

York Academy Regional Charter School

School Language Policy

School Mission and Vision Statement

With an unrelenting focus on academic excellence, the York Academy Regional Charter School challenges students in a diverse learning environment which opens doors for growth, opportunity, and global citizenship.

Students of the York Academy Regional Charter School will experience an extraordinary educational program through:

- an individualized academic experience, shaped by a transdisciplinary approach that challenges and prepared them to effectively advance to the next stage of life
- a respect and appreciation of people from different cultures, religions, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds
- an intrinsic desire to always strive to meet the high expectations they have set for themselves no matter what their goals
- the confidence to pursue their dreams

Statement of Philosophy

At York Academy Regional Charter School, we believe that language is the building block for learning. Language enables children to take in knowledge and express themselves and what they have learned. Children utilize language to communicate with their peers as role models for younger children and to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained to adults in the school environment as well as the community.

We view language as the universal instrument that ties our children to people of all cultures and backgrounds. At York Academy, students participate in a challenging language program in which English is the primary language of instruction and Spanish is the second language taught. We use language to assess students' understanding of each content area taught. Communication standards are enhanced through reading, writing, listening, speaking, researching, and presenting.

We believe students learn best if they are provided with opportunities to:

- reflect on their learning
- self-assess in each discipline
- write across the curriculum
- participate in reading programs such as weekly book clubs and independent reading logs
- use music and art to increase vocabulary and help language acquisition
- reflect on language through comparisons with foreign language

We believe students learn best when teachers:

- use morning messages to stimulate curiosity
- present language through meaningful authentic context
- integrate language into other subject areas
- assist students in discovering various language structures
- recognize and respect the different ways in which students express themselves, including but not limited to, music, art, conversations, discussions, debates
- provide students with a print rich environment which helps advance their language development
- support the development of positive attitudes toward improving communication skills
- provides challenges to students allowing them opportunities to reach their full potential through language development
- acknowledge differences in developmental stages, learning styles, and previous language experiences
- use a wide range of teaching and assessment strategies

To facilitate language instruction teachers will:

- implement a literacy program
- serve as facilitators
- implement their transdisciplinary units of study
- engage students in cooperative discussions
- model effective reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills
- provide students opportunities to research
- provide students opportunities to make presentations
- communicate and express their feelings and opinions and encourage others to do the same in the mother tongue
- communicate and express their feelings and opinions and encourage others to do the same in the second language
- encourage parental and community involvement
- publish student work

Mother Tongue Support

The students at York Academy Regional Charter School are predominantly English and Spanish speaking in their homes. Only 2% of the student population has a mother tongue other than

English or Spanish.

York Academy provides support for those students in the following ways:

- Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP): A certified ESL Program Specialist supports students through pull-out small group instruction and in-class assistance.
- Library Resources: The school library is limited in resources for language other than English; however, the Academy is a part of the York County Library System and students have access to all of their print and digital resources which are available in a variety of languages.
- York County has a large Spanish speaking population and students are provided with opportunities to practice their second language through different community projects.
- York Heritage Trust enables our school, students, and parents to explore the history, people, and culture of York County, the state of Pennsylvania and nation.

Learning Spanish as a Second Language

York Academy provides second language instruction to all students in Spanish beginning in Kindergarten. Students remain on their language track until they complete the Primary Years Program. The acquisition of language must be seen as a continuum along which each individual student progresses at his/her own pace. Through language instruction, all students should acquire a basic understanding of Spanish language in the areas of listening, speaking, and writing. Students will have the knowledge of and the ability to use two languages, but not to the same extent. The Spanish instructor will enhance the six transdisciplinary themes through their Spanish lessons.

Language Development and the Learner Attribute Profile Inquirer

Students use language to acquire information and to make sense of the world around them.

Thinker: Students are able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly.

Communicator: Students are competent users of oral and written language in a variety of situations. They listen attentively and pay attention to detail. They speak confidently and clearly. They read fluently with good comprehension. They write clearly, concisely, accurately and in a style appropriate for the purpose.

Risk-taker: Students are willing to attempt to read, write, or speak in situations where they may not feel completely confident.

Knowledgeable: Students have acquired the vocabulary and understanding to discuss literacy styles and forms.

Principled: Students are aware that language is powerful and that it can have a profound effect, therefore, it must be used responsibly.

Caring: Students show caring in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others.

Open-Minded: Students respect differences and similarities between languages, dialects, and personal communication skills.

Balanced: Students can express themselves orally as well as in writing and find a balance between listening and speaking in communicating with others.

Reflective: Students reflect on their language usage and development and consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

We believe that through the exploration of language, students become independent thinkers, responsible world citizens, and excellent communicators in a global world filled with multi-linguists. In practice, all teachers are language teachers. Thus, York Academy's teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language instruction students develop international mindedness. At York Academy, students enter a culture of curiosity where there is an appreciation of the richness of the world's diversity.

Review As a Staff

York Academy teachers and stakeholders will review our language policy at the end of each school year.

This policy will be reviewed annually and posted for public viewing at our school website, yorkacademy.com.

Last updated: 3-1-20