



# Barack Obama Elementary

## IB PYP School

### Language Policy

---

#### **Introduction/Philosophy**

At Barack Obama Elementary School all instructors are language teachers, and the students are all language learners. Written and oral language will allow students to express themselves and to connect with others. International mindedness will be enhanced with the exploration of languages, cultures, and norms. Creative expressions will be promoted and will foster the understanding of connectivity to all people. Our school program allows all students to develop the language skills that will be necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating and permeating the whole curriculum. It is necessary not only to learn a language, but also to learn about language, and through language. (Making the PYP Happen). Language provides the pathway for transdisciplinary learning and inquiry. Through the units of inquiry, students are provided with the opportunity to explore language in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, listening, speaking, reading, writing as well as visual representations.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to clarify the teacher's understanding of language and learning. It informs us of teaching and learning in the classroom within our school community. This document is fluid and reflects our school's needs. It is consistently implemented across grade levels.

The Language Policy ensures that:

- All members of the Learning Community value language and language acquisition
- All learners and their families have supports to communicate effectively
- All who do not have English as their mother tongue receive support services
- All faculty members are language teachers

#### **Definitions**

**Mother Tongue:** The language that the student uses at home. In some cases, that is not English.

Language A: The primary language of the school, and most likely considered the language of operation in the general education classes.

Language B: The language which the student is acquiring. There is no indication of fluency in this language.

ENL: English as a New Language: A program too support language for students who need to acquire English as a working language.

FLES: Foreign Language acquisition program for elementary students

Bilingual: Speaking fluently in two languages

### **Identify Students' Language Needs**

We create a caring language community to enhance the learning of all students. A Home Language Questionnaire and interview is conducted by the school district to determine student's English language proficiency. This information determines whether the student is classified as a student for who English is a new language (formerly ESL). Parents are notified of the results, and students are provided with appropriate support services (ENL or Bilingual). Students within these programs are reassessed annually.

### **FLES**

Our school offers students in Grades 1-6 the opportunity to learn a language in addition to their mother tongue. This will enable students to explore a new culture and the value of multilingualism. Resources and instructional time will be provided for quality teaching and learning. Students will explore the nuances of articulating ideas, feelings, facts, and beliefs to various audiences with respect that is deemed necessary from the cultural background studied.

The FLES program introduces our students the Spanish language. It concentrates primarily on the development of listening and speaking skills and on cultural awareness. Grammar is not ignored but is learned indirectly rather than through direct instruction.

We are continuing with our FLES program with Mandarin as a new language of study. Grades 1-6 are working towards developing listening and speaking skills and on cultural awareness. The goal of the FLES program is to support students in acquiring functional proficiency in a foreign language

### **Language of Instruction**

English is the primary language of instruction within our school and district. While subject matter and instructional materials are written and presented in English, supports

in Spanish are provided where needed. Students are actively engaged in language acquisition in their practices of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Language is integrated throughout all subject areas. Inquiry based learning, formal and informal assessments, small group instruction, differentiation of instruction and guided reading are platforms supporting language development. This yields opportunities for students to sharpen their understanding of the IB Learner Profile Attributes. Students can determine the proper words, tone, and attitude to use when communicating as knowledgeable and open-minded. They will develop vocabulary that will help them express themselves responsibly and carefully.

These are some additional resources used in support of the language development of our students.

- TC Units of Study, including If...Then
- iReady – Online Lessons
- Vocabulary Link
- Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Resources
- EngageNY Module
- CCLS Appendix A for Read Aloud text
- TC Units of Study & Writing in the Content Area
- Next Generation Science. HMHCentury 21
- Measuring Up!
- PNW BOCES Integrated Social Studies ELA Curriculum

### **Data**

Our school uses data to drive instruction and plan appropriate services. District, school and state mandated assessments (NYS ELA, NWEA, I-Ready) are used by teachers, parents, and students to assess language learning. Teachers also use various informal language assessments on a regular basis to assess student progress.

### **Supporting Resources**

Hempstead Union free School District Language Policy

Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education (pg 68)

