

**Scott Elementary School: A PYP Candidate School**  
**Language Policy**

**Language Philosophy**

At Scott Elementary,

- ❖ We believe language is central to learning and fundamental to communication.
- ❖ We believe language is the most significant connecting element across school curriculum and is a vital tool for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- ❖ We believe language is a vehicle for transdisciplinary learning and inquiry and we strive to ensure all students experience authentic language in all disciplines. We encourage learners to listen, think, discuss, and reflect on information, ideas, and issues within relevant, authentic context.
- ❖ We believe all teachers are teachers of language and are dedicated to continuously improving their language instruction.
- ❖ We believe language fosters learners' engagement within the world and allows learners to relate and accept responsibility to help create an improved and more peaceful world. We respect and honor intercultural awareness, new perspectives, curiosity, and an appreciation of our world's diversity.

**Language Profile**

At Scott Elementary PYP Candidate School, there are students from several cultures that represent 3 different languages. Within our student body, there are currently 37 students whose home language is a language other than English and 14 students are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). English as a Second Language (ESL) support is provided to 14 students. Currently, there are students that speak languages including Spanish and Vietnamese.

The language needs of our students are screened using a variety of assessments. Assessments include Woodcock-Munoz, Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) for grades K-2, Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) for grades K-5, Texas Early Mathematics Inventory (TEMI) for grades K-2, Temple ISD Assessments, and the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) for grades 3-5. Other methods used to identify the language needs of our students include Running Records, formative assessments, summative assessments, student/teacher conferences, teacher observations and conversations.

## **Language in the Classroom**

English is the language of instruction for all students, Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, at Scott Elementary. Language is integrated across the subject areas and throughout our transdisciplinary programme of inquiry (POI). The units of inquiry provide the students with opportunities to learn language, learn about language, and learn through language within an authentic context. The major expectations considered essential in language learning are identified by Temple Independent School District's language arts curriculum-Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Resource System (TEKS Resource System) and the PYP language scope and sequence document.

A variety of literacy strategies are implemented to promote language development and foster contextual English language instruction while cultivating written language (reading and writing), oral language (listening and speaking), and visual language (viewing and presenting).

### *Written Language (Reading and Writing)*

The written language of students at Scott Elementary is fostered utilizing the approach of Reading and Writing Workshops. Literature is read for enjoyment and is discussed, analyzed, compared, and contrasted. Students engage in shared reading, interactive reading, and read-alouds. Throughout this process, students utilize strategies to understand, interpret, and respond to text while making connections. Students are exposed to various genres of literature including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Scott students also have the opportunity to participate in reader's theatre.

Shared writing and guided writing groups are utilized to develop technical skills of writing, as well as explore various genres and styles of writing, writing for meaning, and self-expression. Student compositions include narrative, informative, persuasive, and poetic. Students also express their ideas and thoughts within their PYP Journals and their Writing Journals.

Classroom learning is differentiated in a variety of ways to grow the language of each student. Students are assessed using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Renaissance Reading Assessment to determine the student's instructional level in reading. With the use of DRA and the Fountas and Pinnell system, guided reading groups are formed to meet the language needs of each student and literacy centers are designed to strengthen language skills. Classroom libraries are present within each classroom and our school library is rich in literature in order to build and equip students with the tools to become life-long readers and writers who can communicate their thoughts. Computer-based literacy programs including Headsprout, RazKids, Waterford, and Study Island, are also available within our classrooms and school computer lab in order to assist the language development of our students.

### *Oral Language (Listening and Speaking)*

The oral language development of our students at Scott enables students to apply and communicate their understanding in learning through oral expressions using numerous hands-on learning experiences such as songs, stories, listening stations, computer-based literacy programs, cooperative learning, and presentations. Teachers consistently emphasize vocabulary in all content areas utilizing anchor charts and vocabulary journals. The school announcements also provide a venue for oral language expression featuring a vocabulary segment highlighting synonyms and antonyms brainstormed by the student body, as well as greetings in the German language.

### *Visual Language (Viewing and Presenting)*

A common goal at Scott Elementary is to create a print rich environment while filling the hallways, classrooms, library, and computer lab with student-created works that express and communicate their understanding in language learning in response to all subject areas and the programme of inquiry. Students not only have the opportunity to view learning across the campus, but also the chance to share language learning in the form of presentations, the online school paper-The Scottie Scoop, or the school newspaper designed by Journalism Club.

### **Mother Tongue Support**

The faculty and staff at Scott Elementary embrace the diverse language backgrounds of our students and believe the numerous backgrounds that fill our campus enrich our school family and should be celebrated. We believe that the families within our school community who speak another language bring an added perspective to learning. We value and encourage their involvement.

All families enrolling their child at Scott Elementary complete a Home Language Survey in order to indicate whether or not their child's primary language is one other than English and whether or not the dominant language in their child's home is one other than English. If either response is affirmative, English Language Learner (ELL) services are provided which include:

- Screening the student to determine language abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing,
- Placing the student in an English as a Second Language (ESL) certified teacher's classroom
- Assessing the progress of the student annually in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with the administration of the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

- Conducting annual Language Proficient Assessment Committees (LPAC) to determine the success of the student
- Students are exited from the ESL program when they achieve language proficiency demonstrated by TELPAS and STAAR performances ; however, the students will continue to be monitored by the district as they continue their education

In order to support and promote both second language acquisition, as well as the mother tongue language, Scott Elementary incorporates music from different cultures in academic and performance settings and invites guest speakers from the community. Our school library is striving to provide library books in a variety of languages and aspires to build upon this collection. Families are encouraged to read, write, and speak in their mother tongue and if available, a translation of school information is sent home and translators are provided at parent conferences. Vocabulary is also developed and reinforced through the utilization of technological translation assistance.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Scott Elementary attend German class two to three times a week, depending on the rotation schedule, for 50 minutes. Reading, writing, and oral language practices, as well as, the learner profile, attitudes, and the programme of inquiry are supported by the German teacher when appropriate. While engaged in German instruction, students are exposed to holistic learning through an input method called TPRS, Total Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling. Students learn German while playing games, singing songs, dancing, reading stories, and through consistent review and repetition. Learning the German language also supports the native language of our students while strengthening grammar mechanics and parts of speech.

Throughout their German language learning experiences, Scott students develop and build an awareness and appreciation of the German culture and regions. Similarities and differences are explored among the culture of the students and compared to the German culture while connections are made within history, traditions, and conventions.

School involvement across campus includes labeling of common areas and classroom items, building upon our German literature collection within the Scott library, and integrating German greetings and birthday wishes within our school announcements. Scottie students and staff are also applying German vocabulary in everyday learning, including common words and polite phrases. The students are able to demonstrate their learning to the school and community with performances in German throughout the year during Family Nights. It is an aspiration for the

future that a German club will form and be sponsored by our German teacher, meeting for an hour after school once a week.

### **Support for Language Development**

Scott PYP Candidate School provides a plethora of support services to assist students in their language development. Opportunities and services at Scott include:

#### *Special Education*

Special Education services are provided to the students at Scott who have met the eligibility guidelines. The classroom teacher and special education department staff supports these students. The students' IEPs are implemented by both the special education teacher and the classroom teacher within the students' least restrictive environment. Services are provided within the students' general education classroom or within the special education classroom depending on the needs of the students.

#### *Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)*

Students at Scott have the opportunity to be identified as Gifted and Talented. Kindergarten students are identified through a prescreening and nomination process including the administration of the Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI). Once identified as GT, Kindergarten students receive services from their classroom teachers beginning March 1<sup>st</sup>. Currently, students identified as GT in grades 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> are bused once a week with their grade-level peers to the Little Wildcat GATE Center at Meredith-Dunbar Early Childhood Center Academy within the Temple Independent School District. Students who participate in services designed for GT students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment.

#### *Response to Intervention (RtI)*

Students at Scott who struggle with language skills and need additional support or an early intervention are discussed in an RtI meeting. With the collaboration of classroom teachers, administrators, the instructional coach, and at times the special education teachers, a plan is developed to help the students become successful. Once a plan is established, students begin working in small groups before, during, and after school throughout the week. The students are also supported through a computer time that utilizes HeadSprout and the Waterford software programs. Kindergarten and first grade students receive additional support through Foundations, a phonics program, twice a week; while eligible second graders receive instruction in Foundations from the literacy coach. Every three weeks, classroom teachers discuss and monitor the goals and progress of each student and continue to assess students weekly.

### *Literacy Coach*

Scott PYP is fortunate to have a part-time literacy coach who meets every day with students struggling with their language development. Administrators and teachers meet to decide which students will benefit from meeting with the literacy coach based on data and the needs of the students. For the entire school year, the literacy coach teaches four classes utilizing the phonics program known as Foundations. Second graders make up three of the classes, while first graders make up the fourth class. Students that receive instruction from the literacy coach are monitored and tested on a weekly basis with DIBELS Assessment.

### *Technology*

Technology at Scott is continuing to flourish and progress resulting in the support of language development. Currently, students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> have chrome books available at a 2:1 ratio. Students in grades K-2 have at their fingertips the use of iPads. Each classroom has a teacher-presentation station that contains a document camera, laptop, projector, and screen allowing the students opportunities to engage within the learning process. All students at Scott also have the chance to participate in developing and sharing their knowledge through the use of a SmartBoard and a class size computer lab. Computer software available to grades K-2 includes: Focus Science, Raz Kids, ReadingA-Z, Reflex Math, and Envisions. Grades 3-5 software includes: Study Island, Focus Science, Think Through Math, Raz Kids, ReadingA-Z, Reflex Math, and Google Ideas. Additional technology programs comprise of Renaissance STAR Reading, Early Literacy, and Math, Typing Pal, HeadSprout, Science Starters, Read Naturally, Waterford, PebbleGo, United Streaming, Culture Gram, BrainPop, BrainPop Jr, Encyclopedia Britannica, Think Central, and Istation.

### *Library*

The librarian at Scott meets once each grading period with the PYP Coordinator and specials teachers from music, art, and physical education to review grade level planners and discuss ways they can reinforce grade level units of inquiry within their subject area. The librarian and specials teachers notate their plans and ideas on their Collaboration Documents that are shared via GoogleDocs with Scott staff. The librarian also collaborates with grade level teachers in order to support the students' needs in various areas including writing book reviews, introducing E-books in K-2, and introducing and engaging the students within the research model known as the Super 3 for grades K-5 students. The Scott library houses a large and growing collection of books, periodicals, reference materials, and online databases, which are not only maintained by the Scott librarian, but also by several students who applied and were selected as librarian assistants.

### *Para-Professionals*

At Scott, we are fortunate to have several para-professionals who work closely with our students and teachers inside and outside of the classroom. The para-professionals assist with small groups during school by providing extra support and supplemental lessons designed by the classroom teachers that aid students in achieving their learning goals in order for them to be successful within the classroom. Throughout instruction of small groups, the para-professionals monitor the students' progress and share results with the classroom teachers.

### *Skills Trainer*

The skills trainer at Scott visits with students that need to reinforce and strengthen social skills and oral language. During their time together, the trainer engages the students in activities and discussions that give the students the opportunity to interact with others while practicing and demonstrating politeness, sharing, and conversation skills.

### *Wildcat Mentors*

Scott 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers nominate students to be mentees based on individual needs such as the presence of a positive role model. Community members mentor their 5<sup>th</sup> graders 1-2 times a week, developing one-on-one relationships while they play games, eat, and visit. As a result, the support and efforts empower students to make positive choices that enable them to maximize their personal potential.

### *Peer Assisted Leadership Support (PALS)*

Beginning this school year, Temple High School 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be coming over to Scott PYP Candidate School to tutor 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who qualify based on their academic needs. PALS will focus their tutorial efforts on reading and math content areas.

### *Peer-Tutoring Groups*

Another programme beginning this year are Scott peer-tutoring groups. Fifth and fourth grade students who are strong academically and have excellent marks in the areas of conduct and work habits will be selected to tutor students in the younger grade levels needing one-on-one assistance, review, and repetition in the areas of reading and math.

### *Lunch Bunch*

The Lunch Bunch programme is offered school wide to Scottie students that are requested to join by teachers, parents, or the counselor. During their lunch times, students have the opportunity to join the counselor for lunch in her office and share quality time together. While

together, students initiate activities including playing games, a lunch theatre, or visiting about the day and sharing their student goals.

### **Parent Support for Language Development**

Scott offers numerous opportunities for parents to support the language development of their children. Scott honors an open-door policy and welcomes parents before the school year begins to a Meet-the-Teacher Night. During this time, expectations are shared and families and teachers begin building relationships. Qualifying families also have the chance to participate in the Backpack Programme and receive parent-training tips that will assist them in working with their children throughout the school year. Scott embraces the community again and again during scheduled Scott Family Nights each grading period, focusing on a different content area each family night. Parents are able to engage in learning experiences with their children and are able to take home games and activities that reinforce content area skills and strategies at home. During the month of October, teachers schedule one-on-one time with parents in the form of Parent-Teacher Conferences in order to review expectations, upcoming assessments, and the student's progress up to this point in time of the school year. Parents are also encouraged to schedule additional Parent-Teacher-Conferences as the need arises.

During the school year, teachers send home weekly newsletters highlighting the week's learning and special announcements, while the principal sends out monthly newsletters outlining the month's events and important information. Fourth and fifth grade students take the responsibility of filling out their personal weekly planners and communicate the information with their parents and teachers. Parents also have available the digital marquee and the online Scottie Scoop newspaper to find out more about Scott happenings.

Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Special Education teachers send home book bags and 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> and Special Education teachers send home guided reading homework for parents to read with their children in order to continue strengthening reading skills. Our librarian launches two Scholastic Book Fairs each year to reach out to families and provide them with the chance to build their home libraries and to get reading materials into the students' hands. Scott celebrates the hard work of the parents and students with mid-semester and end-of-the-year award assemblies, Citizen of the Month Luncheons, Great Kid Award, and visits from the Incentive Cart. At the end of the year, Scott PYP Candidate School invites families to attend our Portfolio Night where students have the opportunity to share their portfolios with their families while presenting their learning experiences from the school year.

### **Professional Development**

The Temple Independent School District and Scott PYP Candidate School offer an abundance of professional development opportunities for their staff. Board and administration support the

continuing education of the teachers and it is the main obligation of the teachers to take advantage of the trainings and workshops that take place in the summer and during each school year. Staff members are required to receive 12 professional development hours offered by the school district each school year. Additional professional development opportunities include TISD's Excellence in Education Conference, PYP Category 1 and 2 trainings, GT and ESL trainings, Googlet training, and various in-service trainings. During school hours, teachers participate in planner writing each grading period, monthly SpEd cadre meetings, monthly librarian meetings, monthly Inspiring Instruction, and weekly PLCs and grade level planning meetings. Each week, teachers also attend staff meetings after school and engage in various trainings including instruction in technology, writing, rigor, and math vocabulary and strategies. At this time, staff have received their Category 1 Making the PYP Happen training and administrators have received both Category 1: Making the PYP Happen and Category 2: Collaborative Planning trainings. The PYP Coordinator currently attends TIBS meetings once a year and participates in the one-day workshop that is offered during this conference. Resources are available to the staff by the Instructional Coach and PYP Coordinator including the use of the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC).

### **Language Policy Implementation and Review Process**

It is the responsibility of the faculty and staff at Scott PYP Candidate School to carry out the expectations within the Scott Language Policy. Teachers will be held accountable through informal walk-throughs and their formal observation following the guidelines of the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) each year. The Scott Language Policy will be electronically posted on the school website, posted on the school bulletin board, and distributed to Scott staff. Review of the Scott Language Policy will take place each August.

Our 2014-2015 Scott Leadership Committee members created the Scott PYP Candidate School Language Policy. The following people formed this committee:

Donna Ward, *Head of School*

Chrystal Thomas, *Assistant Principal*

Vanessa Berna, *Primary Years Programme Coordinator*

Carlinda Rex, *Instructional Coach*

Leigh Nave, *Counselor*

Isabel Hernandez, *Kindergarten Team Leader*

Kim Epperson, *First Grade Team Leader*

Tracy Meyer, *Second Grade Team Leader*

Lindsey Fussell, *Third Grade Team Leader*

Quinessa Williams, *Fourth Grade Team Leader*

Errin Allen, *Fifth Grade Team Leader*

Stephanie Fritz, *Special Education Teacher*

Mary Barr, *Librarian*

### **Resources**

The following resources were used in the construction of the Scott PYP Candidate School Language Policy:

- Guidelines for developing a school language policy, IBO, 2008
- Making the PYP Happen, A curriculum framework for international education, IBO, December 2009
- Language Scope and Sequence, IBO, 2009
- Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes, IBO, 2009
- IB learner profile booklet, IBO, 2009
- Language policy examples from various PYP Schools