

Bennett Elementary, an IB World School

Language Policy



Philosophy

Learning revolves around language; therefore every staff member is a language teacher. Language is the means to access information, enhance intellectual growth, foster communication, develop social skills and values, maintain culture, examine who we are, and express ourselves. The staff and community at Bennett Elementary School, an IB World School have a responsibility to recognize and support language development. Inquiry is the way that children learn best, and language is the vehicle for delivering the inquiry process throughout all content areas and social interaction.

Practices

The language of instruction

The language of instruction is American English. Classroom instruction supports the development and acquisition of oral and written English through best practices such as:

- differentiation of instruction
- small group and individual instruction
- print-rich environments
- multi-sensory stimulus
- opportunities for authentic language use
- identification of language objectives for each unit of inquiry
- scaffolding of instruction
- activation of student background knowledge
- pre-teaching of key concepts and vocabulary
- comprehensible input
- modeling
- cooperative learning

English Language Acquisition (ELA) staff provide additional instruction and support to students whose primary language is not English. The amount and intensity of services are determined by student needs and may take the form of small group instruction, in-class support, teacher collaboration, and/or monitoring of academic progress. Poudre School District allocates staffing based on student population.

Specific language needs of English Language Learners are determined through formal and informal assessments and process is recorded on a continuum of ELA Standards. A formal language assessment (ACCESS) is administered yearly, as required by the state of Colorado. Other assessment tools include, but are not limited to, STAR, TCAP, DRA, MAP, classroom rubrics, writing samples, and AR quizzes.

Teachers implement best teaching practices regarding language instruction. Collaboration among staff members is essential to implement research-based practices effective for language acquisition. Staff development is provided as needed to support

student success. Parents are informed of student progress and are encouraged to support the school's language and content learning goals.

Bennett recognizes the Arts as a language of instruction and a means of communication. Because our learning community values the Arts, students receive an average of 90-120 minutes of direct instruction per week. Through the model of transdisciplinary learning, the Arts are integrated within all classrooms.

The school's additional language

Students at Bennett receive Spanish instruction as the school's additional language. Bennett students receive Spanish instruction an average of 45-60 minutes per week. In addition to the integration of Spanish in the Program of Inquiry, the study of Spanish provides Bennett students the opportunity to broaden their horizons through the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of culture through language. As an after-school enrichment activity, French is also offered.

Language learning is encouraged outside of the Spanish classroom by providing teachers with classroom resources (posters, books, etc.), inviting native Spanish-speaking students and community members to share their language, utilizing the Spanish "Word of the Week", posting student work, and communicating with parents.

Mother-tongue support

In order to maintain culture and facilitate academic progress, Bennett supports the mother tongue language while helping students acquire English language skills. The following practices support students with languages other than English at home:

- Books are annually requested and stocked in various mother tongues to continually build library resources and support the ever-changing student body.
- The excused absence policy acknowledges holidays and religious observances
- Relationships are created and maintained with International organizations at local Universities.
- Staff are educated about customs and celebrations unique to students' cultures
- Various languages are displayed throughout school
- Parents are encouraged to continue to support mother tongue language acquisition and competency.
- Communication with families is facilitated through the use of interpreters and translators
- When able, school communication is provided in mother tongue to families who cannot receive the information in English
- Opportunities for the use of mother tongue in inquiry is provided
- Pre-teaching of content in the native language is encouraged.

Language Policy Review

As a staff we will review our language policy annually and revise as needed.