

Jose S. Ramirez Elementary School Language Policy

Classroom Instruction

Language Learning is integrated throughout the entire school day, rather than in an isolated block of time. At Ramirez we are committed to planning cross-curricular units in which language learning is evident throughout all the disciplines. Teachers do this by following the state standards knowledge and skills to create their Units of Inquiry lessons. All faculty, Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade, use the English Language Arts-Reading (ELAR) curriculum or Spanish Language Arts-Reading (SLAR) curriculum. It is essential for the faculty to use all resources when planning their Units so that they may successfully integrate language into other subject areas. Language integration allows for creative expression and use of various forms of assessment, such as projects and performance tasks. This is evident by looking through our Units of Inquiry, teacher lesson plans, rubrics, and the physical classroom environment.

Jose S. Ramirez Elementary School provides differentiated literacy instruction, by using instructional teaching practices at each student's developmental level to enhance language development. Our faculty utilizes the Writing and Reading workshop models as described in *Guided Reading* and *Guided Readers and Writers Grades 3-6th* by Fountas and Pinnell. This model allows for literature studies, independent reading, and reflective practices for both teacher and student. In this framework, teachers facilitate academic language and discourse in the classroom, with supports like sentence stems for asking and answering questions. Teachers in grade Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade build on the language skills, focusing on students' instructional levels to gain mastery.

Collaboration occurs horizontally within grade level team members and vertically among teams of Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade teacher teams. This collaboration enables teachers to create grade-level checklists, and to create rich, exciting, engaging, and aligned language lessons within our Programme of Inquiry.

Dual Language Program-Transition to Spanish Immersion

We began phasing out our Dual Language model in lieu of a Spanish Immersion model beginning with the PreK class of 2014. As of 2018, students in our PreK-3rd grade language programs follow the Spanish Immersion model, and students in 4th and 5th grade language programs follow the Dual Language model. Next year, 4th grade will follow the Spanish Immersion model, and in two years, 5th grade will switch to Spanish Immersion.

For students in our language programs, our goal is for all students to become bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural. Students in 4th and 5th grade in the dual language program

experience a 50/50 model where half of the instruction is in English and half of the instruction is in Spanish. PreK-3rd grade students in our Spanish Immersion model are immersed in Spanish instruction all day long, with the exception of during specials. In the Dual Language grades, Spanish speaking students benefit from this framework since they continue developing their native language as they learn English. English speaking students are totally immersed into the Spanish language and academics. Other components that enhance communication and language acquisition include bilingual pairs, cooperative learning, centers, bilingual resource centers, and committing to the language model throughout the day.

Parents interested in enrolling their students in the Spanish Immersion program attend a parent meeting to get more information. After reviewing the criteria, parents commit whether their child would be a good candidate. A language test is given and pending results, the student is placed in the program.

Language Instruction for Speakers of Languages other than English or Spanish

The students at Jose S. Ramirez Elementary School are predominantly English speaking in their homes, with just over 9% of our population speaking other languages such as Arabic, Khmer, Sinhalese, Mandarin, Kazakh, Danish, Uzbek, Kissi, Korean, and Amharic in addition to various dialects of Spanish. Students whose primary home language is not English are identified during initial enrollment in our school using a Home Language Survey. When the parent completes the form stating that English is not the language spoken in the home, we begin our assessment of English Language Skills using the *Woodcock-Muñoz* assessment. The results are used to determine program placement. Students who qualify as English Language Learners are placed in classrooms with teachers who are certified to teach English Learners. These students receive the same curriculum, plus assured an additional set of standards for English Learners called English Language Proficiency Standards. Students are closely monitored for their acquisition of the English learning components. Finally, we have on campus an ESL teacher who supports teachers with EL students, teacher training, and monitoring of student progress.

Spanish and Mandarin Language Instruction

At Jose S. Ramirez Elementary School Spanish and Mandarin Chinese instruction are offered in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grades. Our Pre-Kindergarten students receive instruction for 30 minutes every week. Our Kindergarten through 5th grade students receive instruction for 45 minutes every fifth day.

The main goal of Spanish and Mandarin Chinese World Language program is that students explore language and culture through the integration of the five C's: Communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities. The program's objective is that students become cultural aware, knowledgeable, open minded, and

thinkers to gradually acquire listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in each grade level.

Spanish instruction

All grade levels spend time in Spanish class studying about the different Spanish-speaking areas of the world. Students will also gain knowledge of various Spanish speaking countries around the world. They will study the culture through traditions, history, songs, celebrations and the people of those countries.

The goal is to give them the basic communication skills to make connections in real life. The lessons are high energy and are filled with movement and humor. Also, the students learn traditional games, songs and different activities to help them learn the language. The following units are taught to all students Pre-Kindergarten through 5th Grade from “Descubre el español” con Santillana:

Unit1: Nos conocemos (greetings and goodbyes, family and friends)

Unit 2: Como vivimos? (clothing, colors, homes, people and places in community)

Unit 3: Vamos a aprender (games, school, and school activities)

Unit 4: Los animals (pets and farm animals, and taking care of pets)

Unit 5: Me cuido (body parts, food and health)

Unit 6: Nuestro ambiente (transportation, weather, seasons, and recycling)

Unit 7: Como funciona? (the Panama Canal, professions, and ships)

Unit 8: Nuestras celebraciones (birthday celebrations and traditions)

Our Spanish teacher collaborates with classroom teachers in order to support oral language development. Students’ progress is reported on the district report card each six weeks. As an added enrichment, Crafts and games for Latin America Club is offered to students in grades 4th to 5th grade. During club time students meet every Monday once a week to extend their learning through games, songs, and crafts from different Spanish speaking countries.

Signs posted in common areas throughout our school are posted in both English and Spanish to promote student’s acquisition of a second language.

Mandarin— Pre-Kindergarten to First Grades:

Pre-Kindergarten through 1st grade learn the target vocabulary through thematic units every six weeks. The goal is to give them vocabulary that is related to their daily lives. Listening skill is particularly emphasized during this phase, and speaking skill is encouraged. It is because plentiful input of the language helps learners produce it. The lessons are filled with movement, rhymes, and songs. The following units are taught to all students Pre-Kindergarten through First Grade:

- Basic greetings

- Asking and introducing names
- Numbers to 10
- Family members
- Age and gender
- Colors
- Animals
- Chinese Festival

Mandarin— Second to Fifth Grades:

2nd through 5th grades are also taught through thematic units every six weeks.

Vocabulary related to their daily lives continues to expand during this phase. Reading and writing skills are added to the lessons so that they know the language in more depth and are able to develop the ability to conduct research on this language.

Comprehensible input is adopted in the instruction with related visuals, movements, and explanation in English. Students will also study the culture through traditions and celebrations. The following units are taught to all students Second through Fifth Grade:

- Basic greetings
- Asking and introducing names
- Numbers to 31
- Family members
- Date and time
- Senses and feelings
- Chinese Festival
- Basic structures of Chinese characters

Students' progress is reported on the district report card each six weeks. As an added enrichment, Chinese Club is offered to students in grades K-5th. During club time students meet every Monday once a week to extend their learning through stories, role-play, and songs.

Spanish/Mandarin in the homeroom:

Our Spanish teacher collaborates with classroom teachers in order to support oral language development. Spanish and Mandarin labels cover the common classroom items.

In addition, each class is provided with a word of the week in Spanish or Mandarin. Each time a class goes to Spanish and Mandarin, they are given the word to display in their homeroom. The challenge is to teach their homeroom teacher what the word means and how to pronounce it. This will allow for everyone including the teacher to use the word. Also, Spanish and Mandarin teachers send every six weeks a video containing the words of the week for those weeks so the classroom teachers can play it every day for the students to practice them.

Students from Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade must also put on a PTA performance in English, Spanish, and sometimes Mandarin for the community. Each grade-level will perform songs, poems, etc that they have learned in foreign language class. The Spanish and Mandarin teachers collaborate with the music teacher (as well as art and PE) about the performance.

Spanish and Mandarin Chinese support IB learning in collaborations with the other specialist (Art, PE, and Music).

Library Media

The Jose S. Ramirez Elementary School library supports the language acquisition and development of students by providing a wide variety of print and electronic materials for students to read and for teachers to use for instruction. Our print collection includes nearly 15,000 books including nearly 2,500 in languages other than English. The primary languages present in our collection are English and Spanish, but also include books in Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Napali, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Korean. As we enroll students with a mother tongue not currently represented in the library, the librarian order books in that child's language. The library staff strives to maintain a current collection that meets the academic needs of students and staff, but also provides books for pleasure reading. Our campus participates in district wide inter-library loan and can borrow titles from any of the district's 47 schools. Our library is open daily for students, parents and staff to check out new materials.

The district subscribes to Discovery Education and TexQuest databases so teachers have access to high quality videos and video clips as visual supports that enrich student learning in the classrooms. In addition to technology resources, our library also houses Makerspace once a week for students to engage, explore, and create with various tools and materials.

Parent Communication

Communication is a vital part in how our campus and families stay connected. Through communication we can ensure that our students and their families needs, questions, and concerns are addressed. For example, grade-level character folders, school website, teacher website, parent/teacher GOALS conferences, classroom newsletters, School Messenger, Wednesday folders, marquee outside our school, and PTA meetings are our campus commitment to keep all parents informed.

Current Language Practices at Ramirez

Staff Development for Faculty and Staff

1. English as a Second Language (ESL) training and certification for some

- faculty members. Each grade level has at least one ESL teacher.
2. Primary Years Programme (PYP) Level I, II, & III training for all faculty members.
 3. As needed training for teachers with new and different opportunities for continued learning.

Programs and Activities that Support Language Development

1. International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program
2. Thinking Maps
3. Interventions to ensure grade-level mastery of reading
4. Special Education to ensure students read on-level: Resource, Inclusion
5. Speech Special Education for students who need support with either or both receptive and expressive language, as well as articulation
6. ESL services for ESL students
7. Dyslexia interventions for students needing additional instruction in phonemes, phonics, and reading.
8. Spanish and Mandarin Chinese in all grade-levels
9. Spanish and Mandarin Club once a week

Assessment/Monitor Tools Used to Determine Student Acquisition and Progress

1. Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems Kit
2. Running Records used to determine instructional reading level
3. Circle Assessment in PreK
4. MAP Benchmark K-5th
5. Benchmarks in Reading, Writing, and Math to assess progress
6. District Six Weeks Reading Tests for 2nd-5th grades to assess students' reading performance
7. District Six Weeks Writing Tests for 2nd-5th grades to assess students' writing performance
8. Istation

Monitoring Meeting/Focus:

1. Teacher/Administration meetings to discuss student concerns
2. Student Support Team (SST) which is for campus-level intervention
3. Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) for ESL students
4. Admission, Review, Dismissal Committee (ARD) for Special Education Students
5. Section 504 Committee for students with an identified substantial limitation
6. GRADEBOOK-home access to review students' grades
7. Parent Conferences-GOALS conferences, emails, phone calls, Student messenger etc. as needed
8. Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) Development and Reviews/Summary
9. Gifted and Talented Review Meetings
10. Report Cards, Progress Reports, Parent conferences

Instructional Practices/Processes and Program Support Materials

1. Inquiry Instruction in all grades
2. Writing Journals in all grades
3. Student televised broadcasting
4. Interactive Notebooks of various kinds
5. Guided Reading Instruction
6. Daily Five in Grades K-5th
7. Interactive Writing and/or Shared Writing in Grades PreK-2nd grades
8. Reading and Writing Workshop in Grades K-5th
9. Phonemic and Phonetic Instruction
10. Technology supported through computer lab
11. English Learners support
12. Gifted and Talented Program for qualifying students in grades 1st-5th
13. Take Flight Dyslexia intervention program

Materials and Resources used to support language development

1. Parent Volunteers
2. School Library
3. 2nd-5th grade have Chromebook carts for each class
4. Prek-Kg have Ozmos
5. Computer lab for primary grades
6. Parent Resource Specialists (Nicki Zambrano)
7. Guest Speakers, ie: Watch Dogs, Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms, Literacy Nights, College and Career week etc.
8. Interpreter Availability