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South Ridge Language Policy

Beliefs

Language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating and permeates the whole curriculum. It is necessary not only to learn language, but also learn about language and through language. Learning best takes place in authentic contexts, and literature plays a special role in enabling this to happen. The strands of oral, written, and visual communication are learned across and throughout the subject areas. Each aspect is only relevant in relation to the whole. (*Making the PYP Happen: A Curriculum Framework for International Primary Education*. Cardiff, Wales GB: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2007. 68. Print.)

Philosophy

At South Ridge Elementary, we believe that the study of language is the foundation for all learning. This foundation is built by learning language skills through social interaction, explicit teaching, self expression, and modeling for authentic purposes.

Language Values

- Every teacher is a language teacher.
- Language skills must be developed in context through interdisciplinary work.
- Learning more than one language enriches personal growth and facilitates international understanding.
- Oral language is the foundation for effective communication.
- Differentiated instruction is a priority.
- Integration of speaking, listening, and communicating occurs through reading and writing.
- Addressing multiple learning styles happens throughout the learning.

World Cultures

At South Ridge Elementary, we offer a class called World Cultures to all students. In this class, students explore geography, languages, and cultures from around the world. Through this experience, they learn to be global thinkers and develop a broader perspective. World Cultures is attended by all of our students 4 times a month.

Reading Framework

Student Ownership and Responsibility

- Students have the opportunity to select their own text based on next learning steps, level of skill, and interest.
- Students have awareness of their strengths and next steps in reading and create goals that will advance their skills as a reader.

Best Practices in Reading Instruction

- Skills and strategies are explicitly taught to the whole group, small group, and individually based on identified student needs.
- Teachers know the skills for their grade level and are also aware of the continuum of skills. They use this information to plan instruction for individual students at their grade.
- Teachers model their own reading selections and processes (think-alouds).
- Teachers use a variety of genres and cross content text to teach skills and strategies.
- Application of skills and strategies occurs through oral and/or written responses to whole and meaningful text.
- Teachers utilize a science of reading framework for reading instruction, providing a researched approach to instruction which includes listening and speaking.
- Teachers support the development of communication skills and provide a wide range of opportunities for students to practice them.
- Students are encouraged to explore reading through the arts.
- Teachers and students use technology as a reading tool.

Assessment

- Pre-assessment for skills is used to plan instruction.

- Application of skills and strategies is assessed through oral and/or written responses to whole and meaningful text.
- Students are given regular feedback from their teacher on their progress toward their goals.
- Students are continually assessed with a variety of formal and informal methods such as running records, anecdotal records, reading responses, iReady, conferences etc.
- Students have opportunities to self-assess their own progress toward their goals.
- Teachers acknowledge differences in students' developmental stages, learning styles, as well as previous language experiences.

Environment

- Students have been taught and encouraged to use the print rich environment in order to further their own individual skills.
- The print rich environment must include either text that is student created and/or text that is meaningful to students.

Reading Forms

- Stories and songs in Spanish
- Fiction
- Expository text
- Read-alouds
- Graphic novels
- Poems
- Biographies
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Online texts

Writing Framework

Student Ownership and Responsibility

- Students choose their own topics and match the topic to genre, purpose, and audience.
- Students are aware of their strengths in writing and collaborate with their teachers and peers to help determine their next steps.

Best Practices in Writing Instruction

- Skills and craft are explicitly taught whole group, small group, and individually based on student need.
- Teachers utilize a science of reading framework for writing instruction, providing a structured approach to instruction which includes listening and speaking.
- Applications of skills and craft are consistently assessed in authentic writing.
- Teachers know the skills for their grade level and are also aware of the continuum of skills. They use this information to plan instruction for individual students.
- Modeling occurs on a consistent basis by the teacher in the areas of skills, craft, process, and assignments.
- Teachers support the development of writing communication skills and provide a wide range of opportunities for students to practice these skills.
- Students are encouraged to explore writing through the arts.
- Teachers and students use technology as a writing tool.

Assessments

- Formative, summative, and interim assessments are consistently used to plan instruction.
- Formative, summative, and interim assessments are vertically aligned.
- Assessment consistently occurs in authentic student writing.
- Students are given feedback from their teacher as well as having the opportunity to receive feedback from other authentic sources and self assessments.
- Teachers acknowledge differences in students' developmental stages, learning styles, as well as previous language experiences.

Writing Forms

- Reports
- Biographies
- Nonfiction genres (i.e., recipes, directions, and fact books)
- Journals
- Letters
- Poetry
- Fiction genres (i.e., fairy tales, folk tales, and picture books)
- Personal narratives
- Persuasive Writing

Structured Literacy

All teachers are trained in a science of reading approach to literacy instruction using Benchmark Workshop curriculum. The resource provides instructional strategies that allow for the explicit instruction of reading and writing through a science of reading. In addition, classrooms utilize a literacy block where lessons begin with the teacher demonstrating a skill (I do, you watch). Then, students are invited to participate with scaffolding provided by the teacher (we do it together). Finally, students are released to practice the skills independently (you do, I watch). The instructional strategies used during the literacy block are as follows:

In Reading

- Read aloud with a purpose
- Shared reading
- Guided reading
- Strategy Groups
- Independent reading with conferences
- Reciprocal teaching

In Writing

- Interactive writing
- Modeled writing
- Independent writing with conferences
- Interactive editing
- Reciprocal teaching

The Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction.

Additional Language Instruction

Learning a second language stimulates personal growth and the appreciation of different cultures. At South Ridge Elementary, Spanish is the second language currently taught in grades K-5. In addition, we

offer cultural linguistic opportunities through parent involvement, music, art, school assemblies, and curricular units.

Students with English as a Second Language

At South Ridge Elementary, we support three English as a Second Language (MLL) teachers. The aim of the MLL program is to address the needs of the individual child. Children are mainstreamed into the classroom and given support through small group and one-on-one instruction both within the regular education class, push-in/co-teaching model, and pull-out work.

In addition, outside of school tutoring is available to those students who have been identified by classroom teachers as needing extra support. The tutoring is overseen by a certified teacher and staffed with members from the community. Programs such as: Kiwanis provide extra outside support.

Response to Intervention

South Ridge Elementary uses the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. This model allows teachers to target their instruction based on three levels of student need. The first tier is targeted instruction for all students, the second tier is targeted instruction for struggling students, and the third tier is targeted instruction for those students who need different instruction and not just more.

South Ridge utilized 2 full time literacy interventionists specific for primary grade levels and 1.5 math and reading interventionists.

Demonstration of Proficiencies

- See Assessments paragraphs above.
- Use of common language assessments across grade levels
- Evidence of choose, act, reflect