



Hephzibah Elementary School

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Hephzibah Elementary PYP Language Policy

Statement of Belief

At Hephzibah Elementary School, we believe that language is fundamental to the success of all student learning. Language includes the ability to express oneself through speaking, reading, writing, drawing, as well as communicating through different languages, such as the languages of science, math, and the arts. Language is essential to the construction of meaning and connects all of our curriculum elements and ultimately supports the mission of our school. We believe that literacy instruction should connect to all units of inquiry. By instilling an intrinsic love of reading through the use of balanced literacy, authentic assessment, and differentiated instruction we can meet the needs of each learner. Through inquiry, teachers provide students with opportunities to use language in many different formats, including art, as well as the traditional teaching of language both embedded in the units of inquiry and as stand-alone subjects. Hephzibah Elementary School accepts the responsibility of recognizing and supporting language development of all students. It is the expectation and understanding that all of our teachers work together to ensure that language is integrated within meaningful contexts.

Components of the Language Program

- English as a Second Language (ESOL)/General Education Language PK-5
- All subjects are taught in English while offering ESOL support.

Identification of Language Needs

As required by federal and state guidelines, all students enrolled in Hephzibah Elementary School must complete a Home Language Survey indicating the language most often spoken in the home. For any student who is not from a home in which English is the listed primary language, testing must occur to determine level of ability in English. This information determines whether or not the student is classified as a student for which English is the second language and informs the school of the primary language. Any student who is identified as “ESOL” shall be placed with a teacher who is certified in ESOL instruction through the State of Georgia Board of Education. Students who are not fluent in English are also given a yearly exam which determines their progress in the acquisition of the English language. This assessment encompasses the four domains of speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Students who test at the exit level of competency are placed in monitored status.

Support for Language Learners

Our teachers are working to create a caring language community to enhance the language learning of all students. Hephzibah Elementary School strives to promote a language-rich campus for all students through the implementation of technology, multimedia, and library resources. We ask that teachers be well informed of their students who have language needs and other language abilities. Hephzibah Elementary School encourages families to continue native tongue development at home, and support is given to these students when that language is one other than English. The school also offers support through our professional staff, which includes our Spanish and ESOL teacher.

Parent Support for Language

Parents are encouraged to support language development at home. Parents are asked to read with students on a regular basis, discuss concepts to check for understanding/comprehension, assist with inquiry-guided research, complete writing prompts, and encourage oral communication. Whenever possible, communication with parents will be made in their native language.

Language in the Classroom – Language A

The state of Georgia requires that students receive instruction in the accepted language of English. All students receive content instruction in Language A. Language A standards and assessment are determined by the Georgia Department of Education and Richmond County School System.

In the classroom, language is supported through various literacy activities such as guided reading, writer's workshop, content-related writing, classroom libraries, visuals, instructional vocabulary, individual word lists, daily read-alouds, and opportunities for students to use language during presentations and collaborations.

Learning is differentiated in the classroom in various ways. Students are individually assessed in their reading abilities using the following: reading scores from previous years, Access, Developmental Word Study assessment, writing and speaking samples, common formative vocabulary assessments, and i-Ready assessments. Students are organized into groups focusing on spelling patterns and transfer. Writing is used to focus on meaning as much as technical skill. Self-expression is encouraged by regular intervals of written and oral reflection. The focus of learning is for the experience to be relevant, engaging and challenging to each student.

Language and the Programme of Inquiry

Language is integrated throughout the Programme of Inquiry. Higher level thinking, key concept questions, and extended research all lend themselves to having a strong academic vocabulary and language presence within the planners. Oral, visual, and written language are all present within learning experiences. Literature selections both in read-alouds and guided reading are chosen to build an understanding of the concepts within the planners.

There are six-day rotations of integrated specials throughout all PYP grades. This would include the language of visual art, music, Spanish, and physical education (movement).

Secondary Language – Language B

Spanish is the second language taught to students through several formats. Each student in K- 5 attends a 50-minute Spanish class on a six-day rotation. Language B standards and assessments will be determined by the Georgia Department of Education and Richmond County School System. The following practices will be implemented:

- Morning News announcements allow for additional learning – with incorporation of Spanish into different segments of the morning news program.
- Documents and other forms of parent communication are available in their native language.
- If and when possible, communication will be made using the native language of each student.
- Professional development to encourage teachers to use strategies from the Language B classroom in non-Language B settings.
- Full-time ESOL teacher.

- Use of technology (e.g., Google Translate) or school personnel to facilitate communication with parents who speak a language other than English.

Language Resources

Hephzibah Elementary School's goal to increase language resources has been a primary emphasis. We have built and continued to add to our extensive literacy library of leveled books that support our IB unit planners. The Hephzibah Elementary School library has an array of fiction and nonfiction books, and we are continuing to grow our collection of books in other languages. In addition, we have a variety of online resources to support student learning and research. Hephzibah Elementary School has also purchased online programs to support students who are struggling readers. Our Media Specialist consistently reviews materials to include books in languages other than English.

Hephzibah Elementary School offers a variety of professional development opportunities in the area of language arts in a variety of ways. A professional library of resources is available for teachers to learn additional best practice methods and our teaching staff has a wide variety of abilities and experience and can provide professional development internally as well.

Library as a Resource

The Media Center (library) is a learning space that facilitates the needs of all learners. The Media Center is open regularly, with a flexible schedule. Students have Media as a Specials class on a six-day rotation. Students are also able to come in as needed for support and instruction. The Media Specialist collaborates with teachers to provide resources, instruction, and support for the language development and growth of the students. The Media Specialist has a deliberate process to select and purchase books and other multimedia that support language development in native languages as well as Languages A and B.

Technology as a Resource

Technology is used for research, planning, and collaboration between administration, teachers, parents, students, and the wider community. Students use multimedia resources to conduct research and explore content, and have multiple means of expression for creating presentations which enrich their language development. Technology is used to assess students and differentiate their learning. A wide variety of software technology offers language enhancing experiences through the use of i-Ready Reading, Renaissance, 95% Literacy, and other programs available online. Each classroom has a computer cart and all students in grades K-5 have been issued a device for use during the day and at home.

Ongoing Review of the Language Policy

The Pedagogical Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation and evolution of the Language Policy. Communication of the policy will extend to parents, teachers, and local stakeholders in the community. Regular evaluation and implementation of the policy can be seen in lesson plans, PYP unit planners, and classroom instruction.

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