



Oak Grove Middle School

Language Policy

A language policy is an action statement....It is concerned with where the students in a school are going, and more with how they are going to get there.

Language Policy in Schools, Corson (1999)

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish:

- The framework for valuing language diversity in our school.
- The support for all language learners and their families, including those in which the primary language of instruction is not their mother tongue.
- The structure for language learning at our school.

Definitions:

- **Mother-Tongue:** The language the student uses at home and/or outside of the classroom/school environment. This term encompasses other terms including: first language, home language, preferred language, native language, heritage language, and sometimes best language. This term also included sign language. This could also include multiple languages since many second-language students are using more than two languages outside of the classroom.
- **Language B:** Describes the language(s) learned subsequently to the first language.
- **Language Acquisition:** The class that provides instruction and support for the learning of the language B.

Common Practices and Philosophy for all students:

- We promote International-Mindedness and encourage multilingualism.
- We provide pathways to language acquisition for students in addition to supporting mother tongue languages.
- We provide support for students to be successful in language acquisition.
- We encourage students to take action and extend their language learning in ways that help their community.
- We ensure that every discipline includes support mechanisms for language learning, both written and spoken.
- We promote awareness of one's own language and culture.

- We believe that language learning is vital for social, emotional and cognitive development.

In our increasingly global society, we strive to educate our students to think and communicate with a holistic worldview. Aligning with the IB learner profile attributes of being “open-minded” we encourage our students to understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and to be open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. The acquisition of additional languages helps students develop an understanding of the culture of other countries and an understanding of the role culture plays in one's global perspective and international engagement of the world. We aim to create a dynamic multilingual learning community in which the language of instruction is English, while also fostering the acquisition other languages, including mother tongue, so our students thrive within our culturally rich environment. We recognize the critical role of language in teaching and learning. Language is involved in all learning and is central to educational progress. In addition to learning how to use language, students must also learn about language and through language.

Language Curriculum at Oak Grove:

- **Primary Language Instruction:** The primary language of instruction is English. Although multilingualism and diversity are highly valued, English is the primary language with which OGMS communicates with its community and in which it is committed to providing instruction for learning. All students will develop fluency in this primary language.
- **Language and Literature:** This course is required for all Oak Grove students and the course is designed to help students build knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills as described in the subject guide and in the unit development guide.
- **Language Acquisition Requirements for students:** Students must sustain instruction in the same Language B for the last 2 years.
- **Language Acquisition Instruction:** The primary aim of the Language Acquisition course is to gain competence in a language other than one's native tongue, with the long-term goal of balanced multilingualism. Knowledge, conceptual understandings, and skills will have been developed through units of inquiry and student reflection. Each year, students will be placed in different phases (from 1-6), according to their ability. Each phase represents a development continuum, which is not age-based.
- **Language Acquisition Continuum:** Oak Grove Language Acquisition classes build on previous language learning experiences.

Multilingual communication in the school community:

- Oak Grove Middle School enlists the help of many bilingual staff to translate and/or interpret for our Spanish speaking parents.
- Mount Diablo Unified School District has a translator/interpreter office and parents can contact them to request an interpreter or translator.
- The school libraries include materials to support continued use of the mother tongue as well as offering diverse language selections.

- District documents and publications are available in Spanish.
- The District ELL department contracts with translators of languages other than Spanish who translate curriculum components or other documents at the request of teachers.

Languages Offered:

- Spanish
- Spanish for Spanish Speakers
- Accelerated Spanish (Bilingual Program)
- French

Special Populations:

- **Newcomers:** Oak Grove offers newcomer ELD classes for students who are new to the country.
- **Placement of students and progress:**
 - Oak Grove’s ELL students, or whose mother tongue is not English, take a test at the district to assess their language proficiency before determining supports and placement.
 - ELL students are then annually tested as mandated by federal legislation with the yearly ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessment for California) test. Results are then analyzed yearly with regard to language development and growth.
 - ELL students are placed into most mainstream courses and language development courses throughout their progression in learning the English language. Each of the ELL courses has a curriculum map and Common District Final, which is used to calculate the students’ semester grades and language development progress. To ‘exit’ from the ELL program, a student must get an overall score of 4 on the ELPAC test and the most recent report card grades of C or better in grade level English (quarter). The students should also have the necessary iReady Reading scores for each grade level (6th-578, 7th-583, 8th-599) **OR** meet/exceed standards on ELA SBAC from previous year.
 - Continuing ELL students (Long Term ELLs): Students who have been in the United States for four years or more also qualify to take the ALD Academic Language Development courses.
 - All ELL students have language development folders which consist of a variety of data to assist teachers, counselors, and parents in decisions about instruction, placement, and supports.
 - Course selection is a process involving teachers, parents and counselors and could include a variety of course combinations including mainstream classes and/or ELL courses.

Oak Grove Middle School ELL courses:

- ELD 1 – English Language Development classes for beginning English and reading/comprehension.
- ELD 2 – Intermediate English and reading/comprehension.
- ELD 3 & 4 - Advance English and reading/comprehension.
- ALD A – Academic Language Development – 6th grade
- ALD B – Academic Language Development – 7th grade
- ALD C – Academic Language Development – 8th grade
- ALD & Academic Success – Academic Language Development for SpEd students. The Resource teacher teaches ALD to the same group of students.

Supports for all students:

- Oak Grove offers various summer school programs for all students, including ELL programs.
- District ELL office offers special summer school programs for ELL students
- Smaller class sizes for Special Education students
- Teacher Paras teaming with content teachers to provide additional support for language learners in mainstream classes
- Technology assistance such as voice recordings, digital editing of drafts and other language learning applications which apply the 21st century learner
- After school tutoring
- Additional Reading and Math support classes
- Many teachers offer additional supports as needed
- FEV Tutor online program.

Language Instruction:

- The district offers various summer school programs for all students, including ELL programs
- Teachers select and provide access to literature from a variety of cultural backgrounds
- Students are encouraged to use their native language to help them build schema for the vocabulary in the new language
- Teachers provide differentiated instruction for students with special needs, including students with learning disabilities and students who are academically talented and gifted.
- Teachers assess students using a combination of formative and summative assessments and incorporate rubrics
- Teachers in some ELL classes may include a combination from the Language and Literature guide but also from the Language Acquisition Guide

Document Review:

- A committee will be formed to review the policies at the time of each program evaluation. The committee will consist of IB coordinator, administrators, teachers, community members and parents.
- This policy will be communicated to stakeholders via OGMS Parent Square and school website.

References:

- MYP Principles and Practice (occ.ibo.org)
- Language Policy considerations (occ.ibo.org)
- MYP Language Instruction in Fridley Public Schools
http://www.fridley.k12.mn.us/uploaded/IB_Files/MYP_Language_Practices.pdf
- San Jose High School and Burnett Middle School Language Instruction
http://www.sjUSD.org/san-jose-high/docs/IB_LanguagePolicy2012.pdf
- Oxford Community Schools Language Instruction in the MYP
<http://oxfordschools.org/images/87/2012Language%20Policy.pdf>