

New Lebanon School Language Policy

Language Philosophy

At New Lebanon School, language is at the core of learning, communication, inquiry and creative expression. We believe that language permeates all subject areas (academics, arts, and physical education) and also plays a major role in social-emotional learning and development. We strive for our students to be fluent English speakers while honoring linguistic diversity and multilingualism to succeed at achieving their goals in a 21st century environment.

Our primary language of instruction is English. Spanish is taught as an additional language from grades kindergarten through fifth. Through collaborative units of instruction, our students acquire and reinforce skills in two languages. By doing so, students are exposed to multiple cultural perspectives and linguistic diversity, which connects them to the international community. At our school, students are also encouraged to maintain and develop their home language as we believe that our learning community is strengthened by our students' diversity, and because extensive research suggests that there are advantages to being bilingual at an early age, including: cognitive flexibility, metalinguistic awareness, and executive functioning skills (Genesee, 2008; Lauchland, Parisi, & Fadda, 2012; Poulin-Dubois, Blaye, Coutya, & Bialystok, 2011; Yoshida, 2008). [US Gov site with data](#). These students develop deeper understandings, better math skills, and broader vocabulary. [link to research about strengths of bilingual learners maintaining home language](#)

Students are also encouraged to develop and build their communication skills across the curriculum. Students who are in the process of acquiring and mastering the English language benefit from rigorous and explicit language instruction in a nurturing and supportive environment. Here too, we strive to honor linguistic diversity while pursuing the necessary skills to succeed in the 21st century environment.

All teachers and professionals across their speciality areas are dedicated to sharing best practices with families, thereby keeping the lines of communication open between caregiver and child. As teachers, we see parents as critical partners in the process of learning a language. We encourage our parents to be active participants in the development of communication skills. To that end, we provide ongoing programs aimed at educating parents to effectively partner with us in this academic journey.

Languages of Instruction

Spanish as a Foreign Language (FLES):

At New Lebanon School Spanish is taught through the FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary School) program starting in kindergarten. Our FLES program is designed to provide a solid foundation for World Language learning in preparation for secondary study and beyond. The FLES program's goal is to help students develop confidence in speaking, and provide an introduction to reading and writing, which will translate into a higher level of proficiency in Spanish. Instruction is delivered in the target language with an initial emphasis on speaking and listening, followed by reading and writing as students become more proficient. Our program provides students with the opportunity to communicate about relevant and meaningful content in thematic units related to specific core content, and to their personal experiences. FLES instruction is delivered 3 to 5 times per week, depending on the grade level, to provide students frequent interaction in the target language in order to build their linguistic proficiency and knowledge of other cultures.

Native Spanish Language Arts Program:

At New Lebanon School Spanish Native Language Instruction is offered to heritage and native Spanish speaking students who need to develop literacy skills in their first language in order to become truly bilingual. Instruction is focused on helping students develop basic proficiency in reading and writing through exposure to age-appropriate literature of the Spanish-speaking world. Grammar and vocabulary is taught in context through a variety of genres and texts. In addition, students participate in writing activities and use technology to enhance their writing skills.

The New Lebanon School FLES and Native Spanish Language Arts programs are aligned to the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. These world language programs are an integrated part of our elementary curriculum and school environment. Participation in them will prepare students for a global, multilingual and multicultural environment through tolerance, awareness and the ability to communicate across language barriers.

Other Languages

At New Lebanon School teachers understand the linguistic variations of our student population. We foster and build connections with all cultures represented in our school through lessons, activities and projects where students can integrate their cultural and linguistic heritage with what they are learning in class.

ESOL Program (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Goal (Mission):

The mission of the ESOL program is to facilitate the acquisition of communicative and academic English, academic content, and cultural competency that would ensure and expedite ELs' (English learners') success in both general education classes and U.S. communities.

ESOL Teaching Practices:

ESOL teachers and paraprofessionals use a variety of teaching strategies and techniques to make English comprehensible for our ELs.

New Lebanon's ESOL Teaching Model:

- Push-in: ESOL teachers and paraprofessionals work in the mainstream classroom and support the ELs during content area instruction.
- Pull out: ESOL teachers pull small groups to a separate setting to instruct them in English language development. Beginning and early intermediate ELs are typically pulled into the ESOL room to work on developing overall language skills. More proficient ELs are often pulled to develop reading comprehension and writing skills in English.
- Recently arrived (beginning ELs) receive a combination of push-in and pull-out one-on-one instruction from teachers and paraprofessionals 5 days a week to learn foundational English and emergent English literacy skills.

New Lebanon's ESOL Teaching Practices:

- We incorporate the following to make lessons more comprehensible for our ELs:
 - Visuals, picture-word cards (vocabulary), TPR (total physical response), graphic organizers, hands-on learning experiences/inquiry, development of background knowledge, appropriately paced and repetitive oral language practice

New Lebanon's ESOL Assessments:

- In the winter, every EL takes an annual English language proficiency test that measures his/her current English level. We use the LAS Links (McGraw Hill) to measure students' overall proficiency level as well as their proficiency in the 4 language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Upon registering at New Lebanon, all potential kindergarten students are given the Pre-LAS (McGraw Hill) to determine language proficiency in English and whether or not he/she requires ESOL services. For Spanish speaking students, the Pre-LAS in Spanish is given to assess their skills in their home language and to determine eligibility for the Bilingual Spanish Literacy Program. This additional assessment also helps determine language dominance.

New Lebanon's Bilingual Literacy Program (K-2):

Students whose language assessments demonstrate that their Spanish oral proficiency is significantly stronger than their English oral proficiency are placed in our bilingual program. The bilingual program focuses on developing students' literacy in both English and Spanish. Students are assessed throughout kindergarten, first, and second grades to monitor their literacy growth in both languages. It is our hope that while learning to decode in their native language, students are also being exposed to literature in their home language and begin to form a deeper appreciation for their bilingualism and bi-literacy abilities. By the end of 2nd grade, students who received bilingual literacy instruction have a solid literacy skill set in both English and Spanish. They transition into native language *FLES* (Foreign Language in Elementary School) in third grade as confident Spanish readers and writers.

Bilingual Teaching Practices:

- Kinder incorporates the following:
 - phonemic awareness & phonics (1st half of the year)
 - Word study/ focus on syllable work (2nd half of the year)
 - Shared reading
 - Guided reading (once students are ready to begin reading in Spanish)
- Grade 1 incorporates the following:
 - Guided reading & written responses to text in Spanish
 - Continuation of syllable work
 - Shared reading
- Grade 2 incorporates the following:
 - Guided reading & written responses to text in Spanish

Family Support:

Currently we host the following parent outreach:

Evening Programs:

- ***“ESL Family Engagement”***
- ***“ESL Family Library Night at the Byram Shubert Library”***
- ***“Bilingual Parent Information Session”***

“ESL Family Engagement”

Goal:

1. To teach parents language and literacy strategies they can use at home to foster their child’s language and literacy development especially during the summer months to avoid summer regression
2. To promote continued learning over the summer (encourage summer school participation)
3. To build community amongst parents and teachers (a light dinner is provided)

Target Group: Families with children in kindergarten, first, and second and recent arrivals in upper grades.

Method: ESOL teachers present a bilingual, interactive, multimedia presentation for parents to engage with the English language while learning about how children learn language and literacy best. A Spanish summary of each slide helps parents deepen their understanding.

Teachers involved:

- ESOL teachers present to parents
- Additional teachers work with children

Duration: 1 evening session in May

Contact time: 2 hrs

Extras:

- Teachers create take-home literacy bags for each family

“ESL Family Library Night at the Byram Shubert Library”

Goal:

1. Familiarize our new families with the local library (next to the school), the bilingual library director, and the community programs the library offers

2. Build community amongst our new ESOL families, and between ESOL families and teachers
3. Provide an opportunity to apply for library cards

Target Group: Families with children in kindergarten, recent arrivals in grades-1-5.

Method: Byram Shubert Librarian, Mr. Miguel Gracia Colon, and ESOL teachers present a bilingual program to the parents on how to access and effectively use the Greenwich Public Library (Byram Branch). A tour is given, activity calendars are shared, and parents are assisted in applying for a library card. Children participate in a literacy activity with a teacher in the children's area.

Teachers involved:

- ESOL teachers
- Byram Shubert Librarian, Mr. Miguel Gracia Colon

Duration: 1 evening session in September

Contact time: 2 hrs

“Bilingual Parent Information ”

Goal:

1. To inform parents about our Bilingual Spanish Literacy Program in grades K-2.
 - a. Review curriculum
 - b. Expectations for at home learning
2. To establish a community amongst bilingual parents in our school

Target Group: Families with children in the Bilingual Program K-2

Method: Spanish presentation to parents. Q&A at the end of the presentation.

Teachers involved:

- Bilingual ESOL Teacher

Duration: 1 session in September/October

Contact time: 30-45 min

Translations: (oral and written)

- School newsletter, flyers and forms
- Parent teacher conferences

New Lebanon School Language Policy Committee:

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