



## Río Real Elementary School K-8 Dual Immersion Academy (K-8)

Río School District

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Río Real Dual Immersion Academy is a K-8 public school in the Río School District in Oxnard. It was established in 1958 in the middle of a rich agricultural area and the community is home to generations of hard-working families and migrant workers. Ninety percent of the students at Río Real are culturally and linguistically diverse, with more than 80% being Spanish-speakers, 96% of the students are Hispanic, 80% are English Learners, and 20% are English, Mixteco, Chinese, or Filipino speakers.

The Dual Immersion Academy (DIA) opened its doors in 2004 as the district's only dual language program. The program was designed to provide students with an effective way to become fluent and biliterate in English and Spanish, as well as achieve at high academic levels and develop socio-cultural awareness, in alignment with the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education. In this 90:10 dual language program, English instruction in increments of 10 percent is added each year after kindergarten until 50 percent English/Spanish instruction is attained in 4th and 5th grades. In response to parent requests, Río Real transitioned from being a K-5 to a K-8 school starting in 2013, reaching full implementation of 6th-8th grades for dual immersion students in 2015. In 6th-8th grades, Spanish Language Arts and Social Studies are taught in Spanish and dedicated to the continuation of Spanish literacy and oracy development. Additionally, Río Real participated in two published white papers regarding the fidelity of implementation of the program: Learning content, language and culture in concert: the academic achievement, aspirations and social experiences of bilingual students at the end of middle school.

Río Real is an assets-oriented and needs-responsive school. From the moment parents step onto the campus in the morning, they are greeted by a parent volunteer, a counselor and usually a few students. This first contact of the day communicates important information to parents, such as an upcoming minimum day, Coffee with the Principal, or ELAC or School Site Council meetings. Monthly parent meetings are held in the mornings, after school and in the evenings for working parents. Family literacy and math literacy nights help develop parents' capacity to support instructional strategies in reading and math at home. Parent meetings are well-attended and recent topics have included Reclassification, the California Dashboard, CAASPP scores, ELPAC, grade-level Pathway projects, environmental projects on campus, and updates on bond measures in the district. English Learner parents are also recruited to attend the annual Saber Es Poder, the annual Parents as Advocates conference that is held in the spring where they learn to be informed advocates for their rights in the educational system.

The Río Real staff consists of 30 highly qualified teachers, one resource specialist, one speech and language therapist, two Kindergarten "Push In" teachers, four instructional assistants, one full-time library clerk, and three district teachers on special assignment (Literacy, Math, and English Learner) who support instruction. In addition to being the lead designers of learning, staff have created an inclusive, engaging environment for Río Real's emergent bilinguals and English-only students, preparing them according to the district's vision with the communication, collaboration, creative and thinking skills necessary to "thrive in the 21st century and global society."

Over the last six years, Río Real's teachers and support staff have adopted and refined exemplary and research-based practices of inquiry and project-based approaches for student learning. These practices engage students in academic discourse and increase the opportunity for academic language development. Instructional practices implemented by teachers positively engage and impact our students leading to accurate rates of reclassification based on competency levels. When designing lessons, teachers ensure the balance of language is aligned with the percentage required by the program for their grade level, thereby maintaining fidelity to the 90:10 language model. Throughout the year, students are given opportunities to inquire and learn through transdisciplinary practices, making connections from one concept or theme to the next with an integration of language and cross-linguistic transfer. Connections are often made to the world outside of the classroom, to their home and community. These intellectually rich and developmentally appropriate experiences integrate language development, content instruction and give English Learners meaningful access to the standards.

At Río Real, students and adults take personal responsibility through the REAL Guidelines, which guide students and the school community to be Responsible, Respectful, Enthusiastic, Accepting and Leaders. Developing the guidelines launched a process of becoming a more caring, equitable, supportive and welcoming learning environment at school and in the home. Throughout the school, teachers, the school counselor and the assistant principal regularly teach students through restorative justice circles, class meetings, Socratic seminars, mindfulness practices, and social-emotional learning curriculum, such as Mindful Mondays. These strategies and the rich relationships created among teachers, students and families have created a family environment and a culture where students and families thrive. These practices demonstrate that Río Real is responsive to the strengths and needs of English Learners and supports the social emotional health of our student population. As one student commented, "Río Real is more than just a school, Río real is a home...it is REAL, Responsible, Respectful, Enthusiastic, Accepting and Leaders."

***CABE is proud to recognize Río Real Elementary K-8 Dual Immersion Academy as  
a CABE 2020 Seal of Excellence School!***