Q: What is language immersion?
A: Language immersion is an approach to second language instruction in which teaching and learning of core content occurs in a language other than English. This means that the target language is the medium of instruction for the teacher and of learning for the students. The goal of an immersion program is language acquisition at a proficiency level equal to the native language, with content and culture as complementary components.

Q: What does immersion look like in Blue Valley classrooms?
A: Blue Valley Schools uses a dual language immersion model in which students are co-taught by two full-time classroom teachers, spending half of the day in the target immersion language and half of the day in English. Dual language immersion allows students to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in two languages, building academic fluency in both English and the immersion language.

Q: What immersion sites and program options are available in the district?
A: Blue Valley Schools’ inaugural language immersion program began in the 2017-18 school year at Wolf Springs Elementary. A second Chinese Immersion site, Valley Park Elementary, welcomed its inaugural class during the 2018-19 school year. The district continues to listen to community feedback and is committed to cultivating global learners. The Chinese language has strong community interest, is a critical language and offers students a global focus.

Q: Who can participate in the immersion program?
A: Blue Valley’s Chinese immersion program begins in kindergarten. Students must be five years old by Aug. 31 to be eligible for the program per state of Kansas regulations. Students cannot be current kindergarten students. Students in the Blue Valley North and Blue Valley Northwest attendance areas will typically attend the Valley Park immersion location, while students in the Blue Valley Southwest, Blue Valley High and Blue Valley West attendance areas will typically attend the Wolf Springs location. Up to one-half of immersion student spots at Wolf Springs are reserved for students coming from the Blue Valley Southwest attendance area and up to one-half of the spots at Valley Park are reserved for students coming from the Blue Valley North attendance area. Transportation will not be provided to students who transfer to participate in the immersion program.

Heritage speakers can enroll but will be treated equally with no preference provided. Preference will be given to siblings of current immersion students. Students with special needs are also welcome to enroll. The IEP team along with other district administrators will work with the family to determine if participation in an immersion program best meets each individual student's needs.
Q: Do I have to be a Blue Valley resident to apply for the immersion program?
A: Yes. Blue Valley Schools asks all families enrolling for the first time to provide proof of residency (a purchase contract/lease or utility bill). Families selected to participate in the Chinese Immersion program are typically asked to provide documentation to the school within three weeks of selection.

Q: Will transportation be provided to transfer students participating in the immersion program?
A: Transportation will not be provided by the district to students who live outside of the Wolf Springs Elementary or Valley Park Elementary boundaries and transfer to the schools to participate in the immersion program.

Q: What happens in middle and high school after completing the elementary immersion program?
A: As the program develops and students complete the elementary immersion curriculum, the district plans to implement continuing immersion programs at the middle and high school level.

Q: If my child is not admitted to the immersion program in kindergarten, can he/she join the program later?
A: In order to maintain the integrity of the immersion program and ensure participating students are developing in their language skills at a similar pace, students will not be admitted into the immersion program after their kindergarten year. Students who are not admitted to the program but are interested in studying the target language can look at Global Language elective offerings at the elementary, middle and high school level.

Q: If my child participates in Chinese immersion, how long does the program last?
A: Blue Valley’s immersion program begins in kindergarten and families will be asked to make a long-term, multi-year commitment to immersion education. The district plans for participating families to make a K-12 commitment to the immersion program.

Q: If my child participates in Chinese immersion, will he/she still take elementary Spanish class?
A: Students enrolled in Chinese immersion will not participate in the elementary Spanish curriculum. Immersion in the Chinese language fulfills their elementary Global Language education component.

Q: If my child does not participate in immersion, will he/she still receive Global Language education?
A: Students who do not participate in the immersion program will attend Spanish class like all other district elementary schools.

Q: How do I apply for my child to participate in the immersion program?
A: An online application will be available in mid-February. The application period will be open through mid-March. Participation in the program will be determined by a lottery system, with up to one-half of program spots reserved for students in the Blue Valley Southwest and Blue Valley North attendance areas.

Q: What are the benefits of language immersion?
A: - Enhances cognitive skills
    - Increases cultural competence
    - Better prepares students for the global community where a second language is an asset
    - Improves performance on standardized tests
    - Teaches second language skills