



**Bancroft**  
ELEMENTARY  
**Bancroft Elementary**  
**Language Policy**

### **Statement of Philosophy**

At Bancroft Elementary, we believe that language development is the foundation for learning. Therefore, each member of our educational community is responsible for language development. The purpose of the Bancroft Language Policy is to outline our accepted and agreed upon practices for language teaching and learning in order to assist our students to become internationally-minded people.

### **At Bancroft Elementary, we believe:**

- Learning language in content areas and through conversations is effective and enjoyable!
- Learning language should be interactive because learning is a social act.
- Language is a critical element of culture
- World language learning is for all students
- Learning an additional language should not be at the expense of one's mother tongue
- Learning multiple languages should begin in the early years

### **Our Language Demographics**

Students are placed into the schools through the District Placement Center. The District designates Bancroft as a site that provides supports for Spanish-speaking students and families. However, all students in our zone are welcome to attend Bancroft.

Bancroft currently has students who speak ten different languages. Each grade level team has an English Language (EL) teacher who works to support language acquisition. Approximately 35% of our students qualify for EL services. The languages represented at Bancroft include, but are not limited to English, Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Hmong, Amharic, and Oromo.

### **Language of Instruction**

The school's language of instruction is English. We align language instruction with the Minnesota State English Language Arts Standards (Common Core). Teachers provide a print-rich environment and opportunities for literacy are found throughout the building. Classrooms libraries provide students with a variety of reading opportunities. We continue to expand these classroom libraries based on units of inquiry.

The school media center is the hub of language learning. The media specialist works in collaboration with the classroom teachers to provide language materials to the students. Opportunities to incorporate different languages throughout the school are valued and seen as valuable learning experiences.

## **Our Practices for Language Instruction**

We provide language instruction through the Minnesota State Standards (Common Core ELA) that have been aligned to the PYP Scope and Sequence for language arts:

- Reading (across content areas and with a wide variety of text)
  - Balanced Literacy Approach: read-alouds, shared reading, independent reading, guided reading, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, fluency, comprehension
- Writing
  - Letters, symbols, grammar rules, authentic writing in content areas/ units of inquiry
- Speaking & Listening
  - Using language to question and inquire, share knowledge and understanding
- Viewing
  - Visual Thinking Strategies, electronic media, technology

## **World Language**

The World Language provided at Bancroft is Spanish. Classes from High 5 (preK) through fifth grade have Spanish class. In High 5 through fourth grade, this is a push-in model and in fifth grade it is a specialist class. The world language teacher supports the PYP by providing literacy experiences aligned with the units of inquiry. The teacher utilizes many resources – books, media, technology and music.

## **Mother Tongue & Language Acquisition Support**

The Minneapolis Public Schools' primary mission for English Language Learner (ELL) programming is to support Academic Language Learning. The ELL program at Bancroft Elementary supports both IBO principles and the district goals by supporting student instruction in the area of content learning in the regular classroom. Each grade level has an EL teacher as part of the team. We use a co-teaching model to support academic language development.

The EL teachers also provide intensive small group English language sessions for mastery of English language skills.

The Minneapolis School District has a district-wide policy that we use to determine who receives ELL support, which we use as our guideline.

Language acquisition research, English Language Proficiency standards (ELPS), and content area standards guide the development of instruction. The ELL teaching team bases planning and instruction on clearly developed language and content objectives that define for students what they need to know and be able to do.

*The English Language Learners (ELL) team of teachers supports the students' engagement in learning by:*

- Providing a mixture of collaborative instruction in the classroom and additional direct instruction in a sheltered setting with an emphasis on English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills taught through content area subjects.

- Regularly participating in IB planning and data review with grade level teams to support the alignment of the IB with the needs of English Language Learners
- Regularly participating in scheduled collaborative planning meetings with classroom teachers and support staff to align instruction with each other
- Integrate students' cultural backgrounds and interests with specific academic needs within the grade level units of inquiry
- Utilizing methods and materials that will support the skills and content needed for success in mainstream setting and will support and expand upon the knowledge gained in the units of inquiry.
- Facilitating the process of monitoring and exiting students from the ELL program

### **Support for Retaining the Mother Tongue**

We model a climate of bilingualism by supporting students retaining their Mother Tongue, particularly Spanish and Somali, in a variety of ways:

- Home-School communications are written/spoken in English, Spanish and Somali
- We provide access to interpreters parent/teacher meetings and/or conferences
- We have a number of staff that speak Spanish and Somali and we recruit employees that are fluent in mother tongue languages.
- Spanish and Somali-speaking staff are in the classrooms, on the playground and in lunch thus providing support throughout a student's day.
- MSP provides a free language line so that staff members can contact parents/guardians in their mother tongue.
- The media center has a collection of books in mother tongue languages. This collection is reviewed and supplemented annually.

**We all have a role in helping our students become proficient users of language. Therefore, we have roles and responsibilities as a community of learners:**

#### **Role of Students:**

- Practice academic language every day
- Model academic language every day
- Seek opportunities to listen to and learn about another language
- Ask questions and engage with peers of other languages
- Share connections throughout the day with their Mother Tongue
- Wonder about language

#### **Role of Licensed Staff:**

- Model being language learners
- Model the use of academic and informal language
- Provide non-verbal language opportunities through use of body and graphics
- Validate second language learners
- Develop strategies/methods to drive acquisition of academic language for all students (content language, Spanish, English)
- Encourage students to make connections with their Mother Tongue
- Highlight the skills and resources of native speakers of other languages

- Encourage students to show enthusiasm and curiosity about other languages by modeling our own enthusiasm and curiosity towards language

### **Role of Support Staff:**

- Model the use of academic language
- Validate language(s) of students
- Demonstrate and model being a life-long language learner
- Highlight the skills and resources of native speakers of other languages

### **Role of Parents and Families:**

- Model language
- Read to and with their child(ren)
- Provide opportunities for their children to experience their own and other cultures
- Encourage and advocate children's continued development of their Mother Tongue at home

## **RESOURCES**

**Bilingual Program Assistants** – The Bilingual Program Assistants (BPA) at Bancroft support the literacy and numeracy develop of native speakers of the Spanish and Somali language. Additionally, the BPAs serve as a resource for Spanish and Somali-speaking families by translating and interpreting home-school communication and parent-teacher meetings. BPAs are available throughout the school day for students. They are in the breakfast and lunchroom, on the playground and in the classrooms.

**Media Center**– The media center has a collection of books available in Spanish for students to check out. We make an effort to provide literature for the other Mother Tongue languages represented in our building.

**Book Room** – Books are available in the school's leveled libraries that are in Spanish. There are also leveled books that are written in English specifically for ELL learners. Audio and visual materials may also be available to use with those books.

**Classroom Resources** – Each classroom has its own library that also includes books in Spanish. Guest speakers who speak in a second language are utilized when possible.

**Connecting Parents to Educational Opportunities (CPEO)** - Connecting Parents to Educational Opportunities (CPEO) is a seven-week curriculum based program designed for parents; bringing schools, parents and community together as equal partners in the education of students. CPEO provides a framework for creating a community in which parents and teachers collaborate to transform students' educational environment, both at home and at school, so that all students can achieve their greatest academic potential.

**School Materials** – Written materials are sent home in both English and Spanish