

Riffenburgh Elementary Language Policy

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Riffenburgh's Mission

Riffenburgh is a caring community of inquisitive and reflective lifelong learners making connections across disciplines to become global citizens who respect differences among people.

Our Vision

Together, students, teachers, parents, and caregivers create a culture of acceptance and empowerment by recognizing the strength in the collection of people we are honored to call our community.

Foundational Agreements:

- Every member of our community is a learner
- All learners should feel safe to make mistakes and reflect on their experiences
- All learners should identify their learning journey as one of lifelong growth
- All learners should engage in exploration and personal goal setting
- All learners should be taught and exercise advocacy for their own learning
- All learners are recognized as diverse in their process and are offered various opportunities to pursue flexible and individualized discoveries
- All learners value connections with others through accepting relationships and open communication
- All learners have personal and cultural identities, both unique and shared backgrounds and language profiles
- All learners should experience assessment as equitable opportunities to reflect on growth and their personal learning journeys
- All learners should feel accepted and valued
- All learners should celebrate challenge and growth in their individualized learning journey
- Language drives learning
- Learning happens over time
- All learners value responsible choices, respect of self and others, fairness, and trustworthiness as principled members of our learning community

Language Philosophy

Riffenburgh Elementary is a community of communicators who create a culture of acceptance and empowerment. We believe that effective use of language, both written and spoken, is a necessary and valuable life skill. Language is vital to thinking, learning, and communicating effectively across time and cultures. Each learner has their own language and cultural background, which contributes to rich, diverse perspectives in our school community. The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the mother tongue enrich personal growth and help facilitate international understanding. Recognition and acceptance of different forms of communication are vital for maintaining diverse cultural identities. As language is

integrated into all subject areas, every educator within the school is considered a language teacher.

Language Policy: Rights and Responsibilities

Riffenburgh is determined to reflect inclusivity through our school culture, by fostering social and emotional as well as physical wellness. We emphasize, teach, refer to and celebrate the characteristics and attributes outlined in the learner profile. We recognize diversity of perspective as both an asset and a necessity for internationally-minded learners.

The following outline our action for developing language learners at Riffenburgh Elementary:

Leadership commits to:

- Prioritize practices promoting stakeholder well-being and belonging
- Promote a school culture and climate that celebrates diversity and diverse perspectives
- Helping all learners identify strength and growth areas
- Curates systems of open and positive communication for all stakeholders
- Allocates staffing and financial supports to address learner needs, and aspirations
- Provides consistent and meaningful time for collaboration to promote learning and growth, both professionally and personally (including professional development opportunities and facilitation)
- Ensures that federal, state, and local laws and guidelines related to meeting the needs of diverse learners
- Ensures that school policies related to addressing the needs of diverse learners are shared with and regularly reviewed and updated by the school community (Inclusion Policy, Language Policy, Access/Admissions Policy, Assessment Policy, Academic Integrity Policy)

- Allocates staffing and financial supports to address students learning one language in addition to their Mother Tongue (example: Spanish teacher)
- Facilitate and support systems addressing the needs of students in language acquisition (Speech/ Language therapist, Physical therapist, ELL teacher, Family Liasion)
- Provides consistent and meaningful time for collaboration to promote learning and growth, both professionally and personally
- Allocates common collaborative time for creating engaging learning, assessments for essential learnings, and inclusion of language instruction across currciulum
- Offers guidance and coaching in differentiated and authentic language learning

Teachers/Staff commits to:

- Foster a climate of communication and acceptance within the learning environment and the school community
- Communicate regularly with families and caretakers about classroom engagements, operational happenings, and open-reflections on learning
- Routinely provide opportunities for learners to share, question, connect, pursue inquiry, and act to apply learning, through the IB Approaches to Learning
- Use approaches to teaching that are inquiry based, conceptually driven, contextualized, collaborative, differentiated, and informed by assessment
- Collaborate with teaching cohorts as grade levels, school teams, and district communities to address diverse learners and address strengths, needs and barrier removal (evidenced in PLC structures, Kid Talk Protocols, Shared Collaboration Time, Allocated Reflection Days and Data Talks, Transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry)
- Address home language needs with consideration of resources provided by both the school and district
- Develop trust and acceptance through actively referring to and teaching the attributes of the IB Learner Profile
- Offer opportunities for learners to design and pursue engagements related to their interests and inquiries
- Recognize individual learner strengths and growth areas to provide equitable learning engagements
- Offer engagements with a variety of access points
- Recognize and empower students' understanding of their background, language profile, and cultural and personal identity
- Encourage open communication of varied perspectives
- Invite and encourage families and caretakers to share about their culture, beliefs, and traditions that impact the child's education
- Actively teach and pursue student voice, choice, and ownership of their learning
- Work to remove barriers to learning by understanding the learner and offering equitable practices such as, but not limited to, scaffolding and varied assessments
- Teach students to advocate for themselves and their learning by providing a climate of trust and shared construction of learning

- Work to incorporate, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and media literacy into all aspects of planned learning experiences
- Conduct either formal or informal language profile
- Utilize media center and technology to assist in addressing growth in both Mother Tongue and second languages

Students commit to:

- Explore, pursue and put into practice the attributes of the IB Learner Profile
- Commit to advocating for needs for their learning, well-being, and belonging as well as for peers
- Reflect on and pursue personal inquiry and action
- Practice courageous pursuit of growth, goal setting and personal and collective achievement
- Utilize the approaches to learning to move understanding to from surface level to deeper level success criteria (SOLO Taxonomy)
- Commit to advocating for needs for their learning, well-being, and belonging as well as for peers
- Reflect on and pursue personal inquiry, action and success learning criteria
- Actively assess understanding and utilization of the skills offered within the approaches to learning
- Accept that mistakes are an expected part of the learning process
- Work to engage in learning from a variety of access points
- Honor personal and cultural identity through intentional and varied forms of communication
- Work to create climates of trust and support among peers and teachers
- Engage in open-minded thinking by both considering various perspectives and reacting with empathy
- Routinely reflect on progress, challenges, and action steps to exercise agency
- Act with integrity during all academic exchanges and sharing

- Recognize that language in all forms is essential for effective communication
- Honor cultural identities and diversity through the preservation of Mother Tongue as well as adopting a second language

Families and Caretakers commit to:

We believe that families and caretakers are active partners in our students' learning. We welcome and encourage this relationship through the following actions.

- Celebrate learning through reflecting on growth in all aspects of academic, behavioral, social and emotional pursuits
- Recognize the value in learning from mistakes and celebrate the pursuit of courageous learning
- Openly support and connect the attributes of the IB Learner Profile at home and share celebrations of action related to these
- Feel comfortable to share background, culture and beliefs to allow for all stakeholders to support learners
- Communicate with administration and staff concerning questions, comments, celebrations, and concerns related to their child that are solution centered
- Actively participate in communication, meetings, and conferences regarding their student (s)

- Upon registering, complete district-provided language profile
- Communicate with administration and/or family liaison desire for translation services
- Assist students in setting goals inside and outside of the school learning environment
- Recognize the value in learning from mistakes and celebrate the pursuit of courageous learning

Language Development Practices

Riffenburgh Elementary recognizes that language is essential to learning. Language is both expressive and receptive. The four domains under which we teach language are listening, reading (receptive) and speaking and writing (expressive). The primary instructional language is English, with the additional instruction devoted to Spanish language acquisition. Language instruction, both receptive and expressive occurs in every part of the learning day.

Within our transdisciplinary practices, all teachers are language teachers, and we use the following strategies for language instruction

- Language-rich learning environments

- Embedded use of structured literacy as outlined by the [Science of Reading](#)
- Use of Six Stages of Language Acquisition to identify strengths and needs of learner
- Inquiry-based language learning
- Use of objects, manipulatives, and models
- Collaborative learning spaces
- Read-alouds, music, visual ques, total physical response, choral response
- Explicit systematic use of the five research-based component of literacy instruction: phomenic awareness, phonics, speaking and reading fluency, speaking and reading vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension
- Collaboration and transdisciplinary discovery
- Self- assessment (reflections, summarizing, audio recording, written work, portfolios, journals, stream feeds, student led-conferences)
- Performance tasks
- Collection of evidence of student’s growth (SeeSaw portfolio, running records, DIBELS data, IB report cards, learning journals, learning stories, school to home/home to school communication)
- Routine opportunity for reflection
- Engaging in learning community in dialogue (conferences, student displays, professional learning communities)
- Individualized student outcome expectations
- Projects (technology applications, presentations of learning and action, analysis of action)

Assessment Accommodations

Accommodations for assessments in classrooms, as well as for state-mandated tests are regularly implemented by teachers and assessment proctors. Our school follows the district and state guidelines regarding Individualized Education Plans, Section 504 plans, MTSS Plans, and assessment accommodations and strategies. All assessment accommodations are based on individual needs.

Common accommodations include but are not limited to:

- extended time
- prior notice of tests and quizzes
- frequent check-in and reminders
- scribing
- small group environment
- 1:1 testing environment
- speech to text
- preferential seating
- written or visual instructions

- proctor read instructions and assessment items
- pre-arranged breaks
- use of hands-on tools
- integrated speech recognition technology
- variety of ways to demonstrate learning
- availability of assessment materials in Spanish
- alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive and language needs
- modifying the content and format of classroom assessments based on student needs

Legislation and Requirements

The following links detail local, state and federal legislation and requirements related to addressing the needs of diverse learners, including those identified as needing special services and support within and beyond the general classroom environment.

Currently, the State of Colorado requires the educators must demonstrate completion of training or professional development activities equivalent to 45 clock/contact hours or three semester hours in [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CLD\) Education](#).

In addition, Riffenburgh’s Educators in grades K-3 have completed READ ACT Endorsements to their licensing, qualifying them to teach Structured Literacy through the Science of Reading.

English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act	ELD District Resource
English Language Proficiency Act	Riffenburgh Kid Talk Protocol
Riffenburgh MTSS Flowchart	Colorado READ Act Overview

Resources

Riffenburgh provides relevant human, natural, built, and virtual resources to implement our Language Policy. Our school identifies and provides appropriate learning support.

[Poudre School District Resources](#)

[Colorado Department of Education](#)

[Stages of Language Acquisition](#)

In addition to all classroom teachers and specialists, a school counselor, a school psychologist, an English language Development Educator, Integrated Services Staff, an MTSS and Intervention Coordinator, Instructional Paraprofessionals, Gifted and Talented Educator, and Family Liasion Specialist are all available to assist with the diverse needs of our students.

Policy Purpose, Definition, Review, and Communication

The purpose of this document is to outline the language policy of Riffenburgh Elementary utilizing the guidelines in the *IB General Regulations: Primary Years Program*. This policy is constructed using input from Riffenburgh's Learning Community. It is a statement of purpose that outlines goals specific to language and its role in learning and teaching.

We define language as the key to communication, connection, creativity, and culture. By focusing on the receptive and expressive constructs of language, we can better solidify our community's climate as a collective source of knowledge, comfort, and growth.

This document and its contents are reviewed yearly. Input is collected from all stakeholders and presented to the IB Leadership Committee. Any proposed changes are articulated and agreed upon before revisions are made.

A formal review and revision of all policies will occur within the five-year IB program evaluation cycle or more frequently as needed. Collected input by all stakeholders, School Accountability Committee, Grade Level Teams, Specialists, Support Personnel, and Student Committee, will be used by Riffenburgh's IB Leadership Committee to update the policy.

All Riffenburgh policies can be accessed through Google Suite and are shared on the school website. School administrators and instructional staff are knowledgeable about the policies and can discuss the contents of the inclusion policy with parents.

Definitions of Terms

Access: The ability for students to participate in learning experiences.

Accommodation: The term used to describe an alteration of the environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual to gain access to content and/or complete learning tasks

Language Acquisition: The process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate.

Assessment: Effective assessment that achieves this purpose provides valuable information to understand what constitutes learning and how to support it, and is meaningful to all members of the learning community

Climate: The perceptions of a social environment that are shared by the learning community

Co-Construct: The practice of working with students to develop a shared understanding of what success looks like

Differentiate: To differentiate means to tailor instruction to meet individual needs, and to allow for flexible movement into and out of differentiating methods.

Diversity: The concept of diversity embraces the wide range of human characteristics used to mark or identify individual and group identities. These characteristics include but are not limited to, ethnicity, race, national origin, age, personality, sexual orientation, gender, class, religion, ability, and linguistic preferences

Engagement: Refers to educational interactions during which students are asked to apply approaches to learning to illicit agentic learning, exercising voice, choice, and ownership.

Equity: As a function of fairness, equity implies ensuring that people have what they need to participate in school life and reach their full potential. Equitable treatment involves eliminating barriers that prevent the full participation of all individuals.

Expressive Language: Expressive language is our ability to communicate our thoughts and feelings through words, gestures, signs, and/or symbols.

Inclusion: Taking every individual's experience and identity into account and creating conditions where all feel accepted, safe, empowered, supported, and affirmed.

Language Acquisition: The process by which individuals acquire, use, and understand either a mother tongue or another language

Receptive Language: Receptive language is the understanding of the information provided in a variety of ways such as sounds and words; movement and gestures; and signs and symbols.

Reflection: A process where learners describe their learning, how it changed, and how it might relate to future learning experiences

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