



# PROVIDENCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Primary Years Programme Language Policy



### OVERVIEW

This document provides an overview of the language learning policy at Providence Elementary. The policy is written in compliance with the principles and practices of the International Baccalaureate (IB). As an IB school, we are committed to the following principles and practices:

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue host country language and other languages. (IB Standard A, Practice 7)
- The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programme(s). (IB Standard B1, Practice 5)
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. (IB Standard C1, Practice 8)
- The classroom teacher takes responsibility at least for the language instruction, mathematics, social studies, science, to support the PYP model of transdisciplinary teaching and learning. (Standard C3, Requirement 1b)
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than mother tongue. (IB Standard C3, Practice 7)
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. (Standard C3, Practice 8)

### IB 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 other people, with their differences can also be right.

### PROVIDENCE MISSION STATEMENT

Providence Elementary is committed to developing students that are principled, enthusiastic seekers of education. Our inquiry-based philosophy encourages students to independently and collaboratively engage educationally with a global viewpoint through collaborative and independent learning experiences.

Our goal is to create an inclusive environment for all students through our transdisciplinary learning framework. We strive to instill in our students the importance of reflecting on their actions, with the knowledge that those actions will impact the future.

## PROVIDENCE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

At Providence, we believe that language is the foundation for all learning and is the core of a student's education. Students must have a thorough understanding of English to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively. Having strong language development will influence a student's ability to communicate through conversations and the written word. Language is developed across the curriculum because it is essential that students are immersed in each aspect of language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. While developing agility in one's language, we believe that exposure to another language is crucial to the structural and pedagogical development of perspective, analytical, and expressive abilities. It needs to be the heart of education. Providence is dedicated to teaching language to provide our students with the necessary tools to communicate confidently and effectively in our global world.

## LANGUAGE PROFILE

Providence Elementary School is a public school located in Huntsville, Alabama. Our school population is comprised of students who live within our school zone. We have a diverse community of ESOL students. At present, there are 14 different languages/cultures represented in home language surveys. Parents and students are always welcomed to share about their home countries' cultures and traditions. We celebrate these differences.

The language of instruction is English. In the 2020-2021 school year, Providence has a population of approximately 790 students. Of those students, 92% have English as their mother tongue (native) language. A small percentage of students, 8%, have another language as their mother tongue. About 5% of the students are Spanish speaking. The other 2% includes Arabic, Vietnamese, Gujarati, Creole, Nepali, Chinese, German, Portuguese, Tagalog, Japanese, French, and Korean. All administrative and teaching staff speak English.

## LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

The language of instruction at Providence Elementary School is English. The acquisition of language is the key element of understanding, thinking, and learning. All activities that stimulate learning involve language. To this end, all teachers are teachers of language. It is our responsibility to provide all language levels a safe space for learning and development. This connection between language and learning is shared between teachers and students and includes parents as an essential component of this lifelong learning process. For our students to grow into life-long learners that contribute to our local

and global society, they must be immersed in every aspect of language. Language includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students must be given multiple opportunities to practice each of these aspects daily.

The literacy vision of Huntsville City schools includes the following:

- Teachers will practice responsive teaching using ongoing and varied assessments to differentiate instruction to maximize student potential.
- Incorporating tiered instruction to support ALL learners.
- Explicitly modeling and teaching appropriate literacy skills, including foundational standards K-5.
- Providing time for authentic listening, speaking, reading, writing, and inquiry in all content areas.
- Involving all stakeholders in developing a love of literacy.

*(Literacy Pathways, 2018)*

All students are instructed through best practices, which include:

- Use of formative and summative assessments to drive instruction
- Reading and Writing Workshop
- Shared Reading
- Whole Group Instruction
- All students receive differentiated language instruction and support based on individual small group needs
- Oral Language
- Word Study
- Word Work
- Vocabulary in context and isolation
- Engaging Literature
- Cross-Curricular Activities
- Journal Writing
- Think-Pair-Share
- Turn and Talk
- Partner Work
- Discussions
- Dialogues
- Role-Playing

## SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

We believe that instruction in an additional language inspires a meaningful interaction that results in the broader development of personal understanding, linking the student to the world. The overall goal for Spanish Language instruction at Providence Elementary for students in PK-Fifth grade is to open students' minds, ears, and mouths to a different

way of hearing and speaking about the world. Cultural awareness is woven through all grades. Language development for PK through first grade, which has Spanish every other week for 30 minutes, is designed to encourage the development of good pronunciation, understanding of the concept of “language,” and a love of the language. From second through fifth grade, which has Spanish weekly for 30 minutes, we work to add more knowledge of Hispanic history and culture and increase students’ vocabulary and expression. Our ultimate goal is that by the time students exit our school at the end of fifth grade, they will be able to read, write, and conduct simple Spanish conversations and show respect and understanding of other cultures.

## IDENTIFICATION OF LANGUAGE NEEDS

As required by federal and state law, Providence identifies language needs using the Home Language Survey form. All students in Huntsville City Schools are issued the survey at the beginning of each school year. The *Home Language Survey* identifies the language most often spoken in the home and any additional language spoken. For any students who are not from a home where English is the primary language, testing must occur to determine the students’ level of English ability. Students are screened through a language proficiency test (ACCESS) developed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium once a year. If a student qualifies for the English Language Learner (ELL) program, they will receive additional support as determined by the ELL Department. Students meet with specialized instructors to increase their English language skills until they achieve a 4.8 or better composite score on the ACCESS. Once they reach the required score, they are monitored quarterly for four years to ensure that they are successful in the classroom with no assistance.

ELL students have an Individual-English Language Plan, which gives guidance to classroom teachers for appropriate accommodations. The classroom teachers have access to ELLevation, a program management system that allows collaboration among teachers and instruction differentiation. The program provides resources and essential practices that support effective instruction.

The educational goals of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program in Huntsville City Schools include:

- Equal access to understandable instruction in all academic areas
- Meaningful participation in all district programs
- Increased English proficiency
- Mastery of subject matter content

*(Huntsville City Schools, English Learner District Plan and Guidance, 2019)*

## MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT

Mother tongue refers to the language most commonly and comfortably used to

communicate within a home and family setting. The development of the mother tongue is central to intellectual understanding and social growth. Additional languages inspire meaningful interaction that results in a broader development of personal understanding linking the students to the world.

Classroom teachers have opportunities for staff development in ELL strategies and make accommodations for ELL students. Parental involvement is encouraged through parent conferences, with a translator when necessary, and notes home for parents. The district also provides ELL classes for parents, special outreach meetings for EL parents, and summer education programs for parents and students. The library media specialist is aware of students' language needs and updates resources in the library to meet the variety of cultures represented in the school. Teachers, students, and parents assist the library media specialist with material recommendations.

Whenever possible, multicultural lessons incorporate the expertise of the students' mother tongue ability. Students and parents are also encouraged to develop the mother tongue at home. With the help of ELL teachers, tutors, volunteers, and peers, students can grow in the knowledge of their mother tongue.

Through our language program, we offer mother tongue support by:

- Fostering respect for all cultures
- Preparing students to become productive members of a global society
- Promoting awareness of one's language and culture
- Allowing for opportunities for interdisciplinary connections
- Preparing students for collegiate endeavors

### ON-GOING REVIEW OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

The Language policy will be formally reviewed yearly by Providence staff and revised as needed to adapt to changing best practices and our learning community's needs.

The Language Policy is available to all stakeholders in the Providence Learning Community at <https://www.huntsvillecityschools.org/schools/providence-elementary>. The school leadership welcomes comments and recommendations at any time.

### RESOURCES

*Literacy Pathways, 2018*

*Huntsville City Schools, English Learner District Plan and Guidance, 2019*

*IB Programme Standards and Practices, 2014*