

Memorial Elementary School
IB PYP Language Policy



Mission Statement

Memorial Elementary is a school of choice for Houston families. We nurture the total development of every student through the IB and Dual Language Curriculum, so they can become critical thinkers, responsible decision-makers, and college/career-ready learners. This is accomplished through the focus on the Social and Emotional well-being of our students, rigorous differentiated instruction, and with the active participation of all stakeholders.

Philosophy

At Memorial Elementary, we believe that language plays an essential role in all aspects of a student's development. In this ever-changing world and with advances in communication and technology, we have the responsibility of supporting and preparing our students to be multilingual learners. Appreciating that language expresses cultural diversity, in this role, language also fosters intercultural dialogue, preserves cultural heritage, and encourages collaboration and inclusive communities. Language presents opportunities that will cultivate internationally minded citizens. We believe language acquisition is best supported by a language-rich environment that includes books, periodicals, environmental print, online resources, technology, and teacher and student writing. Teachers are role models for using and learning language and can foster a positive attitude toward language and literature.

Language of Instruction

At Memorial Elementary, we collaborate and plan for effective and enriching language experiences through the transdisciplinary units of inquiry. Language is integrated into an 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 is the major connecting element across the curriculum. The English language arts are not perceived as individual content areas, but as one unified subject in which each of the five areas supports the others and enhances thinking and learning. The integration of knowledge, skills, and strategies of the English language arts enables students to solve problems and think critically and creatively in all subject areas.

Second Language

Memorial Elementary teaches Spanish through two opportunities that support our philosophy and pedagogy of language learning:

● **Dual Language Program**

Memorial Elementary offers a Dual Language program for grades Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth grade. We implement a 50/50 model where students spend 50% of their day learning Spanish and 50% of their day learning English. Dual Language is both an additive bilingual program for Spanish-speaking students and a foreign language immersion program for English-speaking students. In Two-Way classrooms, a

combination of native Spanish speakers and native English speakers are taught together in an effort to develop full bilingualism and biliteracy for both groups of students. Our goal is to empower our students to become respectful, life-long bilingual, and bi-literate inquirers who celebrate diversity as responsible citizens of the world.

Dual language teachers at Memorial Elementary are responsible for language development throughout the disciplines and across various experiences to support personal expression. As a result of our commitment to language, our global learners will become open-minded communicators and ensure we promote bilingualism, biliteracy, biculturalism, cross-cultural awareness, and high academic achievement.

● **Spanish Language Program**

The Spanish Language Program provides language acquisition skill development and develops an appreciation of biculturalism. Its goal is for students to attain BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) in Spanish and to promote biculturalism, cross-cultural awareness, and globally minded students. This additional language program is offered to our ESL classrooms in grades 1 - 5 once a week and is aligned with the IB scope and sequence. Students in the English-only classrooms will be receiving Spanish instruction once a week for 45 minutes as a push-in model.

Mother Tongue Support

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 library media center has books in different languages and continuously seeks out more resources to support our school's diverse population. The school district offers translators for many languages to assist with communication with a family who hasn't mastered the English language. Families are invited to participate in culture studies and share their language within the classrooms and at Memorial Elementary's International Celebration. As our language program develops, we explore more ways to support and honor our home languages

Support for Language Development

Memorial Elementary has many programs in place to support language development at all levels

- Response to Intervention (RtI) – Students are grouped for a portion of each day based on their performance level during Mustang Time. Mustang Times is a designated time when all students receive targeted instruction based on areas of need or enrichment. Progress monitoring is performed through academic assessments and performance and reviewed regularly to determine if goals are being met and if any changes need to be made to move students to the next step. Students who are in T3 are pulled by our interventionist to receive highly targeted and intensive support four times a week for 45 minutes each day. Classroom teachers meet with students in T2 during Mustang Time three to four times a week for 20-25 minutes each day. T1 students receive targeted small group instruction once a week for 20-25 minutes a week. This small group instruction supports language development for students at each level.
- Emergent Bilinguals (EB)- Students who meet EB criteria have limited English mastery. Modifications are made by the classroom teachers to scaffold instruction. Teachers implement sheltered instructional strategies in their lessons to support the development of a second

language Some examples of how they support students as they learn and understand new vocabulary are using new words multiple times in different meaningful contexts, such as practicing the vocabulary words while reading stories and during play. Other methods of promoting vocabulary development include teacher narration, using visuals, total physical response, realia, sentence stems, and open-ended questioning.

- Gifted and Talented (GT) - G/T students receive instruction daily by a G/T trained teacher implementing differentiation through acceleration, adding depth and complexity, higher level thinking skills, and developing independent research skills in the four (4) foundation curricular areas (English Language Arts/Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies), emphasizing advanced level products. GT students also have access to Renzulli, an online site that provides engaging, individualized resources specifically designed for students' interest areas and learning styles.

References:

- *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*
https://resources.ibo.org/data/g_0_iboxx_amo_0804_2_e.pdf
- *Houston ISD Multilingual Department* <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/31871>
- *Houston ISD Gifted and Talented Department* <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/31858>