



Edgar Allan Poe Elementary Language Policy 2020-2021

Mission Statement

The Mission of Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School is to prepare children to function successfully in a global and changing world by helping every student:

- develop a love of learning
- become caring of others and the world we live in
- practice and demonstrate critical thinking skills through inquiry
- strive for maximum academic growth and knowledge
- recognize and enhance strengths and talents
- value and respect one's-self and other's backgrounds, beliefs and cultures
- develop a sense of international-mindedness

The parents, teachers, staff and administrators, working in partnership, will promote communication and pursue growth to maximize the educational environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to inform teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders of the policies regarding language at Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School. This policy is a living document, meant to be reviewed and revised according to the needs of our language program.

“Language stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning.” David Corson, *Language Policy in Schools: A Resource for Teachers and Administrators* (1999) *Making the PYP Happen*, page 68 (2009)

Philosophy

At Poe Elementary, we believe in the power of language to facilitate all learning. Our recognition of language learning includes literacy of mathematics, the sciences, the visual and

performing arts, personal, social and physical education, as well as technology. We understand that language is the essential element in cultural and creative expression; and that language is at the heart of all communication that empowers our lives.

We support the theory that multilingual learners are better equipped to communicate globally, thus instilling one of the many facets of open-mindedness.

Practice

English is the language of instruction at Poe Elementary. Instruction in language includes learning about the elements and mechanics of language, using language as a means to inquire, expressing ideas and concepts within our transdisciplinary curriculum, and appreciating the aesthetics of various forms of communication.

Learning about the elements and mechanics of language. Poe Elementary implements a Balanced Literacy Block that is informed by the pedagogy of *The Daily 5* by Boushey and Moser. The components include read-alouds, phonics, guided reading, workstations, mini-lessons, interactive writing, journaling, writing workshops, story dictation and dramatization. Instructional formats include flexible grouping within the classrooms i.e., whole group and small group instruction, partners, independent practice, as well as interactive software programs. The underlying premise of these instructional strategies and formats is to provide a combination of teacher direction and student choice. Learning these fundamentals of language allows for greater depth of understanding in all endeavors.

Using language as means to inquire. Language is a primary vehicle that connects and facilitates learning in our inquiry-based classrooms. It provides the means to explore, identify, pursue, and communicate what we want to know, what we are learning and how to investigate and acquire more knowledge. In our classrooms, we encourage discussion, brainstorming, questioning, writing, listening and presenting in many different forms of communication – visual, oral, digital, graphic, kinesthetic, and non-verbal.

Expressing conceptual understanding within transdisciplinary curriculum. Developing language skills and concepts provides learners with multiple lenses to understand and synthesize our transdisciplinary curriculum. Developing conceptual understanding requires learners (students and teachers) to make connections between disciplines - by integrating and transferring content through the use of skills, also known as, approaches to learning – thinking, research, communication, social and self-management.

Appreciating the aesthetics of various forms of communication. As a fine arts magnet school, our goal is to develop creative thinkers and performers in the arts that recognize and appreciate how the arts, through time, have continued to distinguish as well as connect all

cultures and societies. We seek to allow each child the opportunity to discover and develop their individual talents in the arts and to understand the relationships between academics and the arts. Therefore, we embed the love and appreciation of language, in all its forms, into our program of inquiry. We provide opportunities to appreciate the “craft” involved in all forms of communication.

Language B

At Poe Elementary, Language B is Spanish, with the purpose to introduce students to the Spanish language and Hispanic/Latino culture of the Spanish-speaking world. The instructional goal is for students to learn the rudiments of the language to be able to speak with basic interpersonal communication skills. A second instructional goal is for students to know and appreciate the distinctive qualities and contributions of the Spanish speaking world throughout history.

All students in second through fifth grade English instructed classes have Spanish instruction once a week. The Spanish teacher rotates to each of these classrooms. Our goal of teaching and learning Spanish is not only to develop conversational and written communication in Spanish, but also to create opportunities for appreciating the culture, beliefs and values associated with the language.

We are currently without a Spanish teacher. Due to budget cuts and a hiring freeze, we are unable to employ a Spanish teacher.

Bilingual Program

Bilingual classes at Poe Elementary are defined as Transitional Bilingual Program. This program is offered to students whose home language is Spanish and who are identified as having limited English proficiency. The model provides instruction primarily in Spanish when entering pre-kindergarten or kindergarten and progressively transitions to English by the end of third grade. A bilingual classroom is provided in fourth grade, for those students still needing the support of their home language in Spanish if necessary. The students in fourth grade take the state required assessments (STAAR) in English.

The rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Commissioner of Education are part of a larger body of state agency rules that are collected and published by the Office of the Secretary of State as the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). SBOE and commissioner’s rules are codified under Title 19, Part II, of the TAC. Bilingual/ESL Programs in Texas must comply with the State’s rules under Chapter 89.

The Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) are set forth in Title 19, Chapter 74.4 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and were approved by the State Board of Education in 2007–2008. The ELPS outline the instruction school districts must provide to ELLs in order for

them to have the full opportunity to learn English and succeed academically. The ELPS are to be implemented as an integral part of the instruction in each foundation and enrichment subject of the TEKS. Teachers in Bilingual/ESL programs must teach the TEKS skills for the assigned grade level/subjects.

All the bilingual classes are taught by certified bilingual teachers. They are required to complete state and district professional development courses to keep updated on the latest standards of the bilingual program.

The bilingual classrooms, as all classrooms in our school practice speaking, listening, reading and writing skills that are incorporated into each of the units of inquiry, both in English and Spanish, by grade appropriate percentages of each language.

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is administered yearly to monitor the effectiveness and language differentiation in the bilingual students' learning process.

English as a Second Language

At Poe Elementary, we have students from all parts of the world, whose home language is not English. We provide support for these students in classrooms taught by a certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. All teachers at Poe are required to become ESL certified. Students in these classrooms are immersed in English, while provided support with supplemental aides, tutoring and testing accommodations when needed and close communication with their parents.

Mother tongue support

The media centers will serve as support by providing translations and meaning to English literature. Books and other resources will be provided in various languages spoken by students. Home communication, as well as any needed translation services will be provided in the students' and/or parents' mother tongue.

Having many students with different home languages provides rich opportunities for further development of international-mindedness.

Support for Language Development

Edgar Allan Poe Elementary has several support services available to help students in their language development. These include:

Special Education:

Students who have met the eligibility guidelines to receive Special Education services are supported by the classroom teacher and Special Education department staff. The special education teachers and the classroom teacher work hand in hand to implement the student's IEP. All services are provided with consideration to the least restrictive environment, considering first providing support within the student's general education classroom if appropriate.

Gifted and Talented:

Students in grades Kindergarten-5th who have been identified as Gifted and Talented receive services from the classroom teacher. Teachers work closely with students to provide depth, complexity and enrichment to all learning experiences, with an emphasis on communication.

Implementation, Review and Revision

The Edgar Allan Poe Elementary Assessment Committee members include the PYP Pedagogical Leadership Team members, the librarian, campus technologist and parents. The language policy will be communicated with parents by the teachers and administrators. The school technology specialist will post the policy on the school website. The implementation of this policy will be evaluated by the IB Pedagogical Leadership Team during classroom observations, parent/student /teacher conferences and school presentations.

This revised Edgar Allan Poe Language Policy will be effective February 24, 2020. It will be reviewed in August, 2021 or as needed by the assessment committee.

Library

The library serves to provide rich resources for reading, learning and investigating. In normal circumstances, students visit the library once a week to check out reading material, conduct research and/or participate in learning experiences facilitated by the librarian. Books in English and Spanish are available. The library also has a few books in other languages.

Due to the pandemic policies currently in place, the students are not able to visit the library. The librarian is now visiting each of the classrooms on a six-day rotation in conjunction with the fine arts/PE teachers.

Resources

Guidelines for developing a school language policy, IBO

Making the PYP Happen, A curriculum framework for international education

Language Scope and Sequence, IBO

MyIB, PYP Resources, Language in the PYP