



Students in the 21st century environment will be able to communicate using a range of critical, creative, and self-regulated media and methods. Our students will be able to think, read, write, listen, and speak in a way that expresses both who they are and how they are connected to their world. Because of teachers' use of engaging and interactive instructional practices, students will perceive reading and writing as avenues for pleasure, connection, and meaningful self-expression.

Jefferson-Houston Language Philosophy

At Jefferson-Houston, we recognize that the mark of a well-educated person is someone who has control of all aspects of the language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We understand the importance of language mastery as language is the one subject that connects all other academic areas. All teachers are language teachers, modeling effective communication skills within their discipline, as well as fostering language development through classroom lessons, activities, and extra-curricular activities.

Language Profile

Approximately 83% of the students at Jefferson-Houston live in homes where the primary language spoken is English. Seventeen percent of the families reported an alternate language primarily spoken among family.

Second Language Acquisition

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) provides a program of language instruction so that students meet the same challenging academic content and student achievement standards that all students are expected to meet while they develop English language proficiency.

At Jefferson-Houston Spanish is offered as a world language for the entire student population. The Spanish program both supports and extends the IB philosophy by imparting knowledge of a new culture and by opening doors for inquiry. In grades 6-8, students take Spanish as a required elective.

English Language Supports

Students who are eligible for the English Language (EL) program are assessed annually to evaluate their English Language Proficiency (ELP) using the WIDA ACCESS test. Students are assigned an English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level 1-5 based on the results of their language proficiency assessments at the time of registration. The assigned level is equated to a time allocation for program support by an EL teacher.

Students assessed as *entering*, *beginning*, *developing*, or *expanding* receive classroom instruction in English for speakers of other languages. English teachers also coordinate with EL teachers to provide appropriate differentiation in the English Language Arts classroom.



Jefferson-Houston adheres to the ACPS policies of English Language supports:

- All students will work towards achieving English Language proficiency while meeting or exceeding content standards identified for the core curriculum.
- Differentiation (e.g. building academic background knowledge, tapping into students' prior learning) will occur for all students, based upon varying language proficiency levels, interests, and learning profiles. Differentiation will ensure that students learning English will comprehend and interact with core standards and related knowledge; deepening their understanding as they grow more proficient in use of the language.
- Effective EL programs will provide common scaffolding strategies to accommodate and support students' language development.
- All foundational courses instruct grade-level content while addressing students' language development needs. They do not represent a separate curriculum.
- As students develop proficiency in their use of the language, they will also increase their levels of efficacy and enthusiasm for participating in academic experiences.
- We will ensure that EL students can express their thoughts and their learning via language reflective of higher-order thinking, reasoning, and related habits of mind.
- Along with expressing via the printed and the verbal, EL students will demonstrate comprehension of challenging and complex text, using inferences and conclusions to express critical, creative, and self-regulating reasoning and thinking.

Mother Tongue Support

Students whose mother tongue is not English are screened by the WIDA ACCESS language proficiency test developed by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium. Students receive additional support as determined by the English Language (EL) department.

Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity and native language while learning to speak and write in English.

Resources available to these students include; after-school tutoring, parent sessions presented in the native language, language dictionaries, and translated written texts. In addition, Jefferson-Houston has developed a foreign language library that is accessible to all students and parents. This collection includes a variety of languages that reflect the mother tongues of the current student population, as well as an online International Digital Children's Library website.

Language Acquisition/Language and Literature

Language Acquisition and Language and Literature placements are based on data collection of student performance on standardized and non-standardized tests, along with parental input.