

Language of Instruction

The Language of Instruction at Williams Elementary is English.

As language is the key to all learning, all teachers at Williams School are language teachers. Language learning at Williams School refers not only to the learning of a specific language, but it includes any and all activities which bring about learning. Through language, our students acquire the ability to think and to learn, to develop social skills and values, and to acquire knowledge.

Williams School believes that all students can learn and experience success in a second language; to that end, we provide a foundation for the lifelong process of language acquisition. Our language program:

- fosters respect for other cultures
- prepares students to become productive members of a global society
- promotes awareness of one's own language and culture
- allows opportunities for interdisciplinary connections
- prepares students for collegiate endeavors
- meets students at their level and prepare them for language acquisition according to their level of understanding

The Acquisition of Language

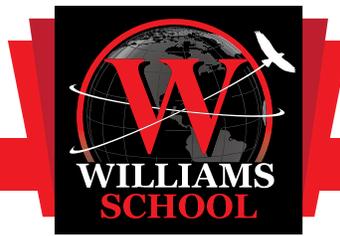
Language is the key element of understanding, thinking, and learning. All activities that stimulate learning involve language. To this end, all teachers are teachers of language. This connection between language and learning is shared between teachers and students and includes parents as an essential component in this life-long learning process. 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 student to the world. The school will provide resources that support the study of Language B as well as the mother tongue

Languages Offered

Huntsville City Schools offers these additional languages: Spanish, French, German, and Mandarin in our IB schools. At Williams Elementary Language Acquisition begins in Pre-Kindergarten with Spanish. Students in the PYP are required to study Spanish. At the end of fifth grade, students are given an end of course test to determine readiness for Phase 2 Language Acquisition.

Works Cited: Guidelines for developing a school language policy. International Baccalaureate Organization (April 2008).

<http://www.ibo.org>



The goal of Foreign Language Acquisition

At Williams Elementary the goal is to prepare each student to successfully continue their experience from elementary to middle school and enable successful students to continue their language acquisition through high school and have 5 years of High School credit in Foreign Language by the time they complete high school.

English Language Learner (ELL)

Using the *Home Language Survey* form that is issued to all students in the school system, English language learners are identified, as well as mother tongue languages. As required by federal and state law, the WIDA –ACCESS Placement Test is administered to each student whose parents have reported on the *Home Language Survey* that their home language is not English. Following initial identification, students will take the annual ACCESS for ELLS assessment until they attain a 4.8 composite score. These students receive differentiated instruction that is modified to meet their needs. Classroom teachers have opportunities for staff development in ELL strategies and make accommodations for ELL students. Parent involvement is encouraged through the use of parent conferences, with a translator where necessary, and notes home to parents. The media specialists at both schools are aware of the language needs of students and update resources in the library to meet the needs of the variety of cultures represented in the school. Teachers, students, and parents assist the librarian 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 volunteers, parents and peers, students can retain and grow in their knowledge of their mother tongue. ELL tutors and ELL teachers provide assistance. For the languages not taught in the schools, community resources are offered and information about private educational support is made available. In some supplementary textbook materials, multilingual summaries are available.

Mother Tongue Support and Language A Support

Students whose mother tongue is not English are screened by a language proficiency test (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) developed by WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) Consortium. Students receive additional support as determined by the English Language Learner (ELL) department. Resources available to these students include supplemental English Language development during the school day, school tutoring, language dictionaries, and translated written texts. Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity and native language while learning to speak and write English. Though we have other mother tongues, 85% are Spanish speaking.

Works Cited: Guidelines for developing a school language policy. International Baccalaureate Organization (April 2008).

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