** Beecher Hills Elementary School**

 **Language Policy**

**Purpose**

The purpose of our Language Program at Beecher Hills Elementary is to promote enjoyment and appreciation of language learning, develop knowledge and understanding of another language other than their mother tongue, ensure that students maintain fluency in their native language, and ensure the delivery of the PYP program through inquiry based language instruction. The purpose of our Language Policy is also to clearly communicate to parents, students and the community the importance of language and the role that language plays in our curriculum.

**Philosophy**

At Beecher Hills Elementary, language is a vital instrument for international understanding, intercultural awareness, intellectual growth, and open-minded global citizens for the 21st century and beyond. The purpose of our language policy is to provide the framework of language development at our school. At the heart of our language program, we believe that instruction should motivate students to learn and expand new ideas. Our school aims to provide real life, authentic experiences that connect beliefs and values to support multiculturalism among our community. Therefore, all students learn Spanish as the second language, which is taught daily by our Spanish Specialist Teacher. We look to each student’s unique background, experiences and learning styles. We strive to make our students life-long learners who are caring citizens, responsible risk-takers and effective communicators. Beecher students use their language to express, relate and self-assess their own growth and progress.

Our Language Policy is reviewed and communicated to all stakeholders. The purpose of this document is to inform teaching and learning in the classroom, to guide curriculum and to involve families in our goal to educate children in an internationally minded environment.

**At Beecher Hills, we believe:**

* All teachers are language teachers.
* Language is a primary means of learning and communicating.
* Language acquisition is to be promoted as a partnership between all members of our community including parents, students, teachers and staff.
* Mother tongue languages help form cultural and personal identity and should be respected.
* The shared experience of learning language creates cohesion among students from diverse backgrounds and promotes international-mindedness.
* Learning world languages is an integral part of becoming a global citizen.

**Essential Statements**

*The Beecher Hills’ staff, parents, community members, and students agree that the following are essential to an effective language program:  We agree that:*

* All staff members, parents, members of the community, and students are teachers as well as learners of the 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 learn a second language and be exposed to cultural diversity to increase cultural awareness across the curriculum.

**Language of Instruction and Curriculum**

English is the primary language of instruction at Beecher Hills for all students and therefore is integrated in all areas of the curriculum. We believe that language is a connection to academic, social/emotional growth that can be transdisciplinary in nature and integrated across all content areas. These areas consist of oral, visual and written language to help cultivate social, research, thinking, communication and self-management skills. Our units of Inquiry include oral, visual and written language where authentic connections are made during the lesson. We support these areas in the following ways:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Oral Language** | **Visual Language** | **Written Language** |
| Discussions with members of the learning community | Creating and presenting visual products to convey evidence of learning | Reading and writing for information and pleasure |
| Inquiry throughout instruction (asking/answering questions) | Utilizing multimedia and technology for expression, interpretation, and evaluation through inquiry and instruction | Instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension |
| Listening for understanding and research | Presentations of products to members of the learning community | Whole and small group reading and writing |
| Communicating in various ways to convey thoughts and perspectives |  | Collaborative and cooperative learning groups |
| Presentation of Work |  | Authentic writing for multiple purposes |

**Assessment**

All Beecher students’ English language skills are assessed and documented three times a year using a universal screener. The results of the universal screener are used to identify students who will receive additional assessments and early interventions. Language will also be assessed on an on-going basis through the unit planners.

**Support for all Learners**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 the 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 based on their area of weakness.

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

**Language B - Language Learners**

Beecher Hills offers Spanish as the additional language taught to expose students to a second language, promote international mindedness, and to develop cultural awareness. Spanish instruction is given to students beginning in Kindergarten and continues through fifth grade. All students receive 80 minutes a week of additional language instruction. The language model used at Beecher Hills is content enriched FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary Schools), in which the second language instruction is enhanced by concepts from the general curriculum.

The Beecher Hills FLES program focuses on communication and culture. We integrate content with language learning, using the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The goal of our program is for students to apply language skills to the world beyond the classroom and assist them in making meaningful connections and comparisons.

**Mother Tongue (first language) Support**

*Accessibility*

Beecher Hills is committed to supporting students and parents whose primary language is not English. Our Media Center supports our policy by offering a collection of books that are available for check-out in several languages and global topics.  Students are also encouraged to bring books/resources from home to add perspective to the learning of their classmates. The administration, staff, and PTA make every effort to communicate with parents in their mother tongue. Parents are encouraged to request written translation services and/or interpretations can be made available upon request.

**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Support**

The goal of our English for Speakers of Other Languages Program (ESOL) is to develop English proficiency, particularly through the acquisition of academic English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Potential ESOL students are given a Home Language Survey to identify the mother-tongue language spoken in the home. Based on the results, students whose home language is not English are given a district approved assessment, the W-APT (WIDA ACCESS Placement Test) 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 the upcoming year. The identification of proficiency determines eligibility in the ESOL program.

The ESOL program develops the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. 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, and materials/literature used in classroom to enhance skill development in order for students to participate more independently in the classroom. ESOL teachers design their lessons to use strategies that promote the development of concepts, vocabulary and structures, which will in turn allow the students to progress toward independent English proficiency and academic success. ESOL teachers respect and build on the cultural and language experiences that our students already possess in order to provide for a more meaningful learning experience. Frequent communication with parents is also essential to student progress and achievement. This parent-teacher partnership supports student progress and overall academic success.

Georgia is a member of the WIDA Consortium and Beecher Hills Elementary follows WIDA’s English Language Proficiency Standards of English Language Learners in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. These standards include:

* The Language of Language Arts
* The Language of Mathematics
* The Language of Science
* The Language of Social Studies
* Social and Instructional Language

**Professional Development**

Every member of the Beecher Hills staff is expected to share language experiences, knowledge, and strategies with other staff members. They are also encouraged to collaborate effectively with others to make teaching and learning language more meaningful.

Beecher Hills Elementary aspires to send lifelong learners into a global society,who are inquirers, knowledgeable, caring, appreciate others' differences, value multiple perspectives, and communicate in multiple languages. To this end, staff members are encouraged to be open-minded, reflective, and more knowledgeable about language. All teaching and support staff are provided with opportunities to learn more about language in the PYP.

In addition to providing school-based professional development, the administrative team is committed to providing opportunities for teachers and support staff to reflect on and analyze data in order to revise classroom instruction including IB Units of Study. Teachers and staff are also given the opportunity to visit other classrooms or IB schools and/or meet with job alike specialists to see language curriculum implementation firsthand and learn more about language in the PYP in different school settings. This, in turn, will increase the personal knowledge of staff members as well as add to the language knowledge base of our entire school community.

**Responsibility of Stakeholders**

Effective implementation of the Language Policy requires the cooperation of all stakeholders of the school community. All stakeholders recognize that learning a language promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding. It is also understood that language development at Beecher Hills is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

**Language Policy Review**

The Language Policy of Beecher Hills Elementary will be reviewed annually by administration, staff, and the Team IBelieve Steering Committee, to adapt to changing of best practices, changes in the Primary Years Program, and changes in the needs of our community. The Team IBelieve Steering Committee consists of the Assistant Principal, Counselor, PYP Coordinator, one teacher from each grade level, two Specialist Teachers, one Gifted teacher, and one Special Education teacher. This group of individuals will ensure that the policy is implemented with fidelity throughout the school year.

 **Resources**

* IBO, 2020 Language in the PYP
* Warren Jackson, 2019 Language Policy
* Bolton Academy, 2018 Language Policy
* Roberts Elementary School, 2014 Roberts Language Policy
* Georgia Department of Education, 2014 Georgia Standards of Excellence
* Wildwood Elementary, 2011, Wildwood Language Policy
* WIDA website: https://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS20.aspx,

https://www.wida.us/assessment/w-apt/