



## Primary Years Programme: Language Policy and Agreements

### Our Beliefs and Values:

- Language is the foundation of learning. Language acquisition occurs most readily in meaningful contexts where scholars are using speech, writing, vocabulary, reading and listening skills to engage with the world around them.
- All Uplift Hampton Preparatory teachers are responsible for supporting language acquisition and development for every scholar in our building. We believe there are opportunities to develop language skills in every lesson to help streamline all content and subject material.
- Children best increase their language skills through learning in a print-rich environment with explicit vocabulary talk. Also, the inclusion of visual aids to assist with the process of language learning for all scholars.
- Scholar talk, inquiry and discussion with both teachers and peers play a vital role in development and refinement of language skills. Development in speaking abilities must include both academic and social conversational skills.
- The first language of a child is to be respected, valued, and utilized as a culturally diverse component of the school experience.
- *Uplift Hampton Preparatory has made a commitment to closing the gap with regards to literacy through culturally rich experiences and with the merging of our multicultural population.*

### Languages of Instruction:

#### Classroom Instruction:

- The primary language of instruction at Uplift Hampton Preparatory is English. Scholars are instructed in all areas of the language arts, with an emphasis on reading and writing. Students are encouraged to bring their heritage into the classroom, as the lives of each of our scholars provide a unique perspective to our learning. It is an expectation that all classrooms are language-rich, including anchor charts, labels, student work, teacher models, word walls and authentic academic text.

- Beginning in kindergarten, scholars have a specials class where they learn Spanish. Spanish is the second language of choice for Uplift Hampton Preparatory and scholars participate in this class all the way through fifth grade. The majority of the instruction is given in English, while Spanish vocabulary and phrases are learned and practiced. Classroom routines are often spoken in Spanish and scholars are able to understand, comply, and respond to these repeated practices.

#### ESL Instruction:

- At the start of the year, all scholars are provided with a Home Language survey. Based on the responses to the survey, scholars are screened for language proficiency under the requirements of the Texas Education Code. Scholars that qualify for additional services are supported by our ESL coordinator and/or teachers to meet their individual language acquisition and development needs. All Uplift Hampton Preparatory teachers are required to be ESL certified by the 2016-2017 school year. Assessment of ESL scholars' progress is included in the guidelines of our assessment policy.

#### Scope and Sequence:

- The scope and sequence of our language program is determined and written by our Spanish coordinator and instructor. As an entity, they have collaborated with classroom teachers, administration, and experts in the field to create a policy that meets both the IBO and state/national standards. We are required to abide by the aforementioned document.

#### Practices that Reflect Our Beliefs:

- Each morning, scholars are greeted upon arrival to school and taught to return the greeting and make eye contact with teachers on duty. This develops their social and conversational skills, while beginning their day on a positive note.
- As small group instruction is a priority at our school, scholars are expected to be engaging in guided reading, shared reading and independent reading opportunities.
- Teachers are expected to model and reinforce the importance of answering and addressing others using complete sentences. All staff actively models and fosters a respect for appropriate language, academic language and conversational skills.
- Students are expected to work collaboratively to expand upon their oral communication, listening, and team building skills. This could include working on collective projects, and through morning meetings.

- Reading is taught using both fiction and non-fiction passages in a variety of genres, where scholars are given opportunities to gather information from multi-media resources. Reading is emphasized as an activity for both academic learning, as well as pleasure. Scholars often complete reading logs to track their exposure to print outside of the classroom.
- Formative language assessments are used in class frequently. These assessments include class discussion and debate, writing sample analysis, writing journals, self and peer assessments, etc.
- We value the process of language development as well as the completed product. We recognize brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing as integral components of the writing process and assess them as such.
- Teachers follow a lesson planning structure where they are encouraged to use CTL plans which include question stems, exemplar student responses, English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and a variety of instructional strategies. Anticipating ideal responses assists teachers in holding scholars to high expectations during class discussion.
- Scholars communicate their understanding verbally as well as in writing. They are given opportunities to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas throughout the school day using a variety of platforms. These include but are not limited to turn and talks, presentations, call and response and written expression.
- As our population is diverse and scholars often have a home language other than English, our ESL coordinator has open office hours on the first Monday of every month. This provides one on one opportunities to address teacher questions regarding how to best support ELL scholars in their classrooms.
- Scholars are exposed to talk of higher education in morning meeting.
- Staff Notes and Tuesday Newsletter are sent each week to staff and parents to communicate upcoming school events, IB instructional focus areas, behavior expectations, etc.
- Our library contains books that address almost all cultures represented in our population. We continue to work towards gathering books written in the native languages of our vast majority of scholars.

## Roles and Responsibilities:

- The leadership team, with input from stakeholders, are responsible for developing and refining the language policy on a yearly basis. In addition, it is a document that is open to be amended as the need arises throughout the year.

- The Director is responsible for communicating the language policy to our staff and community. The leadership team is responsible for ensuring that the language policy is being implemented.
- All teachers are responsible for ensuring that their classroom is a language-rich environment where language acquisition and development are an instructional priority.
- The leadership team is responsible for conducting regular observations of teachers and classrooms. This ensures that best practices are being used to fulfill the stipulations of our language and are resulting in scholar language development.

## Assessment:

- Language is assessed as outlined in our assessment policy.

## Professional Development:

- Professional Development is a priority at our school. Uplift Hampton Preparatory hosts formal, mandatory professional development sessions at a minimum of twice per month. Our staff has opportunities to further their development outside of our campus by attending IB as well as other trainings in support of the language arts.
- Our staff receives differentiated professional development for guided reading, and opportunities for off-campus PD are supported and highly encouraged. Opportunities such as these have been attended for writing workshops, creating lessons with attention to the ELPS in math and sciences, inquiry based learning strategies, questioning skills, and more.
- We believe in learning from each other as a staff, and therefore ask teachers who have attended an off-campus PD to present their newly acquired knowledge at an upcoming school PD session.
- Individualized professional development for staff is given through debrief meetings with the leadership at least once per month.
- Uplift Hampton staff has an opportunity to further their language development through ESL office hours.
- Teaching Excellence, our alternative certification program, opens their Professional Learning Saturday's to all staff members. Often, sessions are provided that directly address language development.
- Weekly staff notes provide additional resources for individual teacher development.
- Network-wide PD includes: 1-2 weeks of training and professional development prior to each school year, a Quarterly Collaboration Day with all primary campuses, and observations of teachers both within and outside of our school.

## Resources:

- The curriculum resources are all in English, yet the content encompasses a variety of cultures and global experiences. Our leadership team and staff come together each year to determine which resources to purchase with funding based upon the needs of our scholars.
- BAS testing should be utilized to monitor oral fluency and comprehension.
- Novel studies are to be utilized in grades 3-5 to integrate foundational reading and listening skills, upon which writing can be extracted and developed from related prompts.
- The language curriculum used as a campus is Journeys. It is a comprehensive curriculum that includes all aspects of balanced literacy. All teachers have access to leveled readers through this curriculum and use them during small group instruction. Journeys also provides specific strategies to assist teachers to support scholars who are English language learners.
- Go Math is a math program used by kindergarten through fifth grades. There is a math dictionary for scholars to look up math-specific words. Definitions are provided in English and Spanish. Scholars also have the opportunity to use email through RM.
- Supplemental Resources available to classrooms: Time for Kids, Brainpop Jr., LLI, school library, (an online database for scholars to explore a variety of nonfiction texts for research and personal enjoyment), etc.