



Language Policy

To be reviewed and updated at least every 2 years. Last reviewed September 2019.

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Philosophy, Purpose, General Principles and Practice

Philosophy

In ACSD, we believe it is our responsibility preK-12 to provide an integrated, language-rich environment so that each student becomes a confident, competent communicator. We recognize that language is an inherent part of culture and that a multilingual learning environment will enhance students' cultural understandings and their capacity to make positive contributions to the world.

Language development is a continuous process (Halliday, 1980), and language is central to all learning. Therefore, we view teachers across all subject areas and contexts as teachers of language and families as vital contributors to the language learning process.

ACSD "is committed to supporting multilingualism as fundamental to intercultural understanding and international mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds" (IB Language Policy, 2014).

Purpose

This document will outline the principles and practices of the ASCD IB Language Policy.

Principles

1. We believe that language is central to communication and learning. Language has various components: listening, reading, speaking, writing, viewing, presenting, and nonverbal communications.
2. We believe language learning is part of social and personal development.
3. We believe language learning is crucial to academic growth and the construction of knowledge.
4. We believe that fostering a multilingual learning environment will enhance intercultural understanding and promote international mindedness.
5. We value all languages and cultures and affirm the identity of each learner while ensuring access to the curriculum for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.
6. We value families as important partners in the language learning process.
7. We recognize that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff will require professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching.

Practice

The language in which most of the curriculum is delivered is the *Language of Instruction* (Language A). In ACSD, the language of instruction is English.

The language that the school offers, in addition to the language of instruction, is the *Additional Language* (Language B). In order to maximize opportunities for coordination and collaboration across district PYP programs, the Additional Language offered in the ACSD elementary schools is Spanish in grades 2-6. At 7th grade, students choose either French or Spanish. In the majority of cases, this will remain their additional language throughout the Middle Years Program (MYP), grades 7-10. Some may elect to switch to Latin in grade 9. “The MYP structures additional language learning in [6] phases so that the complexity and range of language profiles that students bring to their MYP classroom is acknowledged and fostered” (Language acquisition guide, p. 3). MYP students who complete phase 4 are considered proficient and may switch languages. In the Diploma Program (DP), Middlebury Union High School offers French, Spanish, and Latin.

Language of Instruction (Language A) Practices

1. As language is central to learning, all pK-12 teachers across subject areas and contexts are language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication.
2. Professional development in the fields of language learning/acquisition and teaching is provided for administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff, deepening understanding that “Language stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning” (Corson, 1999).
3. The Common Core State English Language Arts Standards serve as the framework for language and literacy instruction and learning across ACSD, addressing listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
4. Language in the form of reading, writing, and expression is used to demonstrate learner profile attributes and attitudes and is central to effective research, thinking, reflection, self-management, and social skills.
5. Students have access to culturally-diverse reading material and multimedia formats.
6. With guidance, students are encouraged to select texts for pleasure and understanding. Additional texts are teacher and/or student selected to foster inquiry, research, international mindedness and intercultural understanding.
7. Differentiation and Universal Design for Learning are essential because culturally and linguistically diverse students have a range of language needs and abilities. Student assessment drives differentiated instruction. Process, product and content shall be differentiated within each unit of inquiry to meet students’ language needs and abilities.
8. ACSD’s system of services includes a range of resources and practices to support learning in the language of instruction. These include individual and small group intervention, special education instruction, speech and language therapy, etc.

Additional Language (Language B) Practices

1. Instruction is carried out mainly in the target language.
2. The program of instruction is accessible to all students.
3. Curricula and instruction is based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign

Languages (ACTFL) “Five C’s” of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. These include communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities.

4. Curricula and instruction incorporate the ACTFL Can-Do Statements: Proficiency Benchmarks.
5. Various assessment methods and tools are used to determine proficiency relative to the “five C’s” ranging from novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, to distinguished, in conjunction with the IB language phases of proficiency.
6. Learning outcomes are articulated from PYP to MYP and MYP to DP.
7. Teachers of additional languages communicate and collaborate across content areas and IB programs. Time is provided within teaching schedules to allow for collaboration to take place.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners Practices

1. United States Federal and Vermont State laws require that students who are not proficient in English are given access to English Language Development (ELD) instruction and can meaningfully access the content of the mainstream curriculum regardless of the language of instruction. These responsibilities are outlined in the Dear Colleague Letter from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. Full details of the instruction, support, and services for culturally and linguistically diverse students in ACSD are described in our district Lau Plan.
2. The State of Vermont requires that “all schools administer the Primary/Home Language Survey to all students entering Vermont elementary or secondary schools . . . for the first time in order to identify those who are potentially eligible for programs/services. Depending on survey and interview responses, students from linguistically diverse backgrounds may also be screened to assess their level of English language proficiency for academic purposes.”
3. Curricula and instruction incorporate the WIDA English Language Development Standards, and all English Language Learners (ELLs) in ACSD are assessed annually with the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Summative Assessment “to monitor students’ progress in acquiring academic English” (WIDA Consortium).
4. English Language Learner teachers communicate and collaborate across content areas and IB Programs. Time is provided within teaching schedules to allow for collaboration to take place.
5. Professional development regarding learning in English as an additional language and language acquisition is provided on an on-going basis for administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff.
6. School and district personnel translate documents and offer interpretation services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) families. Resources and processes for translation and interpretation are outlined in two documents: Information, Resources, and Guidance: Communicating with Parents Who Speak Another Language; and Communicating with Your Child’s School: A Guide for Parents Who Speak a Language Other than English, both available on the ACSD website.

7. Because we value cultural and linguistic diversity, ACSD aspires to be a district where students are encouraged and supported to speak and share their home language at school and at home and where student products and responses can be made in English and in students' other home languages.

The ACSD leadership will annually review the Language Policy and revise as needed, and the updated policy will be available on the ACSD website.

Requests and Proposals for Additional Languages

Any ACSD community member (e.g., student, parent, faculty member, administrator) can request that the district consider adding a new Additional Language (Language B) or expand existing language programming. A school principal has the authority to establish a small working committee to develop such a request into a formal proposal. Formal proposals should

- Clearly outline the rationale for offering the additional language including the anticipated positive impact on student learning, and
- Describe the potential impact on school and district curriculum including projected enrollment across proposed and existing language courses,
- Define the resources that would be needed (e.g., staffing across schools, instructional time) to offer a full instructional program in the new language with attention to equity of offerings across elementary schools (e.g., minimum instructional time and weekly class sessions) and/or in alignment with the requirements of the Middle Years and Diploma Programs (e.g. continuity of learning across schools and throughout the year).

Formal proposals will be submitted to the district leadership team to determine the feasibility of adding a new Additional Language.

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Appendix: Six Levels of English Language Proficiency

The six WIDA English Language Learner performance definitions describe what students can process and produce at 6 levels of English language proficiency.

1: Entering - students will process, understand, produce or use: (a) pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas; (b) words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support; (c) oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support.

2: Beginning - students will process, understand, produce or use: (a) general language related to the content areas; (b) phrases or short sentences; (c) oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support.

3: Developing - students will process, understand, produce or use: (a) general and some specific language of the content areas; (b) expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs (c) oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support.

4: Expanding - students will process, understand, produce or use: (a) specific and some technical language of the content areas; (b) a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs; (c) oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support.

5: Bridging - students will process, understand, produce or use: (a) specialized or technical language of the content areas; (b) a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports: (c) oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material.

6: Reaching - students will process, understand, produce or use: (a) specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level: (b) a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level: (c) oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers.

(WIDA, 2019)