

## **Southgate Language Policy (Updated March 2017)**

### **Philosophy of Language**

Language is a touchstone for all we do at Southgate Elementary School; it is the medium by which we construct meaning of the world around us. Language is taught through context of new information's relationship to existing knowledge. It is through language that our students build critical thinking, communication and social skills. At Southgate, language skill areas of listening, reading, speaking and writing are embraced in every classroom. All teachers are language teachers.

Southgate Elementary School's mission seeks to encourage international-mindedness and life-long learning. In order to do so, the SGES staff is dedicated to: the development of English language skills, the examination of cultures other than our own, and acquiring language skills in a second language. At Southgate we believe in the value of learning a second language. Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must learn to adapt to their ever-changing environments and be productive in the global context. Second language exposure and acquisition gives a student intellectual advantages as well as providing an avenue for deepening intercultural understanding and respect.

### **Purpose of Language Policy**

- Outline our common purpose as language speakers and teachers.
- Provide a foundation for whole school second language program in Spanish.
- Meet the standards of an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP).

### **School Language Practices**

**English** is the primary language of instruction at Southgate Elementary School. Language learning is supported in all grades offered, 1-5. The classroom teachers at Southgate support language development through the following practices:

- Fostering communication and social skills within the classroom
- Modeling effective communication, choosing words carefully and purposefully
- Vocabulary instruction and development in content-specific areas
- Growing fluent readers; reading to and with students
- Encouraging students to be lifelong readers and language learners
- Creating a print-rich environment with relevant and age appropriate literacy materials
- Interpreting different types of literature and offering a rich literature selection
- Encouraging diverse communication styles

- Promoting listening skills and public speaking skills
- Doing a variety of writing and sharing that is formal, informal and process-focused
- Teaching spelling patterns and rules
- Questioning; encouraging exploration of questions and ideas
- Being open and welcoming to other languages spoken in the school
- Using other non-English languages when appropriate in songs, art forms, games
- Encouraging the development of language b, Spanish, access to Rosetta Stone software, and Spanish books and online websites

**Spanish** is our additional language, language b, offered to all students in grades K-5. Our goals for our Spanish program are that all students at Southgate are provided the opportunity to: develop a foundation for Spanish language; cultivate an appreciation for the Spanish culture and heritage; and to embrace language learning as fun and relevant.

Spanish language and culture is provided by a language technician who is proficient in Spanish. The Spanish teacher provides age-appropriate language curriculum to Southgate Students that builds language skills at least one time a week and where possible, develops vocabulary supporting each grade level's Programme of Inquiry (POI). We anticipate hiring a full-time Spanish teacher in the 2017-18 academic year.

Southgate's Media Center provides resources and support for learning about Spanish-speaking cultures and Spanish language learning. Signage within the school feature Spanish translations.

As a school community, we seek opportunities to expose students to Spanish culture through assemblies and field trips. The Middle School and High School that Southgate feeds into have Spanish language programs.

### **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Support**

Southgate supports students who do not speak English as a first language through ESOL support. Currently, English Language Learners (ELL) represent less than 5% of the SGES student population. An ESOL support teacher works directly with ELL students through individual teaching time. The ESOL teacher communicates, as needed, with classroom teachers regarding comprehension strategies for ELL students and ELL student progress. Informally, mother tongue language sharing within all SGES classrooms is welcomed and encouraged.

### **Additional Language Offerings**

Southgate is committed to raising international-mindedness and access to foreign languages. Afterschool language club is offered within the school year for French.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

All teachers at Southgate support English language development through the adoption of the above practices in their classrooms. SGES teachers reinforce school-wide Spanish activities and participate in International Parent meetings to share grade level information. Interpreters are present to assist with communication.

The Southgate Media Specialist is committed to providing resources to support the language learning of the school community. Print and digital resources are available in multiple languages. Rosetta Stone software is available in the computer lab, and all students, families, and staff have access to Rosetta Stone online at no cost through the Anne Arundel County Library system.

The Southgate Spanish teacher provides developmentally appropriate language instruction to grades K-5. The Spanish teacher is instrumental in bringing Spanish to life through activities and inquiry, and may help to translate school information into Spanish. The SGES PYP Coordinator and Spanish teacher will update the parent community on our Spanish learning activities via the school's regular SGES newsletters.

The PYP Coordinator communicates any language or cultural enrichment opportunities that come about in our local area. She/he works with other IB schools offering Spanish and work closely with the Southgate Spanish teacher and AACPS to improve access to language opportunities. The PYP coordinator will assist in identifying appropriate professional development opportunities for PYP and Spanish resource staff.

The school community and leadership of Southgate are committed to cultivating our language program with all members of the school community. The Language Policy will be reviewed/revised by the School's leadership team on a bi-annual basis. A link to the policy will be available on the school website.