Albert Einstein Academies Charter Elementary School

Language Policy 2020-2021

Teaching our children today to advance our shared humanity tomorrow

What is the Purpose of the Language Policy?
- Achieve a common understanding of our aims and objectives for language learning and teaching
- Explain how to meet the diverse needs of our students in their language acquisition
- Create a working document that will help guide current and new staff in their practices
- Convey the Albert Einstein Academy Charter Elementary School (AEACES) language philosophy and program to parents
- Create a common language and understanding of the language programs offered at AEACES
- Communicate how the mission of AEACES is intertwined with language acquisition

Language Philosophy
At AEACES, all teachers are teachers of language and all students are language learners. Each student has his or her own linguistic background which makes unique contributions to our learning community as a whole; recognizing this is crucial for defining the cognitive development of a student and maintaining his or her cultural identity. We make a commitment to our students and parents to provide a learning community that promotes and supports language development in a multilingual environment, fostering international-mindedness, while encouraging and supporting a community of communicators. We use language as a tool to help learners interpret the world around them. AEA emphasizes learning through language. Language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating and plays a central role in the curriculum. To create a unique, multilingual learning environment and to foster global awareness and understanding, we introduce a second language in the primary grades via a dual immersion setting. We do so by bringing minority* language speakers (German speakers), majority* language speakers (English speakers), and English language learners whose home language differs from English or German together, to learn from and with each other in an integrated setting. Each student thus becomes a teacher and a learner.

* The minority language is the language other than the one spoken by the majority of people in the given regional or national context. The majority language is the language spoken by the majority of people in the given regional or national context.

Revised 2020
AEACES also offers a non-immersion option for students in grades 3-5 who are already enrolled in the school and request placement in these classes or who enter the school without German language skills in the upper grades. This allows families some flexibility in the level of additional language instruction they want for their child and provides students the benefits of learning an additional language regardless of when they enter the school.

**Research Supporting AEACES Language Philosophy**

The results of many studies suggest that multilingualism positively affects both intellectual and linguistic progress. These studies have reported that bilingual children exhibit a greater sensitivity to linguistic meanings and are more flexible in their thinking than are monolingual children. (*Cummins and Swain, 1986; Hakuta and Diaz, 1985; Ricciardelli, 1989*). Bilingual children generally perform better on tasks that call for creativity and problem solving. (*Margarita Calderon, Designing Bilingual Programs, 2003*). In addition, multilingualism offers many socio-cultural and economic benefits. Individuals who speak, read, and understand more than one language can communicate with more people, read more literature and can adapt well to a wide range of cultural backgrounds. (*Sandy Cutshall for Educational Leadership, Volume 4, 2005*). They are able to respect the values, customs and ways of viewing the world of speakers of other languages and their communities. (*Margarita Calderon, Designing Bilingual Programs, 2003*). Learning to communicate in a variety of ways in more than one language is fundamental to the development of intercultural understanding. (*What is an IB Education?, 2013*)

**School Profile**

**Primary Years Program K-5**

**Dual-Immersion German and English in Kindergarten - Fifth Grade**

In a dual-immersion classroom at AEACES our goal is to provide half of all instruction in English, and the other half in German. This enables students to participate in learning, while gaining confidence in a new language. Students are given the opportunity to engage with the core curriculum while developing proficiency in the new language.

**Practices: Dual Immersion Program**

- The minority and majority language are both used as the vehicle of instruction. In grades Kindergarten through fifth, we aim to deliver 50% of instruction in the minority language (German) and 50% in the majority language (English).
- Subject content is taught in both languages with a rotating model of one-week English immersion, one-week German immersion. Math is an exception when English is needed to access the Math Program “GO Math” which is not available in German.
- Language is seen as a trans-disciplinary element throughout the curriculum.

*Revised 2020*
There is consistent collaboration between teaching team partners to assure transfer of knowledge from one week to the next and to assure full curriculum coverage.

English and German language teams meet regularly to discuss and plan for instruction in subjects taught in both languages.

Professional development is provided in language acquisition.

Grade-level teaching teams meet regularly to discuss grade-level specific subjects, e.g. literacy development across languages.

Language exchanges provide opportunities for students to get exposure to both languages in every instructional week.

Differentiated instruction methods are used in both languages to address the different language levels.

The classroom environment is print rich.

Oral language practice is an important part of the language learning process and students are provided with multiple opportunities for listening and speaking.

Teachers approach language instruction through a balanced literacy model, including: speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Cultural celebrations and events are organized to foster exposure to the German language, embrace international-mindedness, and honor home languages.

Curriculum across all language instruction is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and IBPYP Standards and Practices.

German language acquisition is supported weekly through music in grade K-3.

Non-Immersion 3rd-5th grade:
Students in the Non-immersion classes will receive the same IBPYP curriculum as students in our immersion classes, but will mainly do so through the majority language (English). In addition, they will receive German as additional language instruction, which includes four, fifty-minute lessons per week.

Practices: Non-Immersion

- German language instruction is targeted to students' skill levels in a differentiated instruction model.
- Instruction focuses on exploring culture and building language skills through speaking, listening, reading, writing and visual interpretation activities.
- Students learn through German songs, games, and role plays as well as through individual and group projects.
Assessment:

The purpose of assessment in language acquisition is to determine students’ strengths and growth areas, guide meaningful instruction, improve student learning, and inform stakeholders.

- Students are given the opportunity to creatively demonstrate their language knowledge via a variety of mediums: oral presentations, exhibitions, performances, and multimedia presentations in both languages.
- Multiple standard measures to assess student language proficiency are used in grades K-5.
- At the end of 5th grade, immersion students participate in the German language diploma A2 level, and non-immersion students participate in the German language diploma A1 level. These exams assess German language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Student Support:

To support German language learners, AEACES provides a variety of programs and resources.

- German tutoring program during school hours
- German through Music program K-3
- German intern teacher program to support German immersion and non-immersion teachers in the classroom
- Summer school opportunities for students new to the German language or in need of additional support
- Grade level and teacher websites
- German resource website with resources for students and families.
- The library media center contains books in many of our students’ home language including books that explore culture and language. Students have access to a wide variety of media in the majority, minority, and home language: books, audio books, magazines, movies, music, and online resources.

To support English Language Learners, AEACES provides the following resources:

- Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies to support English Language Development and provide access to curriculum content
- Classroom differentiation
- Small group tier 2 pull out support
- Spanish and American Sign Language translation for all live events and schoolwide electronic forms of communication
- Translators for conferences, SST, and IEP meetings

Staff Support:

To support German language teachers, AEACES has developed ongoing structures and systems.

Revised 2020
- German intern teacher program supports differentiated instruction.
- German music teacher supports vocabulary development through songs.
- Teachers participate in professional development related to majority and minority language teaching.
- German Team Meetings
- Collaboration about Language Continuum with Middle and High school language teachers with respect to language curriculum, assessment, and preparation for language exams.

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