Cypress Elementary School Language Policy

Philosophy

      At Cypress Elementary School, we understand that all students will progress academically and socially from having exposure to speaking, listening, reading and writing opportunities in English, Spanish, and their native language(s). Our focus on language acquisition and integration provides students a context to develop deeper cultural and interpersonal connections through language.

Language Profile

- Language of instruction within the Program of Inquiry (POI) is English.
- The language of our host country is English.
- All teachers within the programme are considered to be language teachers. Students read, write, and communicate within all units of inquiry.
- Standards for language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking are in accordance with California Common Core standards and the California ELD standards for each grade level.
- Delivery of language instruction is through Wonders, published by McGraw Hill and approved by the CVUSD board of education. Wonders is a balanced literacy program in which the learning of language is integrated into the Programme of Inquiry.
- Best practices established within the balanced literacy program including direct instruction, differentiated learning, and flexible groupings.
- GATE students have differentiated instruction, including compacting and accelerated curriculum, yet still connected to the units of inquiry.
- Books and resources that support our inquiry units are purchased yearly for classroom libraries and the school library. These, and other reading material in multiple languages, are available for student checkout.
- Additional support and groupings are provided to English Learners through designated English Language Development (ELD) as well as MTSS.
- Legal requirements are in place for designated ELD (30 minutes each day). Teachers incorporate ELD support that connects to their IB Units of Inquiry.
- Newcomer students are paired with other students who speak the same languages when possible.
- All ELD students have access to Smarty Ants and Imagine Learning licenses through the district office.

Pedagogy for Language Instruction

- Our model of instruction is based on inquiry.
- Language instruction is integrated throughout the POI.
- Instruction is connected to the IB Approaches to Learning.
- Focus is on collaborative processes for discussions.

- Focus is on Close Reading processes.
- Focus is on citing with evidence (connection to Academic Honesty).
- Focus is on writing through the *Step Up to Writing* program and *Handwriting WIthout Tears*.
- Texts are available with the use of Scholastic Reading Measure which determines student Lexile level.
- Access is provided for research based phonemic awareness, phonics, reading, writing, listening, and oral language development (Heggerty, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), Lexia, Wonders).
- Fluid re-grouping of students is based on the need for MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support).

Strategies to Support Teachers with Students' Language Development

- We make accommodations for students with different abilities and needs such as English Learners and Special Education students. We differentiate assignments and scaffold in order to meet their needs.
- Teachers label objects in the classroom in various languages (English, Spanish, etc.) to support language acquisition.
- Teachers are encouraged to utilize translanguaging when introducing units of inquiry, while teaching and in reflection; students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language.
- Technology is often used to support students in written language. Those who have difficulty reading texts may use the text to speech option on their ChromeBooks, and students who have difficulty getting their thoughts on paper use the speech to text option.
- Language skills are embedded within all inquiry projects and are scored through student/teacher developed rubrics, portfolios and reflection.
- Language development goals are identified at the beginning of the year using current language skills data.

Support For Students Who are not Proficient in the Language of Instruction

- Students who are not meeting standards on classroom language assignments, classroom assessments, or state standardized tests receive appropriate modifications and instruction. Students are given support within the classroom through flexible grouping and differentiation, and sometimes receive pull out or push in help from specialists.
- Student Success Teams (SSTs) are used to identify concerns and solutions in order to meet individual students' needs.
- "Newcomer" students are paired with other students who speak the same languages, when possible.

Languages Offered

- The school's world language is Spanish.
- All students grades 1 - 5 receive 1 hour of Spanish language instruction weekly. Students in TK and Kindergarten receive 30 minutes of Spanish language weekly.

Support of All Languages

- The school supports and encourages the development and continued use of all languages. Students are encouraged to continue reading, researching, and speaking in all of the languages to which they have been exposed.
- Students with limited English proficiency may conduct inquiries in their native language and then translate, write, and present their findings in English at their present skill level.
- Teachers also show students how to convert texts to different languages using Google translate, which also helps students in the research process.
- Students are encouraged to present their projects in their native language to the classroom/school during class or school assemblies.
- Students with a common language (not English) are often partnered in order to provide opportunities to communicate and support one another using their primary language. This is especially done when one student is weaker in the language and needs additional assistance.
- The district has a language support office so that any student, teacher, or parent needing translation of documents or during conferences can receive the assistance they need.

Learning of the Regional Language and Culture

- As we celebrate holidays and traditions of the host country, we also try to acknowledge the traditions and beliefs of students' home culture in order to celebrate commonalities while also recognizing differences.
- Learning of the regional language involves oral practice and students are given multiple opportunities to converse with their peers in social settings and in settings that require teamwork and collaboration.
- Acquisition of academic language is supported with specific strategies that help English language learners progress.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Implementation and revision of the school language policy is a process done by all stakeholders. It is a document in progress that is updated as needed.

- The language policy is made readily available to all of our stakeholders. The IB coordinator and leadership team have the responsibility for communicating the policy to all constituents through information nights, staff development, and the school website.
- Through staff development, teachers work to align language instruction with IBO program standards, current research, and best practices. Staff development is determined based on the PYP action plan developed and revised by the leadership team with staff input.
- School site council, the librarian, school leadership team, and grade level teams yearly collaborate on classroom and school libraries to make recommendations for additional language support materials.
- We involve our School Site Council (SSC) for their feedback in: how we can assist in the acquisition of languages, areas where students or families need more support, and how our language policy can adapt to meet their needs.

Goals to address in developing our language program

1) How do we serve students already fluent in Spanish?
2) How do students who come to the school at higher grade levels catch up in Spanish instruction?

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