

# Kit Carson International Academy

## Language Policy

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### Carson Mission Statement:

Working together as a team, students, parents, staff, and the community of Kit Carson International Academy is committed to providing a rigorous, innovative, respectful and diverse learning environment that promotes academic excellence, intercultural understanding and social success. Through inquiry-based learning, we will produce internationally minded learners who are excited about achieving their goals.

### Beliefs:

At Kit Carson International Academy, we believe language acquisition is foundational to learning. The acquisition of language is paramount to all learning. Every teacher is a language teacher. Language skills and vocabulary must be developed and reinforced through interdisciplinary work both at home and at school. Language is a tool that is central for social interaction, self-expression, and communication. The acquisition of more than one language is enriching for personal growth and facilitates international understanding. Oral language is the foundation of effective communication.

### Language is Central to Learning:

We believe students learn best when they have ample opportunities to speak, read, write, listen, view and think critically. They make connections between subject matter, prior knowledge and life experiences. They engage in active, cooperative, and respectful environment. Building language skills in context through applicable and relevant lessons, students present ideas effectively in multiple formats appropriate to audience and task. They analyze and respond critically to communication models with developed criteria for quality work. Students take responsibility through self-assessment, feedback, and reflecting. High and clearly stated expectations encourage students to access and utilize information from primary and secondary sources. Students engage in higher-order cognitive skills and critical thinking. Authentic discussions provide practice and develop language skills for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Language learning occurs throughout the day, including specialists.

- Science or social studies-based reading materials are aligned to the current planner as a base for constructing knowledge.
- Authentic rich literature is used to promote vocabulary, global awareness, and connect to prior knowledge.
- Teachers utilize small group settings to differentiate instruction, promote engagement, and support struggling readers.
- Writing in the content areas promote use of academic vocabulary and varied text structures for authentic purposes.
- Engagement activities, close reads, classroom discussions and summative assessment encourage academic language practice and speaking skills.

### Language Acquisition:

The process of acquiring a second language parallels the acquisitions of the mother tongue. In both situations, learners move through phases, acquiring skills and knowledge. At Kit Carson, we believe it is imperative that we create classrooms that support all students' language learning, not just additional language learners.

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### Language Acquisition Cont':

Spanish language instruction is offered to all 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Being widely spoken, the Language B choice affords our students with educational, recreational and business opportunities.

The process of implementing a second language program begins with providing different learning modalities. Realia based Spanish flashcards help with visual learners. Spanish grammar is similar to English and provides reinforcement to the English language. The Spanish specialist, who is fluent in both English and Spanish, assesses students. Students attend second language classes semi-weekly.

Student achievement in Spanish is based on the number of years the learner has been in the program, student willingness to learn and ability. In the Spanish classes, we expect all children to demonstrate movement through language phases in the acquisition and advancement of Spanish, just as we expect all students to demonstrate progress in English literacy skills.

The learning of language is integrated into the program of inquiry by ensuring the literacy is a transdisciplinary skill in all grade-level planners. The Spanish specialist incorporates the planner themes into the Spanish curriculum as much as possible. The specialists meet with grade level teachers to articulate the planner central ideas and inquiries so that cross-curricula learning will take place.

All classrooms at Kit Carson International Academy are supportive of multiple language learners beginning with providing a safe learning environment. Teachers provide support and help build confidence in students by responding positively to students' first language and culture. Students engage in interactions with peers to provide a wide range of language use.

### Development & Maintenance of Mother Tongue:

Kit Carson provides language in instruction to all students in English in a regular classroom setting. Teachers are provided with diverse learning materials and strategies. In order to build a literature rich environment, classrooms use multimedia and multiple sources of reading.

All research into language development supports the notion of language use as a major principle of language development. We advocate that students use their first language during classroom activities where they are attempting to make connections to the material. In classrooms where the teacher is fluent in the language of the students, we advocate for the teacher to use the mother tongue as a tool for learning.

The school acknowledges the vital importance of the maintenance and development of the mother tongue as a foundation for virtually all other learning. Resources within the school must be appropriate to students' experiences and needs. The Carson library maintains a collection of Spanish and Mandarin books. These books are available for students, staff, and community members.

A team of special education teachers both Resource and GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) work with the classroom teachers to provide access to the curriculum for all students. Additional resources such as bilingual books and leveled libraries are available to teachers.

*"Academic Excellence for, Every Student, Every Day!"*

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### Professional Development:

At Kit Carson International Academy, teachers are receiving professional development on many aspects of language acquisition and development. A leveled library and related assessments are offered as well as differentiation methods. The staff is attending trainings on the phases and support of additional language learners. As further support, the staff has complete pedagogical studies and book studies within the IB program. Teachers use Professional Learning Community (PLC) structures twice a month to reflect on current practice, student mastery and develop lessons as well as assessments. Planned professional development includes strategies to support additional language learners, struggling readers and extending lessons for high-achieving students. Elective professional developments are offered to teachers regarding IB instructional methods of inquiry to align with planners and promote differentiation. The district and state also offer professional development in the content areas as well as diversity.

### Family Involvement:

Families are the first language experience for children. As the foundation for language learning, families are encouraged to promote and support literacy. Students are encouraged to practice their mother tongue at home, in conversation and literacy activities. Spanish is also encouraged for use at home.

Newsletters, websites, parent meetings, and parent link are used to involve parents. Additional Title I meetings are held monthly to model literacy and math activities parents can use at home. These meetings as well as other methods to communication are provided in English and Spanish. The website provides translation of school news and updates in almost 100 languages. School communication to parents, including the school newsletter and curriculum resources, is distributed in both Spanish and English.

Essential information regarding literacy is represented during IB inquiry nights. These nights promote language across the disciplines and into the community. Families explore novel ways that language plays a role in all aspects of global mindedness. Exhibition, showcases, and family nights allow families to engage in PYP activities using language learning. Family Engagement Sessions are scheduled monthly for preschool parents. Family training promotes literacy in activities for daily living.

Families also have opportunities to volunteer at the school and serve as advisors to the school. Bilingual Spanish staff members attend and facilitate language support at varied meetings and events. They also support student-led conferences.

*Established 2017-2018  
Updated 2019-2020*

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