As the Chinese foreign language programs grow rapidly nationwide, the Chinese immersion programs are also gaining more attention. In New York City, a 50-50 dual language (DL) model is recommended for schools. The 50-50 dual language model refers to a bilingual program where half of the program’s students come from English dominant backgrounds and the other half of the students are English language learners (ELLs) of the same native language background. The 50-50 model also refers to the instructional time allocated to each language. Half of the instruction is provided in English and half in the native language of the ELLs in all subject areas.

There are currently five Chinese dual language programs in New York City (PS 94 in Brooklyn, PS/IS 184 and The High School of Dual Language and Asian Studies in Manhattan, and PS 163 and PS 173 in Queens). Several other schools are interested in establishing a Chinese dual language program, including PS 20 in Manhattan, whose program is scheduled to open in September, 2010. Recognizing the common goals and needs of these schools, ALBETAC organized a network meeting on February 1, at PS 163 to provide administrators and teachers with the opportunity to share success stories and to discuss strategies to help them overcome challenges.

The group took a learning walk facilitated by the principal of PS 163, Lucius Young, and the school administrators. Participants looked at the DL classes in session and were amazed at the quality of student work in both English and Chinese. The learning walk was later followed by structured discussions regarding instructional materials/resources, parent outreach strategies and administrative support. Other dual language schools (PS 94, PS 173, and PS/IS 184) also shared their effective practices at the network meeting.
Kindergarten Bulletin Board in Chinese celebrating winter and the Chinese Lunar New Year

Ms. Alice Wang, with her 2nd grade students in the Chinese language arts class

Question: What is the Earth made of?