

Lucile Erwin Middle School

Language Policy

Philosophy

Reading:

We believe our role as literacy teachers is to instill a passion for reading, an appreciation for language, and an ability to read independently. Independent readers can apply thinking strategies to gain meaning from text. To achieve this goal, we offer students choice in literature, and provide students access and exposure to a wide range of literacy resources and genres. Reading instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of all our students. We teach the five components of reading within a balanced literacy model. We also use appropriate instructional strategies such as guided reading, literature circles, reading response journals, and individual conferences. Our reading instruction focuses around specific decoding and thinking strategies. Thinking strategies are integrated in transdisciplinary ways. These strategies spiral and deepen vertically throughout the curriculum. Students at Lucile Erwin take ownership for their reading progress by setting and reflecting using SMART goals.

Writing:

We believe writing is an essential part of everyday instruction. Students are developing as writers and are given time to develop their writing craft on a daily basis. Writing is integrated in all subject areas throughout the day as students learn to write with purpose. Vocabulary development is encouraged through learning engagements throughout the eight content areas.

Students are empowered in their writing and take ownership in the process, planning, writing, editing, and revising. The writing process is student centered and teacher facilitated with modeling, mini-lessons, use of exemplars and rubrics. Students are taught to be independent writers and thinkers by using available classroom resources (charts, word dictionaries, thesaurus, peer editing/feedback,). Students are aware of their personal writing goals from conferencing with the teacher. Teachers provide prompt feedback through scoring rubrics to support the writing process. Consistent vocabulary is used school wide in writing instruction. Students become familiar with many forms of genre writing. Students are encouraged to share and reflect on their writing individually, in small groups, in pairs and with the whole group.

An effective communicator can write for a variety of audiences and purposes. We have school-wide horizontal and vertical articulation of writing that includes organization, vocabulary, common expectations and mechanics. Lucile Erwin encourages students to write a SMART goal for writing which can be used to reflect on their development as a writer. The students and the parents are aware of grade level writing expectations. Writing instruction is taught across all eight content areas. We reflect the importance of writing for a variety of purposes by our students by including writing in both Language A and non-Language A classes.

English Language Instruction

Language of Instruction:

Our language of instruction is American English. For language instruction, we follow IB's Language Scope and Sequence, as well as the Colorado Academic Standards published by the Colorado Department of Education.

General Education English Instruction:

In the general education classroom, teachers use many programs and curricular materials to meet the needs of a wide range of language learners (see resources). For reading instruction, teachers at Lucile Erwin use Common Core Standards and IB Criteria to guide our instruction.

English Language Instruction Outside of the Classroom:

-Literacy Support:

Students who are not meeting grade level language benchmarks may receive additional assistance from a literacy intervention class. At Lucile Erwin we currently have in place an R2 class to support all levels of literacy intervention. These students are often on Individual Literacy Plans (ILP) which is a document created collaboratively with the classroom teacher, parent, literacy specialist, and the student. The ILP identifies elements of literacy the student may be struggling with, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension. After the plan is developed, an appropriate intervention program is selected to best meet the needs of the student. Students who do not have an ILP may also receive literacy support for assistance with a targeted skill. The students' progress is monitored closely and instruction is adjusted as needed. When a student meets the grade level benchmark, he or she will be moved out of literacy intervention. See resources section for a list of reading programs.

-Special Education:

A student may qualify for special education services if he or she exhibits a disability, as outlined by the Colorado Department of Education, which is interfering with academic progress. Students in special education have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). This plan is written collaboratively between the special education teacher, general education teacher, and the parents. Special education services may be in small groups or one on one support from a special education teacher. See resource section for a list of reading programs and/or the Lucile Erwin Special Education Needs Policy for more information.

- Art, Choir, Band, Orchestra, PE, Technology:

Whenever possible, literacy skills are integrated into art, music, PE and technology lessons. This integration ensures that students read, write, listen and speak throughout their day.

In *choir*, students listen to selections and write responses. They also write personal their reflections and reflections about a unit in their developmental workbooks as well as written responses to warm-up prompts.

In *physical education*, writing is an important form of assessment. Students often write essays explaining the rules of a game or activity.

In *art*, students use writing to create plans for their artwork and build background knowledge. Students write reflections about artist's statements and about their art and use language to respond to the work of others.

-Speech/Language Services:

Our school has a full time Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) on staff. The SLP works with students who need help with receptive and expressive language as well as articulation issues. Speech services may be provided in small groups, one on one, or within the general classroom.

Lucile Erwin's Additional Languages

Spanish and French are offered as an additional language of study for all students at Lucile Erwin. By the end of eighth grade, we expect students in French and Spanish to be able to communicate at the novice-mid proficiency range in the three modes of interpersonal speaking and writing; presentational speaking and writing and interpretive reading, listening and viewing. Through the study of French and Spanish, our students gain knowledge and understand of the cultures that use these languages. Our students demonstrate this knowledge and understanding by examining the relationships among the practices, products and perspectives of the culture.

Spanish and French instruction at Lucile Erwin follows the Colorado Academic World Language Standards, which focus on communication, cultures, connections with other disciplines, and comparisons between one's own language and culture and the target language and culture.

Students at Lucile Erwin receive 50 hours of Spanish or French instruction yearly starting in the 6th grade.

Mother Tongue Support

At Lucile Erwin, we believe that students should continue to read, write, and speak in their native languages. We also believe that language diversity within our student body benefits all students and staff. Students who speak languages other than English are given opportunities to maintain and share their languages. Our library collection includes literature in the languages spoken by all of our students. The collection is updated as we get students who speak different languages. Whenever possible and appropriate, school information is sent home in different languages and translators are provided for parent teacher conferences to aid with communication between school and home. All staff members at our school allow students to continue speaking in their native language and teach other students vocabulary words in their native language. We also have flags hanging in our school that represent the countries represented by the United Nations. These flags also represent the countries from which our students originate. These flags also serve as a visual reminder and celebration of the cultural and linguistic diversity within our school.

English Language Learners

A certified English Language Acquisition (ELA) teacher provides additional instruction and support for students whose primary language is not English. The needs of individual students determine the amount and intensity of services. Student needs are assessed by The Colorado English Language Ability (CELA) assessment and other literacy assessments. Examples of support include small group instruction, in-class support, teacher collaboration, and/or monitoring of academic progress. Lucile Erwin maintains a Language Profile to document the languages spoken by our students. This profile is updated when we get new students and when students leave our school.

Updated: 2/19/2013