

ANNUNCIATION

CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Annunciation Catholic School - Language Policy

Three aspects of language and learning development are part of the process of constructing meaning: learning language, learning through language and learning about language.

The purpose of this language policy is guide our community to:

- maximize student learning and understanding
- provide a framework that promotes consistency throughout the school
- assist teachers in their planning, presenting, and evaluating teaching
- provide parents with information about our values and our practices of language development
- guide professional development and ongoing learning
- ensure that our practices provide inclusion and equity of access to all learners
- support ongoing development of home and family languages

Our Perspective on Language Instruction

At Annunciation, we want students to understand that language is the way we communicate our thoughts, feelings, perspectives and beliefs. Our commitment to language instruction is evident in a print-rich environment. It is also evident in the time and effort invested in differentiating language instruction. For the purpose of this language policy, we define language instruction as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is our perspective that language instruction should be incorporated in all grade levels and departments of our school and nurtured by each member of our learning community. Language learning is the basis for gaining understanding in all content areas. As a result, language takes several forms: art teaches a visual language, music teaches the language of sound, and physical education teaches the language of movement. Spanish is taught as language B. Annunciation is a school of avid readers, creative writers, artists, and enthusiastic learners.

What is the purpose of language in education?

The purpose of language in education at Annunciation is to develop students who communicate effectively in a variety of ways. Students use language to show what they know and to express what they do not know through questioning and wonderings. Language is the foundation for all learning and understanding. Through it, students are able to communicate their ideas and gain new perspectives.

The primary language of instruction at Annunciation is English. The scope and sequence of specific language skills is dictated by the Minnesota State Standards (Common Core State Standards for ELA) and is consistent with the International Baccalaureate language scope and sequence. Additionally, we strive to use language to:

- promote inquiry and reflection
- support the learner profile and attitudes
- encourage age appropriate social discourse

Additional Language: Annunciation incorporates Spanish into its K- 8 curriculum. We have 2 Spanish teachers, one serving grades K-3 and one serving 4-8. Research supports that multiple language acquisition occurs best at an early age, and it is an integral part of being an internationally-minded school.

Principles and Practices of Teaching Language

Annunciation staff works collaboratively to promote student language learning by:

- using a research- based and standards- driven approach to instruction
- modeling proficient language practice through reading, writing, speaking clearly, and listening with respect
- asking students to demonstrate their language skills through reflection

The Practices used at Annunciation to Teach and Develop Language

Speaking - We teach a broad range of speaking skills including:

- communicating with clarity and proper volume
- speaking fluently
- expressing opinions and participating in discussions
- discussing feelings, thoughts, and opinions in small/large groups
- presenting evidence
- persuading others
- agreeing/disagreeing/partially agreeing
- asking purposeful questions
- using respectful responses
- engaging effectively in collaborative discussions
- expressing opinions and participating in discussion
- giving verbal feedback to peers
- sharing spoken reflections

The strategies we use to teach speaking skills including:

- Responsive Classroom skills: sounds, looks, feels like
- sharing at Morning Meetings and class discussions
- partner reading
- practicing sounds during phonics instruction
- Reader's Theater
- presentations
- sharing, book reports, strategies
- interviews
- storytelling
- talk like a...(mathematician, scientist, etc.)

Listening - We teach a broad range of listening skills including:

- listening to respond
- developing listening comprehension skills
- focusing attention
- productive discussions and staying on topic
- making others feel heard and valued

The strategies we use to teach listening skills include:

- Morning Meeting and in class discussions
- buddy reading
- recording facts and taking notes
- being an interested audience for assemblies and class presentations
- participating in Reader's Workshop mini-lessons, guided reading groups, and large group
- Math Talks
- one speaker at a time (no interruptions)

Reading - We teach a broad range of reading skills including:

- knowledge acquisition
- fluency and comprehension
- reading for different purposes and enjoyment
- decoding words and text

The strategies we use to teach reading skills include:

- Groves Phonics (Phonics instruction)-K-3rd
- Benchmark Reader's and Writer's Workshop-K-5th
- Benchmark word study-4-5th
- guided reading, large group discussions
- journaling
- reading for meaning across curriculum in all subject areas
- read alouds-picture books and chapter books

Writing -We teach a broad range of writing skills including:

- academic language
- writing for a specific audience
- grammar skills
- research/report writing
- genres of written expression: Narrative, Summative, Descriptive, Persuasive
- conventions of print appropriate to grade level expectations
- drawing information from informational texts
- word study

The strategies we use to teach writing skills include:

- direct instruction of foundational skills
- Writers Workshop
- daily writing in all subject areas
- modeling with literature examples
- study of figurative language to enhance writing
- grammar - parts of speech, sentence structure
- editing and revising
- math in written form

Language B – Spanish

Our community supports and fosters the development of additional language learning by:

- students in kindergarten through fifth grade receive Spanish instruction twice a week
- use of Spanish language throughout the school
- prayer in Spanish
- classrooms and school areas are labeled in Spanish

- teachers incorporate second language in their daily use of the vocabulary
- learning about Spanish speaking countries
- partnering with schools and families from Spanish speaking countries

Support of Home and Family Languages

While the majority of our students speak English as their primary language, we do have some students who speak Spanish at home. Here are ways we support home and family language:

- encouraging students to speak their home language
- activating prior knowledge during instruction
- encouraging paired discussions (speaking and writing)
- honoring and supporting home languages by making connections
- offering library resources
- offering translations in Seesaw for student portfolios and school/teacher communications (This is a growth area.)

Students in need of more significant support will be referred to the Minneapolis Public Schools to be evaluated for service.

“Language is involved in all learning and is an essential vehicle for inquiry and the construction of meaning. It provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking.” MTPYPH

- Policy approved by K-8 staff and administration, Nov. 2016
- Updated September 2017 and 2018
- Re-evaluated and edited spring of 2022