

Carl Cozier Elementary Language Policy

Eric Paige, Principal
Greg Baker, Superintendent

Mission Statement: *Our Carl Cozier community is dedicated to the care and education of all our members. Open-mindedness is taught as a means to foster respect for the differences that exist among the people of our global community. We model the importance of leading balanced and principled lives, and we take action based on thoughtful inquiry.*

Philosophy

Language acquisition is an issue of equity, a life-long process that permeates all learning and creates opportunity. Language is a way to connect and engage with human beings, and with the world around us. We believe students need a rich foundation of all language skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting. We care deeply about helping our students acquire precise language in order to communicate effectively, receptively and expressively.

Every member of the Carl Cozier community, children and adults, are teachers and learners of language. We provide a variety of opportunities, strategies and platforms for students to develop social and academic language with respect and compassion for approximations. We extend these opportunities beyond our students, to their families and to our greater community. With the understanding that language use is impacted by emotion, we strive to create an emotionally safe place, where our school community connects and communicates comfortably.

Practices

At Carl Cozier, we strive to immerse learners in a rich, stimulating and patient environment that offers diverse and safe opportunities for *learning* language, for learning *through* language, and for learning *about* language. Our language of instruction is American English. We explicitly teach and support student growth in six interconnected literacy strands within three modes of communication:

- Oral communication: listening and speaking
- Written communication: reading and writing
- Visual Communication: viewing and presenting

Because communication happens everywhere, all of the time, and in many ways, *all* Cozier community members are practitioners and teachers of language. The inquiry process supports, enriches and deepens the learning of language. This can present itself in many forms.

Language across our school community:

A wide variety of resources support the teaching and learning cycle in the classroom, including but not limited to Benchmark Literacy Program, Leveled Literacy Intervention, an extensive leveled library, Washington Reading Corps tutors, Rosetta Stone, a strong computer network that includes desktop workstations, laptops, iPads, presentation stations, etc. with multiple online subscriptions to extend differentiated instruction. Human resources support student language development through carefully planned and executed instruction by classroom teachers, specialists in music, physical education and library/technology, a speech & language pathologist, occupational therapist, English language learners specialist, Title 1 reading teachers, special education literacy instruction and support, and a variety of Western Washington University professors and students.

We intentionally create and provide common experiences for all of our families, such as family math nights, raising salmon, our school garden, public displays and assemblies. These provide the entire school community with common experiences on which they may build and use a variety of social and academic languages. Oral language across grade levels, in all subject areas, and at-home conversations result from these experiences. Our playground and cafeteria staff and volunteers intentionally design, model and support language development that helps students navigate less structured times of the day through questioning, signage, and problem solving conversations.

We understand that with our diverse community, language provides us the opportunity to embrace, navigate, negotiate and compromise with each other. We connect through language; therefore we have chosen Restorative Justice as a practice to build relationships and resolve conflict. Community building circles, both classroom-based and in adult settings, allow us to share personal viewpoints, to summarize learning, ask questions, explore issues and generate solutions. When necessary, Restorative Justice presents opportunities to those impacted by wrong-doing to collectively identify its impact and determine steps to make things right. Throughout this process students learn how to interact and manage their relationships with peers and adults. They understand how their actions impact others and how to monitor

future behavior. Restorative practices use language to encourage accountability, help strengthen relationships, improve school safety and create more positive outcomes for students and the school community.

Each year, Cozier hosts an artist in residence, who brings the language of their particular art medium to our community. Local artists deliver world dance instruction and performances, silk painting, and visual art experiences. They build specific art language through their instruction in the classroom, and incorporate content language and the language of the PYP through school wide collaborative projects.

Language beyond our school community:

Because we believe learning engagements that immerse students in an authentic experience, enriched with reading writing and speaking about that experience, provide the best opportunities for language growth, our students regularly go out into the greater community to extend their learning and practice real-life communication and inquiry. From our locally situated Cozier Forest, to the extensive network of resources beyond, field experiences give students opportunities to interact with individuals and groups as inquirers, observers, communicators and risk-takers. Through their units of inquiry, students spend time interacting with experts in such places as the North Cascades Institute's Mountain School, the Whatcom Museum's Syre Education Center and Lightcatcher Museum, the Lummi Nation's First Salmon Ceremony, Whatcom Falls Park Fish Hatchery, Mount Baker Theater performances, Western Washington University's outdoor sculpture exhibits, planetarium, and Archives & Center for Pacific NW Studies, ReSources, the Red Cross, and many more. These authentic experiences provide students with rich oral, written and experiential language opportunities.

All students have research opportunities with both print and electronic resources. These experiences allow our students to reach beyond their local community to the world at large, reading, writing, viewing and presenting their inquiries of the people and places in our global community. Because our families come to us from many corners of the world, we also encourage students to inquire about and share their own family journeys through events such as Taste of Culture evening and research into family heritages.

World Language

Students in grades 2-5 receive Spanish language instruction 30 minutes per week, three times a month. The classroom teacher is a learner and participant alongside the students during this instruction, and is provided resources, such as
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songs, games and cultural activities, for further learning and enjoyment of the language with their students. We realize that this is a minimal amount of instruction, and are actively pursuing additional funding to provide more Spanish language instruction time.

Additional Supports

Carl Cozier is fortunate to have a rich, culturally diverse community of learners. To support the varying needs of students whose mother tongue is not English, classroom teachers are provided with collaborative support and training by our ELL specialist. Those students whose need is greatest are also supported individually by the ELL specialist. Our library collection includes literature and resources in Spanish, and with plans to increase resources in other languages as well. Our library also includes titles written by authors from a wide array of countries. District home/school communications are available in a variety of languages, and interpreters and translation services round out our support for families whose mother tongue is not American English. We are currently exploring the possibility of mother tongue literacy support, using the wide array of resources available from our community.

Carl Cozier is a Title 1 school, and therefore receives additional funding to support literacy. An additional 1.5 teachers provide targeted literacy instruction to readers and writers. Classroom teachers meet regularly with Title 1 teachers to hone support for identified students.

Additional staffing supports are provided by the Washington Reading Corps and Americorps grants. These grants bring one-on-one literacy support to students, clerical support for our leveled instructional library, and family engagement opportunities such as books and breakfast or family curriculum nights. A Care Room is staffed by our Americorps volunteer, who supports visitors to this space in a variety of ways.