

IB Middle Years Programme Language Practices

I. Purpose

In the Fridley School District, we believe every teacher is a language teacher and that language learning occurs in every subject area, in every classroom, and in all areas throughout the school district. Our goal is to provide our students with the tools they need to effectively read, write, speak, listen, and view. We believe in the importance of learning an additional language, value the linguistic diversity of our community, and work to support the mother-tongue development of our students and families.

II. Definitions

- A. Mother-Tongue - The terms that describe the language student's use at home and/or outside the classroom/school environment include "first language", "home language", "preferred language", "mother tongue", "native language", "heritage language", and sometimes "best language". For the purposes of the MYP, the term "mother tongue" is used. Many language acquisition students are using more than two languages outside the classroom arena. Schools will engage with parents and students to decide in which of the student's languages literacy should be maintained and developed.
- B. Language Acquisition - is standard linguistic terminology used to describe a language learned subsequently to a first language, and implies that a student also has access to the language for communicative purposes outside the context of the language classroom (in other subject classrooms, outside the school or learning environment, or in the community).
- C. English Learners (EL) – EL instruction is provided to those students for whom the Language of Instruction is not the student's first language.

III. Language Practices in the Middle Years Programme (MYP)

The primary aim of language acquisition in the Middle Years Programme is to encourage students to gain competence in a modern language other than their native tongue, with the long-term goal of balanced bilingualism.

- A. The International Baccalaureate Organization acknowledges that learning additional languages greatly contributes to the holistic development of students. Proficiency in an additional language gives students access to a broader range of input, experiences and perspectives, and is believed to raise achievement in other subject areas, as well as giving the student the enjoyment of being able to communicate in a language other than their native tongue. The study of languages in the MYP aims to encourage in the student a respect for and understanding of other languages and cultures, and to provide a skill base to facilitate further language learning. The development of communication skills in more than one language supports the concept of an international education and promotes multilingualism and multicultural understanding.
- B. The primary Language of Instruction (LOI) in the MYP in Fridley Public Schools is English. All students will develop a fluency in the LOI and all teachers are considered to be language teachers.
 - i. Schools will establish proficiency and process goals for language development for all learners.
 - ii. Teachers will participate in professional development on effective practices for promoting language learning.
 - iii. Curriculum will be developed and vertically aligned to provide a continuous framework for language development for all students.
 - iv. All teachers will follow protocols with respect to language teaching and learning outlined in the district's published style guide.
 - v. Teachers will model proficient literacy behaviors.
 - vi. Teachers and students will work together to practice literacy and communication skills.
 - vii. Students demonstrate their literacy and communication skills through independent and group activities.

Within this model, students work to meet their grade level standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. The scope and sequence of specific skills is determined by Minnesota State Standards.

- C. Language Acquisition offerings in the MYP are Chinese, German and Spanish. Instruction in these languages begins in grade five with a language carousel that provides an opportunity for students to experience each of the three languages. Beginning in grade six, students select one of the three languages and instruction in this language must be sustained over the remaining five years of the program. The process of language selection will involve the student, coordinator, counselors, and parents. If parents and students insist on a

changing to a different language, the school will inform the student and parents that the student may not be on track to be successful in the Diploma Programme and that it is their responsibility to provide acceleration if necessary.

- D. Instruction is constructed as additional language instruction for native English speakers and as literacy instruction for native speakers. The students learn to speak, listen, read, and write in an additional language as well as develop an appreciation for the culture.
- E. IB Language Acquisition Continuum – MYP Language Acquisition builds on experiences in language learning that students have gained during their time in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). Knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills will have been developed through transdisciplinary units of inquiry. Students continuing on to the Diploma and Career-related Programmes will have grounding in an additional language that will enable them to engage in DP courses and will have developed an inquiring, reflective approach to language learning.
- F. For students who do not have the Language of Instruction as their mother tongue, English will be required in phases one through four as appropriate to the needs of each English Learner. An assessment by EL teachers will determine proper placement.

IV. Interventions

- A. Reading Assessment: Administrators, literacy coordinators, literacy coaches, and reading teachers review state and local reading scores for all students two to three times a year. Students who are reading significantly below grade level standards are assigned to tiered reading intervention classes instead of selecting an additional language.
- B. Reading Intervention Classes: Students identified to be most at risk of not meeting grade level benchmark expectations in reading receive supplemental literacy instruction from highly qualified teachers. All interventions take place outside of and in addition to the core Language and Literature course.
 - i. Reading interventions are offered at four different tiers.
 - ii. Interventions are guided by student data and in response to the data on student progress.
 - iii. Exit criteria are established for each tier.
 - iv. Once students meet grade level standards, they exit the reading intervention program and select an additional language of study.

- C. EL: Students requiring services from our highly qualified EL staff are often identified at registration. Students may also be identified through teacher referrals. Students are assessed through language proficiency tests and placed in the proper EL course as identified through test results. No more than two language phases will be combined in any one classroom. Some students receive direct service whereas other students may receive support through teamed classes. Once students demonstrate language proficiency, they transfer from direct instruction in English to monitor status in order to provide continued support for student success.

V. Mother-Tongue Support

In the Fridley School District, we believe in the need to support our families whose native language is not English. We encourage our parents and students to speak and develop their mother tongue at home and at school. This strengthens the child's language and cognitive skills while instilling a sense of importance about his/her culture. In addition, we use a number of resources to support mother-tongue development and assist in our communication with these families.

- A. We interpret written communication into the mother-tongue of the parents as much as possible.
- i. TransACT – The web-based program TransACT (www.transact.com) provides us with a comprehensive set of forms and notices, written in a wide range of languages.
 - ii. All statewide testing letters for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, Test of Emerging Academic English, Student Oral Language Observation Matrix, and Mathematics Test for English Language Learners go home in the students' mother-tongue. These translated letters are on the Minnesota Department of Education website.
 - iii. Many specific communications are translated into Spanish, the second largest spoken language at Fridley Public Schools.
- B. Interpreters are used regularly when communicating directly with families at school.
- i. EL teachers coordinate interpreters through local, professional interpretation companies to facilitate the communication between teachers and the families when required.
 - ii. We have access to the Language Line as another interpretation service. This is a national service that allows for a three way conference call between a staff member, parent/guardian, and the interpreter.

C. The school is purchasing and using bilingual materials and materials written in the mother-tongue languages of our students.

- i. Teachers have access to <http://www.readinga-z.com/> which allows them to print off leveled reading materials in Spanish.
- ii. The media center is purchasing materials printed in numerous languages: Spanish, Urdu, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Hindi.
- iii. Native speakers of the languages offered by the school continue to develop their literacy skills as other students are introduced to the language.

VI. Review Committee:

A committee will be formed to review the language practices of each school in the Fridley School District on a timeline aligned with IB program evaluation. Each committee will be made up of the building principal, IB coordinator, literacy coordinator, members of the building leadership team, and teachers. The purpose of this committee will be to review the current language policy, communicate suggestions to the school board as needed, and plan how to communicate the language policy with staff and the school community.