

Barack H. Obama Elementary School is dedicated to providing all students with a strong foundation in language. We aim to develop confident, curious, proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. In the school context, students actively learn language, learn through language, and learn about language. All teachers are language teachers who work together using evidence-based teaching strategies to provide inquiry-based, transdisciplinary learning experiences. These experiences provide for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students and support language connections instruction in all content. We believe language learning leads to greater cultural understanding that develops an open-minded global perspective, the willingness to take the risks involved in learning to communicate in an additional language, and the desire to be a lifelong learner of language.

Language instruction builds a

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into the units of inquiry, with connections to both the language of instruction (English) and the additional language (Spanish) being made. Stand-alone language sessions are the primary mode instruction for the additional language (Spanish). The school focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by recognizing and modeling the role of the language of instruction in each subject as well as in the additional language. Evidence-based practices are integrated into the instructional strategies at every grade level. The language program is provided through a balance of large, small group and individual instruction. Resources are selected to match the units, languages, and needs of students when possible.

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The basic skills for oral, written and visual communication are explicitly planned for. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, recognize patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate and use language. As students progress, teachers enable them to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context driven, having multiple meanings, and involving at all levels of discourse a personal stance, from simple communication to the core of academic language (Lifelong learners 7.3)

The writing process of drafting, revising and publishing will be modeled and explored. The use of literature, games, role-play, and multimedia will support students' understanding of different genres as well as developing their vocabulary, sentence construction, use of tense and punctuation. Using text as a model, students and teachers will analyze the features of different genres before jointly and individually constructing written or presented pieces. During the revision process, students will be encouraged to develop their knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions using print and digital dictionaries and thesaurus as well

of a unit. Various forms of both formative and summative assessment may be used. Students are often asked to peer or self-assess as well.

Assessments are reported to parents in different ways. Students and parents receive district report cards and IB appraisal reports that provide information about their language learning. Parents have access to online platforms with assessment information for tracking individual student progress. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher and student-led conferences (Approaches to assessment 1.2).

Students are assessed in Spanish instruction through observation, quizzes, and student projects. The teacher uses checklists and rubrics to monitor progress.

*El objetivo principal de este programa es proporcionar a los estudiantes una experiencia de aprendizaje en español que sea significativa y relevante. Se espera que los estudiantes desarrollen habilidades de comunicación en español y que sean capaces de aplicar estas habilidades en contextos académicos y sociales. El programa también busca fomentar el interés por el idioma y la cultura hispana.*

All staff members foster and encourage reading and writing for meaning. Throughout the school there is an expectation that in order to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students will be encouraged to read at home after school, during school breaks and over the summer. Students may be read to, read with, or read every day at home. A variety of evidence-based strategies will be introduced to support students in the mechanics of reading and comprehending the meaning of what they read.

The grade level teachers work with the gifted education teacher(s), interventionist, and special subject teachers (counseling, library/media, music, and Spanish) to collaborate on vocabulary and conceptual development across the curriculum.

Since students learn about language and through language, we understand that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students in the school. As a result, collaborative planning and reflection is built into the regular schedule for all staff as well as being a focus of staff meetings throughout the year. This collaborative structure supports the development of links across and between different subject areas. All teachers review the language scope and sequence to ensure it is as relevant and comprehensive as possible. Teachers then plan collaboratively, during grade level meetings, grade band meetings, special subject meetings and meetings with the PYP coordinator.

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Teachers use a range of district provided and/or individually sourced quality texts so students can explore different genres and text structures. Students have access to a variety of print and online dictionaries, including Spanish-English dictionaries.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. Students go on field trips to visit museums, libraries, theaters, and other locations where they have an opportunity to use language in context. Guest speakers are invited to speak on

various topics and they may speak languages other than the language of instruction. Throughout the year, students are exposed to celebrations linked to diverse cultures to promote international mindedness and an appreciation of different cultures.

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