



Queen Mary Community Elementary Language Policy Primary Years Programme

Policy developed April 2014, review dates listed below

Philosophy:

Queen Mary Community School's language policy has been developed collaboratively with input from various stakeholders at the school. The language policy reflects the core beliefs of members of the Queen Mary school community. It encompasses best teaching practice, specifically related to language instruction. In essence, the policy is an action statement that does not simply state where students need to go with their language development but how they may achieve specific language learning goals. The policy specifically relates to the current demographics of language learners at the school and supports these diverse language learners as such.

All stakeholders of the Queen Mary school community play an active role in language development since language is at the core of learning. Language empowers the learner and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking (*Language Scope and Sequence, IBO, p.1*). Through language, students gain a greater understanding of their role as global citizens, which enables them to make authentic connections to the world around them. They acquire greater awareness and appreciation of the Learner Profile attributes. Language learning that includes a second language, in addition to honoring and supporting a child's mother tongue, develops a child's self-esteem. The goal of Queen Mary staff is to develop language learners who confidently utilize their language skills to effectively communicate and make meaning of their learning.

Applicable IBO Standards:

Standard A, Practice 7a: The school makes provision for students to learn a language, in addition to the language of instruction, at least from the age of seven. Schools with two languages of instruction are not required to offer an additional language.

Standard A, Practice 7b: The school supports mother tongue and host country language learning.

Standard B1, Practice 5a: The school has developed and implements a language policy consistent with IB expectations.

Standard C3, Practice 7: Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than mother tongue

Standard C4, Practice 3: The school uses a range of strategies and tools to assess student learning.

Student's Roles and Responsibilities:

- Maintain and value their own mother tongue language and value the first languages of other students
- Develop a love of language and literature in all tongues and work to develop fluency in more than one language
- International mindedness

School's Roles and Responsibilities:

- Establish a language policy steering committee
- Provide inclusion and equity
- Develop a language profile for the school
- Promote inquiry-based language learning
- Understand that language is taught by all staff

Queen Mary Community School's Language Profile:

Queen Mary Community School is situated in the Lower Lonsdale area of North Vancouver, British Columbia Canada. The school is located in a widely diverse social and cultural community. English is predominately spoken at the school and within the surrounding community. The Queen Mary school community consists of a mix of well-established families and new immigrants from both English and non-English speaking areas of the globe. Using registration records as the primary source of data, the total number of different languages that students are either exposed to, or speak at home is 30, including English.



Although 52% of families speak English at home, 48% of families speak a diverse range of languages at home. The predominant language spoken at home is English at 52%, followed by: Tagalog 15%, Persian 14%, Spanish 4%, and Korean and Portuguese at 2%. It is evident that students bring a rich diversity of languages experiences to school.

Furthermore, 31% of students attending the school are ELL (English Language Learners). Of this group, a small percentage receive direct instruction from one of the four ELL teachers at the school. The majority of the ELL students receive indirect instruction, meaning that they do not attend regularly scheduled classes with the ELL teachers; however, their proficiency in English is monitored throughout the school year.

Languages at Queen Mary

Mother Tongue Languages OTHER than English	% of student population
Filipino (Tagalog, Cebuano or Visaya, Ilokano, Kankanaey)	15%
Persian (Farsi)	14%
Spanish	4%
Korean	2%
Portuguese	2%
Arabic	1%
Chinese (Mandarin)	1%
Japanese	1%
Kurdish	1%
Romanian	1%
Russian	1%
Other Asiatic	1%
Bengali	<1%
Bosnian	<1%
Bulgarian	<1%
Faroese	<1%
Hindi	<1%
Nepali	<1%
Polish	<1%
Slovak	<1%
Turkish	<1%
Urdu	<1%
Vietnamese	<1%

Twenty-nine different Mother Tongue languages, other than English, are spoken by students at Queen Mary, representing 48% (198/413) of our student population.

Role of Language in the Curriculum

Language learning is the connecting element across the curriculum and is viewed as a critical component in the construction of meaning and understanding in all curricular areas. Students learn in social settings where they feel successful and have the opportunity and ability to connect to meaningful and relevant learning engagements in a safe and supportive environment. Language development occurs through authentic language activities in meaningful contexts, in relation to transdisciplinary learning.

Language learning is a creative mode that enables students to communicate for diverse purposes. Throughout the school day students are provided with many enriching opportunities that support the development of learning through language and



learning about language. Students are encouraged to be imaginative, creative, risk-takers as they develop language skills in both English and French.

Role of Language in Inquiry

Students effectively inquire through language, as language is the vehicle that drives inquiry. Different cultures are recognized, honored, and explored through purposeful, engaging communication within the Units of Inquiry. Language instruction focuses on key skills related to effective inquiry; therefore, reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and presenting skills are explicitly taught to students. In order for students to inquire about their world and express and share their learning, educators at the school use a common language based on the essential elements of the PYP to ensure consistency of language instruction from year to year.

Provincial Requirements and District Support

Queen Mary's language instruction, and curriculum scope and sequence, is based on the British Columbia Ministry of Education's Language Arts Curriculum <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts/>. This comprehensive curriculum outline indicates Big Ideas, Core and Curricular Competencies, and Content for each grade level; furthermore, the focus on what students should "Know, Do, and Understand" reflects best practice in pedagogy, based on current research, pertaining to language acquisition and development. Educators in the school also refer to locally developed documents that have been written by specialists in the school district (*Reading 44, Writing 44*).

Furthermore, teachers utilize some standardized diagnostic reading assessments to inform instruction and provide guidance for the specific intervention that may be needed. Results of specific diagnostic assessments, such as TOPA (*Test of Phonological Awareness*, a Kindergarten assessment), help to identify students needing more intensive support in language development and early literacy learning.

Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities:

Instructional Strategies

Students bring varied personal experiences and background knowledge to school. Since learners possess a diverse knowledge base, teachers provide various opportunities for students to connect their background knowledge to new understandings and learning through provisions of specific supports tailored to the individual learner. Acknowledging the variety of developmental stages and individualized rates of language learning through scaffolding ensures that students' learning needs are met.

Instructional strategies and learning opportunities are provided to students to support the development of: listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting skills. Language is modeled, taught, and practiced throughout the school day in a variety of learning contexts. At the school, the focus is on a balanced program of instruction and learning. Students readily engage in rich learning activities that support development of language. Opportunities to listen and review ideas and information are balanced with opportunities to express ideas orally. Students view and interpret others' work and create presentations to be viewed. Students read, discuss, and respond to various genres of literature, non-fiction, and visual texts. They write for various purposes and audiences in order to communicate thoughts, ideas, opinions, and knowledge. Multi-media and technology are important components in language learning and are incorporated in instruction within all grades.

Differentiation of Instruction

Language instruction must be responsive to student needs. Educators at the school differentiate between language ability and cognitive ability. They recognize that not all students have the same background knowledge and skills. Instruction is differentiated to allow students to express themselves in the most effective way based on their skills. Differentiated formative assessment, combined with flexible language instruction, render an inclusive learning environment that recognizes that children develop language skills at different rates, and through different modes of instruction.

Role of Specialist Teachers

All teachers are language teachers. At Queen Mary, single-subject (Visual Arts, Library) and specialist teachers including the English Language Learning (ELL) and Learning Support Teachers (LST) play an important role in reinforcing, supporting and extending the classroom language learning experiences. A Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) also works at the school, providing specific intensive support for students identified as needing further support in both the development of expressive



and receptive language. Specialists teachers work with classroom teachers in order to connect learning to classroom instruction. Students who receive assistance from ELL and LST specialists are supported through small group and in-class support. The Visual Arts specialist extends language learning through drama, movement, and art. The teacher librarian supports development of the elements of the PYP and the Learner Profile attributes.

Second Language Learning

The primary language of instruction at the school is English. The majority of students attending the school have English as their mother tongue. As per the mandate of the province's Ministry of Education, all students in British Columbia must take a second language as part of the required curriculum beginning in Grade 5, unless they are eligible for an exemption that must be documented in the student's Individual Education Plan (see assessment policy). In North Vancouver, the second language chosen by the school board is French (Ministry authorized with a scope and sequence). Therefore, English is the language of instruction and French is the second language taught. French language is taught in all classes. A FSL specialist supports where needed. Oral and written French is integrated when possible into daily learning and Units of Inquiry in all grades from kindergarten to Grade 7. A variety of French learning resources are made available to all teachers to support French language instruction in classes.

English as a Second Language and Mother Tongue Support

Any student who enrolls into the North Vancouver School District indicating their mother tongue as a language other than English, is screened for English Language Learning (ELL) support (required by North Vancouver School District Policy). The need for additional ELL support is determined by an English Language assessment that is administered by the ELL teachers. By identifying language populations, the school is able to provide individualized support for ELL, as well as support for mother tongue languages, through the purchase of resources, access to translators, settlement workers, and reaching out to our multilingual community for support (*Settlement Workers in Schools* and the *North Shore Multicultural Society*). Teachers and staff use assessment information to seek out appropriate supports for students.

A culture of respect and inclusion is established through purposeful acknowledgement and integration of culture and languages into instruction. Teachers make every effort to meet language needs of individual learners through the use of adapted materials, peer translators, and providing access to resources in the student's mother tongue when possible, to ensure students, regardless of level of understanding of the host country language (English), are engaged in learning and are provided with opportunities to develop their conceptual understandings and communicate their learning.

Students learn in a safe and caring environment, where they are encouraged to be risk-takers in new language acquisition, and make connections to others in the school community. ELL teachers support ELL students routinely in class, in collaboration and co-teaching with the classroom teachers. More intensive, small-group English language instruction is provided for students as required.

Queen Mary recognizes the importance of encouraging and helping students share their mother tongue with others. This is often done through the Units of Inquiry and at assemblies. Furthermore, students can read in their mother tongue during the daily silent reading period (**Drop Everything And READ**). The school has made a commitment to students, and our learning community, to continually add to our collection of multilingual resources, including bilingual books in variety of languages.

In our school district, students who are of Aboriginal decent have the opportunity take Squamish Language classes (parent/guardian consent required). We also have two First Nations Support Workers and a District Indigenous Success Teacher who work at the school and spend time in classes, sharing their knowledge of traditional languages and culture with all students. The Squamish Nation Education Department partners with our school district to provide Queen Mary with a Squamish Language teacher. Students taking Squamish attend two 40-minute language and culture sessions per week, within the instructional day. Currently, out of our 33 Aboriginal students, nine are taking part in the Squamish language and culture sessions. This is an enriching learning experience for students as it provides a means of supporting language development and preserving the culture and language of their heritage. It is also a way to ensure that students of Aboriginal descent have their rich cultural heritage honoured and shared within our learning community. Squamish Language instruction has been offered at the school since 2008.



Professional Development

Educators are encouraged to pursue on-going professional development in language instruction by attending district in-service sessions and in-house professional development. Furthermore, as per the Practices and Standards of the IBO, any professional development opportunities that arise either online or as a PYP workshop that directly pertain to language development, instruction and pedagogy will be brought to the attention of the teaching staff by the PYP coordinator.

Assessment

Language is assessed based on provincial learning outcomes and the school's assessment practices (please refer to the school's assessment policy).

Parents' Roles and Responsibilities

Parents play an integral role in facilitating their child's language development in both our language of instruction and any mother tongue languages. Parents have a responsibility to communicate with the school regarding their child's language needs and development.

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is also committed to supporting students by providing additional funding in order to purchase multilingual resources. Acquisition of learning resources in students' mother tongue is on-going; as it is recognized that development of mother tongue supports a child's cultural identity, cognitive development, self-esteem, and overall success as learners.

Procedures and Practices:

These are outlined in the School's and Teachers' Roles and Responsibility sections above.

Other School Policies

Assessment

Academic Honesty

Inclusion

Essential Agreements:

Staff Essential Agreements – Language Policy

- The language policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be collaborative and include all school staff, parent, and student representatives.
- Revisions will reflect the needs of the student population and the instructional beliefs that pertain directly to best practice in language instruction.
- The policy will be made public through the school website. Hard copies will be made available upon request.
- The policy will be adhered to by all staff members at the school and will be reflected through their teaching practice.

References/Additional Resources/Links to Further Information:

Resources

Queen Mary students and staff have access to a variety of print resources located in the school library, guided reading and novel collections, and in individual classrooms. Acquisition of multilingual, multi-media, and culturally and globally diverse resources will continue to be an on-going priority for resource purchasing. Our school board, and our PAC (Parent Advisory Council) are aware of our need to expand these resources and have committed financial support to meet the needs of the PYP. French language materials will also continue to be purchased, in an effort to broaden our resource inventory for teachers and increase library resources for students. Staff members are involved in resource purchase decisions, with current emphasis on resources needed to support learning within the units of inquiry.

Policy Review Procedures and Dates:

The policy will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year by the teaching staff, support staff, and representatives of the school community, including parents and students. It will be revised to reflect changes in pedagogy, beliefs, and the language needs of students. Opportunities to provide feedback and input will take place during the weekly scheduled IB in-service meetings. The IB coordinator, the IB joint steering committee, which is comprised of members of the parent community, administration, and members



of the pedagogical team, will finalize changes to the policy. The policy will be posted on the school's website. Hard copies of the policy will be made available upon request.

Review dates:

Mar 30th, 2016

October 10, 2018