

LANGUAGE POLICY



Harrison Central School District

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAM

2023

Harrison Central School District: Language Policy

“The role of language is valued as central to developing critical thinking, which is essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness, international-mindedness and global citizenship.”

(From: Language and Learning in IB Programs, 2011)

Philosophy

The Harrison Central School District is dedicated to the belief that the most important endeavor in any community is the cooperative effort of parents, community members, and educators to ensure the best possible education of its children. The faculty and staff are committed to a mission of equity, access, rigor and adaptability for **all** of its students. These core values inform every aspect of our school district’s work.

Our philosophy supports students self-selecting enrollment in the most challenging classes and expects every member of the learning community to continually adapt to meet the evolving needs of our students. In support of these commitments, the district provides students a rich array of opportunities to cultivate talents and realize success. Our teachers embrace high performance standards and are supported with comprehensive professional development, and the entire school system is focused on continuous improvement on behalf of the students we serve.

Our core beliefs are exemplified by our language program. All IB language classes enjoy open enrollment, and students are encouraged and supported in this effort. We believe that all teachers are teachers of language; therefore, all teachers receive extensive and on-going professional development in the process of language acquisition regardless of their subject area expertise.

Profile

Harrison is located 25 miles north of New York City in Westchester County. As one of the geographically largest school districts in Westchester County, Harrison encompasses several micro communities comprising a socio-economically and culturally diverse student population. The primary language of instruction at Harrison Central School is English, however the members of our student body and faculty speak over 30 languages.

Language A

Offerings:

IB LITERATURE HL YEAR 1 & YEAR 2

IB LANGUAGE & LITERATURE SL YEAR 1 & YEAR 2

Beliefs and Practices:

- Language should be taught through the lens of empathy and global citizenship in order to deepen the student's appreciation of cultural perspectives and understand how language can be used to challenge and sustain ways of thinking.
- A globally-minded approach to literature prepares learners to appreciate diversity while encouraging a deeper understanding of one's own culture and place in the world.
- The study of world literature enriches the students' international awareness, developing the qualities outlined in the IB learner profile, tolerance, empathy, and a genuine respect for perspectives different from their own.
- Students need exposure to a wide range of literature from various time periods and global cultures.
- We emphasize the importance of communication through both text and non-text mediums
- Students should achieve an appreciation of the English language and its linguistic structure.
- Students should become literary critics of texts from different periods, locations, styles and genres.
- Through literary criticism and analysis, students will examine conflict and challenges within a multi-cultural context, affording them a broadened international perspective on literature, human thought and civilization.
- Students need to develop an understanding of both oral and written discourse, with a focus on expanding their analytic and composition skills.
- An understanding of the ways in which formal elements are used to create meaning in a text should be combined with an exploration of how that meaning is affected by reading practices that are culturally defined, both at the time of production and reception.
- We use test exams to monitor program based achievement.

Language B

Offerings:

IB FRENCH SL YEAR 1 & 2

IB FRENCH HL YEAR 1 & 2 (starting in the 2023-2024 school year)

IB ITALIAN SL YEAR 1 & 2

IB ITALIAN HL YEAR 1 & 2

IB SPANISH SL YEAR 1 & 2

IB Spanish HL YEAR 1 & 2

SPANISH AB INITIO SL YEAR 1 & 2

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES:

- The study of world languages provides students with the opportunity to study and appreciate the language and culture of other countries by broadening their personal and cultural perspectives.
- Teaching a language includes not only developing the learners' language proficiency, but developing the learners' cultural understanding and content knowledge as well.
- The study of additional languages empowers students to engage in meaningful, direct interaction with members of other cultures and communities.
- Integrating knowledge and skills from other disciplines promotes logical and creative thinking.
- Language that is taught in an interactive environment allows students to develop communicative skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- We focus on a performance model of language use, in order to prepare students to function independently, spontaneously and comprehensively in the language.

The English as a New Language Program

The Harrison Central School District continues to welcome students and their families who are English Language Learners (ELLs) and the richness that they bring to our school community. As we immerse our students in the English language, we assist them in developing a deeper understanding of their own cultures, as well as the diverse cultures in the United States and in the world. ELLs are capable of reaching the highest standards, but they need time and support to acquire the English language. Parental involvement is sought and nurtured to ensure the success of our students.

The work of the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher is to advocate for their students and to work with content area teachers to make content available to ELLs at their current level of proficiency. We believe that through dialogue and a shared understanding of curriculum at all levels with classroom teachers, guidance counselors and administrators, students in our ENL Program are provided with differentiated and carefully scaffolded activities and assessments to help improve and develop English language skills as well as deepening their understanding of the content. Our service delivery for ENL students is highly personalized. Students may receive support in an integrated ENL setting that consists of a co-teach pairing between an+ ENL teacher and a content-area teacher in order to make content comprehensible; this approach is beneficial to all students, ELLs and native speakers of English. Students may also receive support in a stand-alone ENL setting, in which ELLs are scheduled for an ENL class for more targeted support.

To measure their growth in the English language, ELLs take *The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test* yearly in order to determine their level of proficiency. Once a student reaches the level of Proficient, he/she is then exited from ESL services, but the district still supports ELLs for an additional two years of transitional services.

Mother Tongue Support

Teachers are trained to recognize the importance of the maintenance of the primary language in the development of a secondary language. Families are encouraged to continue using the primary language at home and to enhance literacy skills in the primary language to the fullest extent.

The District has used technology to enhance communication with our multilingual families. The District's website, in addition to community-wide communications, are easily translated into multiple languages by families. The District also continues to provide translation of documents and interpreters for in-person meetings whenever needed.

Teachers have engaged in professional development to learn more about two high-incidence languages within our student population - Spanish and Japanese. Study groups that take place throughout the year help teachers acquire some language and gain intercultural understanding in order to enhance family communication.