



Aina Haina Elementary School

Language Policy

Aina Haina Elementary School Mission Statement

Aina Haina strives to be the heart of our community where:

- ... every child matters and has a gift to share
 - ... teachers and staff are dedicated, collaborative and caring
 - ... families and the community partnerships are supportive and involved so that the academic learning environment, enriched by the arts, athletics and altruism, enables each child to participate productively in our global society.
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Language Philosophy *(What do we believe about language?)*

At Aina Haina Elementary School, we believe that all of us are both students and teachers of language, since it is through language that we communicate with others and learn about the world around us. Language is the key element to all learning - it provides a context for learning and is crucial as we develop understanding of new concepts, different perspectives, and new information. Language is also essential as we strive to teach others and clarify our own understanding. Because language is essential in both taking in information and expressing oneself, it is critical in the development of the whole child.

Effective communication skills are placed in high esteem by the world beyond school. We believe that we have a responsibility to our students to prepare them well in this area. This can be a challenge in this ever-changing world where the influence of technology is increasing. With less emphasis on the use of “proper” English, we must still focus on effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills so that our students will be college and career ready. Being an effective communicator is also directly tied to sense of place since there are nuances and terms embedded within the host language that helps one gain a deeper understanding of the culture. This is also key if one is to participate in the world as a global citizen.

Principles of Effective Language Instruction *(What are the characteristics of effective language instruction?)*

At Aina Haina, we believe the following are principles of effective language instruction:

- It takes place all day long, in meaningful, relevant contexts, and not in isolation.
- There is a connection to real life, it is consistently reinforced and authentically practiced.
- Both peers and adults are influential and serve as role models.
- Different approaches are used to meet the needs of all students.
- It takes place in and out of school and in informal and formal contexts.
- There are many opportunities to practice and receive useful feedback.
- A language rich environment is created - where frequent exposure to authentic, rich language models, both spoken and written, are prevalent.
- Allows for the acquisition of new vocabulary, using various developmentally appropriate tools and resources (experiences, songs, stories, games, dictionaries, glossaries, etc.)
- It instills the love of learning through active participation, inquiry, and engagement!

Beliefs about Language Learning *(What do we believe about how children learn language?)*

At Aina Haina, we believe the following practices help foster effective language learning:

- language taught within the context of meaningful learning engagements



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- exposure to different methods and instructional strategies
- immersion into authentic, meaningful contexts; watching the world around them, hearing language and speaking it
- repetition and modeling
- opportunities to practice in real life situations, with peers, adults and community members
- experiences to help build understanding of vocabulary
- immersion and the connection of language to other learning experiences
- reflecting on learning
- environment that sparks curiosity in students through thoughtfully designed lessons
- safe environment where mistakes are accepted and valued
- learning experiences are engaging, meaningful, relevant and challenging

Language Groups

The school population consists primarily of native English speakers; however, other languages are recognized, encouraged and supported. Currently the languages that make up our diverse school community, in addition to English are: Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese and Samoan.

Languages of Instruction

English

At Aina Haina Elementary, our primary language of instruction is English. As a Hawai'i Department of Education public school, we follow the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA). These standards encompass all forms of communication - reading, writing, listening and speaking. In addition, non-verbal communication is addressed in our Hawaii Content and Performance Standards for Health.

We use a State-selected instructional resource published by McGraw-Hill, known as Wonders. This program was mandated for all Hawaii DOE schools beginning with the 2013-14 school year, with full implementation expected by 2016-17. Aina Haina is in its first year of full implementation. The program was selected based on a number of criteria, three of which were alignment with Common Core State Standards, evidence of the pedagogical shifts present in the Common Core and an online instruction component.

The Wonders program offers two primary components - a "Reading-Writing Workshop" which presents the ELA skills in a manner that builds on itself through the grade level scope and sequence and a "Literature Anthology" which has reading texts selected to correspond with the skills taught in the "Reading-Writing Workshop." The teachers have the flexibility of using alternate reading texts (both fiction and non-fiction) to support and enhance their Units of Inquiry throughout the year. The Wonders program is used as a resource to engage the students in ELA instruction. Its basic structure aligns nicely with the Units of Inquiry in that there are essential questions for each of the six units in Wonders and each week has a "big idea" question to consider as well.

Japanese (Nihongo)

In addition to English, we offer Japanese (Nihongo) as our second language and Language B for the PYP. Students participate in weekly classes beginning in Kindergarten as part of their regular school day. The Nihongo program is designed to meet the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards for World Language. Students attend 30-45 minute classes with our Japanese teacher (Sensei), who is a native Japanese speaker with current ties to Japan. Because the rich culture is



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part of our Sensei's heritage, this becomes an integral part of our Nihongo program - providing the students with language instruction and cultural awareness.

Our Sensei is currently working on integrating inquiry into her program as well as making connections to the concepts within the various Units of Inquiry. This allows the students to gain a deeper understanding of and experience with these concepts, and helps them to see natural connections among the various contexts and disciplines.

Aina Haina has dedicated a full time classroom teacher position to our Nihongo program.

Hawaiian Studies

The Hawaiian culture is also very important to people in Hawaii. Because of that, there is a State-funded Hawaiian Studies program in every DOE school across the islands. At Aina Haina, the students participate in weekly classes beginning in Kindergarten as part of their regular school day. Students attend 30-45 minute classes with our Hawaiian Studies teacher (Makua) who, although not native Hawaiian, has deep cultural appreciation for the people and place of Hawaii. The classes are primarily designed to provide students with an awareness of and appreciation for the culture of the Hawaiian people, as well as serve as an introduction to the Hawaiian language.

A part-time teaching position has been given to Aina Haina to implement the Hawaiian Studies program.

Optional After-School Enrichment Classes

Nihongo and Mandarin (Chinese) classes are offered to Aina Haina students as after school enrichment classes for a fee.

Both Nihongo and Mandarin are offered at our local middle school, Niu Valley Middle School which offers the Middle Years Programme (MYP). The after school classes and the regular Nihongo classes provide students with an opportunity to develop a foundation in their language of choice before moving on to the MYP.

Additional Student Resources

Aina Haina Elementary School (AHES) Library

The AHES library is becoming the hub of PYP learning. All classes visit the library for bi-weekly lessons that are closely related to their Units of Inquiry. In addition, classes visit the library on alternating weeks to browse and borrow. The library continues to serve as a resource and motivation for learning and literacy development.

AHES values this role and has dedicated a full time position as librarian to service the school.

Response to Intervention Student Support

Because of the emphasis placed on language acquisition and the critical role that language plays in learning and communication, Aina Haina has a system in place where students may access intensified instruction in their area of need. When students in Grades K-2 experience delays or difficulty with the mastery of developmentally appropriate reading skills, they may receive focused instruction and practice by either a grade level classroom teacher or one of two part time teachers. The goal is to address the students' needs, give them the tools needed to be successful, then



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mainstream them back into the classroom. The amount of time the students receive this intensified support is solely determined by each one's need.

English Language Learner Support

As a Hawai'i public school, we are held accountable to the Identification, Assessment, and Programming System for Students (IAPS) in the English Language Learners (ELL) Program guidelines and procedures. This document "serves the special needs of currently enrolled, national origin minority students of limited English proficiency through the" ELL Program. (Taken from IAPS Foreword). Aina Haina recognizes the need to support learners who are learning English as their second language. We have a dedicated part-time teacher who provides additional services to those students - designing experiences to help with vocabulary and language development as well as being the liaison to provide assistance with mother tongue translation and support for the families when needed.

ELL students are also closely monitored through informal and formal assessment practices, culminating in an annual standardized test known as the WIDA. Students need to reach certain benchmark scores in order to be exited from the program. There is a procedure in place to allow for gradually releasing the students back into their regular classroom for all subject areas, phasing out the need and reliance on the ELL program.

Mother Tongue Support

Aina Haina currently supports its ELL students and their families through liaisons made available via State resource teachers. These resource personnel are utilized for translation and other school-home communication assistance as needed. The librarian has also maintained a Hawaiian language collection and has grown the Nihongo collection within the last five years.

ELL students also have access to an online language development program which serves as the temporary bridge between their native language and English language learning.

Admission Procedures

As students register for enrollment at Aina Haina Elementary, parents/guardians complete a form to establish each student's language background. Students whose parents/guardians indicate a language other than English spoken at home, are tested for ELL services. All entering ELL students are given the W-APT (WIDA ACCESS Placement Test), which incorporates reading, writing, listening, and speaking assessments. Students are placed in an ELL class according to the results. In addition, ELL students who score as Non-English Proficient (NEP) are given an Native Language Proficiency (NLP) test, to insure that students are proficient in their home language.

All entering Kindergartners are pre-assessed for reading readiness skills via a series of teacher made screening tools at the beginning of the school year.

Language Assessments

Aina Haina uses a variety of different assessment methods to determine a student's progress toward the mastery of ELA standards. Please refer to assessment policy for our beliefs about assessment, which also apply within the area of ELA skill acquisition.



- Aina Haina plans to continue its support of the mother tongue through parent-child sessions that will allow them to explore different facets of the IB programme and the units of inquiry.

The following graphic was created in Wordle to visually represent our thoughts about language..

