




## Capilano Elementary Language Policy PYP Programme

Policy Update: October 2023

 <b>Capilano</b> ELEMENTARY	<b>Capilano Elementary Mission Statement</b>	<b>Capilano Elementary Vision Statement</b>
	<p>The Capilano School community will work together to provide learning opportunities that will enable students to develop as creative and inquiring individuals who are inspired to be life long learners and globally responsible citizens.</p>	<p>We provide a supportive learning environment that values diversity, promotes success and personal growth, and inspires students to become global citizens who accept responsibility for their learning.</p>

### Philosophy:

We make meaning of our world through language. Through language, students gain a greater understanding and development of global citizenship, and they acquire a more concrete understanding of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

Language learning that includes an additional language, along with honouring and supporting mother tongue, develops international understanding, global awareness and citizenship. We feel this reinforces cultural identity and develops a greater sense of community.

All members of the Capilano community play an active role in language development.

### Applicable IBO Standards:

#### Philosophy

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages
  - a. 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
  - b. The school supports mother tongue and host country language learning

[Programme Standards and Practices](#) – IBO (2018; updated 2020)

Section 02: Environment – Standard: Leadership 5 & Student Support (Pg. 5)

Section 03: Culture – Standard: Culture 4 (Pg. 11)

Section 04: Learning – Standard: Lifelong Learning 7 & Approaches to Teaching 5 (Pg. 13)

### Student’s Roles and Responsibilities:

- Actively participate in language activities
- Actively participate in additional language instruction
- International mindedness



## School's Roles and Responsibilities

The school has established a language policy steering committee which will meet once a year. This committee will periodically develop a language profile for the school through a community survey. This will give a general picture of what languages are present in our school community and how our students come in contact with them.

- Languages students can understand
- Language students can speak
- Languages students can read
- Languages students can write
- Languages spoken at home

This data will be used to guide the implementation of this policy such as how we support mother tongue. We will respect privacy and not connect data to individual students or families nor will we require disclosure.

## **Role of Language in the Curriculum**

Language learning is viewed as a critical component in the construction of meaning, responsible for creating a framework for the development of conceptual understanding and critical thinking. As a result, language learning is the major connecting element across the curriculum in a transdisciplinary approach to instruction and learning. Language is also viewed as the vehicle for inquiry and is therefore a central component in all units of inquiry. Language learning grows through authentic language activities, in meaningful contexts, in relation to transdisciplinary learning. Language is seen as an avenue for enjoyment and creativity, as well as learning.

## **Role of Language in Inquiry**

Strong language skills are essential for inquiry and collaboration. Strong reading skills, including basic phonetic awareness as well as broader reading strategies, are needed to conduct research. Visual and media literacies allow students to access information from many additional sources, including charts, images, and media. Focused talk between students, with both strong speaking and listening skills, deepens thinking, builds on student generated ideas, and enables meaning making. Students need to be able to communicate thinking effectively both verbally and non-verbally to share the results of their inquiries.

At Capilano, language instruction must explicitly teach all these interconnected skills, from reading and writing to listening and speaking, to enable our students to inquire into their world and express and share their learning. To assist with this, Capilano teachers use a common language, based on the essential elements of the PYP program, to ensure continuity of language instruction year over year.

## **Provincial Requirements and District Support**

Capilano's scope and sequence of language instruction is determined and written by the BC Ministry of Education (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>). This comprehensive website provides an overview of the curriculum at each grade level that reflect current practice and pedagogy, based on current research. Use of locally developed documents further defines and supports instruction (i.e. *Reading 44*, *Writing 44*, *Focus on Literacy* District in-service for teachers, and other professional development opportunities).



## **Teacher's Role:**

### **Instructional Strategies**

A variety of instructional strategies and opportunities are employed to integrate listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing and representing in all areas of the curriculum. Language is modeled, taught, and practiced daily, in a variety of contexts throughout all areas of instruction. Through scaffolding and within the *Zone of Proximal Development* (Vygotsky), students' learning needs are met, acknowledging the variety of developmental stages and individualized rates of language learning.

The focus is on a balanced program of instruction and learning: Students engage in listening, talking, viewing, reading, representing, and writing as they negotiate new learning experiences to build understanding of concepts. Opportunities to listen to and receive ideas and information is balanced with opportunities to express ideas orally; Learners view and interpret other people's work and create presentations to be viewed; Students read, discuss, and respond to various genres of literature, non-fiction, and visual texts; Learners write for various purposes and audiences to express thoughts, ideas, opinions, and knowledge and to further develop their understandings. Multi-media and technology (ICT) are an important component in language learning and is incorporated into instruction in all grades.

### **Differentiation of Instruction**

Language instruction is responsive to the needs of the students, with the recognition that all students need effective modeling and daily opportunities to process and use language in a variety of forms to be successful in school and life. Capilano teachers separate language ability from cognitive ability and recognize that not all students have the same background knowledge and skills. Effective formative assessment and flexible language instruction leads to an inclusive and differentiated learning environment. Instruction provides opportunities for students to express their learning, ideas, information, and feelings critically, creatively, and articulately, through various modes and mediums to incorporate the needs of all learners.

### **Role of Specialist Teachers**

Capilano teachers believe that all teachers are teachers of language. At Capilano, single-subject (Music, Library) and specialist teachers, English Language Learner (ELL) teacher and the Learning Services Teacher (LST), play a particularly important role in reinforcing, supporting, and extending the classroom language learning. Those specialists work collaboratively with all other teachers to explicitly connect their language instruction to classroom-based learning. Students who receive assistance from ELL and LST specialists are supported through small group (grade groupings) and in-class support. The music specialist extends language learning through singing, movement and dance, drama, reading music and playing instruments. The librarian works collaboratively with all teachers and students in all grades, locating resources and engaging in team-teaching.

### **Second Language Learning**

The working language of the school is English and the majority of students have English as their mother tongue. As per the Ministry of Education's mandate, all students in British Columbia must take a second language as part of the required curriculum starting in Grade 5, unless they are eligible for an exemption that must be documented in the student's Individual Education Plan (see assessment policy for more details). In North Vancouver, and in much of Canada, the second language chosen by the school board is French and is ministry-authorized with a specific scope and sequence and the BC Curriculum. As a result, at Capilano, English is the language of instruction and French is the second language taught. Oral and written French language instruction is integrated, when possible, into daily learning and units of inquiry. Instruction is supported by additional French language learning resources and literature in our library.



## **English Language Learning and Mother Tongue Support**

Any student entering the school system or coming into the district that lists their mother tongue as a language other than English is screened for ELL instruction, as required by North Vancouver School District Policy. The need for additional English Language Learning support is determined by an English Language assessment, carried out by our ELL specialist teacher. (See assessment policy for more information).

By identifying language populations we are able to provide individualized support for English language learning, as well as support for mother tongue languages through the purchase of resources, access to translators, settlement workers and reaching out to our multi – lingual community for support. Teachers and staff use assessment information to seek out appropriate supports for the students in their classrooms. This creates a culture of respect and inclusion by acknowledging and integrating represented languages into instruction. Capilano staff make efforts to attend to the language needs of individual learners, through the use of adapted materials, peer translators, and resources in the student’s mother tongue when accessible, to ensure students, regardless of level of understanding of the host country language (English), are engaged in learning and are provided with opportunities to communicate their thinking and understandings.

We, as a community, have made a commitment to our students and our learning community to continually add to our collection of multi-lingual resources, including bilingual books in over 15 languages. Acquisition of learning resources in students’ mother tongue is ongoing, as it is recognized that development of mother tongue language is important not only for cognitive development, but also for cultural identity as it relates to self- esteem. Capilano also recognizes the importance of encouraging and helping students to pursue their inquiries in their mother tongue.

## **Professional Development**

Our staff is encouraged to pursue on-going professional development in language instruction by attending IBO PYP workshops, school district in-service and in-house professional development lead by administrators, the IB coordinator, school district literacy specialists, and teacher leaders. Learning about language instruction is further enhanced through regular collaboration with colleagues.

## **Families’ Roles and Responsibilities**

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

## **Procedures and Practices**

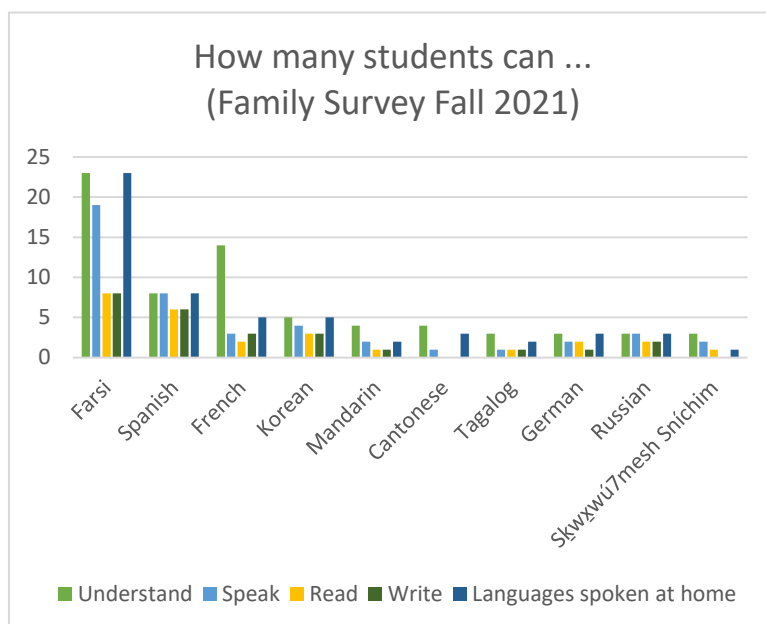
These are outlined in the School's and Teachers' Roles and Responsibility sections above.

## **Essential Agreements:**

- Staff will review this policy each year under the guidance of the Language Policy Steering Committee
- The school will conduct a Language survey periodically to stay aware of the language profile in the school. This will inform the school’s efforts to support and incorporate Mother Tongue languages.

**References/Additional Resources/Links to Further Information:**

Capilano’s latest language survey was conducted in fall of 2021. 112 families responded to the survey, in which 76 families reported their children having the ability to understand, speak, read, and/or write languages other than English. The survey data from the families represented 25 languages in all. Farsi has continued to be the most common non-English mother tongue language in the school with 23 students – 19 of which reported being able to speak it and 8 of which are able to read and write it. 14 families reported their children understanding French and 8 families reported their children understanding Spanish; however, the rest of the languages had 5 or less families reporting their children understanding, speaking, reading, writing other languages. Overall, there are significant numbers of students who have some level of knowledge of Farsi, Spanish, French, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, German, Russian, and Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim.



Capilano students and staff have access to a broad variety of print resources housed in the school library, novel study collections, and in individual classrooms. Parenting resources are also included in the school library collection. Acquisition of multi-lingual, multi-media, and culturally/globally diverse literature has become, and will continue to be a priority for resource purchasing. Decisions on resource purchases are based on curricular and instructional needs as well as student interest. All members of the teaching staff are involved in resource purchase decisions.

**Policy Review Procedures and Dates:**

Capilano’s language policy has been written collaboratively with input from teachers, Grade K-7 students, support staff, and families. The language philosophy is a reflection of the perspectives of all stakeholders of the Capilano school community and is reflective of current pedagogy and beliefs about language learning. The policy is dynamic and ever changing. It will be reviewed periodically by the entire teaching staff, support staff, and representatives of the school community (families and students) and adjusted to reflect changes in the pedagogy, beliefs, and language needs of the learners. The policy will be made available to all members of the Capilano school community (posted to school’s website). Opportunities for feedback/input will be provided through annual committee meetings. The IB coordinator, IB steering committee, and school administration will finalize changes to the policy.