

Rock Ridge Elementary School Language Policy

The most recent date for reflection and review of this document was on Monday, September 21, 2026 during our Professional Learning Community meeting.

Philosophy & Instructional Delivery

- Language is fundamental to learning and thinking and permeates all content areas within the Rock Ridge curriculum.
- English is the primary language of instruction. The school allocates dedicated literacy blocks daily: 60 minutes for Kindergarten, up to 180 minutes for primary grades, and 120 minutes for intermediate grades.
- Language instruction is integrated throughout all Primary Years Programme (PYP) Units of Inquiry across reading, writing, listening, speaking, and Spanish.

Instructional Framework & Best Practices

- Benchmark Literacy: Grounded in the Science of Reading, the Benchmark Advance and Benchmark Workshop programs deliver a cohesive, knowledge-building literacy architecture that seamlessly integrates explicit foundational skills, close reading, vocabulary, and text-based writing across vertically aligned content units.
- Systematic & Explicit Foundations: Direct, spiraled instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and word study, paired with immediate application to decoding and encoding in decodable texts.
- Knowledge-Based Complex Text Sets: Daily whole-group and small-group close reading of authentic literary and informational texts designed to expand content knowledge, vocabulary, and critical comprehension.
- Differentiated & Multilingual Support: Embedded multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and integrated English Language Development (ELD) routines that scaffold access to grade-level content for diverse learners.

Writing Process & The Releasing Writers Framework

- The Releasing Writers framework, an explicit, strategy-focused gradual release model to guide students through each phase of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Beginning with direct teacher modeling, mentor text analysis, and target goal-setting, instruction transitions from co-constructed writing and collaborative practice to self-directed application. This framework equips students with self-regulation strategies and genre-specific tools, systematically releasing them to become independent, fluent, and critical writers.
- **Literacy Strategies:** Reading and writing experiences include purposeful read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading groups, book clubs, independent conferencing, modeled writing, and interactive editing.

- **Gender-Sensitive Strategies:** To support male literacy development, instruction incorporates topic choice, movement opportunities, boy-friendly materials, pre-writing discussions, and interest-based technology.

Assessment & Student Needs Identification

- **Informal Assessment:** Teacher observations, anecdotal notes, interest surveys, work samples, and i-Ready lesson progress inform daily instruction.
- **Formal Assessment:** i-Ready diagnostic assessments are administered three times annually for K–6 students and learners with reading goals, alongside a 13-week screening and end-of-year assessment.
- **Writing & Special Education:** Students complete extended writing assessments scored with the Releasing Writers rubric three times per year. Special education students complete QPA.
- **Formative Monitoring:** Ongoing progress is tracked via reading conferences, running records, unit tests, monthly writing prompts, and monthly i-Ready progress monitoring.

Tiered Support: Struggling & Advanced Learners

- **Universal Screening:** Literacy proficiency screening occurs for all students within the first three weeks of the school year.
- **Struggling Learners:** Tiered interventions are delivered through guided reading and writing groups. READ Plans target specific needs in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension.
- **Advanced Learners:** High-achieving students receive extension opportunities through book clubs, peer tutoring, or Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) featuring grade-level acceleration, independent inquiry, and differentiated products.

World Language Program (Spanish)

- **Instructional Model:** Spanish is taught to students in Grades K–6 by a licensed Spanish teacher.
- **Learning Formats:** Students attend weekly direct oral and written instruction.
- **Immersion Practices:** Classroom integration includes daily routine phrases, bilingual read-alouds, Spanish picture books/dictionaries, songs, and translated IB Learner Profile attributes.

Mother Tongue Support & English Learners

- **English Proficiency Support:** Students with non-English home languages undergo proficiency screening, with access to district ESL programs or supported enrollment at Rock Ridge.

- **Mother Tongue Retention:** Rock Ridge actively supports native language preservation alongside English acquisition.
- **Support Strategies:** Native language maintenance is supported through bilingual library media, visual aids, translated parent communications, peer clustering by native language, and augmented communication tools when required.

Family & Community Engagement

- **Home-School Connection:** Communication occurs through initial goal-setting conferences, trimester progress reports, and mandatory meetings for ILP/ALP reviews.
- **Family Engagement:** Parents are engaged through Literacy Nights, Culture Nights, Parent University sessions, unit newsletters, and guidance on home literacy practices.