

## **Iroquois Point Elementary School Language Policy**

### **Philosophy**

At Iroquois Point Elementary School (IPES), we believe that language permeates the whole curriculum. It is essential to learning, thinking, and communicating. Language, in all its forms, provides the vehicle for reflection and knowledge acquisition. All teachers at IPES are teachers of language and are committed to providing a variety of opportunities for the strands of oral, written, and visual communication throughout the different content areas.

### **Focus on Literacy**

The globalization of society through advances in technology, trade and world travel has created an environment that requires critical, creative and rapid responses to multiple forms of texts and media. Students shall be provided with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to prepare them to be contributing citizens. All students shall be ready to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global society.

Students who are literate know how to read, write, listen and speak as well as effectively manage, evaluate and use information. Developing each student's literacy skills is the responsibility of every teacher. In the early years, teachers develop fundamentals and appreciation for reading and writing. As students progress through grades and content areas, they are introduced to a variety of forms of text, technology and media. English is the primary language of instruction at IPES.

### **Practices**

Our students possess a wide range of language skills. Because of this, differentiation in language instruction must be a key practice. Tools and practices to support differentiation in language instruction include:

- Guided Reading practices in grades K-5: Teachers form small, homogeneous groups based on similar needs and abilities. Teachers use leveled text correlated to students' reading abilities and guide the reading as the students practice.
- i-Ready in grades K-6: A computer-based instructional support program that provides a research-based reading curriculum specifically designed to differentiate for all learners.
- McGraw-Hill Reading Wonders is implemented in grades K-5. The program is research based and aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), while

providing rigor and depth utilizing complex text and various reading and writing strategies.

- College Board Springboard is implemented in grade 6. The focus of instructional design is “Understanding by Design.” The curriculum is scaffold to address the embedded assessments, which are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
- Achieve3000 (KidBiz/TeenBiz) in grades 3 to 6 is a web-based, individualized learning solution scientifically proven to accelerate reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing proficiency

Instructional strategies help students strengthen specific literacy skills across grades and content areas and have the following characteristics:

- Integration of learning through literacy:
  - Connects reading, writing, talking, listening and thinking
  - Connects to all content areas and everyday life
- Student develops higher order thinking skills
  - Formulating ideas
  - Solving problems
  - Making meaning
  - Deeper and more discerning understanding of text
- Teacher provides differentiated instruction
  - Use of different texts
  - Different supports depending on the learning needs
- Teacher creates a community of learners
  - Collaborative learning experience
  - Multicultural values development
  - Social responsibility and leadership skills development
- School plans careful use of instructional time
  - Instructional time is protected
  - Time for targeted instruction for students not making adequate progress

## **Second language acquisition (Spanish)**

Our curriculum promotes the learning of a second language at a young age when students are most receptive to language development. All students in grades 2-6 at IPES receive weekly Spanish instruction from a native Spanish-speaking teacher. Students gradually learn how to communicate in a simple, natural way with their teachers, classmates and other members of the community. Furthermore, students gain insight into how societies beyond their own are similar and different.

## **English Language Learners (ELL)**

ELL students are identified through screening by an ELL teacher upon registration at our school. Any parent who lists a second language spoken at home is contacted in order to set up screening for the student. Parents have the right to refuse screening or services. ELL students receive weekly services by the ELL teacher. The amount of service time is predetermined by the students' needs and abilities and is adjusted during the school year as necessary. ELL students receive their primary support from the classroom teacher to ensure equity of access to learning.

IPES is committed to ensuring equal access to education through the provision of linguistically accessible materials and oral language services for students, parents, guardians, and members of the public who are limited English proficient (LEP). To this end, we provide important translated documents with information necessary to access or participate in services, programs, and activities of a state agency. In addition, we also provide translators to assist with parent/teacher conferences in cases where parents have limited English proficiency.

## **Mother Tongue Support**

IPES has an increasing ELL population. There are approximately twelve different languages spoken at our school. Consideration should be given to the diversity of cultures and languages in the homes and localities of Hawaii. In every culture, children learn the language of the home as they observe, listen, speak, and interact with adults and children in their environment. All students bring valuable cultural knowledge and experiences to the classroom. In order to bring meaning to their efforts, students need to be able to understand and appreciate their culture and integrate it with the acquisition of literacy skills. To support our diverse population, our school library is developing its collection of books in the different languages of our students, including books about their culture and heritage. Parents are involved with the development of our book collection. We are committed to expanding our resources to accommodate the needs of all students.

## **Professional Development**

As defined by National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the term “professional development” means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement. To this end, teachers participate in professional development in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to: on-site school and district-led workshops, external workshops, IB workshops, and weekly collaborative meetings. Teachers stay informed of current research and best practices regarding language learning. Through meaningful collaboration, teachers share their expertise about language learning with one another. IPES is committed to providing the necessary training to teachers to ensure that learning is ongoing and job embedded.

## **Assessment**

Students are regularly assessed to determine if their language skills meet the standards set forth by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Formative and summative assessments provide essential information to teachers that guide instruction. Teachers use a variety of assessments, including, but not limited to: i-Ready, Achieve3000 (KidBiz/TeenBiz), McGraw-Hill Reading Wonders, College Board Springboard, and DRA running records.

*Please review our assessment policy for more information.*