

Westward Elementary International Baccalaureate Magnet School/Title I

Revised January, 2024

PYP Standards and Practices that connect to the Language Policy

Reviewed January, 2024

Mission Statement

Westward Elementary International Magnet School encourages the development of knowledgeable, principled, and caring students who strive to become active citizens of their global community. The responsibility for the development of each child is shared by the home, school, and community.

School's Vision Statement

Westward elementary seeks to develop inquisitive lifelong learners who explore the world from a global perspective. We desire to create a safe and nurturing environment that promotes academic success and character development.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the Language Policy at Westward Elementary School, a school offering an international education to students from Kindergarten through Grade 5. The school serves a large population of Haitian Creole students from the local community, as well as students from the district's "Choice Program". Parents of these students have chosen for their child to attend Westward Elementary. This Language Policy is a consensus of philosophy and practice, and is intended to inform teaching and learning, to guide curriculum, and to form a common understanding of our aims and objectives within our school community.

Our Philosophy

At Westward Elementary International Magnet School, we recognize that language development is the foundation of all learning. Language is used to communicate our needs, feelings, ideas, and experiences. Through language we are able to acquire the skills necessary to become effective and confident communicators.

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Identification

All students of Non-English-Speaking backgrounds are identified through the enrollment process, and referred to our English Language Learner (ELL) coordinator. Students that are listed as speaking another language other than English are then screened by the ELL Department. By identifying our English Language Learners, we are able to determine grade level placement, and inform teachers and staff so that the appropriate accommodations can be made.

The IB Learner profile is integral to teaching and learning language in the PYP because it represents the qualities of effective learners and internationally minded students. (Language in the Primary Years Programme, 2007) In accordance with the PYP, it is our goal that all students will develop the necessary tools in order to be:

- Inquirers: Students use their language skills to ask questions, acquire information, and make sense of the world around them.
- Thinkers: Students will use their language skills to formulate questions and express their ideas clearly.
- Communicators: Students use oral and written language in a variety of situations for diverse purposes. They speak with confidence and clarity, listen attentively, and read with both fluency and with comprehension.
- Risk Takers: Students make attempts to read, write, speak, and listen with comprehension in situations where they are not completely confident.
- Knowledgeable: Students acquire the tools that will aid them in communication and comprehension.
- Principled: They are aware that language is powerful and can have a profound effect if not used responsibly.
- Caring: Students will show care in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others.
- Open Minded: Students will respect both the differences and similarities between languages and styles of personal communication.
- Well Balanced: Students will express themselves orally, as well as in writing. They strive to find a balance between listening and speaking when interacting with others.
- Reflective: Students will reflect on their own language development, and choose to improve upon their level of proficiency.

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General Practices

1. The main instructional language at Westward Elementary Magnet School is English.
2. Language instruction includes oral communication (listening and speaking), written communication (reading and writing), and visual communication (viewing and presenting). Florida's Next Generation State Standards (NGSSS's) and The Florida Standards Assessments are used as our guide in this endeavor. Kindergarten.- Fifth Grade.
3. Though language is transdisciplinary in nature and is used throughout the curriculum, the oral, written, and visual communication skills must also be specifically taught. Westward Elementary uses the Standard Based Instruction for this purpose. This includes a 90 minute block of time (Literacy Block) where language skills are developed through Whole Group Instruction, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, and Independent Practice.
4. Materials that are used include but are not limited to: Standard Based Instruction, Scholastic Library and Mentor Text which were adopted by the Palm Beach County School District, fiction and non-fiction texts that connect to the units of inquiry and Easy CBM. These materials include fiction and non-fiction samples, as well as a variety of genres.
5. Because we use this holistic approach to language development, we do not have a formal spelling program at Westward Elementary International Magnet School. Students learn how to spell through our reading and writing instruction in authentic contexts. Spelling patterns are taught using the vowel pattern chart as well.
6. Sight words are introduced and practiced within context during reading and writing activities. Word walls are used to display and reference once words are introduced.

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7. Assessments of reading skills, which are addressed in our Assessment Policy, include formal and informal assessments, as well as formative and summative assessments. Some of these are: the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking, District iReady Diagnostic tests, Access for English Language Learners, Star Math and Reading Renaissance assessment for K-2 students.

8.

In addition, Westward Elementary uses Top Score Writing for 4-5 graders and Benchmark Writing for 3rd graders, both writing programs use Whole Group Instruction, Shared Writing, Guided Writing, and Independent Practice. Assessments for writing skills also include District mandated "Palm Beach Performance for Assessment."

Reporting

1. Progress in language development is reported to parents through district-mandated report cards, parent-teacher conferences, and student-led conferences. Students also have portfolios which contain student and teacher chosen samples. (This is part of our developing Assessment Policy).
2. Most of Westward's parents' information, students' documents and other communications are translated for parents in their mother-tongue (largely Haitian-Creole and Spanish).
3. There is currently 1 Creole Language translator, and one Spanish translator on campus to assist in conferences and other communications as needed. In addition, there are several other staff members who speak Creole and Spanish that can assist as needed.

Professional Development

1. Professional Development, both within the IB/PYP and through the district, is encouraged and provided to Westward Elementary Magnet school staff. Such training have included but are not limited to: Category 1 and 2 IB Workshops, Literacy in Action, Writer's Workshop, Top Score, Concept based and Curriculum. Professional Development will continue to be offered.

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A) Media Center

1. Our Media specialist works diligently to provide multilingual resources in the media center that are accessible to students and staff.
2. In addition to the media center, the teachers are provided classroom libraries with leveled readers for guided instruction or independent reading for all subject areas. Most of these resources are culturally diverse.
3. Furthermore, media specialist provide materials to teacher relating to the unit of inquiry

B) Spanish as a (Second) World Language:

Westward Elementary Magnet School offers Spanish as our World Language to all students from Grades K through 5. Learners in the IB/PYP in a language other than their mother tongue are potentially able to become balanced bilinguals who are highly proficient, literate, and knowledgeable in two or more languages (Joyce Stone, 2007). The IB/PYP recognizes the value of our bilingual population here at Westward Elementary Magnet School. Therefore, we will emphasize global awareness as well as cultural considerations by providing a language program that will encourage and enrich students with the tools to serve in our diverse nation.

In their ERIC Review (1998), Kathleen Marcos and Joy Peyton suggested a plan of action for a language-proficient society that included the role of the parent, teachers, school leaders, as well as business community and policy makers. The following are some of the ideas that will be implemented as part of the Westward Elementary Magnet Language Policy:

- The Westward Elementary educator will foster children's world language competency and cross-cultural understanding by drawing on community resources to promote language and cultural awareness by using a variety of resources and technology to supplement lessons and bring Spanish to life in the classroom. The World Language teacher will have a library accessible to parents and students to create home-connection. Teachers should find or create opportunities for all students at Westward Elementary Magnet to use Spanish (Westward Elementary first World Language) in and outside the classroom by using various resources and ideas.

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- Westward’s Elementary Magnet World Language program will align to the curriculum to the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning which include: 1) Communication in a language other than English, 2) Exposure to other cultures to gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures around the world, not limited to Spanish-speaking countries, 3) Making connections to other disciplines and information in content areas. This includes the support of the Units of Inquiry (POI) that are part of the IB/PYP, 4) Comparisons to develop insight into the Nature of Language and Culture, and Communities that encourage participation of multilingual communities at home and around the world.
- The Westward Elementary Magnet parent can help their children develop knowledge of other languages and cultures by exposing children to people from other languages and cultural backgrounds, attending multicultural and multi-linguistic events, and by generally supporting the Westward Elementary Magnet World language program.
- Westward Elementary will develop the three language strands of oral, written, and visual communication within its Spanish program.

Reading and Writing Instruction

All teachers are teachers of language. Students learn to read and write through a variety of strategies.

- Whole group read aloud
- Small group reading instruction
- Small group writing instruction
- Independent reading and writing instruction
- Digital reading resources
- Varied levels of reading materials
- Adding written responses to charts and graphs (ex. KUD chart, Wonderwall, etc.)

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Oral Language

Listening and speaking learning engagements are provided throughout the day in a

variety of lessons.

- Class discussion
- Partner discussion
- Presentations
- Asking questions
- Responding to peers and teacher
- Collaborative projects and presentations
- Creating digital projects

Visual Language

Students are provided visual texts in the shape of posters, charts, labels, word walls, anchor charts, digital media, movies, flags, etc.

- A variety of visual texts is available in each room
- Labels with visuals using our World Language (Spanish)
- Visual vocabulary strategies in the upper grades
- Performances and presentations

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- Digital media

Mother-Tongue Support

Mother Tongue refers to a language learned first; the language is known best and used by a student. Many of our students speak a language other than English as their mother tongue, and many are bilingual. Many staff members are bilingual, some are multilingual, and they are from various cultures. We support mother tongue language at our school using the following strategies:

- 85% of the Teachers have their English Language Learner endorsement
- ELL teachers who speak other languages and provide push-in support to students during reading and math
- School Advisory Council meetings are translated
- Parent communication is translated
- 3 Language Facilitators on staff to support home school communication, including parent conferences
- Learning strategies specifically to support ELL students
- Materials in the media center in Spanish

Currently, students at Westward Elementary Magnet receive Spanish instruction on a rotating basis. They are with the Spanish teacher during Fine Arts time for approximately 40 minutes twice per week.

Spanish-speaking cultures will be learned about through literature, music, drama, and dance.

To give students the opportunity to communicate with more people in our global society.

Additional Support/Teaching English Language skills to our large ESOL population

- There are currently two teachers at the school including the ESOL Coordinator.
- The English Language Learners (ELL) students are supported by English Student of other Language teachers during the daily Literacy Block. This is done on “pull-out” basis.
- ESOL teachers will collaborate closely with the homeroom teacher to provide resources and modifications as needed. When these students are exited from the ELL program, they are closely monitored for two years to monitor progress.
- 80%of Westward Elementary teachers are ESOL certified or endorsed.

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Policy Review every 2 years

Policy Committee

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