

Billingsville Elementary School Language Policy

Our Philosophy: At Billingsville Elementary School, we believe that all teachers are facilitators of language instruction including reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English, Spanish and mother-tongue languages. Although English is our primary academic language, we celebrate all languages. We believe that language is a tool for learning and is integrated throughout the inquiry process. We believe that language instruction is modeled by the PYP teaching staff and school community, both in the classroom and through their daily interactions involving reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We believe that language is vital to developing internationally-minded communicators and thinkers.

Identification: New students are evaluated, upon entrance into school, and screened for any additional languages spoken in the home. Proficiency tests are used to measure the level of proficiency in English. Students are enrolled in ESL (English as a Second Language) based on their proficiency levels. Phonemic awareness is measured in Kindergarten upon enrollment and progress is monitored throughout the year.

Scope and sequence: We follow the North Carolina State Standards as adopted by the State of North Carolina for language program instruction. Plus the IB Language Scope and Sequence.

Language of Instruction

Language instruction follows the CMS Balanced Literacy Model. Students engage in shared reading, independent reading, word work and writing each day. The school uses a combination of workshop methods. Teachers have opportunities for small group instruction and individual student reading and writing conferences, while students are engaged in independent work. Resources selected for language learning in the classroom are related to the current unit of inquiry.

English as a Second Language: ESL students receive English language instruction through collaboration between classroom teachers and the ESL specialist on a schedule determined by the students' needs. Students receive services until proficiency levels are met. They are tested annually and monitored throughout the year. Student work is modified by classroom teachers, with support from the ESL specialist, as needed.

Writing: Writing skills are taught in isolation as well as integrated throughout the school day as a means of communicating ideas across all subject areas. Teachers incorporate a writer's workshop model. All students and teachers at Billingsville Elementary record their ideas and reflect on their thoughts. Students write for a variety of genres and use writing as a tool for publishing and communicating their final products.

Speech/Language: Students may be referred by parents, teachers, and/or the school intervention team for a speech/language evaluation. Once qualified, students then receive speech impaired services provided by a licensed, master's-level speech-language pathologist on a schedule determined by students' needs. Mother tongue language is considered when making decisions about eligibility. These services are provided until IEP (Individual Education Plan) goals and objectives are mastered or achieved at optimal levels. Speech-language pathologists also offer consultative services to classroom teachers, conduct hearing and speech-language screenings, along with providing specific intervention and support and students identified as speech and/or language impaired.

Professional Development: IB PYP training and ongoing site-based and district training in reading and writing is provided to all staff. The Literacy Facilitator provides language instructional support to grade level

teams. Book studies are also offered each year to increase professional teaching knowledge, enhance skills, and stay current on educational research and practices.

Resources: We are continuing to expand our professional and student resources and library collections in the areas of foreign languages, mother tongue languages, and best teaching practices. Books, videos, and digital media in English/Spanish are available for classroom use. Learning is available for exploration in media center, and in classrooms by both students and staff.

Parents: Language instruction is supported at home through nightly reading and teacher suggestions. Library checkout of mother tongue resources is also available. Parent literacy night and parent classes are offered throughout the year.

Mother Tongue Language

Translators are provided for parent-teacher conferences and PTA meetings. We are developing a library collection in mother tongue languages in addition to expanding our foreign language resources. Efforts are ongoing to expand our collection of resources in multiple languages.

Second Language Acquisition

Spanish classes are held for all students. The expected proficiency level upon graduation is to have a novice low level of the Spanish language. Students are evaluated through the use of informal assessments and teacher observations. Implementation of the K-5 FLES CMS Curriculum, along with embedded cultural perspectives and themes, take place within second language instruction.

General Education Support: The elements of the IB PYP and IB Learner Profile are supported during Spanish instruction. The conscious effort to connect the foreign language curriculum with other parts of students' academic lives opens doors to information and experiences which enrich their entire school and life experience. Classrooms have access to Spanish language books through Reading A-Z and online resources, such as www.tumblebooks.com. Experiences outside of the Spanish classrooms, such as enrichment clubs, have been provided as options to further develop internationally-minded students.

Review: At the beginning of each school year, the Language Policy will be reviewed by staff and the School Leadership Team and revised as needed.