



FICKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME LANGUAGE POLICY



R.N. Fickett Elementary Mission Statement

In a safe and nurturing environment, with collaboration of all stakeholders, we will provide all students with a quality, rigorous curriculum that develops curious, experienced, and compassionate learners that think positively and globally.

R.N. Fickett Elementary Vision

A school of excellence that empowers students to become curious, considerate, lifelong learners who are internationally minded and college and career ready.

LANGUAGE POLICY

Purpose of the Language Policy

The language policy is a working document developed by the administration and staff at Fickett Elementary School. The policy is consistent with the principles and practices of the IB Programme and Georgia Standards of Excellence. This document outlines the expectations of Fickett Elementary as it relates to language learning and is a statement of agreement between all stakeholders.

The language policy promotes life-long learning by developing language-learning skills that will give students the capacity to solve problems, think critically, and act creatively.

Philosophy

At Fickett, we believe that students will become more knowledgeable and aware through the transdisciplinary study of language and the study of an additional language. We believe that language and communication create the cohesiveness and understanding across cultures needed to exist successfully in a rapidly changing society. Therefore, we aim to continuously improve the quality of language instruction using research-based strategies and best practices to advance learners at every level.

Overview

Fickett Elementary School is a PreK-Fifth grade public school in the Atlanta Public School District. The school accepts all students living within R. N. Fickett's school zone. At our school, we understand that language is vital to learning because it saturates the entire curriculum. Therefore, we support the development of language of instruction, world languages, and the home language. Through language, one is able to form his or her own identity, explore the environment, solve problems, and influence the thinking of others.

At Fickett, all students experience an enriched language program in which English is the primary language of instruction, and French is taught as an additional language. Fickett Elementary has a full-time French teacher. French is offered 5 days a week. Students in grades Kindergarten through Five receive French instruction a minimum of 1 day a week for 45 minutes.

For English Language Learners, we offer a comprehensive program which allows students to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to access the regular curriculum. Fickett provides support to students and their families to enable them to adjust to a new language, learning environment, and culture.

The school promotes usage and enrichment of the home language by encouraging families to continue speaking, reading and writing in the language spoken at home. Fickett also recommends that families take advantage of the home language instructional opportunities available in neighboring communities.

All aspects of our language program require formal as well as ongoing informal assessments. These assessments are used to plan appropriate instruction and to evaluate student progress.

At Fickett, we believe students learn best when teachers.....

- Present language through meaningful authentic context
- Integrate language into all subject areas
- Encourage students to reflect on language and develop awareness
- Recognize and respect the different ways in which students express themselves, including mother tongue development
- Provide an environment that is conducive to learning and enriches their language development
- Develop positive attitudes toward improving communication skills and provide a wide range of opportunities to do so
- Teach language using a balanced approach that address all components (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- Use a wide range of differentiated strategies for the purpose of (remediation, enrichment, etc.)

To facilitate language instruction teachers will....

- Implement lesson plans
- Implement the literacy block with fidelity
- Implement their transdisciplinary units of study
- Engage students in cooperative discussions
- Model effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills
- Provide students opportunities to research, publish, and share work
- Express feelings and opinions and encourage others to do the same
- Encourage potential involvement

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Home Language Support/ESOL

At Fickett, 98% of the students speak English and the remaining 2% are Non-English speaking students. The ESOL Program supports the home language of the students whose first language is not English. The faculty and staff are also accountable for communicating support of the mother tongue, and there are books in the Media Center to support Non-English speaking families.

R.N. Fickett's ESOL program is standards-based and emphasizes academic and social language development. ESOL coursework is based upon WIDA Consortium English Language Development Standards while simultaneously integrating grade appropriate content standards to ensure that all ELs are successful. The ESOL Program also provides access to resources and facilitates communication between the school district and home to allow parents and families of English Learners to play an active role in their child's education.

Fickett provides support for Non-English speaking students in the following ways:

- English Language Learners (ELL) Program: A part-time ELL teacher supports students through pull-out small group instruction and in-class (mainstream) assistance 2.5 days a week.
- Office of Bi-lingual Education (OBE): Fickett Elementary draws on resources from the district office for students and parents whose mother tongue is other than English. They provide print resources in a variety of languages for parents and teachers upon request. Also they provide oral and written translation services when requested by a school or parents.
- Library Resources: The school is limited in resources for languages. There are some books in other languages, and additional resources will be purchased regularly.

English Language Learner Family Support

- New Parent Orientation with Parent Liaison and Administrative Team
- Community Outreach (connect with other members of the community of the same home language)
- Inform families of community resources that support their language and culture
- Ongoing parent workshops
- Books purchased for parents in French and English
- Sharing of strategies to use at home
- Donating/loaning books in native language
- Connecting with local public library

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THE MEDIA CENTER

Information Literacy forms a basis for lifelong learning and is common to all disciplines and learning environments. At Fickett Elementary School, the media center supports, extends, and

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individualizes the school's curriculum. The media center offers equitable access to books and reading, to information, and to information technology. In the media center, all stakeholders have access to a database that contains professional material, scholarly articles, newspapers and magazines in multiple languages. Services are also offered to assist parents with information literacy, formatting for source citations, research skills as well as printing and copying.

SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS

If a student is identified with additional learning needs including language difficulties or gifted and talented abilities, intervention and support are provided through the Multi-Tiered Student Support Team in line with the referral process. The Student Support Specialist works with teachers to help meet the needs of students identified with special language learning needs. This support may be formalized through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and may involve short and long term interventions. If students speak English as a second or additional language, the ESOL Department works closely with the Student Support Specialist and other teachers to provide the best service for the child.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers and support staff are provided opportunities to review and revise the language curriculum, including the ELA Scope and Sequence and the Programme of Inquiry. Staff will visit other classrooms or IB schools to observe implementation of the language curriculum firsthand. Teachers are also encouraged to seek out additional professional development opportunities that will increase his or her personal knowledge as well as add to that of the school community.

COMMUNICATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY

The language policy will be introduced to the Fickett community through staff meetings, PTA meetings, grade level meetings, Curriculum Nights, Newsletters, RoboCalls, etc. The policy will be displayed on the school's Webpage. New staff will be introduced to the plan in Teacher Mentor training.

REVIEW PROCESS

The language policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it aligns to the district's curriculum, the school improvement plan, and IB requirements. The Leadership team will continuously review the implementation of the policy in classrooms and throughout the school as a part of the appraisal process.

References:

Beecher Hills Language Policy
West Manor Language Policy