

# Language Policy



## Seven Peaks School

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program

Authorized School

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program Candidate  
School



## **PHILOSOPHY**

---

As an International Baccalaureate school, we seek to cultivate a sense of literacy that promotes understanding of the world by developing a global perspective that nurtures cultural appreciation through language. Language education spans across all educational contexts. Poetry, literature, art, history, performing arts, music, science, technology, physical education, and mathematics all encourage critical interactions between students as they develop communication skills within the twenty-first Century global contexts.

Seven Peaks School expects and empowers all Middle Years Program and Primary Years Program teachers to teach the skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and media literacy. At the center of the Seven Peaks curriculum, language instruction prepares students to thrive as critical thinkers and to develop into effective and compassionate communicators.

Seven Peaks believes:

- Every teacher is a language teacher
- Multiple learning preferences must be addressed in all subject areas
- Oral language is the foundation for effective communication
- Differentiated language instruction is a priority
- Language skills must be developed in context through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work
- Learning more than one language enriches personal growth and facilitates global understanding

Seven Peaks' Language Policy is broad and can be broken down into the following subcategories:

- Integrated English Language Instruction
- Additional Support for English Speakers
- English to Speakers of Other Languages
- English Language Instruction
- Language Acquisition
- Family Involvement
- Policy Review Process

## **INTEGRATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION**

---

Integrating English language instruction in every subject in the MYP and PYP program allows students to develop language skills in the context of purposeful inquiry. Students may experience language through the following mediums:

**Reading:**

Biographies  
 Fiction  
 Factual accounts  
 Expository texts  
 Read alouds  
 Comics and graphic novels  
 Newspapers and magazines  
 Academic texts  
 Poetry  
 Reading music  
 Phonemic awareness/Phonics  
 Reader's theater

**Writing:**

Reflection  
 Reports  
 Journal entries  
 Letters  
 Poetry and lyrics  
 Email and instant messages  
 Interactive writing and editing  
 Fictional narratives  
 Persuasive writing  
 Handwriting  
 Script Writing  
 Essays

**Speaking and Listening:**

Cooperative learning  
 Vocabulary front loading  
 Presenting (local, state, nationals)  
 Public speaking (small groups and whole class/school)  
 Music and lyrics  
 Discussions and debates  
 Peer planning and editing of writing  
 Reflection  
 Storytelling  
 Performance

## **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS**

---

Upon entering Seven Peaks School all students are screened for reading and writing proficiencies, and students' test scores and past records are reviewed. Students with special learning needs that result in slower language development may receive support according to an inclusion model, interventions, or a combination of the two. Students with literacy skills significantly below grade level participate in specialized CARE program. These may or may not be students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue.

Seven Peaks School utilizes a framework to guide our language policy decisions and amend our policy when needed. This group consists of the school's leadership, which includes the school administration, and an advisory team of teachers to ensure research-based interventions are implemented with fidelity. Progress monitoring data and documentation support changes to a student's level of intervention. (See: Inclusion/Special Needs Policy for additional information)

## **ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)**

---

Seven Peaks students who identify a language other than English spoken at home are screened for language usage. Those who are considered English language learners receive support from school staff to acquire English. During this instructional time, students will work to develop all domains of language: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and media literacy. Classroom teachers provide differentiated instruction. The Learning Specialist may provide pull-out support as well. Our goal is to provide focused instruction in English in order to support success in all subject areas.

Additionally, while acquisition of English is paramount, we are devoted to the idea that students who come to school speaking another language must not only be supported in English acquisition, but also in their first language. Support for a student's primary language can be provided in some of the following ways:

- Sharing of language and culture in all classrooms
- Materials available in the classroom in the student's mother tongue
- Development of a multilingual collections of classroom libraries
- Picture books in the mother tongue in the classroom libraries
- Visual aides in the classroom
- Access to English/mother tongue dictionary and/or online translators
- Parent communication (translated if necessary) stressing the importance and showing value of the mother tongue
- Translation of documents for parents when possible
- Clustering of students who share a common language into one classroom to allow for classroom/playground/lunch room interactions in the mother tongue

## **ENGLISH-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION**

---

In the PYP at Seven Peaks, English language instruction is taught within the classroom during the transdisciplinary unit. The MYP, English language instruction is explicitly taught in the subject area titled Language and Literature. Across the PYP and MYP, Seven Peaks teachers incorporate the literacy targets in unit planning by carefully articulating curriculum through horizontal and vertical planning. Teachers execute quality assessments and students self-evaluate in conjunction with Approaches to Learning.

In the PYP, language skills are woven throughout the unit of inquiry and align with the Common Core State Standards. We incorporate and ensure a balance of reading, writing, listening and speaking in the English language throughout our Primary Years Program.

- Reading: We practice a balanced reading approach, which includes comprehension of informational and narrative texts, looking at the vocabulary and parts of speech, exploring language in expository and narrative texts, as well as oral and silent reading fluency in texts.
- Writing: We teach students to compose, write and revise expository, narrative and argumentative/persuasive texts on a variety of assigned, as well as self-selected topics. We write for a variety of purposes across all subject areas.
- Speaking and Listening: We explicitly teach speaking and listening dialogically, academically, and conversationally. We emphasize active listening and civil discourse as a part of our teaching.
- Integration of Language within Subjects: Reading, writing, speaking and listening are utilized in every subject area in the Primary Years Programme. Explicit instruction in how to read primary documents, expository texts, and other required texts, both digital and in print, takes place in every classroom. Students are required to learn and use academic vocabulary in all of the disciplines, as well as articulate their ideas and

thoughtfully engage in discussions across subject areas. Students are expected to write in the persuasive, expository, and narrative forms in all of the disciplines. Scaffolding and differentiation within these subjects is used to provide all students access to the curriculum.

In the MYP, students develop and refine their ability to strategically use language (written and spoken) by analyzing the language of others, especially in and as literature. Students read and analyze a broad range of textual traditions ranging from myth and folktales to classic and contemporary literature. They communicate their understanding through assignments targeting three types of writing: narrative, informational, and persuasive/argumentative. Differentiated instruction is used to guide students as they develop the grammatical and mechanical knowledge necessary for accurate, nuanced, and reflective writers. In this way, MYP language and literature equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can also be used to develop interdisciplinary understanding across all other subject groups. Distinctive to the MYP program is our cross-curricular format in which Language and Literature is often approached alongside MYP Individuals and Societies (Humanities) and Science in a thematically meaningful way.

## **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SPANISH)**

In addition to integrated and focused English instruction, the second language offered at Seven Peaks is Spanish. In the MYP, the course is titled Language Acquisition and students receive an average of 200 minutes per week of Spanish instruction. In the PYP students receive an average of 125 minutes per week of Spanish instruction. As with English instruction, Language Acquisition also addresses the five domains of language: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension. In addition, students experience exposure to literature and culture associated with the Spanish language. Students develop language at various rates depending on their own engagement and understanding of the language. Our goal is for SPS students to eventually be able to think in another language.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are key partners in meeting the needs of all learners. To ensure that all parents have the information and tools they need, teachers at Seven Peaks communicate with parents regularly. Teachers host “office hours” throughout the entire school year, during which parents or teachers may schedule a meeting to discuss the progress and needs of the student.

In addition to office hours, teachers continue to facilitate positive communication through the following strategies:

- Communication via Canvas (MYP) including, but not limited to: information about current units, events, assessments, and homework.
- Emails and phone calls
- Conferences twice a year
- Helpful information and updates on the school website

- In the PYP, classroom newsletters are sent at least twice a month, in addition to face to face communication

Parents are encouraged to participate in the following events and activities to maintain positive and regular parent-teacher communication:

- Back to School Night
- Re-Enrollment Night
- Celebration of Innovation: A week of inquiry using the design cycle where parents are invited in for volunteer support
- Literacy homework that includes reading to, with, and by parents and/or family members
- Parent/family projects
- Volunteering in the classroom and/or for community service projects and special events
- All School Assemblies
- Field Trips
- 5th Grade Exhibition and 8th Grade Community Project
- Special Events: music concerts, art show, sports events, talent show, Turkey Trot, holiday celebrations, earth day, unit culminations

## POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

Every year a committee will be assembled to perform a complete examination of the Language Policy. The committee will include, but is not limited to, a representative from Language and Literature and Language Acquisition, a few primary teachers, as well as the IB MYP and PYP Coordinator, and a member of the Academic Administrative Team. The purpose of the committee will be to study the current document to ensure its accuracy toward meeting IB MYP and PYP standards, as well as the CCSS.

If changes arise in the years between formal reviews, specifically in regards to MYP : The Next Chapter, PYP requirements, new CCSS/National Standards, and research-based pedagogy that impact assessment practices at SPS, a committee can be formed to make the necessary changes to the Language Policy as well as tasked with informing all affected parties.

10/2021 - All staff review

### Term Definitions:

SPS - Seven Peaks School

PYP - Primary Years Program

MYP - Middle Years Program

CCSS - Common Core State Standards

Canvas - Learning Management System in our MYP

ATL - Approaches to Learning Skills (Communication, Thinking, Social, Self-management, Research)

Learner Profile - 10 Character attributes that go beyond academic success