

Palmetto Elementary School Language Policy

The purpose of this document is to share our philosophy and practice of language instruction at Palmetto Elementary School. The language used at school for instruction is English and we recognize the need to support students who speak languages other than English at home. Palmetto has a World Language, Spanish, that introduces students to cultures and language. Our population at Palmetto is made of students from various cultures and backgrounds and we strive to support our students linguistically. Our school takes pride in in our school culture and works to create internationally minded students.

Palmetto Elementary Mission Statement

Palmetto Elementary is committed to developing a community of lifelong learners with a global mindset utilizing inquiry, knowledge, and compassion. To this end, we empower each other to take action, accept each other's differences, and create a more peaceful world and a green environment. As a school community, we commit to a single school culture; collaborating to make this vision a reality.

Philosophy

At Palmetto we recognize language is central to teaching and learning. Therefore we consider all teachers language teachers. Each student is special and Palmetto supports the development and support of the mother tongue of all students. We know supporting our students mother tongue language is important to their academic growth. Palmetto has a commitment to supporting all of our parents by providing a learning community that promotes and supports language diversity.

Language Profile

In the 2018 - 2019 school year Palmetto Elementary has a population of 575 students, 373 students who speak a Mother Tongue other than English. The majority of the students speak Spanish. Other languages include Creole, Pashto, French, Farsi, Parisian, and Bangali.

Palmetto Elementary teachers strive to create a learning environment where all students are comfortable and confident language learners. Students are given a variety of opportunities to use language through engaging activities that include using digital media to record themselves in commercials, making movies and video clips. This provides ways for students to become confident in their language skills in a variety of contexts. Students are encourage to use language to be inquirers by participating in transdisciplinary experiences that provide a way to gain authentic language skills.

Practices

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.)
- Interactive Word Walls

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
- Play Centers in Kindergarten (housekeeping)
- Morning Meetings

Visual Language

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

- 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
- Digital media

World Language Instruction

Palmetto Elementary provides World Language instruction in Spanish in grade Kindergarten through Fifth grade. The language is taught through cultural connections utilizing a variety of strategies.

- Connecting to the grade level unit of inquiry
 - Concepts
 - Theme
 - Learner profile
- Music
- collaboration
- stories/literature
- Videos
- Digital media
- Classrooms have spanish labels
- Cognates
- Home Language Academic Workbooks

Mother Tongue

Mother Tongues refers to a language that was learned first, the language 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 and some are multilingual and they are from a variety of culture. We support mother tongue language at our school using the following strategies:

- 80% 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, French, Haitian Creole
- Home Language Dictionaries

Media Literacy

The media specialist works with teachers to support the unit of inquiry through the media center.

- Creating book displays related to different grade level units of inquiry
- Reading stories related to unit of inquiry
- Providing materials to teacher relating to the unit of inquiry
- Books in Spanish, French, Haitian Creole

Additional support

- Coordinator for English Speakers of other Languages to support students, parents and staff
- District professional development on learning strategies to support English Language learners
- Leadership team meets weekly and discusses needs of English Language Learners
- Imagine Learning a digital platform use by students who are English Language Learners

Language Policy Review

Palmetto Elementary will review this Language Policy twice a year to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students. We want to make sure we are continually seeking out the strategies that will help our students achieve to their fullest potential. As a school with a high population of English Language Learners we track the data of our English Language Learners to make sure they are receiving the appropriate amount of support. We keep track of each English Language Learners level through testing twice a year as well as reviewing classroom performance. We will always be looking for best practices to meet the needs of our students and striving to help them become confident in their language skills.