

# Dundee Elementary Academy

## Language Policy



### **Philosophy:**

Mission Statement: Through shared values, Dundee Elementary Academy provides a transdisciplinary inquiry-based education that builds the foundations for further learning and for contributing to our increasingly global society.

Vision: We are agents of change in our community and nation to become a world class school.

At Dundee Elementary Academy (DEA), we believe that language is transdisciplinary in nature and that all instructional staff members are language teachers with responsibilities for facilitating effective and meaningful communication. We believe that language and communication are critical to creating the cohesiveness and understanding across cultures that is needed in a diverse and changing world. We believe that language and cultural understanding develop best through shared experiences and interactions, and we consider it a privilege and responsibility to teach and learn language alongside our students. We respect and honor the way in which language reflects the individual's and a culture's beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives, and we are committed to creating the opportunity for our students to find their own voice in society and the world.

As we aim to continuously improve our language instruction, we investigate state-of-the-art practices, instructional strategies, and tools that help learners at every level advance and become lifelong readers and writers with a strong appreciation for the role of communication in creating a better and more peaceful world. Accordingly, the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) at DEA:

- promotes inquiry-based authentic language learning
- focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning
- incorporates the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry
- develops and interrelates the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy
- provides for the acquisition of a second language
- provides support for students in their mother tongue

### **Identification:**

All students in Polk County complete a home language survey to identify the mother tongue of the family. Based on the survey, a screening is given to students whose primary language is not English. Students are then enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) based on their proficiency levels.

### **Practices:**

Language A – Primary language of instruction; English

We believe oral, written, and visual language permeates the whole curriculum. Language is the medium through which the entire curriculum is taught and learned. It facilitates communication and incorporates the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and media literacy. There is a reciprocal relationship between using inquiry to facilitate language and using language to facilitate inquiry. All students are provided a safe, nurturing, language-rich environment that supports learning as well as social, emotional development and well-being. Our school community benefits from access to

different cultures, perspectives and languages, which increase cultural awareness and international-mindedness. We value and encourage students to respect the language, literature, and culture of their home country. We strive to create a caring language community in which all students feel accepted and supported, thereby feeling confident to be courageous.

To add complexity to the student experience, all teachers are expected to maintain certain literacy standards with their course work. All staff members hold students accountable for proper grammar and structure, both written and verbal in everyday interactions. Teacher tools and strategies evaluate student language acquisition. Students' journal entries are tools to evaluate literacy. The criterion used to assess students' language development is consistent across subject areas to reinforce the idea that all subjects are connected and skills cross boundaries.

#### Language B – language acquisition taught at school; Spanish

Currently the world language of instruction at Dundee Elementary Academy is Spanish. Grades 2 - 5 receive at least fifty minutes of Spanish-language instruction once a week. Forty minutes of face-to-face instructional time is facilitated by a trained paraprofessional educator who models conversational Spanish and provides students with opportunities to practice face-to-face conversation. After the lesson, the teacher gives an opportunity for students to practice language skills through writing. The Spanish teacher also connects to what students are learning in their PYP Units of Inquiry. All teachers support students' learning of Spanish through bilingual vocabulary and other displays in the classroom.

Students are encouraged to use Spanish in a variety of contexts to reinforce the importance of learning a second language by providing opportunities to communicate with the school community and share language knowledge with their families. It is understood that reinforcing, supporting, and extending classroom work is an important aspect of embedding Spanish throughout the students' daily lives. We also encourage Spanish-speaking parents and members of the community to participate with us in expanding opportunities for students to develop and practice second-language skills.

#### Scope and Sequence:

Dundee Elementary Academy follows the Florida Academic Standards for language instruction.

#### English as a Second Language (ESL):

ESL students receive English language instruction through their classroom teacher and ESL specialists, depending on student need as determined by the district. This instruction occurs in inclusion classrooms where students receive ESL services until proficiency is achieved. These students are assessed annually using ACCESS (*Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English state to state for English Language Learners*) and monitored throughout the year. Student work is modified, in collaboration with the ESL specialists.

#### Writing:

Formal writing instruction is taught using Lucy Calkin's Writers Workshop curriculum. The formal writing instruction takes place during the literacy block and writing is infused throughout all content areas and embedded into our IB units of inquiry.

#### Speech and Language:

Students may be referred for a speech/language evaluation. The amount of time in which the student and speech-language pathologist meet is determined based on student need and is outlined in the student's individualized Education Plan (IEP). These services are provided until the goals outlined in the IEP are mastered. In addition, speech-language pathologists conduct hearing screenings to new enrollments.

### Hearing Impaired:

Hearing impaired students at Dundee Elementary Academy are mainstreamed with their peers. Classroom modifications are executed based on the student's IEP.

### Professional Development:

Ongoing professional development opportunities are available for the entire staff at Dundee Elementary Academy to support IB instruction as well as language instruction. Our Language Arts Instructional Coach provides teachers with literacy professional development to enhance and support instruction aligned with Lucy Calkin's Readers Workshop curriculum. In addition experts in the field of literacy support our school with site visits and grade level professional development.

### Resources:

It is our goal to expand our teacher and student resources to support language instruction, especially in the areas of foreign language and mother tongue language. Presently students and teachers utilize Reading A-Z, Newsela, Reading Wonders, and Readers Workshop resources to further enhance literacy instruction and student knowledge of the English Language.

## **Mother Tongue Language:**

We believe that recognizing and supporting our students' mother tongue languages is crucial to their development. The role of parents is vital in ensuring a positive approach to the development of languages. The school expects parents to value their home language(s), as home language proficiency and maintenance are essential in the acquisition of additional languages. Appropriate support with English at home is also an essential part of the children's success both for English and non-English speaking families. Letters and flyers sent home will also be translated into Spanish.

Students who enroll at Dundee Elementary Academy, speaking a language other than English, will be given a Home Language Survey and provided with the appropriate assistance depending on their needs. In order to support students who speak a language other than English, all teachers are required to be ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) endorsed or certified. Translators are provided upon request during parent-teacher conferences and as needed throughout the school year. Any parent letters sent home are translated so that parents who do not speak or read English may still communicate with us. Ongoing efforts are in place to expand our collection of resources in multiple languages, including mother tongue languages.

Each monthly early release date, we invite our ESOL families on campus in order to provide them with tools they can use at home in order to better support their students with academics. These meetings are also supported by our district ESOL department. These meetings provide insight, support, and confidence to our non-English speaking families in our school and within our diverse community.