

Patterson Elementary School
International Baccalaureate Candidate School
Language Policy

This policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programs designed and available to help our students attain these goals.

This policy is intended to provide an overview of our guiding principles for language learning at Patterson which permeates the entire school curriculum with local opportunities that provide authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

I. School Language Philosophy:

Patterson recognizes that communicating effectively in all subjects for a variety of purposes is key to academic success. Thus, all teachers become language teachers and are central to effective communication in the classroom. We encourage students to develop their mother tongue to nurture their personal and cultural identities. A child's cultural identity is important to acknowledge and take pride in.

We encourage students to learn additional languages, including Spanish, an integral language in our American Southwest community, as a way of promoting intercultural awareness and global citizenship. Students are encouraged to develop an interest in becoming proficient in all their languages of study.

II. Culture and Language Profile:

Patterson has approximately 525 students. Of these, 59% identify as Caucasian, 23% as Hispanic, 2% as Asian, 4% as African American, 2% as Indian Alaskan Native and 9% identify as belonging to two or more categories.

Identified home language of students:

- English 97%, Spanish 1.7%, Arabic 0.19%, French 0.19%, Vietnamese 0.76%, Portuguese 0.19%

Additional languages that students are exposed to at home include: Polish

Students who are identified as bilingual on the state required Home Language Survey, are assessed for their English proficiency using the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA). If needed, students are placed into the appropriate level for English language support. They are re-assessed yearly using AZELLA until they are deemed proficient. They are then monitored for two years.

English is the language of instruction required by Arizona State Law. All teachers in the state of Arizona are required to be fully endorsed in Structured English Immersion. This model is used to rapidly help English Language Learners learn the language of instruction.

Spanish will be taught as an additional language beginning in the fall of the 2024-2025 academic school year.

III. Overview of Language Programs:

English Language Arts

English is our language of instruction at Patterson. In Arizona, we are expected to maintain the Arizona College and Career Readiness standards. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are taught through GPS provided curriculum for K-6 students. The Wilson Reading System is also used to provide extra support to our K-3 students. English language arts is fully integrated into our transdisciplinary units of inquiry, which are outlined in the Patterson PYP Programme of Inquiry. When we design our Units of Inquiry, we work to integrate multicultural and globally minded resources.

Patterson's library houses a large collection of fiction and non-fiction books, as well as multilingual and multicultural resources for the students.

English Language Learning (ELL)

Students who are not proficient in English but are in the process of developing proficiency are considered English Language Learners. ELL support is offered to students through our district. Students identified through the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) as needing support meet with the ELL teacher to receive extra support. The ELL teacher and class teacher collaborate to provide targeted instruction and support within the classroom. All teachers are endorsed in Structured English Immersion.

Language Acquisition

An exploratory Spanish course is offered year round for all students. Students K-6 receive 45 minutes of Spanish instruction per week. This course examines Spanish language and culture, as well as connecting with the students' units of inquiry as outlined in the Patterson Programme of Inquiry.

IV. Mother Tongue and Cultural Support Within the School, District and Local Community:

The school practices an open-minded, flexible approach to students using their mother tongue. Although the language of instruction is English, as mandated by the state of Arizona, the school encourages students to maintain their mother tongue languages. The school also provides internationally minded experiences and multicultural celebrations that can celebrate the diversity in our community.

Gilbert Public Schools attempts to provide interpreters in all languages needed for parent teacher meetings and IEP meetings. District information, including parent and student handbooks, bus schedules, and calendar are available online in both English and Spanish. Translations for other languages are also available through the District.

V. Provisions for Inclusion:

Special Needs:

Students with Individual Education Plans or 504 plans have support from district personnel, such as psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists to help support their language development.

