

Sarah Rawson Smith Elementary School Language Policy

Philosophy

At Sarah Smith, language is a vital instrument for international understanding, intercultural awareness, intellectual growth, and open-minded global citizens for the 21st century. We believe infusing language into all subject areas is a fundamental practice, supporting that all teachers are language teachers sharing the responsibility of developing communication. We believe language development is a process established utilizing inquiry within a balanced, transdisciplinary approach. Our approach creates knowledgeable connections promoting a global perspective with emphasis on: listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing.

We believe in providing real life, authentic experiences connected to multicultural beliefs and values of our students and community. Teachers value each student's unique background, experiences, and learning style. Our goal is to make our students lifelong learners, caring citizens, responsible risk-takers, and effective communicators. Our belief also includes valuing students' independent use of language as a way of expressing, relating, and self-assessing their own growth and progress.

Language Practices

Language instruction within the Primary Years Programme at Sarah Smith includes reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing skills -- all necessary tools for effective communication. Language skills mastery is essential for enrichment and life-long learning. Students need multiple opportunities and multi-modal experiences to build the necessary skills in the classroom. The following are the components of our language-based instruction:

READING	WRITING	LISTENING/SPEAKING/VIEWING
<i>Concepts of print:</i> environmental print, guided reading, leveled reading material in all genres, Accelerated Reader, word walls, various reading materials (ex: internet, literacy games, etc.) <i>Phonemic Awareness:</i> Orton-Gillingham Approach, rhymes, poetry, songs, literacy centers, Foundations phonics program, interactive internet sites <i>Fluency/Vocabulary/Comprehension:</i> guided reading, leveled readers, read aloud, shared reading discussions – development of critical thinking skills	• Writer's workshop • reflections on units of inquiry • reports • graphic organizers (semantic maps, Venn diagrams, etc.) • individual, and class made books • writing across the curriculum • writing journals	• Computer based learning activities • listening centers • role-play activities • oral projects and presentations • guest readers

The media center provides resources for literacy including multicultural and multilingual text, videos, audio/visual equipment, and computer usage both for individual and group research. Assessment of literacy knowledge and skills is both formal and informal using language practices above.

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Methods and Programs:

The teachers and support staff utilize a variety of methods to support language across subject areas. We strive to meet a wide range of learning styles by differentiating instruction and creating engaging lessons in the following experiences:

- Orton-Gillingham Approach and Foundations
- Fountas & Pinnell Interactive Read Aloud and Mini Lessons
- Writer's Workshop – Lucy Caulkins
- Literature Circles
- Reader's Theatre
- Shared reading and writing
- Lexia
- Accelerated Reading
- Current Events –News ELA, magazines, newspapers, etc.
- Book-It and Six Flags reading reward program
- Read- A-Thon
- Weekly tutoring sessions for all students

Specialists (Art, Music, Physical Education)

Art practices	Music practices	Physical Education practices:
Analysis/discussion of cultural art and technique derived from student population and master artists.	Introduction to foreign language songs	Use of task cards/visual cues
Word walls	Reading of musical notation	Use of content specific language based on PE classroom and regular classroom
Reflection – creative writing in association with art and expression	Literature – poetry and song correlations, storytelling	Word walls
Literature	Incorporation of drama combined with musical drama/comedy	Kinesthetic role play
Story sharing	Music theory – musical staff diagrams, musical flash cards	Multicultural games based on cultural representation of population and International games unit
Analysis, discussion, and creation of art with emphasis on aesthetic variances to beauty	After school chorus – provide deeper level of music theory, notation, and appreciation	Collaboration techniques with students through game/activity design
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Support Staff and Services

Due to diverse backgrounds and prior educational experiences, Smith recognizes abilities may vary. In order to meet those needs, support is given through the following programs:

- Student Support Team (SST): SST provides a positive problem solving process to identify strategies and programs that may alleviate academic, attendance, or behavioral issues experienced by a student.
- Early Intervention Program (EIP): serves students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. Teachers implement the program using an inclusion and pull-out model. Within these models, teachers provide additional instructional support to help students who are below grade level obtain the necessary academic skills to reach grade level performance in the shortest possible time.
- Gifted and Talented Education (Challenge): serves students by enhancing critical thinking, problem solving, abstract thinking, and creativity skills.
- Special Education Program: serves students by providing support services, strategies, and/or support staff for specific learning or medical needs in the least restrictive environment based on IEPs (Individualized Education Plan).

Dual Language Immersion (DLI):

The dual language model at Sarah Smith Elementary is a cohort of participants in a 50/50 Two-Way Spanish Model. Beginning in kindergarten, we strive to have 25 native Spanish-speaking students and 25 native English-speaking students who will be mixed together between two homerooms. Students will then spend half of their school day in an English only speaking classroom and the other half in a Spanish only speaking classroom. The cohort of approximately 50 students will move through elementary school together from grade to grade. Students will be reassigned to a new homeroom each school year, but will stay among the 50 DI students.

The APS Dual Immersion Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

APS Dual Language Immersion is a rigorous academic program that develops high linguistic and academic proficiency in two languages while simultaneously fostering positive cross-cultural attitudes.

Mission

In a caring culture of global awareness, all APS dual language immersion students will graduate biliterate AND ready for college and career.

Program Goals

The purpose of the Dual Language Immersion program in Atlanta Public Schools is to move our students towards biliteracy through engaging instruction with inspiring teachers.

The goals of the Dual Language Immersion program are:

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- To equip students with the skills that will enable them to function in a language other than their own;
- To develop communication skills that allow students to compete effectively in the global community;
- To develop listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural competence skills in two languages:
- To develop academic proficiency in all content areas;
- To use technology and other non-print sources to absorb information; and
- To increase awareness of students' own culture and appreciate the culture(s) of others.

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL):

The goal of the ESOL program is to enhance language acquisition and to introduce and practice/develop transdisciplinary skills used in the classroom. Students enter the program through the following process: First, a home language survey is given to identify mother-tongue language spoken at home. Based on survey results, students whose home language is anything other than English are given the WIDA Screener to determine eligibility in the ESOL program. The ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension Communication English State – to – State) is given in the winter to determine eligibility and language proficiency level for each student. The ESOL teacher is responsible for assessing students' language proficiency on a regular basis.

The ESOL program develops the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Listening and speaking skills are developed through choral reading, question and answer exercises, shared-inquiry discussions, and the use of technology. Reading and writing skills are developed through phonics instruction of target language, visual and real life models for the development of vocabulary, computer adaptive instructional technology, and materials/literature used in classroom to enhance skill development in order for students to participate more independently in the classroom.

The ESOL teacher communicates on a regular basis with parents and other teachers to inform them of their student's progress within the program. Ongoing communication with the parents is accomplished through parent workshops, our parent liaison, and by using technology that allows for text translations in the parent's native language.

District level ESOL language center provides workshops and meetings with teachers and parents on an as-needed basis to familiarize each group with goals/expectations of the program and learning strategies to help classroom instruction and support strategies for the home.

Mother-Tongue Support:

Presently, Smith has several home languages other than English, including Spanish, Chinese, Indonesian, Farsi, Russian, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish, Korean, Sinhalese, Georgian, Hindi, French, German, and Urdu.

Smith also offers

- Interpreters and translation services provided by Atlanta Public Schools English Language Center (Campbell Center)
- Support of home language is encouraged.

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- Smith facilitates informational meetings for families with students participating in the ESOL program that provide support and school information to those families whose mother tongue is not English.
- Smith provides a translation option for websites and blogs

Second Language Instruction (French)

French is Sarah Smith's additional language of instruction for First through Fifth grade. The classes provide a complete language environment and all three teachers commit to speaking 90 percent of the time in French. Movement, music, art, drama, and food are used to teach the target language and culture. The teachers' decorated carts or classrooms, posters, props, and costumes enhance the French language experience.

The teachers support and reinforce the grade level curriculum by making connections with language arts, reading, math, social studies, science, music, physical education, and art. Thematic units in French classes overlap and link directly, when possible, to the PYP units of inquiry throughout the year. The second language instruction includes the following four areas of expression: listening, speaking, reading, and writing using an extensive variety of activities. Students build language and practical life skills by engaging in a variety of activities, such as role-play, dialogues, songs, journals, projects, labeling, word walls, research, and Internet usage. Teachers seek to address the needs of all students by diversifying student groupings and differentiating instruction. The French teachers also support the classroom teachers' discipline and academic goals by maintaining open and frequent dialogues. When necessary, French teachers communicate directly with students and their parents to resolve behavioral, emotional, or other concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

Sarah Smith Elementary is committed to the IB (International Baccalaureate) program standards and practices in relation to teaching and learning. We are informed regarding current research and best practices and language learning through district workshops, professional learning communities, conferences, and in-school redelivery.

Sarah Smith's relies on the Sarah Smith Education Foundation (SSEF) to provide funding for teacher training, grants, and educational resources. PTA board, teachers, and administrators are responsible for provision of resources. The resource allocations are directed to classrooms and media center use as well as enhancement and professional development.

The IB Team serves as the policy team, ensuring the language policy is re-evaluated and revised. Collaborative planning and IB training make certain that all teachers are familiar with the PYP philosophies. Teachers, support staff, administrators, and PYP coordinator are responsible for communicating policies to all Sarah Smith constituents. The principal, PYP coordinator, and district program coordinators are responsible for professional development regarding language teaching and learning. Sarah Smith Elementary communicates policies via Internet and PTA meetings. This communication of the policy guarantees its implementation, comprehension, and supported by all constituents.

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The faculty and staff at Sarah Smith recognize that language is a vital instrument for learning, communication, and expression, and that all teachers are language teachers. In order to promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the PYP, we understand that language instruction takes place all day and in all subjects.

The Primary Years Programme faculty agrees that language learning at the school will:

- **be consistent and age appropriate**
- **support the development of skills, understanding and instruction of English and Language B: French**
- **be differentiated to meet the needs of learning styles of all students, including but not limited to those needing special services**
- **be reflected in the programme of inquiry, transdisciplinary planners and individual lesson plans**

Furthermore, the PYP faculty agrees to:

- **work with all students to achieve mastery of the essential skills –reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing**
- **utilize a variety of materials to enhance the development of language skills**

Approved by consensus of the faculty, September 2019.