

# Richey Elementary School

## Language Policy

### Richey Mission Statement

We exist to create a safe, empathetic, inclusive environment where all participants can positively impact the global community through an inquiry process using strong instruction, deep engagement, and high expectations, to develop collaborative, compassionate, and confident learners.

### Language Philosophy

We believe that every teacher at Richey Elementary is a teacher of language and that all students are language learners. Language is fundamental to learning and permeates all subject areas. Each child brings their unique cultural background during language instruction. Language is best taught in a language-rich environment through various modalities, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting, and viewing. We strive to promote cultural awareness and build international-mindedness through the learning of the school's language of instruction, additional language, and mother tongue languages. Through language acquisition, children develop an appreciation of other cultures and different perspectives. This will lead to a lifelong enthusiasm for languages and language learning. Language development is essential for students' social, emotional, and cognitive development. Effective language learning will also enable students to become fully functioning members of the global community.

### Language of Instruction

All stakeholders at Richey Elementary collaborate and plan for effective and enriching language experiences through the transdisciplinary units of inquiry. Wherever possible, language is integrated into authentic context through the Program of Inquiry (POI). Mastery and application of the language skills – listening, speaking, viewing, presenting, reading, and writing – is a critical piece of all learning and is the responsibility of all stakeholders. Through a balance of literature and informational text, language is used as a vehicle to learn and understand all areas of content, central concepts, the Learner Profile, and PYP Attitudes.

### **Language practices implemented:**

- Language skills are integrated into all subject areas for all students.
- There is a balance in the use of fiction and nonfiction reading with exposure to a variety of genres - multicultural, poetry, newspaper, informational text, plays, editorials, etc.
- All students have access to grade-level text, as well as text appropriate to their individual performance level.
- Vocabulary-building techniques are used across the curriculum.
- Students are encouraged to read for different purposes.
- Students master and use various reading strategies to expand their understanding.
- Students are given opportunities to reflect and write in different ways about their learning and understanding in all content areas.

- Students are given opportunities to reflect and write about the Learner Profiles and their growth towards “international-mindedness.”
- Students are encouraged to communicate and present in multiple ways to support different learning styles.
- Instruction promotes the entire writing process (planning, drafting, editing, and publishing) in meaningful experiences.
- Teachers model the correct use of reading, writing, listening, and speaking strategies.
- Development of language skills is supported through individual conferencing and/or small group instruction.
- Instruction incorporates a variety of visual media to support learning – i.e. websites, videos, graphic organizers, photography, etc.
- A variety of instructional best practices are used when planning for instruction.
- All stakeholders promote a culture of high regard for language and literacy through school-wide programs.
- Reading planning and instruction is directed by formal and informal assessment determining the specific needs of the students.

### **Spanish Instruction**

Richey Elementary School is a bilingual environment and strives to expose every student to a secondary language. All students in grades K-5 at Richey Elementary School receive 40 minutes of weekly instruction in Spanish. Teachers also support Spanish instruction in the classrooms by labeling objects/furniture and using common phrases. Whenever possible, the Spanish instructor connects vocabulary and activities to the POI to support the central ideas and concepts. Lessons include the study of cultures, people, and celebrations from Hispanic countries. The Media Center has multiple resources in Spanish and helps teachers integrate Spanish into the POI. We understand that each student will progress on their individual language development continuum at their own rate. Students will be given opportunities to access books written in Spanish, make cultural connections, and become familiar with other cultures.

### **World Language in the classroom**

- Labeling
- Integration of key phrases
- Literature connections with Spanish
- Modeling of conversational phrases school-wide i.e. morning show, monthly newsletter

### **Mother Tongue Support**

The term mother tongue includes the language first learned, the language identified as a “native speaker,” the language known best, and/ or the language used most by our students. The mother tongue of the majority of Richey Elementary students’ is English, the school’s language of instruction. A significant number of students and several staff members are multilingual and multicultural. All faculty and staff are responsible for communicating the importance of home languages. Students are encouraged to contribute their knowledge of their language to the classroom experiences. The media center’s collection of books features rich material that explains and deepens understanding of international-mindedness

and intercultural awareness. The school district offers translator services for many languages to assist with communication with a family who hasn't mastered the English language. As our language program develops, we explore more ways to support and honor our home languages.

***Mother tongue language of all learners at Richey Elementary is supported through:***

- Teacher professional development (ESOL Endorsement)
- ELL Paraprofessional who assesses and supports students and communicates with parents in the mother tongue
- Surveys of students and parents to identify student's use and understanding of their mother tongue
- Teachers use specific instructional strategies to support students with a home language other than the instructional language of the school. For example, RES encourages families and students to utilize home language during parent, teacher, and student-led conferences.

**Support for Language Development**

Richey Elementary has many supports to differentiate language development at all levels.

- Exceptional Student Education (ESE) – Students who meet eligibility guidelines to receive ESE services have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed that outlines special needs and instruction accommodations. These students receive support from classroom teachers and the ESE staff to decrease learning barriers.
- Academically Gifted Program (AGP) – Students who meet eligibility requirements for AGP develop an Education Plan (EP) based on their strengths and building on their talents. These students are supported by enrichment from classroom teachers as well as working with a Gifted Specialist who supplements instruction and works on the POI.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – Students who meet ESOL criteria have limited English mastery. Modifications are made by the classroom teachers to scaffold instruction. Many of these students also work with an ESOL bilingual paraprofessional who aids in those modifications and supports the students as they learn the English language.
- Response to Intervention (RtI) – Students are grouped for intervention or enrichment based on their performance level. Students receive targeted instruction based on areas of need or enrichment. Academic assessments and performance are reviewed regularly to determine if goals are being met and if any changes need to be made to move students to the next step.

**Plan for Implementation and Review**

The school's Leadership Team, along with the PYP Coordinator, is responsible for the implementation of the language policy. Teachers and administration will communicate the policy to parents. The Leadership Team will ensure the policy is implemented and monitored via classroom observations, participation in team planning sessions, school presentations, etc.