

# Language Policy

*Hoover High School and Meredith Middle School  
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme*



## Language Philosophy

Hoover and Meredith schools are committed to language acquisition for all students in all classes, across all subjects. Development of language skills, both spoken and written, is critical to strengthening communication and is an expression of culture. We value the linguistic diversity of our school communities and are dedicated to supporting mother-tongue development, as well as the acquisition of additional language. Multilingualism increases cognitive abilities, including problem-solving, creativity and memory, as well a learner's ability to communicate in diverse environments. All teachers are language teachers and are responsible for teaching language skills within and across subject areas.

Language learning and teaching is an ongoing partnership between our schools, students, and parents. Parent and community support of this language policy is vital to its success.

## Language Profile

English is the primary language of instruction, learning, and communication used in the schools. Students participate in at least one Language A (English) and one Language B (Spanish or Mandarin Chinese) class.

### Language Diversity

More than 40 mother-tongue languages are spoken by students who represent more than 35 nationalities. Other than English; Karen, Spanish, Karen, Chin, Vietnamese, and Arabic are the most common mother tongues.

## Des Moines Public School ELL Statement

There are more than 100 languages spoken in the households that make up Des Moines Public Schools. The district serves more than 6,800 English Language Learners with 160 committed and dedicated teachers and staff, including bilingual outreach workers at 50 different sites throughout the community.

The goals of the ELL program are:

- To educate English Language Learners to the same rigorous curriculum standards as all students in the district while achieving English language objectives in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- To promote pride in students' cultural and linguistic identities and maintain cultural heritage while preparing students to actively participate within American society.
- To ensure that the educational process is a cooperative effort between families, communities, and DMPS staff.
- There is a rising tide of bilingual students in Des Moines, one of the benchmarks of world class schools. The ELL program strives to provide services and programs that best meet the needs of our students and families.

## Mother Tongue Support

The schools' campus supports continued development of mother tongue language skills for all students. Hoover and Meredith provide the following services:

- Bilingual Family Liaisons provide services to ELLs and families to strengthen the relationship between home, school, and language minority communities.
- Oral interpretation and written translation in classrooms and other school settings, as needed
- Offer support in Arabic, Bosnian, Kirundi, Swahili, French, Spanish, Karen, Burmese and others, as necessary

## **Language & Instruction**

The primary language of instruction in the MYP is English. All teachers are considered language teachers.

- Teachers model proficient literacy behaviors.
- Teachers and students work together to practice and develop literacy and communication skills.
- Students are expected to demonstrate literacy and communication skills both independently and in group settings through the practice and use of appropriate MYP Approaches to Learning skills.

Within this structure, students work to meet grade-level standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and media literacy. The scope and sequence of specific skills is prescribed by the Iowa Core Curriculum.

## **Language Acquisition**

The study of a language acquisition aims to encourage an appreciation for and understanding of other languages and cultures; and to provide a skill base for further language learning. Language acquisition course offerings in the MYP Years 1-5 (6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade) are Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. Students learn to speak, listen, read, and write in a second language. Language acquisition study in the MYP should be sustained in the same language over the five years of the programme.

## **Language Practices**

Language & Literature courses are designed around the Iowa Core Curriculum and the MYP *Language & Literature Aims and Objectives*. Language Acquisition instruction adheres to DMPS curriculum standards and the MYP Language Acquisition Aims and Objectives.

### Preferred Bibliographic Style

MLA is the common style of citation of sources in student work for all departments

### Language Expectations

Students are expected to speak and write in complete sentences, using academic language. During class, learners are expected to speak the language of instruction. Translating devices are permitted. Outside of class, students may speak a language of their choice.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development is provided for all teachers in the district to support the Iowa Core Curriculum. DMPS offers ongoing professional development to all teachers in the areas of “writing to learn” and reading informational materials.

## **Language Support Services**

Specialized support for student language development is available through the following programs:

- English Language Development Program – Students are placed in the appropriate English Language Learner class based on state, district and curriculum assessments. The purpose of the ELL class is to support and accelerate English acquisition.
- Special Education – Students with SEN needs receive services from special education professionals.
- Gifted and Talented – Teachers use strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, reading, writing, and inquiry across the curriculum, and the exposure to various forms of literature and informational text. Please refer to the Hoover High School – Meredith Middle School Special Educational Needs Policy for additional information.
- Remedial Language Courses – At the high school level, classes are available and recommended to students whose English assessment results indicate need for additional support.

## **Mother-Tongue Provisions**

At Hoover-Meredith, we recognize that a strong level of knowledge and understanding in the students' mother tongue is vital to the students' development of an additional language. We encourage parents and students to speak and develop their mother tongue at home. This strengthens the child's language skills, while instilling a sense of importance about his/her culture. In addition, resources are available to support mother tongue development and assist in communication with these families.

- Written parent communication is translated into as many mother tongues as possible.
- Multilingual Community Outreach Workers are used regularly when communicating directly with families at school events. Outreach workers have a minimum of one hour each day scheduled to communicate with parents and community members.
- The Technology Learning Center includes reading materials printed in numerous languages.

## **Assessment**

- Standardized assessments are given in English.
- Subject area assessments are given in English, Spanish or Mandarin Chinese, with appropriate accommodations made for language proficiency.
- DMPS has policies in place to accommodate needs of ELLs. As well, ELLs are required to take an English language development assessment each year to monitor English proficiency.
- ELL courses – with the explicit written permission from IB Americas staff (on file) – will have the ability to use the MYP Language Acquisition objectives and criteria when assessing student learning and designing instruction. ELLs who are also enrolled in English language courses will be assessed using the MYP Language & Literature objectives and criteria in those courses.
- The MYP program is an inclusive program. Students with special educational needs will receive accommodations and modifications for assessments as stated in Individual Education Plans or 504 Accommodation Plans.
- Please refer to the Hoover High School – Meredith Middle School International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program Assessment Policy for more information on assessment.

## **Technology Learning Center and Language**

All students have access to the schools' combined Technology Learning Center (TLC). The center is open before, during, and after school. Most books in the TLC are in English. A section is dedicated to mother tongue languages represented in our building, as well as offerings in Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. Students have access to print materials and four laptop labs.

*International Baccalaureate Publications*

*Guidelines for developing a school language policy*

*Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy*