

Hilliard Elementary School Language Policy



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District Mission Statement

We Educate for Excellence... Empowering all students to achieve their educational goals, to direct their lives and to contribute to society.

International Baccalaureate Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Hilliard Elementary School Mission Statement

Hilliard Elementary educates for excellence by creating an environment that promotes globally-minded, compassionate, life-long learners who are knowledgeable and socially responsible citizens.

Philosophy

In educating for excellence, Hilliard Elementary School promotes a learning environment based on understanding, respect and commitment in order to develop international-mindedness and the attributes of the IB learner profile. We believe language acquisition and literacy in all areas should be emphasized by all teachers throughout the grade levels through transdisciplinary inquiry and instruction. In our school, teaching and learning that is engaging, varied and develops communication skills is employed to meet students' learning styles, needs and individual differences. We believe that inquiry-based learning experiences that build on what students know and can do help them develop knowledge and skills to become actively engaged and responsible for their own learning. We provide a dynamic, student centered, 21st century learning environment. We believe in the extraordinary potential that lies in all individuals and work every day to create deep learning challenges and experiences that will maximize opportunities for students to be college and career ready as they pursue their life goals and grow to be individuals who will make informed decisions that will make a difference in our city, state, country, and international community.

Language Profile

The language profile of our school varies as families move in and out of our community. The diversity of language learners provides challenges and benefits to be addressed in order for students to become knowledgeable, effective communicators in a variety of modalities and in more than one language. Our learning community is made up of mostly native English speakers but a variety of mother tongues, other than English, are represented. Students who are not native English speakers are offered support such as ESL instruction, Mother Tongue support and differentiated instruction. The presence of varied Mother tongue languages provides an opportunity for all learners to share cultural and linguistic experience and to develop an understanding of a variety of cultural practices.

Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction in the Westlake City Schools and connects all elements of the curriculum. Language proficiency, which includes performance and comprehension of oral language (listening and speaking), visual language (viewing and presenting), and written language (reading and writing), is key to learning and growth in all subject areas. Therefore, all subjects, with the exception of world language, are taught exclusively in English with the goal that students reach a level of proficiency in all areas of English language across a concept-driven curriculum.

Language acquisition is a developmental process that is monitored and supported in a variety of learning situations as it continues throughout the grade levels. Programs and practices such as guided reading, reader's and writer's workshops and Wilson Foundations (a phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program), in addition to practical application of the English language in all areas of the curriculum, help our students develop a facility of communication in English. Daily observations, progress monitoring and quarterly benchmarks are used to insure all students achieve annual yearly progress in line with their grade/year level. Literacy resources and support by all staff members are priorities in all buildings. Opportunities for inquiry and sharing, such as public speaking; reading and responding to fiction and non-fiction selections; responsive, expressive and non-fiction writing; and peer reading, exist to help students hone expressive and receptive language skills.

Current language practices are based on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/English>

Additional World Language Westlake City Schools offers an introductory second language program at each elementary school in grades 1-4. At Hilliard Elementary, that language is

French. The program's purpose is to provide students with a foundation for future learning of second and/or third languages. Our emphasis is on the attainment of second language skills and the brain development benefit that results from this emphasis. The nature of how this broadens cultural understanding and the fact that attaining a second language has been shown to greatly increase the probability of expanding to further languages.

We know research supports that students are better able to speak and understand second, third and fourth world languages better when a foundation for bilingualism is built in the younger years. Research also demonstrates that second language learning at an early age supports higher academic achievement, provides cognitive benefits to students, and impacts their beliefs and attitudes about language learning and other cultures. (From the SLL page of WCS)

The language at the elementary level follows the New Ohio Learning Standards for Foreign Language. The district also follows the proficiency levels for language acquisition put forth by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) who have developed a self-assessment document called LinguaFolio, which serves as a guide for assessment and curriculum.

Westlake Schools follow the new Ohio Learning standards curriculum. Our elementary program is a FLES program with the explanation from ACTFL below. Program goals are consistent with the amount of time actually provided for instruction (30 minutes, twice a week in grades 1-4). The desired program outcomes determine time allocations for elementary school programs.

- FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School)
 - FLES programs are designed to provide a sequential language learning experience aiming for some degree of language proficiency.

Westlake's World Language Program is a 1-12 continuum. As a result of offering world language at Hilliard Elementary School, our students who choose to continue with French, will begin year 1A and 1B of study at the Intermediate (grades 5-6) level and 2A and 2B of study at the Middle School (grades 7-8) level..

Mother Tongue Support

As a school and as a district, we reflect on the current and changing needs of our non-native speakers and endeavor to provide them access to Mother Tongue and cultural support. Our elementary media centers/libraries have a compliment of books and videos that support a variety of world languages. We are committed to adding books that support the mother tongues represented in our student population. Additionally, Internet access and online translator programs are accessible from the media centers and computer labs. Our school maintains a list of programs and resources within the community and on the Internet to support the Mother Tongues of our student population and their families.

Library and Media Resources

Hilliard Elementary School library/media center is centrally located and accessible to all students and faculty on a daily basis. Our certified Media Specialist works with students and teachers to support teaching and learning focused on language development as directed by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and the IB PYP Language Scope and Sequence. This focus on language is evident in all areas of the curriculum as students practice and apply their language skills in a wide variety of ways including, but not limited to fluency, comprehension, research, organization, oral and multimedia presentations.

Language Assessment

Students' prior knowledge and understanding are factored into expectations for their grade levels, based on Common Core standards. English language development is emphasized in application across the curriculum. Pre- and formative assessments ensure that instruction is differentiated, based on student needs as well as grade level curriculum benchmarks and goals. Interventions are in place for students needing assistance in achieving literacy goals for their developmental levels.

Hilliard utilizes Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing, to provide detailed, actionable data regarding student progress. Additionally state and national tests monitor progress and value added in relation to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). When needed, students' English language development in speaking, reading, writing and comprehension may be progress monitored using nationally-normed assessments such as AIMSweb, Cognitive Abilities Test (CoGat) and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Information gathered from these assessments determines the direction of language instruction for each student in a targeted manner. For further information regarding assessments at Hilliard Elementary, please refer to our Assessment Policy.

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is a key to meeting the changing needs of a diverse learning community. To that end, Westlake City Schools provides teachers with a variety of professional development opportunities in areas such as foundational skills support, comprehension strategies, differentiation strategies, and the use of available instructional tools in a variety of formats. As the landscape of teaching and learning evolves, professional development is offered to support and empower teachers and students. Additionally, collaborative planning provides an opportunity for sharing of strategies and tools among staff members on a regular basis.

Resources

- MPYPH pages 69-79
- Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy. April, 2008

- Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy, 2012
- IB learner profile booklet
- Programme standards and practices, Jan. 1, 2011; pages 4-6
- IB PYP Language Scope and Sequence
- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/English>
- Westlake City Schools Continuous Improvement Plan
- International Baccalaureate Mission Statement
- Westlake City Schools Mission Statement
- Hilliard Elementary Mission Statement
- Westlake City Schools website

Language Policy Committee

This policy was developed by the committee members listed below. All members of the school community were invited to reflect on and give input regarding language learning at Hilliard Elementary School. A plan is in place to review this policy in a year, then every three years.

- PYP coordinators
 - Colleen Mudore
 - Deb Wadden
- Media Specialist
 - Kim Geletka
- Reading Intervention Specialist
 - Trudy Pauken
- French teacher
 - Alex Petrak
- Director of Academic Services
 - Pam Griebel
- ESL educators
 - Celina Bigio
 - Kate LaBatte