



## W. H. Council Traditional School – an IB World School IB PYP Language Policy

Established: September 2006

Revised: August 2020

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February 2011

### **Philosophy**

W. H. Council Traditional School is an IB PYP World School and a magnet school of communication, which provides a strong foundation of language development for all students in multiple languages.

Language is a tool that enables us to acquire knowledge and communicate in many modes, for many purposes, and to many different audiences. Although conventions are important, the construction of meaning and the emphasis of creative expression are of equal importance. Language learning is central in all areas of the curriculum.

Because each strand of language (listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, nonverbal, and presenting) requires different cognitive processes – some simple, some complex – we recognize and honor our students’ developmental levels and learning styles, adjusting our instructional strategies accordingly. A constructivist approach allows teachers to meet students where they are and build upon prior knowledge to make learning more meaningful, authentic, and streamlined.

Ultimately, we strive to produce students who effectively communicate their needs, feelings, ideas, and experiences with creativity and confidence.

### **Language Practices**

English is the language of instruction. Students are taught conventions of English through classroom instruction in all seven strands of language. The strands of language are interrelated, and mastery of one strand fosters heightened development of the others. Incorporating the seven strands of language into all disciplines is vital to the success of our students’ language development.

School activities and curriculum that support many or all of the strands of language:

- Adopted reading/language arts program (Wonders)
- Adopted phonics program (Phonics First/Sunday System)
- Adopted Spanish program (Descubre el Español)
- PreK Spanish immersion lessons
- Learning style options (traditional and remote during pandemic)
- After-school clubs and organizations
- Broadcasting (includes a Spanish moment)
- Morning announcements (includes the school mission, the school motto, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag in Spanish)
- Exhibition
- Internet research
- Classroom and schoolwide presentations and projects (includes the Global Tour, the Oratorical Contest, the Wax Museum, IB unit culminating projects, and more)
- Various resources used in and with the Schoology platform by teachers and students (includes Nearpod, Discovery Education, Edpuzzle, PDFs, Screencast-O-Matic teacher videos, digital textbooks, and more)

**Listening:** Listening is not a passive skill. Students must apply active listening skills to gain information and analyze it properly. In addition, students must demonstrate appropriate listening etiquette.

Additional activities that support listening include:

- Cultural Arts assemblies
- Guest speakers (includes Holiday Read-a-Thon, author visits, career day, Honor's Day featured speakers, and more)
- Read-Alouds
- Teacher questioning strategies
- Listening centers in the lower grades

**Speaking:** Students use oral language skills to ask questions and to share ideas, opinions, information, and feelings. They must develop proper pronunciation, inflections, intonation, and fluency to become confident and skillful speakers.

Additional activities that support speaking include:

- Book shares
- CTS Ambassadors

**Reading:** Guided by the English Language Literacy for College and Career Readiness, students receive systematic, explicit, instruction in language, speaking and listening, reading literature, reading informational text, reading foundations, and writing. Students then apply those skills across the curriculum. We strive to instill a love of reading by exposing students to a wide range of genre and author styles and by allowing self-selection of independent reading titles.

Additional activities that support reading include:

- E-book platforms (includes Big Universe, Sora, and Epic!)
- Alabama Virtual Library
- Sadlier Vocabulary
- Time for Kids
- Studies Weekly in select grades
- Literacy centers
- Accelerated Reader
- Various interactive internet sites (includes Padlet, Kahoot!, Starfall, Quizziz, and many more)
- School and classroom libraries

**Writing:** Writing is a complex, developmental process by which students communicate information, ideas, opinions, and feelings. To address the demands of high-stakes tests, many writing and mechanic skills are taught through systematic, explicit instruction. We recognize, too, that the message should not be lost in the mechanics. Writing occurs daily, as teachers model for students, write with students, and allow students the opportunity to write independently. Student writing portfolios allow teachers to measure progress and customize instruction to meet the needs of each child.

Additional activities that support writing include:

- Adopted writing curriculum (The Six Traits of Writing)
- Journals
- Reflections on Units of Inquiry
- Reports
- Graphic organizers

**Viewing:** By using integrated technology and multimedia resources, students gain exposure to a wide array of visual experiences. The students learn to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs, making informed choices about personal viewing experiences.

Additional activities that support viewing include:

- Use of SMART Boards, student laptops and tablets, the computer lab, and the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program
- Educational videos (includes Discovery Education and other video platforms chosen to support the curriculum)
- Art class
- Video conferencing

**Nonverbal:** Students recognize and react to nonverbal signals and learn to use and interpret symbols to provide information.

Additional activities that support nonverbal communication include:

- Posters and displays created for various projects (includes class projects, Student Council elections, promotion of student body activities, and more)
- Art projects

**Presenting:** Students are provided with many opportunities to apply and synthesize their learning through a variety of projects and presentations. Through presenting original work, students must apply skillful strategies of all the aforementioned language strands.

Additional activities that support presenting include:

- Using presentation software to demonstrate learning (includes PowerPoint, Prezi, and Sway)
- Costuming (includes for the Oratorical contest, the Global Tour, and the Wax Museum)
- Reader's Theater
- Production of visual aids
- Reading and Spanish nights
- Science Fair Projects (5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- School programs (includes the Honor's Day programs, the NEHS (National Elementary Honor Society) Induction Ceremony, and the Christmas program (Kindergarten))

### **Language and the PYP**

Our commitment to nurturing language development supports students in demonstrating the PYP learner profile. W. H. Council Traditional School students, through language, are:

- Balanced, as they express themselves using different mediums, and for varied purposes and audiences.
- Caring, as they demonstrate empathy, compassion, and respect to others.
- Communicators, as they communicate confidently and creatively in both written and oral forms for both pleasure and practice.
- Inquirers, as they exhibit natural curiosity about language and use that innate curiosity to make sense of the world around them.
- Knowledgeable, as they acquire in-depth knowledge of language structure (in all strands) in both English and Spanish.
- Open-minded, as they appreciate and accept differences in communication styles and use language as a tool to share their own cultures and personal histories.

- Principled, as they exhibit integrity, honesty, and respect.
- Thinkers, as they express their thoughts and ideas coherently, creatively, and confidently.
- Risk Takers, as they solve problems and make good decisions.

### **The School's Additional Language**

The additional language at W. H. Council Traditional School is Spanish. Students in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade are instructed in the Spanish language and culture biweekly by dedicated Spanish teachers. The classes emphasize oral communication and include journeys into the Spanish culture and its relationship to the host nation culture. At various times, students also receive additional instruction in Spanish that supports the IB unit being covered in class. Printed and digital materials are provided in Spanish in both the classroom and through the library for vocabulary and reading practice. Each of the PreK classes have a Spanish teacher that presents daily lessons in Spanish. Spanish is reinforced in many ways throughout the school, such as the morning announcements, broadcasts, Spanish nights, classroom displays, and use of the language by faculty, staff, and students during the school day.

Students are instructed in multilingualism by teachers who are native speakers, which is in line with the IB Learning and Teaching from Principles into Practice guidelines. As a school community we embrace multilingualism as a fact, a right, and a resource for learning across the curriculum.

Fourth and fifth grade students are being introduced to German by our feeder middle school German teacher as well.

### **Mother-Tongue Support**

An ESL (English as a Second Language) tutor is provided by the school system to address the language needs of students. Students are also encouraged to share a phrase from their mother-tongue during the morning announcements during the month of May.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

All members of the school community have the right to a strong foundation of language development. This is provided by thoroughly instructing our students in each strand of language and providing them with numerous resources and opportunities to hone their skills. Professional development in good practices for teaching language development is also provided for our teachers as needed.

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to take the instruction that they are given and continue to grow in their learning by applying new knowledge as it is presented.

### **Policy on Reviewing/Updating this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed and updated prior to each five-year evaluation date, unless changes are deemed necessary at an earlier time.