



Lowell International Elementary School

Language Policy

MISSION

The mission at Lowell International Elementary School is to develop globally minded learners of strong character, who are goal driven towards higher education.

Philosophy

At Lowell International Elementary School, we view language acquisition as an on- going process. It is a shared responsibility of all teachers, parents, and students, with the understanding that each student progresses at his or her own pace. We also believe that all students should have the opportunity to learn a second language. This enables students to understand the thinking and culture of others. Through communication in another language, students are more prepared to understand the global world in which they live, enabling them to be active participants in multilingual communities at home and around the world. A Home Language Survey is administered to the families of students at the time of admission. Lowell currently has families speaking at least ten different languages.

Purpose

Inquirers: Learners use their language skills to ask probing questions and to make connections in order to understand their world.

Thinkers: Learners will work collaboratively to communicate and to apply problem solving skills.

Communicators: Learners will use their language skills through verbal and visual modes to convey understanding in various settings.

Risk Takers: Learners will attempt to communicate in a language outside of their mother tongue.

Open- Minded: Learners will understand the importance of other world languages and cultures.

Caring: Learners will be compassionate and empathetic and value the ideas and opinions of others.

Knowledgeable: Learners will gain an understanding of concepts across a broad range of disciplines.

Reflective: Learners will reflect upon their knowledge of their new language and look for areas and ways in which to improve their skills.

Balanced: Learners will understand the importance of both their mother tongue and a second language. They will find a balance between speaking, listening and writing when interacting with others.

Principled: Learners will communicate using their language skills in a manner which is respectful and proper.

Principles and Practices of Teaching Language

Balanced Literacy Program

- Instruction is scaffolded in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension development.
- Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are the four parts of a balanced literacy program.
- Students participate in self- selected reading experiences to gain knowledge in areas of interest.

Variety of Resources to Develop Language

- The school has a reading and ELA block.
- Word walls and vocabulary instruction is prominent in classrooms.
- Each classroom is a literacy rich environment.

- Spelling instruction and practice is integrated throughout the day to support developing language skills.
- The school library contains materials to represent the different cultures and languages within the school community.
- Technology is utilized to support, model, and enhance instruction of language.

Learning and Teaching Practices

Students learn best through the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing in a transdisciplinary manner. English/ Language Arts Common Core Standards are used in the units of inquiry. Some of the practices at Lowell International Elementary School include:

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| Balanced Literacy | Differentiated Instruction | Print Rich Environment |
| Flexible grouping- whole | small and individual | Use of technology |
| See, Think, Wonder Visual Thinking Strategies | Guided reading using a variety of genres | Read to self- self selected books based on student interest |
| Teacher modeled think aloud reading | Classroom libraries | Making connections(text to real life, text to text) |

Professional Development/Support

- Teachers are offered a variety of support from the district and school personnel regarding researched best practices in the area of language acquisition.

- Teachers are encouraged to attend training in areas of interest with a focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Staff at Lowell received training and support in best practices for supporting English Language Learners.

Parent/Home and School Connection Mother Tongue Support

- Seek to gain more support using various community organizations.
- Interpretation services are available as needed for families.
- Correspondence in mother tongue is available.
- Many volunteers, paraprofessionals and the school secretary speak a second language and offer support in students' mother tongues.
- The library is building its foreign language section, with an emphasis on titles written in the mother tongues of our current population.

Spanish Language Experience

- Formal Spanish instruction is delivered weekly for all grades.
- Teachers use Spanish in their classrooms to reinforce the efforts of the Spanish teacher.
- A variety of books in Spanish are available in the school library
- Items throughout the school and in classrooms are labeled in both Spanish and English

English Language Learner (ELL) Support

Lowell International Elementary School, as a part of Milwaukee Public Schools, is committed to educational programs that provide language minority students with the linguistic, cultural, and academic skills necessary to function fully in an English-speaking society, while contributing to their general educational development, without compromising their pride in their native language and cultural background.

Lowell International Elementary School has adopted certain principles to best promote language acquisition in a learner-centered approach. These principles guide the teaching/learning process, based on the premise that learners master a

language best when:

- They are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests.
- They are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative use of English in a wide range of activities.
- They are exposed to communicative sources that are comprehensible and relevant to their own needs and interests.
- They focus deliberately on various language forms, skills (understanding, speaking, reading, writing), and strategies in order to support the process of language acquisition.
- They are exposed to socio-cultural data and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language.
- They become aware of the role and nature of language and of culture.
- They are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress.
- They are encouraged to use their home language and make connections.
- They are seen as an asset, not a deficit for the education community.