

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LANGUAGE POLICY



PURPOSE:

The purpose of our language policy is to clearly communicate to parents, students and the community the importance we place on language at Parkside Elementary and the role that it plays in our curriculum.

PHILOSOPHY:

At Parkside Elementary School, language is recognized as the foundation of learning through the curriculum. Language is the essence of human interaction and experience. Parkside Elementary School believes that language develops international understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth, and promotes effective communication. We believe that all teachers are teachers of language with a responsibility for facilitating communication. We believe that we should incorporate the mother tongue (first language) of our students into the curriculum when possible. We believe that all parents should be informed about the educational process at Parkside Elementary School. We believe that it is our duty to provide students and parents with equal access to information, resources, and the curriculum program. We believe that Parkside Elementary School's language policy supports our goal of increasing student achievement by meeting the needs of all learners and creating internationally minded students who value learning and take action as a result of their learning.

ESSENTIAL STATEMENTS:

The Parkside staff, parents, community members and students agree that the following are essential to an effective language program and we agree that:

- All staff members, parents, members of the community and students are teachers as well as learners of language and that we serve our students best when we model excellence in language.
- Instruction should be differentiated and varied and should include listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing and non-verbal communication in all content and enrichment classes.
- All students should have an opportunity to learn a second language and be exposed to cultural diversity to increase cultural awareness. We also agree to increase cultural awareness across the curriculum.

LANGUAGE PROFILE:

As of fall 2020, more than 90% of the students at Parkside Elementary speak English as their mother-tongue. Mother-tongues and another language spoken at home include Spanish.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:

Curriculum

The development of critical understanding as well as the use of language to construct meaning and higher level critical thinking skills are important goals of our language instruction.

- Teachers integrate all disciplines into the Units of Inquiry to provide transdisciplinary teaching and learning throughout the day.
- Language is taught and practiced throughout each curricular area throughout the day by all teachers.
- Inquiry-based learning of language is encouraged.
- Teachers are expected to provide a print-rich environment, teach with best practices, use a variety of strategies, and differentiate for all students.

Assessment

The learning and assessment of our language program is based on oral (listening and speaking), written (reading and writing), and visual communication (viewing and presenting) strands, and district benchmarks.

- Throughout instruction, the teacher will establish a language skill level to create an appropriate language learning plan for the students.
- A range of assessment strategies and tools are used based on our assessment policy.
- A range of appropriate assessment methods such as portfolios, conferencing, writing sample analyses, writing journals, writing prompts, self and peer assessments are used.
- All teachers consider language development in their planning and assessing and support language acquisition in their teaching.

Support for All Learners (SST process)

Any student who experiences academic difficulties in language will be recommended to the Student Support Team (SST). The SST is a state mandated school-based intervention process. The purpose of the Student Support Team is to provide teachers with a broad spectrum of strategies and models of intervention to improve their delivery of effective instruction. There are six steps in the Student Support Team process. These steps are: identification of needs, assessment (if necessary), educational plan, implementation, follow-up and support, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. The Student Support Team process consists of a committee of school-based and resource personnel, as well as the parents and when necessary, the student. This team brainstorms, collaborates and develops modifications, strategies and/or accommodations for teachers and staff to implement in order to ensure student progress, success and the receipt of appropriate and effective assistance. Students recommended to the SST for language difficulties will be monitored more frequently using progress monitoring. Students will be progress monitored based on their area of weakness.

Special Education students are expected to be included in all aspects of the language curriculum at Parkside. The Special Education teachers plan collaboratively with the grade-level teachers to ensure that modifications are being made based on the Individual Education Plans (IEP) of their students

ESOL (L2)

Our teachers are working to create a caring language community to enhance the language learning of all students. Parkside strives to promote a language-rich establishment 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.

Parkside encourages families to continue mother tongue development at home, and support is given to these students whose mother tongue is a language other than English. We also provide support through our parent body (those who speak the same language) and through our professional staff. This includes one Spanish teacher, and additional members of the world language department, who speak additional languages.

MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT (L1)

We encourage parents and students to continue to communicate in their mother tongue whenever possible. We believe that the continued development of the mother tongue language is crucial for cognitive development and in maintaining cultural identity. It enables our school community to develop intercultural awareness and understanding, and enables students to maintain esteem for the language, literature and culture of their home country.

At Parkside, students whose primary language is not English will be supported and encouraged to continue to study and develop their mother tongue whenever possible. We encourage students to look for and identify relatives in English/Spanish/Mother Tongue to further develop communication skills in each language and to make connections to the curriculum as well as their cultural awareness.

As a community, Parkside is committed to celebrating cultural diversity when writing the PYP planners, as well as in school activities.

Our media center provides resources for literacy including a growing collection of multicultural and multilingual texts, online resources, and computer usage both for individual and group research. Moreover, teachers have made it a priority to utilize the media center in each one of their planners.

Our staff members encourage parents and students to maintain the child's mother tongue and to share cultural and language information with the school community and integrate this into the PYP units of inquiry as often as applicable.

RESPONSIBILITY OF STAKEHOLDERS

Role of Administration

Our Principal, Assistant Principals, PYP Coordinator, Instructional Coaches and teachers are involved in the development and agreement on the language policy.

They are also responsible for professional development regarding language teaching and learning in addition to providing support in order to ensure the language policy is implemented.

Role of Teachers

Teachers, PYP Coordinator, Coaches, Principal and Assistant Principals are responsible for communicating the language policy to students and parents.

All Stakeholders

Parkside is informed and committed to the development and agreement on the language policy. We are committed to teaching and learning via support from the PYP Coordinator and professional development. We are informed regarding current research and best practices through district workshops, conferences, and in-school redelivery.

The IB Team ensures that the language policy supports the PYP philosophy. Staff meetings, common planning and training ensure all teachers are PYP teachers and part of the PYP community.

Parkside will ensure the language policy is implemented, understood and supported by all its components through staff and PTA meetings, parent workshops and communication of the policy.

COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY

A version of this policy will be placed in the media center as well as on the school's website. The policy will also be made available to staff and faculty at the start of each academic year.

POLICY REVIEW

The Language policy will be reviewed and revised yearly by the Principal, Assistant Principals, PYP Coordinator, Instructional Coaches, teachers and parents.