

2021-22

Nodland & Sunnyside Elementary Schools Language Policy



Nodland & Sunnyside
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

School Language Philosophy

- At Nodland & Sunnyside Elementary Schools, we believe language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating.
- Language is an integral part of the curriculum, connecting the subject areas and allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.
- All teachers at Nodland & Sunnyside Elementary Schools are viewed as teachers of language and maximizing language instruction and resources is essential.
- We further believe every student is a language learner, regardless of what languages they speak. We believe in the acquisition of more than one language as a means to enrich personal growth and help facilitate international understanding.
- We promote the maintenance of mother-tongue language for cognitive development and cultural identity and see parents as critical partners in the development of language.
- Each student has his or her own background with unique contributions to make to the school community. These are crucial for defining their cognitive development, in maintaining their native language, and their cultural identity.
- Ultimately, it is through language development that students are given the necessary tools to interpret and impact the world around them.

Language Profile

English is the primary language of instruction and learning at Nodland & Sunnyside Elementary Schools, with each student participating in English Language Arts (Language and Literature) and Spanish (Language Acquisition) courses. English accounts for 87% of our District students' home language, but overall, we have 42 languages spoken in our school community with Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali making up the next 10% of our students' mother tongue. The school works in conjunction with resources available through Sioux City Community School District to communicate with families in languages outside of English.

Guiding Principles

- English is the primary language of instruction for all students.
- All students receive instruction in the world language of Spanish.
- The Iowa Common Core and IB Language Scope and Sequence serve as guides for language instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Language development is supported by resources and instruction grounded in the literacy components of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and writing.
Teachers and students express their understanding of the world through the use of IB terminology specifically that of the learner profile.
- Professional development is provided for all staff to support language goals.
- Transdisciplinary instruction includes specific language goals in authentic contexts.
- Teachers of all subjects and grades understand that language plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. All teachers incorporate the various aspects of language instruction into their everyday teachings.
- Learners need to have the opportunity to engage in learning in meaningful and authentic contexts.
- Language skills are acquired most effectively from using language in meaningful contexts and from experiencing a variety of literature.
- Conversation in the classroom is fundamental to learning. Discussions, rehearsed conversation and social conversation all play a role in language acquisition.

Practices Reflecting Philosophy and Guiding Principles

Classroom Practices

- All students are engaged in literacy activities for a **minimum** of **90 minutes** per day.
- Different components of literacy may be happening in the classroom simultaneously.
- Teachers use a gradual release model of instruction (I do, We do, You do).
- Teachers conduct reading groups with every child. Small group, skills-based groups are flexible. Students may be grouped based on a specific skill that needs development or common reading levels.
- Every student participates in a small group, skill-based group at least two times per week with their classroom teacher.
- Students will have opportunities to write authentically every day for a variety of purposes.
- Students are encouraged to ask many questions. Teachers use these questions as a guide during units of inquiry.
- Reading at home is highly encouraged.
- Students are provided multiple opportunities to learn from peers, both in academic and social situations.
- Teachers use read-alouds of rich texts connected to units of inquiry during instruction.
- Students are provided opportunities to present their learning in a variety of formats, including drama, written expression, multi-media presentations, and oral presentations.
- All teachers continually model listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting skills.
- Some examples may include:
 - **Listening:** read-alouds, discussions, songs, listening centers, Morning Meeting sharing, guest speakers, online resources, echo reads
 - **Speaking:** choral reading, shared reading, Morning Meeting, partner work, discussions, songs, presentations, morning announcements
 - **Reading:** leveled readers, literature circles, read-alouds, shared reading, independent reading, literacy stations, partner reading, research, readers theater, environmental text, online resources
 - **Writing:** daily journal, graphic organizers, reports, reflections on learning, student-created books, exit tickets, letters, observations, awards, interactive, creative, goal setting
 - **Viewing:** focus walls, environmental print, morning message, media, wonder walls, essential agreements, student work
 - **Presenting:** role play, oral presentations, student-led conferences, digital presentations, exhibition, strategies, action

Language Resources

- The library offers materials in English and Spanish, as well as materials in students' mother tongue.
- A variety of texts and resources are available to meet the needs of all learners.
- Supplemental language materials are available to support classroom instruction.

World Language

- IB planners and the Sioux City Community Schools' Curriculum serve as a guide for curriculum development.
- All students receive weekly instruction in the world language of Spanish through a sequential FLES program model.
- Spanish instruction and assessments are differentiated for the many levels of proficiency in each grade.
- Students are assessed on their progress and held accountable for Spanish language learning as an academic subject.
- Spanish is graded and reported on student report cards and discussed during student conferences.

Mother Tongue

- Families and students are encouraged to speak in their mother tongue at home.
- Documentation is translated into mother tongue, when possible.
- School library provides books in the mother tongue of our students, when possible.
- Students are encouraged to bring resources from home highlighting mother tongue and/or culture.
- We offer translated documents for families with a mother tongue other than English and translators for conferences within our building, when possible.

Home Communications

- Teachers facilitate family involvement in language development through conferences, newsletters, weekly communications, family surveys, and PTA meetings.
- Families are encouraged to be active in the classroom through volunteer opportunities and as guest speakers.
- Conferences are held twice a year, giving teachers and families the opportunity to share the student's development of language.
- Every attempt to find interpreters for families is made. The Sioux City Community School District provides interpreters in Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, and Oromo.
- The web-based program TransACT (www.transact.com) provides us with a comprehensive set of forms and notices and is written in a wide range of languages.

Family Involvement

- Families influence how students acquire and become proficient in any language.
- Families are encouraged to help deepen literacy in their primary language by creating a language rich environment at home.
- The media center provides books in a variety of languages with a heavy emphasis on Spanish.
- Students are encouraged to take an active role in the school's rich language community and express their individual learning styles and approaches.

Assessment

- Literacy skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are assessed on a regular basis within the performance expectations of the grade level.
- Language concepts will be assessed based upon our assessment policy.
- When necessary, students will be given additional assessments in order to gather data to determine what, if any, additional supports need to be put in place for successful language development of the student.
- Nodland & Sunnyside Elementary Schools comply with all state and/or federal legislation regarding literacy and language development. For more information see: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/early-literacy-implementation>

Differentiating Support for Language Learners

ELL—Identification:

- Students whose mother tongue is a language other than English must first report to the Sioux City Community Schools ESL office located at the Education Service Center (ESC).
- Staff at the ESL office gather as much evidence as possible, including a language survey, and compile information into a student portfolio.

ELL-Instruction:

- ELL instruction is provided by an ELL teacher in a small group or in a co-taught classroom.
- English language acquisition is assessed on a regular basis within the performance expectations of each level of proficiency; instruction is adjusted based upon multiple assessment data.
- ELL materials are available for all teachers to use as needed.
- Professional development for ELL teachers is provided by school district.

Special Education-Identification:

- As per our assessment policy, any student identified as needing additional support in language is referred to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team.
- Teachers implement intervention and determine if student needs additional testing for special education entitlement, as determined by Student Assistance Team (SAT).

Special Education Instruction:

- Special education teachers write an Individualized Education Plan, including goal areas for language development, if appropriate.
- The amount and intensity of instruction is dependent upon the individualized needs and goals set for each student.
- Professional development for special education teachers provided by school district.

Working Document

The following process will be followed to ensure Nodland & Sunnyside Elementary's language policy remains a working document:

- ❖ Every year, through collaborative reflective practices, the Building Leadership Team (BLT) will review the language policy, as well as all documents referred to in policy, to ensure accuracy and sustainability.
- ❖ Policy will be updated by the IB Coordinator, based upon the feedback of the BLT Team.
- ❖ Each member of the BLT Team will be responsible for relaying the policy changes to their own grade level or subject level team members.
- ❖ Grade level and subject level teams will work together throughout the school year to ensure policy is implemented with fidelity.

Works Consulted

International Baccalaureate Organization, *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*. Wales, UK. 2008

International Baccalaureate Organization, *IB Language Scope and Sequence*. Wales, UK. 2009

International Baccalaureate Organization, *Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*. Wales, UK. 2009

Lipton, Gladys, editor. *A Celebration of FLES: Sequential FLES, FLEX and Immersion*. National Textbook Company, 1998

The ABCs of Elementary School Foreign Language. Vol. 28, No.3 2003