

MYP Language Policy

Statement of Philosophy that Supports Student Learning:

The MYP recognizes that the study of language is the foundation for all learning. Language study develops international understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth, and promotes effective communication. We view all teachers and parents as essential contributors to the language learning process and understand that the most conducive environment is a safe environment of mutual respect, integrity, and dedication. We provide challenging curriculum, differentiated and varied instruction, and diverse learning experiences in a global society.

In accordance with the district's language arts philosophy to produce effective communicators, we believe that an effective and rigorous language curriculum is crucial to MYP students. We challenge all students to use their minds, while providing them with the instruction, the assessment, and the support they need to meet the district and the Colorado Common Core Standards. The MYP curriculum embraces the aims and objectives of the IB programme which develops inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people. Additionally, global contexts increase understanding of languages and cultures, and encourage students to explore globally significant ideas and issues. Our language program encompasses these content goals:

1. Oral expression and listening
2. Reading for all purposes
3. Writing and composition
4. Research and reasoning

OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGES

- English is the language of instruction
- English as a subject is taught through:
 - Language and literature in the MYP programme
 - ESL as a support program
- Modern languages offered:
 - French and Spanish in the MYP and DP
- Linguistic cultural opportunities
 - The school offers a multitude of opportunities to gain exposure to various languages and cultures through parent involvement, festivals, music, art, assemblies, co-curricular clubs and curricular units.

- Students whose native language is not English may use native language resources and language skills to help facilitate their learning within the classroom.

TEACHING OF LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS

English is the primary language of instruction in Academy District 20. Our schools have worked diligently to build strong vertical articulation to prepare students to complete their language and literature studies successfully. In addition, we support reading and writing across the curriculum; we believe that it is the responsibility of all teachers to improve our students' ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. For language acquisition classes, the language of instruction is either French or Spanish.

Language skills are taught at all grade levels. Many of the skills are introduced in elementary school; some are introduced in middle school. All skills are explored in more depth and reinforced each successive year. These skills are ongoing and are refined across all grade levels throughout the year.

- Students are given access to support services
- Students are supported in language development by all faculty and have the opportunity to read and write across the curriculum.
- Students are encouraged to become fluent in more than one language.
- Students are encouraged to express themselves, orally and in writing through a variety of media and situations.
- Students are encouraged to develop a love or appreciation of language and literature from a variety of cultures.
- Students are given time to reflect on their own work, as well as share and develop their work in social contents.
- Students have access to, and are taught through, a variety of technological and information resources available in multiple languages.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

It is the expectation that all MYP students take a continuous course of study in either Spanish or French all five years of the programme. The study of a world language has been included in the District 20 Board of Education definition of a core subject in its academically rigorous curriculum. The State of Colorado has presently identified four areas of focus for State Standards for World Language:

1. Communication in Languages Other Than English
2. Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

3. Connections with Other Disciplines and Information Acquisition
4. Comparisons to Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

We believe that world language study is crucial in the development of the MYP student.

All students should have opportunities to participate in world language study at the earliest possible age and to continue to advanced levels of study. Learning a second language at an early age has a positive effect on intellectual growth, enhancing and enriching mental development. Language acquisition opens the door to other cultures and helps children understand and appreciate the global community; it leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening. We are providing programs that are proficiency based and are taught in a dynamic, interactive environment utilizing a variety of strategies. The ultimate goal of world language instruction is for students to use their second language as a tool in educational pursuits, career opportunities, and for personal growth and enjoyment. The MYP world language curriculum embraces the aims and objectives of the programme, which develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people. By using the MYP global contexts, teachers help students to increase their understanding of languages and cultures, and explore globally significant ideas and issues.

Our schools accommodate students who are new to the MYP program by placing them in appropriate language classes. We have students who are part of a French immersion program in elementary school. The uniqueness of a PYP immersion program is that the world language is not taught as a subject. Instead, the language becomes the language of instruction for the science and math classes. Because of this, students are often more advanced in their language acquisition listening and speaking skills by the time they enter middle school.

PHASES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	As needed
Phase 1 Phase 2	Phase 3 (teachers can use phase 2 for transition)	Phase 4 (teachers can use phase 3 for transition)	Phase 5/6 for higher level students

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Students who are learning the English language for the first time are enrolled in a separate program for English instruction. Both Mountain Ridge Middle School and Rampart High School provide English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction through their ESL programs. Students are integrated in most of their classes but there are resources for instructional support. Academy School District 20 teaches classes in the evening at Rampart High School which are geared towards English Language Learner (ELL) parents.

“Parents have the right to choose the English Language Development program service type. Academy District 20 offers either a comprehensive English as a Second Language (ESL) Magnet School program in 10 designated schools or a Mainstream English Language Learner program which is in all district schools. Our middle school ESL magnet program provides instruction for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students from different language and cultural backgrounds. The ESL teacher provides instruction to beginning students in Language Arts and supports their work in other academic areas.” (Academy District 20, web)

Our high school ESL magnet program provides classes which offer full academic credit in English and social studies at the beginning, intermediate and advanced English proficiency levels. The average high school student schedule consists of eight classes per week. ELL students take six or seven regular classes and one to two ESL classes. Students are provided with direct help in their other academic classes when necessary. The ESL teacher regularly consults with classroom teachers to help students with their courses and contacts counselors to plan the transition from high school into further education careers.

INSTRUCTION FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Our program serves students at all levels of academic readiness. Interventions are in place for students who come to us with language skills that are below standard proficiency. These students, identified by various assessments, benefit from a Response to Intervention (RtI) plan. Teachers use STAR (*Standardized Testing and Reporting*), a program which utilizes small-group differentiated instruction with a computer-based fluency and vocabulary program. All teachers will be informed of students’ individual needs through access of RtI plans in Infinite Campus, and all teachers will implement the research-based intervention strategies that are relevant to their content areas.

MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION

Language acquisition teachers and district translators help maintain communications between the school and parents when the parents do not speak English. Students who speak another language at home are supported in our schools. For example:

- Students share their culture during class time and present information in their native language over the intercom at the start of a school day.
- Some classes have special culture days where community members help to educate our students.
- Native and non-native Spanish-speaking students participate in Spanish immersion lunches.

- Students with unique language needs (Mandarin, for instance) have been introduced to other students for support
- Our media centers provide a wide variety of multi-cultural literature so students can research their own cultures as well as the cultures of others.

Students who are native speakers are placed in appropriate language acquisition classes where the work is differentiated.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Students are required to take a language and literature class every year of the MYP. Because language skills are fundamental to all other subject areas, many steps have been created to support achievement in this area. Teachers continue to attend professional development where the focus is on literacy in the classroom.

Currently, the middle school has enrichment classes in place and the high school has an AVID program, which allows students to gain organization and study skills needed for their success. A portion of these classes is dedicated to language skills. Responsibility for language instruction is interdisciplinary, since these skills are necessary in developing life-long learners. Teachers plan together in Professional Learning Communities to ensure the rigor and quality of each lesson.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The media center plays a pivotal role in the support of language development. Our Library Media Center (LMC) has a variety of texts in Spanish and French. Language acquisition teachers are promoting these books through assignments. The media center provides supplemental resources to all subject area teachers to be used in the text sets for each unit of study and actively seek teacher input as to what sources are needed to support curriculum. From videos and bibliographies to texts and databases, teachers can utilize a variety of resources. We have an extensive collection of multicultural literature. The LMC tracks these titles and promotes these titles through various activities.

Works Cited

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