Onaway Elementary School

Language Policy

2016-2017

“Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savor their songs.”

Nelson Mandela

**Beliefs:**

At Onaway, we believe:

* All members of the school community are language instructors and learners.  We play a critical role in each other’s language development.  We bring our own cultural backgrounds to the community and can make vital contributions.
* Language is central to each and every culture.  We believe it can make us more connected, diverse and tolerant.
* Language has a purpose and function, which is acquired through meaningful use and interaction.
* A student’s mother-tongue or dialect is an important part of his or her identity and it is everyone’s responsibility to demonstrate respect and appreciation.
* Language can foster a love of learning and help create global citizens.  We believe this can be done in a language-rich environment that features listening, reading, speaking, writing, inquiry and media literacy in all subject areas.

**Language of Instruction**

* Our primary language of instruction is English for all students.
* Language instruction is incorporated into all content areas
* Language instruction is aligned to Ohio Academic content standards and the Common Core English Language Arts Standards.
* Language instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

**Additional Language**

* All students in grade 1 - 4 receive Mandarin Chinese instruction from a native Chinese teacher (60 minutes per week )
* In addition to the language, students learn about the Chinese culture and traditions.
* Mandarin Chinese is printed on door signs throughout the building.

**Mother-Tongue**

We also have students whose “mother-tongue” is not English. Some of these languages include: Danish, Farsi, French, Greek, Hebrew, Hindu, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Sinhalese, Spanish, and Telugu.  Mother tongue is defined as the first language learned at home in childhood and is typically the language spoken in the student’s home.

An English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher provides services to students whose Mother tongue is not English. ELL students are taught using a variety of variety of methods and strategies.

At Onaway, we practice:

* Building classroom environments rich in print with labels, signs, essential agreements, teacher and student writing.
* Supporting all language learners (English and Mother-tongue)
* Housing a language-rich and evolving library, with multicultural literature and informational text, provided in a variety of media.
* Reading a wide range of literature and informational text.
* Writing for authentic purposes.
* Modeling best-practice reading, writing and listening strategies.
* Fostering respect for and interest in foreign languages.
* Providing rich inquiry-based experiences, accessing learning through books, reference materials, multimedia resources, community experts.
* Presenting our learning through many modes including oral, audio, video, digital, drama, choral and written.
* Encouraging a discussion-based classroom environment where the school community can communicate their understanding, learnings, opinions and feelings responsibly and respectfully.

**Annual Review of Language Policy**

* The Language Policy was developed by a team of educators including the principal, PYP coordinator, intervention specialist and grade level representatives.
* The Language Policy will be reviewed annually by the faculty and staff will have the opportunity to provide feedback, prior to adoption of the policy.