



Hopkins North Middle School

Language Policy

Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire every student to discover what's possible by thinking critically and creatively, living compassionately and practicing global mindedness in every class, every day. In our communities, we will do this by

- taking risks
- accepting challenges
- learning across boundaries
- caring about each other and the world

Our language policy will describe, instruct, and guide our students, staff, and community.

Language Philosophy

At Hopkins North Middle School, we believe that language is a foundation for understanding and expressing knowledge about ourselves, about the content of our classes, and about the people and cultures around us. We know that students' home languages are a valuable reflection of their culture and identity, and we strive to affirm all home languages while building on their linguistic strengths and helping them bridge to mastery of standard English and academic English. We understand that all teachers teach language, whether the specific vocabulary of their academic discipline or the social language of human relationships. We are committed to helping students develop a rich base of academic vocabulary across all eight disciplines, which will help them show their teachers what they know. We believe that acquiring new languages strengthens the foundations of a student's primary language and helps foster a community that respects and celebrates all of its members. We know that we have a responsibility to teach students how to communicate effectively and appropriately with different audiences from all over the world.

Best Practices

Hopkins Schools incorporates those methods or techniques that both research and classroom experience have proven most successful for student learning and engagement. We understand that helping students who speak a language other than English (our language of instruction) at home with family and friends deserve the opportunity to think, communicate and learn in their home language whenever it is possible, and to feel that their language and its culture is validated and affirmed. Hopkins Schools use the practices of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CLR), which provides "the validation and affirmation of the home (indigenous) culture and home language for the purposes of building and bridging the student to succeed in the culture of academia and mainstream society." (Hollie, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning: Classroom Practices for Student Success* (2011), p. 23

In our community, we strive to help students retain their mother-tongue by:

- i. Organize learning around universal themes and guiding questions that are meaningful to students, culturally responsive, and incorporate flexible groupings for learning activities.
- ii. Tiered language instruction (Hollie), which supports the process of affirming home language, building on their linguistic strengths, and bridging them to proficiency in academic English.
- iii. Supporting students in maintaining their mother-tongue through the use of activities that draw on interactions with adults from their home and community.
- iv. Offer the Juntos program for Spanish immersion and heritage speakers, where students are able to take three of their eight courses in Spanish.

Overview of our Language Programs

- Our language of instruction is English
- Our Language Acquisition Courses include: English-Learner, French, and Spanish
- Heritage and immersion Spanish speakers may enroll in the Juntos program

Language Acquisition Levels and Progression

- All students not needing support in the school's language of instruction (English) will take a Language Acquisition class for all years of their time in MYP. Students will study the same language for all years of the MYP.

Second Language Acquisition

All students who have the skills to read and write academic English at grade level will be enrolled in a language acquisition course at North Middle School to learn another language. Language Acquisition courses include Spanish and French, as well as tiered instruction in English for English Language Learners. Students who are building the skills of reading and writing academic English (either because they speak another language at home and are learning English in school, or who speak English but have not yet mastered academic English), will enroll in classes that help them master our language of instruction. Incorporating content from various disciplines is a key component of language acquisition instruction.

Goals

Students share and develop written and spoken work in academic, social, and other contexts. Students will work toward proficiency in more than one language. Students who need to acquire academic English skills will focus on academic English language acquisition first.

Essential Agreements

We will strive to create an environment where authentic learning experiences are emphasized and a culture of curiosity is nurtured.

We will develop and expand our students' ability to express, represent, and understand thoughts, feelings and experiences and self and others.

We will also differentiate when assessing the learner's work to provide meaningful tasks and assessments for all students considering all levels and abilities.

We will facilitate active learning by fostering inquiry and promoting real-life applications using language as the means to inquiry and intellectual development.

Bibliography

Westlake Academy Language Policy (2007).

Hollie, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning: Classroom Practices for Student Success (2011).*