

Hubbell Elementary

Language Policy

“At Hubbell Elementary we empower diverse learners through inquiry based opportunities that promote lifelong learning”

School Language Philosophy

At Hubbell Elementary, we believe language is fundamental to learning, thinking, checking 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 Hubbell Elementary are viewed as teacher of language and maximizing language instruction and resources is essential. 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 necessary tools to interpret and impact the world around them.

Guiding Principles

- English is the primary language of instruction for all students
- The Iowa Common Core and IB Language Scope and Sequence serve as a guide for language instruction in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Language development is supported by resources and instruction time grounded in the literacy components of word knowledge, fluency, writing and comprehension.
- 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 teaching.
- Learners need to have the opportunity to engage in learning in meaningful and authentic contexts.
- Teachers and students express their understanding of the world through the use of IB terminology, specifically that of the learner profile.

Practices Reflecting Philosophy and Guiding Principles

Classroom Practices

- Students are encouraged to ask many questions. Teachers use these questions to guide instruction.
- Each environment is rich in print
- Classroom libraries contain a variety of genres
- Students write for authentic purposes in all subject areas
- Reading at home is highly encouraged and supported by instructional level books
- Students are provided multiple opportunities to learn from peers, both in academic and social situations.
- Instructional literature consists of rich texts connected to units of inquiry
- 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 writing, speaking, reading and listening skills.

Language Resources

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

Home Language

- Parents 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
- Students are encouraged to bring resources from home highlighting mother tongue and/or culture.

Home Communication

- Teachers facilitate parent involvement in language development through conferences, newsletters, weekly communications, parent surveys and PTA meetings.
- Parents are encouraged to be active in the classroom through volunteer opportunities and as guest speakers.

- Student led conferences are held twice a year, giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their language skills to their families.
- Student portfolios are kept at each grade level, and students are encouraged to share their portfolios often, especially during student-led conferences.
- Every attempt to find interpreters for families is made. The Des Moines Public Schools provides interpreters in the following languages: Arabic, Dinka, Bosnian, Burmese, Kalchin, Karen, Kunama, Lao, Rundi, Somali, Swahili, Spanish, Taidam, Vietnamese, Tigrinya, Karenni

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.

Differentiating support for Language Learners

ELL-Identification

- Students whose mother tongue is a language other than English must first report to the Des Moines Public School Welcome Center. Staff at the welcome center gather evidence, including a home language survey.
- ELL Teachers administer language placement test.

ELL-Instruction

- Small group instruction, through Hubbell's English Language Learner program is provided by ELL teacher in collaboration with homeroom teachers.
- 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 the school district.

Special Education – Identification

- As per our usual assessment policy, any student identified as needing additional support in language is referred to the Tier 2 Team.
- Teachers implement interventions and determine if student needs additional testing for special education entitlement, as determined by the Child Study Team.

Special Education Instruction

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

Working Document

The following process will be followed to ensure Hubbell's language policy remains a working document.

- Annually, through collaborative reflective practices, the Leadership Team will review the language policy, as well as all documents referred to in policy, to ensure accuracy and sustainability.
- This policy will be updated by the IB Coordinator, based upon the feedback of the Leadership Team.
- Each member of the leadership 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 this policy is implemented with fidelity.
- Updated language policy will be uploaded to Hubbell's website for community members to access.
- Annually update list of mother tongues, share with staff.