

Middle Years Programme Language Policy

Introduction

W.E. Mitchell Middle School (MtMS) and Cordova High School (CHS) believe that the acquisition of language is a central component of a person’s academic and personal growth. We understand that it is incumbent upon us, as educators, to foster a student’s knowledge and understanding of their home language, while assisting in the continual acquisition of another language. Knowledge of an additional language aids in developing an understanding of other cultures; a necessity in our learner profile goals to increase International-mindedness and “to create a better, more peaceful world” (International Baccalaureate Organization).

Language Profile

At W.E. Mitchell Middle School and Cordova High School, the primary language of instruction is English. While a majority of our students speak English at home, we recognize that we have a sizeable population of learners whose first languages are not English.

Students’ English proficiency is currently evaluated at initial enrollment using the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). Students are reevaluated annually until the student is reclassified.

At both MtMS and CHS, Beginning level English Learners (ELs) are placed in classes that are specifically designed to help students learn English. MtMS and CHS also have Bilingual Instructional Assistants (BIAs) who support all ELs (some in their primary language). Beginning ELs are taught with appropriate curriculum. They also have use of computer programs that were created to help students build their English language.

English learners are immersed in general education classes in all other content areas. All teachers have received professional development in strategies to support English Learners in their content areas, and the BIA schedule is strategically developed to provide the maximum amount of support. At CHS, English learners are clustered together in their Math classes for additional language support from each other and from BIAs in those classes.

The table below shows the percentage of students at MtMS and CHS who are classified as English Learners, Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) or Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) as of the 2017-2018 demographic data available through the California Department of Education Dataquest system.

	Number of English Learner (EL) Students tested	Level 4 %	Level 3 %	Level 2 %	Level 1 %
W.E. Mitchell Middle School	89	20.2	38.2	22.47	19.1

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Cordova High School	217	12.44	26.27	22.58	38.71
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The most common home language of our EL students is Spanish, accounting for over 60% of our EL students. In addition to Spanish, large percentages of our students identify their home language as Russian, Armenian, Moldovan, Hindi and Tagalog.

MtMS currently offers Spanish and French. Students begin in 6th grade with the Exploratory course in the language of their choice. Students continue the sequence with 1A in 7th grade and 1B in 8th grade. CHS offers all levels of both French and Spanish from level 1 through level 4, as well as the IB Diploma Programme Standard Level (SL) 2-year course for 11th and 12th graders. Both MtMS and CHS offer a sequence of Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses for students who choose to study their home language of Spanish as their World Language choice.

Language Philosophy

At MMS and CHS, we believe that all teachers are language teachers and that all students are language learners. Language is our primary means of communication and the acquisition of language is a life-long process. Proficiency in one language is directly transferable to other languages and students' knowledge of a second language helps them better understand their home language. We recognize that we must nurture and develop students' proficiency in their home language as this is critical to maintaining the integrity of a student's culture. In addition, at MtMS and CHS, we believe that language learning promotes internationalism and multiculturalism.

Language Goals

At MMS and CHS, our language program strives to:

- Ensure quality instruction in World Languages through the delivery of the the World Languages Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) as set out by the World Languages teachers district-wide
- Develop and improve students' oral and written communication
- Enable students to learn and use academic language effectively, appropriately, accurately, and confidently
- Encourage students to use academic language as a means to explore cultures, both their own and others
- Encourage students to use academic language to understand the perspectives of people in different cultures
- Assist students in understanding the necessity and advantage of using academic language in all subjects across the curriculum
- Develop students' abilities to read, understand and analyze works of literature

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Language Policy Review

The Language Policy will be reviewed annually, beginning in the 2015-2016 school year by a cohort selected from the faculty and administration of MtMS and CHS. The review will evaluate how well the language policy is being implemented on campus, updates and changes that may need to be made to the policy, and methods that can be employed on campus to better improve implementation.