MME) and César Chávez Elementary as part of their dual language immersion California school visits.

“I am proud of what our students are doing. We saw our youngest students engaging in high-leverage, developmentally appropriate strategies that intentionally build language and content knowledge. Our educators are skilled in lifting up the assets of all students



Superintendent Best observed students engaged in a Two-Way Bilingual Immersion program classroom at Marguerite Montgomery Elementary School.

and in creating a safe and welcoming environment,” said Superintendent Matt Best. “Throughout the tour, we saw our Graduate Profile at work as students were collaborating, thinking critically and able to demonstrate civic and cultural awareness at an impressively young age.”

“The U.S. Department of Education is committed to working with leaders at the state and local levels to invest in, promote, and support evidence-based dual language practices and programs that will raise the bar and lead the world. As Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona has often said, ‘Multilingualism is a superpower.’ It was inspiring to see Marguerite Montgomery Elementary and César Chávez Elementary doing their part to energize and engage students,” said Assistant Deputy Secretary Garibay.

Dual language immersion programs have shown to help children from English speaking and non-English speaking households in several ways, including to learn English, to help children become competent in their native language without sacrificing success in school, and to open up doors and bridge gaps between cultures and languages.

“Dual language immersion programs connect students and families to a school in ways that can’t be replicated, said Deputy State Superintendent Sarah Neville Morgan. “The visit to Davis schools far exceeded the expectations of our CDE team and that of our U.S. Department of Education visiting delegation. This is truly what all schools should be doing.”

The delegation of state and federal officials visited three classrooms at each school site, getting a taste of kindergarten through 6th grade teaching and learning. At Marguerite Montgomery Elementary’s Two-Way Bilingual Immersion program, visitors learned about the core elements of the school’s eight-year partnership with Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL), the school’s evidence-based model designed to provide high-quality education that bolsters learning for all children, but is especially critical for English Learners. SEAL pedagogy creates alignment and articulation across the grade levels through professional development, curriculum support and coaching. At MME, the SEAL model has helped to build community and uplift the assets of all students in an environment in which approximately 40 percent of students are native Spanish speakers. U.S. Department of Education’s Assistant Deputy Secretary, Montserrat Garibay, observed, “It’s clear that the teachers are really invested in the SEAL program and to see it in action today is truly an inspiration.”

At César Chávez Elementary, the delegation observed classrooms using a different model of Spanish immersion that originated in Davis in 1997. High levels of parent participation and a model of full Spanish immersion beginning in kindergarten were highlighted in Chávez classrooms.

DJUSD Board of Education Trustee Hiram Jackson, who joined the tours said, “My children have grown and benefited from immersion instruction, and I am a supporter and advocate for how these programs serve our students and can especially support our students and families furthest from opportunity.”

Throughout the day, visitors conversed with teachers and students in Spanish about their reading and lessons, and they also had the opportunity to discuss with site leaders and district administrators the opportunities and benefits of multilingualism, as well as about the challenges in bilingual teacher recruitment.



DJUSD’s visiting delegation ended their tour in front of the colorful mural at César Chávez Elementary School.

This visit comes as DJUSD Superintendent Best leads the effort to align DJUSD’s exceptional and diverse programming through the lens of the DJUSD Graduate Profile. “We are providing our students with the tools and the opportunities to grow and thrive. Our schools are filled with excellent educators and support staff who lead exceptional programming that together build the skills and deliver the knowledge that will serve students throughout their lives,” Best said.

For more information about immersion programming and World Language opportunities in DJUSD, visit our [World Language web page](#). You may also visit [DJUSD Graduate Profile](#) to learn more about the District’s Graduate Profile.

ABOUT DJUSD:

The Davis Joint Unified School District provides innovative educational programs to approximately 8,350 students at 17 school sites. In partnership with parents, DJUSD helps students develop the abilities and values needed to reach their full potential. Each year, an average of 700 students graduate from District high schools. With approximately 1,000 employees, including 500 teachers, DJUSD contributes significant economic value to the community. For more information, visit www.djUSD.net or facebook.com/DavisJointUnifiedSchoolDistrict.