

Paso Verde Language Policy

Philosophy

At Paso Verde School, we believe that language is an essential component to learning. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing permeates our entire curriculum. Our students use language daily to communicate, inquire, explore new perspectives, acquire knowledge, and reflect on their learning. Exposure to a variety of texts and ideas enhances students' understanding of the world around them and enables them to become lifelong learners.

A strong foundation in language is crucial to the social and emotional development of our students. Through language, students are able to show empathy, compassion, and caring for one another.

Language is the connecting factor that links all of our students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Students' international mindedness and cultural awareness increase from the exposure to different languages, cultures, and perspectives.

The teaching of language is the responsibility of all teachers. The staff and administration of PVS have committed to creating a positive learning environment in which students feel safe to be risk takers in their language development.

School Profile

Natomas Unified School District is located in a culturally diverse community in Sacramento, California. The New York Times compiled 2006 enrollment data from the US Department of Education and named Natomas Unified as the second most diverse district in the nation. We have twenty-six languages spoken by students at our school and in the surrounding community. Fifty-six percent of our students are considered socio-economically disadvantaged.

Language of Instruction

English is the language of Instruction at PVS. Reading, writing, and oral language are a main focus of each day. Teachers incorporate these skills into each unit of inquiry. English Language Arts Instruction focuses on:

- Reading Literature and Informational Text – Key ideas and detail, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and text complexity.
- Writing- Types of writing and purpose, production and distribution of writing, and research.
- Speaking and Listening – Presentation of knowledge and ideas, comprehension, and collaboration.
- Media Literacy – Analyze and comprehend media.



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English Language Development

Students who have identified themselves as English as a Second Language receive 30 minutes of English Language Development (ELD) each day in accordance with California Education Code. English Language Development is provided within the regular PYP classroom during “What I Need” time (WIN). In MYP our ELD time will be provided during our Language and Literature and Individuals and Societies courses.

English Language Development instruction focuses on:

- Listening and Speaking Strategies
- Reading – Word Analysis, Fluency, Vocabulary Development, Comprehension, and Literary Response / Analysis.
- Writing – Conventions, strategies, and applications.

Each year, all ELD students in the state of California take the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). This test identifies students as beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, or advanced in English Development. Once students reach Advanced on the ELPAC test and are recommended by their teacher, students will be reclassified so that they no longer receive ELD.

World Language Instruction

In the PYP:

Spanish will be the world language taught at PVS. Scholars receive thirty minutes of instruction each week. Spanish is taught to students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade. The goal is to integrate world language instruction into grade level Programmes of Inquiry. Our students’ acquisition of Spanish is enriched by exposing them to the cultures of various Spanish-speaking countries in the world including México, Colombia, Guatemala, Chile, España, and the United States. This will be accomplished by sharing folklore, legends, historical figures, celebrations, music and history.

In the MYP:

Mandarin is offered as our language acquisition course for the MYP. In this course scholars will have the opportunity to explore the language while learning about Chinese culture and customs. Scholars will begin in phase one of language acquisition in year 2 of the program and progress through the phase throughout year 3. An emphasis will be placed on the 5 C’s of language learning: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. This will directly align with the objectives of the MYP Language acquisition course of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the language.



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Home Language Support

We understand and value the experiences and knowledge that our students bring to our learning community and strive to foster opportunities to allow them to engage in their native language. Below are a list of strategies we will embed in our instruction and pedagogical framework to support and honor the home languages of our scholars.

- Using home language as a cue
- Opportunity to present in their home language
- Opportunity to complete inquiry homework in their home language
- Documents translated into home language
- Bi-Literacy pathway support
- Resources representing a variety of languages available in the school library
- Shared document of ELPAC scores
- Create and share results of Home Language Survey

Language Development Tools

Below is a list of techniques, strategies, or programs that are used on our campus to support Language Development:

- Grade level Wonders
- Common Core State Standards
- Reading Intervention
- WINquiry Groups
- Flexible Groups
- Moby Max – English
- Assessment Conferences
- Picture Books
- Differentiated Instruction
- Into the book – advanced comprehension strategies
- Vocabulary Practice
- Use of Visual Support and Modeling
- Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)
- Comprehensible Input
- Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL)

Process to Review and Update Language Policy Roles and Responsibilities

- The Head of School, the PYP/MYP Coordinator, Pedagogical Leadership Team, and



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teachers agree to and were part of the development of the policy.

- The Language Policy will be reviewed and revised annually by the IB Leadership Team and by the whole staff.
- The entire staff is responsible for ensuring that the language policy is a working document. Suggestions for how to improve the language policy will be discussed as an entire staff, at the Pedagogical Leadership Team Meetings, or by the Head of School and Coordinator.
- Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the language policy is implemented.
- Teachers are responsible for using good teaching practices that support the language policy.

Professional Development and Teacher Certification

- All of the teachers at PVS have earned their English Learner Authorization (ELA, CLAD, etc.) from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. In order to obtain this certification, teachers took classes that focused on specific strategies and lesson design that effectively teach students who are English Learners.
- Teachers will work to continuously improve their language instruction through reflection and collaboration on techniques, teaching strategies, and lesson ideas that are in accordance with our language policy.
- The Head of School and Natomas Unified School District will provide support to the California Common Core Standards in Language Arts.
- The Head of School and the PYP/MYP Coordinator will promote strategies that support and enhance our students' language development.

