

Naramake Elementary School Language Policy

“The Primary Years Programme (PYP) beliefs and values about language are embedded implicitly throughout the learner profile and explicitly through the attribute of “communicator”, as well as in the IB’s approaches to learning. Through an IB education, PYP learning communities use language to build a better and more peaceful world.” (*PYP: From principles into practice/Language/language in the PYP*)

Through language, students:

- Express identity
- Develop international mindedness
- Become literate
- Become effective inquirers
- Communicate”

(*PYP: From principles into practice/Language/The language learner*)

The purpose of Naramake Elementary School’s Language Policy is to provide an overview of the school’s philosophy and procedures regarding language learning and teaching. This document summarizes our school’s language profile and the support for all students’ language development in English and Spanish. The Language Policy will be reviewed annually by the Naramake Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), classroom teachers, and coaches, and will be updated as needed.

At Naramake, we believe:

- All languages, dialects, and cultures should be valued and celebrated
- Learning a language in addition to your home language is important to developing international mindedness
- Cultural differences are assets, not barriers, to learning
- Language allows us to be thoughtful communicators so that we can intentionally interact with the learning community in meaningful ways
- All teachers are language teachers
- Language and communication can take many forms
- We learn through language, about language, and from language

Naramake Elementary School Profile

Within the Naramake Elementary School community there are a range of languages spoken.

- 66% of our families speak English as a primary language.
- 29% of our families speak Spanish as a primary language.
- Other languages spoken by our families include Creole-Haitian, Ewe, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, and Ukrainian.
- 24% of our students are Multilingual Learners (MLL)

The Language of Instruction:

Our language of instruction for all students is English. In addition, all students in grades K - 5 take Spanish as an additional language for 40 minutes every 4 days.

For literacy, we implement the Science of Reading, focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. At our school, we are developing practices around language acquisition and the transfer of language. The district provides us with a variety of materials and resources for ELA instruction that follow the Common Core State Standards for ELA.

In addition, we supplement with materials and resources that enhance our units of inquiry. Our transdisciplinary units of inquiry integrate content from Science, Social Studies, Math, ELA, Art, Music, Digital Media, PE, Spanish, and SEL. The units address the standards from the Common Core for ELA and Math, NGSS for Science, and the CT state standards for Social Studies, PE, Art, and Music, and Spanish.

These transdisciplinary units are the outcome of sustained collaboration between all teachers and coaches.

Language Support

Multilingual learners

Our approach to supporting Multilingual Learners (MLL) is rooted in the belief that all students can succeed when provided with the right tools and opportunities. Our MLL students are identified through a combination of home language surveys and ongoing evaluations of LAS Links to ensure appropriate placement. Once identified, students receive tailored support through a variety of strategies, including differentiated and scaffolded instruction, targeted language development programs, and culturally responsive teaching practices. These supports are addressed in collaboration with our classroom teachers during teacher team meetings and lesson planning with the goal of capitalizing on our students' strengths. We believe that multilingualism is an asset, and our approach focuses on empowering students to develop their English proficiency without losing their native language while fostering academic success and social integration in a diverse learning environment.

Several tools support MLLs in developing language proficiency and academic success.

- English Language Proficiency Assessments (e.g., LAS Links – Assess MLLs' progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening).
- Instructional Resources – These include scaffolding, visual aids, and texts to support diverse language proficiency levels in the classroom.
- Translation and Interpretation Services – Supporting students and families with communication in their home language.
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum – Materials that reflect students' cultural backgrounds, making learning more relevant and engaging.

In addition, we understand that honoring a students' home language is important to their cultural identity.

Together, these tools help MLLs improve language skills while mastering academic content.

SRBI

A Brief Overview of SRBI

Scientific Research-Based Intervention or (SRBI), is a Connecticut general education systematic process that provides a continuum of assessments and research-based interventions to improve educational outcomes for all students. SRBI is designed to ensure that all students receive appropriate instruction by providing critical information about students' instructional strengths and needs. The ultimate goal is to increase student success for all students. The key component to SRBI is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom or program (Tier I). As well as conducting universal assessments to review the progress of all children. These assessments assist in identifying children who may need more support or other types of instruction.

At Naramake we have a 30 minute block of time with every grade level called W.I.N. (What I Need). During this period, all students in that grade level receive targeted instruction in "what they need". This could be either acceleration or enrichment, as well as intervention or other supports (Tier II). Students who have been identified in need of intervention receive targeted instruction in a small group setting using research-based programs, instructional interventions for academic and behavioral needs.

Another key component to our SRBI process is "progress monitoring." Progress monitoring gives us a better understanding of a child's needs and demonstrates the growth students are making in a specific area. It allows us to see if an intervention is effective and determine whether to continue or if another approach or strategy needs to be tried.

Additional Language Program

At Naramake we offer Spanish as an additional language to all students beginning in kindergarten. Students receive instruction in Spanish once every 4 days for 40 minutes each time. The goal of the program is to provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to the Spanish language and culture. This will help support the development of international mindedness through an understanding of culture. The program is based off of the CT State Standards for Learning Languages.

The focus of the program is on:

- Communication
 - Developing Spanish language skills in each of the four areas of language acquisition (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) focusing on interaction as the primary means of language learning.
- Cultures
 - Developing an understanding of the traditions, beliefs, and values of the cultures of Spanish speaking countries. Encouraging students to analyze their own cultural perspectives.
- Connections
 - Reinforcing and expanding content knowledge from the core subjects through Spanish vocabulary and perspective.
- Comparisons
 - Identifying similarities and differences in the target language and the language of instruction.
- Communities
 - Using the Spanish language within the school and community for enjoyment.

Many different strategies are used in the Spanish class, such as Total Physical Response, fostering motivation and engagement, integrating technology, utilizing content-based instruction, organizing thematic units, and promoting cultural competence.

Library Media Program

In accordance with the American Association of School Librarians and the Norwalk Public School's Portrait of a Graduate Vision, the mission of the Naramake Elementary School Library Media Program is to foster a dynamic learning environment where both students and staff are empowered to engage with ideas and information in meaningful, creative, and ethical ways. By cultivating a culture of inquiry and discovery, the library program supports the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and digital literacy skills. The library program is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to resources, promoting a love of reading, equipping both students and staff with the skills to navigate, analyze, and create in an evolving digital world, preparing them to become knowledgeable, principled, and caring citizens. The library media program also contributes to the school's broader objectives of fostering and preserving students' native language, ensuring inclusive and equitable access to the IB program for all students, and advancing the school's second language offerings.

During scheduled class time with the school librarian students will:

- Explore a wide range of sources and formats for different purposes;
- Engage in sustained inquiry by generating questions, locating print and digital sources, and synthesizing and expressing new understandings;
- Use a design thinking process to solve problems;
- Ethically and responsibly use technology and information;
- Exchange library books, guided by student's personal interest and enjoyment.

To meet the goals of the library media program, the school library media specialist in consultation with staff, students, families, and other community members will:

- Stay informed of current trends in literature and library media practice and technology;
- Continuously develop the library collection in accordance with the Programme of Inquiry and the needs of the students and teachers, including materials to support students' home language and culture;

- Perform collection analysis to identify areas of need, including materials that support international-mindedness and cultural awareness and order accordingly;
- Encourage reading for enjoyment;
- Collaborate with teachers about the school's Programme of Inquiry, as well as, lesson design and instruction to assess students' needs within the program;
- Integrate the library and technology standards within the school's Programme of Inquiry.

Library Media Center

The Naramake Elementary School Library Media Center holds about 7,200 books, alongside a growing digital collection.

Materials selection is driven by student interest, reviews from professional publications, and relevance to the curriculum. The library's collection has been thoughtfully curated to prioritize diversity and inclusion, ensuring that students can see themselves represented while also fostering empathy for the experiences of others. Furthermore, there has been a focused effort to increase the number of books that promote social and emotional learning. The library media center also includes a makerspace containing robots, snap circuits, building materials, and two 3D printers. The library media center's online resources include the Follett Destiny library catalog, PebbleGo, PebbleGo Next, and Britannica Kids, all accessible via Classlink. The library media center serves as the primary space for digital media classes and book checkout and is also utilized for small group work, testing, lessons, and makerspace activities, which are organized in collaboration with classroom teachers.

**The Naramake language policy was developed by a team of educators from Naramake Elementary School with the intent of using it for learning and teaching within our school.*