

Speas Global Elementary School
An Authorized IB World School offering the Primary Years Programme
Language Policy
Revised: June 2021

The purpose of this document is to clarify teachers' understanding of the Language Policy within our learning community. It is a constantly evolving document that reflects our school's unique language needs. Our language philosophy applies to the whole school and is to be communicated to and understood by all continuing and new teachers, students, parents, and administrators. It is directly linked to our mission statement which is:

The Speas Global learning community educates each child with knowledge, skills, and attitudes while inspiring collaboration, inquiry, innovation and action. In our pursuit of wisdom through an international curriculum, second language development and character development, we empower students to successfully engage in our increasingly globalized, rapidly changing world.

Background

Speas became a Global Schools Network site in the 2013-2014 school year. That same school year, we began our Spanish Dual Language Immersion program with the Kindergarten grade level. In dual immersion, there are two groups of students involved in the program. Ideally, one half of the students in the program are native speakers of the target language, Spanish, and the other half of the students are native English speakers. The goals in such a program is bilingualism and biliteracy for both groups of students. Our program has grown to include Spanish Dual Immersion classrooms at all grade levels, Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Philosophy

At Speas Global, all teachers are language instructors. All students are language learners, regardless of the language they speak. We believe that students not only learn language, but learn through language as well as learn about language. The language and literacy skills that we aim to cultivate will prepare the students to develop their own views and communicate, discuss, and defend them as they consider the larger world around them. English is the primary school-wide communication language, but English and Spanish are primary languages of instruction. Spanish is taught school-wide as our second language of instruction, with celebration and support of home and family languages.

Language is essential to learning and must be taught within meaningful contexts. We believe parents and families also play a role in language development. Language is a major component in encouraging international mindedness. Language is embedded into the curriculum and content. Language affects our social interactions and relationships and plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. It connects the curriculum and provides a vehicle for an inquiry-based classroom across the content areas. We believe a second language encourages cultural awareness, tolerance, acceptance, and a deeper understanding of a global society. (IB MTPYPH: Language in the PYP)

Identification

Students new to Speas Global are screened and evaluated if their enrollment identifies additional languages spoken at home. The W-APT, WIDA-Access Placement Test, screens students' level of proficiency in English. Students are then enrolled in English Learner classes (EL) based on their proficiency levels.

Language Instruction

Speas Global's daily language of instruction depends on the type of class each family chooses for their child in the beginning of their Kindergarten year. We have "English Only" classrooms and "Spanish Dual Language Immersion Classrooms" in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade. In our Spanish Dual Language Immersion Classrooms the daily percentage of time students spend receiving instruction in each language is as follows in the table:

| Grade | Spanish | English |
|--------|--------------|---------|
| PreK | Not provided | 100% |
| Kinder | ~80% | ~20% |
| First | ~70% | ~30% |
| Second | ~60% | ~40% |
| Third | ~50% | ~50% |
| Fourth | ~50% | ~50% |
| Fifth | ~50% | ~50% |

In all classrooms, we incorporate the Science of Reading framework, which allows students to regularly read texts at a range of levels, guided by their interests, knowledge base, and connections to areas of study. This framework moves the focus of our literacy instruction away from whole group literacy blocks, to small, flexible groupings that allow students to work on specific skills and strategies as identified by the classroom teacher and other school specialists and through self-reflection. Additional support is targeted towards the differentiated needs of the students with the help of Resource teachers, Reading Interventionists, EL teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, and Talent Development (AG) specialists. In addition, skills taught in literacy and writing are incorporated throughout the content and units of inquiry. Further details can be found in our Assessment Policy and in the details below.

Scope and Sequence: Speas Global Elementary follows the Common Core State Standards for language instruction, including the extension and augmentations of the Common Core State Standards when appropriate.

English Learners (EL): EL students receive English language instruction through their classroom teacher and EL specialists, depending on student need as determined by W-APT. This instruction occurs in a pull out setting or in identified inclusion classrooms. Students receive EL services until proficiency is achieved. These students are assessed annually and monitored throughout the year in their classroom and EL classroom. Student work is modified, in collaboration with the EL specialists, as needed.

Assessment

Students' English reading skills are assessed using a district determined and state approved assessment three times per school year. District-developed ELA assessments are administered to students in grades 3-5 at the end of each quarter, as mandated by the district. Teachers create formative assessments and common assessments to determine student progress toward grade level standards. NC End of Grade Language Arts tests are administered to students in grades 3-5 to measure reading comprehension. Receptive and Expressive literacy is taught and assessed (through formative and summative assessments) at each grade level.

Writing: Formal writing instruction takes place during literacy and writing is infused throughout the day and in the various content areas. Each quarter a writing sample is collected for the students' Literacy Folder.

Speech and Language: Students may be referred for a speech/language evaluation. Once qualified, students receive services by a licensed speech-language pathologist. The amount of time in which the student and speech-language pathologist meet is determined based on student need and is outlined in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In addition, speech-language pathologists conduct hearing screenings

with new enrollments or as needs arise. Hearing impaired students at Speas Global Elementary receive classroom modifications based on the student's IEP.

Professional Development: Ongoing professional development opportunities are available for the staff to support IB instruction as well as language instruction. The district literacy coaches and ELA department provides literacy professional development to support and further enhance instruction aligned with Common Core State Standards.

Resources: It is a short and long term goal that we expand our teacher and student resources to support language instruction, especially in the areas of Spanish language and home and family language. Presently, students and teachers utilize the Wonders and Maravillas Reading Series, Reading A-Z Raz Kids, and other direct instruction programs to further enhance literacy instruction and student knowledge of the English and/or Spanish language, and to meet the diverse needs of students.

Parents and Families: Parents and families are asked to support their child's language instruction through nightly reading and additional teacher suggestions. Our School Social Worker, Psychologist, Parent Involvement Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, and EL specialists act as liaisons directing parents to community resources both academically and non-academically. They provide teachers and families the opportunity to further their knowledge of the instruction that is taking place in the classroom.

Home and Family Language

Both the preservation and development of home and family language foster the celebration of diversity and enable cross cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding. They also enable the development of higher order cognitive skills, as well as enable people who are members of small cultural subgroups to maintain and transmit cultural identity within a multicultural community. (IB MTPYPH: Language in the PYP)

With over 20 Spanish speaking staff, interpreters are available for parent-teacher conferences as needed throughout the school year. Collaboratively our staff speak 10 different world languages including English, Spanish, Hindi, Bengali, Sign Language, Creole, German, Russian, Polish, and Japanese. We have a blended culture, mixing southern USA, northern USA, and many South American traditions together for an eclectic International Community.

Bilingual members provide support for students and parents. Written communications with our learning community are provided in English and Spanish. If communication in other home or family languages are needed, the school will enlist the assistance of the District's ESL Department and/or World Language Department.

Ongoing efforts are in place to expand our collection of resources in multiple languages reflecting all home and family languages of students and staff. Our school hosts an International Night in the spring of each year to highlight our diverse population of home and family languages and celebrate the diverse cultures which comprise our learning community.

Second Language Acquisition

Our belief is students become more culturally aware through the development of a second language. One of the requirements to be an authorized IB World School is to make provisions for students to learn a language, in addition to the language of instruction. We support this requirement by offering our students two pathways to acquire Spanish (or as Spanish language development support for native Spanish speakers).

Pathway 1 - "English Only" Classroom instruction, Spanish as a Special (every class in every grade receives Spanish once a week for 45 minutes)

Pathway 2 - Spanish Dual Language Immersion Classroom instruction (This choice must be made in Kindergarten)

Spanish classes are offered in the weekly encore class rotation for kindergarten through fifth grade. Not only are students working towards acquiring a new language, but they are also focusing on the goals of foreign language learning, including culture, communication, connections, comparisons, and communities. For our Spanish Dual Language Immersion classes, they focus on learning about various Spanish cultures and building Spanish vocabulary.

Language Policy Review

The language policy will be revisited on an annual basis by the PYP Committee and approved by the School Improvement Leadership Team.

Resources:

Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education, 2007

https://resources.ibo.org/pyp/resource/11162-occ-file-p_0_pypxx_mph_0912_2_e/?lang=en

Primary Years Programme: From Principles into Practice, Learning and Teaching, Published 2018

https://resources.ibo.org/pyp/works/pyp_11162-51465?root=1.6.2.12.5&lang=en

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