

Peyton Forest Elementary School Language Policy



Purpose

Peyton Forest Elementary's language policy serves as a guiding framework for language instruction and acquisition for all students. This document outlines our essential agreements on language learning, teaching, and assessment. Developed collaboratively by the Pedagogical Leadership

Team with input from staff, parents, and the community, this policy is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with school, district, state, and federal regulations, as well as the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate.

Philosophy

At Peyton Forest Elementary School, we recognize language as the foundation for thinking, learning, social interaction, and knowledge acquisition. We are dedicated to fostering both the social-emotional and academic growth of our students through a balanced literacy approach. Because language is central to all learning, we acknowledge that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with the responsibility to facilitate effective communication.

We celebrate the uniqueness of each student, valuing their individual knowledge and experiences as essential parts of our school community. Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of cultural appreciation and linguistic diversity.

Identification of Language Needs

In accordance with federal and state guidelines, all students enrolling at Peyton Forest complete a Home Language Survey to determine the primary language spoken at home and any additional languages used.

Students whose native language is not English are screened within 30 days of enrollment using the WIDA screener appropriate for their grade level. If a student is identified as culturally and linguistically diverse and in need of additional support, services are provided through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) or the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Language Practices

English is the primary language of instruction at Peyton Forest. Teachers model effective listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills within their teaching practices. To support language development, we use the following instructional resources:

- **Grades K-2:** Heggerty, Flyleaf, IXL, Foundations, Geodes
- **Grades 3-5:** Mentoring Minds, Coach Digital, i-Ready, IXL
- **ESOL:** Lexia Core 5
- **Student Support Team (SST):** i-Ready
- **Department of Special Education (DSE):** TeachTown

Daily language instruction is prioritized, with 90-120 minutes dedicated to literacy development. Students engage in authentic language experiences through:

- Asking and answering questions during instruction
- Listening with purpose and for comprehension
- Writing across all subject areas
- Using technology and multimedia to enhance learning
- Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
- Whole- and small-group reading and writing activities
- Opportunities for both collaborative and independent practice

World Languages

At Peyton Forest, Spanish is the second language introduced to students, providing an early foundation in both the Spanish language and the rich Hispanic/Latino cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. The primary instructional goal is to develop students' basic interpersonal communication skills, enabling them to engage in simple conversations. Additionally, students explore the unique qualities and historical contributions of Spanish-speaking cultures, fostering a deeper appreciation and global awareness.

Spanish instruction is offered weekly to all students from kindergarten through fifth grade, with lessons lasting 45 minutes. The Spanish teacher has a dedicated classroom designed to support language acquisition through an engaging and immersive environment. Instruction is integrated with the grade-level curriculum, reinforcing concepts from language arts, reading, math, social studies, science, music, physical education, and art. Lessons incorporate listening, speaking, reading, writing, and expressive communication to develop well-rounded language skills.

Mother Tongue Support

To further develop cultural proficiency and international mindedness, the media center includes literature in Spanish and several of our ESOL students' first languages. We also strive to utilize APS translation services for key documents and request translators for important meetings for our parents and guardians, as much as possible. Our goal is to provide a learning community and environment that consistently includes diversity and inclusion of world cultures.

Support Staff and Services

Peyton Forest is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive learning environment that meets the diverse language needs of all students. We provide tailored support through the following programs:

- **Student Support Team (SST)** – Develops strategies to address student challenges in the school environment.

- **Early Intervention Program (EIP)** – Supports students who need additional help to meet grade-level expectations.
- **English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program** – Provides language support for English learners.
- **Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program** – Enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.
- **Department of Special Education (DSE)** – Supports students with specific learning needs in the least restrictive environment.

The language policy is communicated and upheld through staff meetings, parent workshops, and publication on the school website. It is reviewed annually to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

Sources

- [Georgia Department of Education](#)
- [IB Programme Standards and Practices](#)
- [Making the PYP Happen](#): A curriculum framework for international primary education
- L.O. Kimberly Elementary, *Language Policy 2022*
- Cascade Elementary, *Language Policy 2022*