



# **Language Policy**

**2024-2025**

# Discovery School PYP Language Policy

## Discovery School Mission Statement

*To provide each child the educational opportunity to discover, with perseverance and imagination, the joy of learning and the interconnectedness of our world.*

## Our philosophy on language:

We believe that language is a vital component to the success of all student learning. Language is defined as the ability to express oneself through speaking, reading, writing, performing, drawing, etc. We also recognize that each discipline carries its own language, such as the language of science, the language of math, the language of the arts. Language connects all curricular areas. Discovery School believes that all teachers are responsible for teaching language. Language, as with other concepts, cannot be learned in isolation; rather, language must be taught as a purposeful, integrated part of all curricular areas.

## Language A Policy:

Literature is an integral part of the curriculum, students are assessed formally several times throughout the year to establish reading and writing levels, writing is as much about meaning as it is about structure and form, self expression is encouraged by regular intervals of reflection, opportunities for presentation skills and other oral language opportunities, skits, songs, debates. Teachers model speech, vocabulary, and other forms of the spoken word. Selection of materials are made to reflect the units of study, matching reading levels and moving into more challenging texts focusing on fluency, comprehension, recognition, and the writing process. Special attention is given to ensure the resources are relevant and engaging.

Learning is differentiated in the classroom in a variety of ways through our adoption of Bookworms and EL education. These are state approved curriculums that align with the science of reading. Students are individually assessed in their reading ability using the Fountas and Pinnell system, organized into groups, book clubs, and literature studies.

Spelling is assessed individually using Words Their Way and organized into groups focusing on spelling pattern and transfer. Writing is used to focus on meaning as much as technical skill, and self-expression is encouraged by regular intervals of written and oral reflection. Writing is taught using Units of Study, an inquiry-based writing program.

### **Language B Policy:**

Spanish, as our language B, is taught to students through several formats to all students from Preschool-Grade 6. Preschool and prekindergarten students attend weekly classes for 30 minutes, while students in Kindergarten and above have lessons for at least 45 minutes a week.

Spanish is supported throughout the school environment by labeling objects, using common greetings, hallway displays and through other cultural experiences connected to subjects such as art, music, and dance.

### **Identification of Language Needs:**

Through inquiry, teachers provide students with opportunities to use language in many different forms: role-play, debate, acting, and art, as well as the traditional teaching of language through the planners. Students read materials that match their levels. Student writing samples are taken throughout the school year to demonstrate growth in all six traits of writing: ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions. Reading and writing are also interwoven into all curricular areas as students read materials that are generated from the planners and write in response to activities generated from these. The focus of the learning is for the experience to be relevant, engaging and challenging to each student.

Students whose growth is not as anticipated are screened and intervention is provided regarding the specific language areas in which they are demonstrating difficulty.

### **Home Language Support:**

Discovery School seeks to encourage our families to continue using their home languages with their children. We celebrate the cultural diversity that all languages bring to our school and our community. In order to better understand what languages are spoken in the homes of our students, we send home an annual language portrait

survey to collect this information. As well, we encourage our parents and families to come into school and share their language with our students. We feel that having access to multiple languages gives our students different perspectives which are invaluable to their learning. We encourage international-mindedness in our families, students, and staff.

Some members of our faculty possess their English Second Language (ESL) certifications and have taught in countries whose language of instruction was in a language other than English. Each fall, parents will be asked to complete a *Student Language Portrait* the results of which will be shared with homeroom teachers.

### **Language Resources:**

An effective library skills curriculum is an integral part of the total language program at Discovery School. It promotes a lifelong love of reading and supports students in their personal reading needs. The library offers a safe, quiet, welcoming place where students can acquire or extend knowledge, gain insight through literature and research and select books for home use. This area serves as a resource center, offering support for students and staff in their exploration of Discovery School's Program of Inquiry.

Parents play a vital role as language resources at Discovery School by actively contributing to our vibrant, language rich community. They can volunteer in the library, enrich students' literacy experiences through storytelling or assisting with diverse language materials. Parents can also support communication by helping with specific translations, where appropriate. Additionally, sharing their unique cultural and linguistic experiences with students offers invaluable learning opportunities, fostering a deeper appreciation for diversity. Finally, completing the annual language portrait survey about their child provides crucial insights into their child's unique linguistic backgrounds, helping the school tailor support and celebrate each child's individual language journey.

The Discovery School library provides support for the mother tongue, while offering exposure to books in other languages. Our library is an area we are continuing to develop due to funding challenges, which ultimately affects resource expansion and flexibility in scheduling. Currently, we have a part-time librarian who works to supplement the needs of our school through an annual book fair fund-raiser and auxiliary school funds.

Our classrooms are rich in print and provide many options for students at various reading levels. All teachers have access to an online resource: ReadingA-Z.com, that provides numerous resources, both in English and in Spanish, for students reading at an emergent level to those reading chapter books. Finally, all teachers have access to Brainpop, another online resource for teachers to use across the curriculum.

## **Language Policy Review**

As a staff, we will review our policy annually.  
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