Somers Middle School
Language Policy

Somers Middle School is committed to meaningful growth, learning, and the social emotional well-being of our students. We strive to integrate the MYP framework, concepts and skills to nurture life-long learning and global awareness. We aim to engage students with a focus on reflection, open-mindedness and inquiry.

Statement of Philosophy:

At Somers Middle School, we strive to promote language learning, with strong supports and opportunities to communicate in both the mother tongue language and the target language. We recognize that all students, regardless of their language background, are linguists and believe that all teachers are teachers of literacy.

Defining Concepts:

Concept	Definition
Mother-Tongue	"The language(s) learned first; the languages(s) identified as a native speaker; the language known best and the language used most." The term is best described as the language that the student predominantly uses outside of the education setting. Mother Tongue is typically the language that is frequently spoken at home by all family members.
Target Language (TL)/ Language B	The world language that MYP students are learning in school, subsequently to their mother-tongue language. The goal of Language Acquisition is to be able to communicate in both, an educational and real world setting.
ENL	English as a New Language. - This refers to those MYP students whose first language is not English.
Language Acquisition	The teaching of the Target language (TL) using the MYP framework
Literacy	The ability to read and write with a goal of identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and apply skills, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

Placement and Instruction of Target Language

Multilingualism and the development of critical literacy are considered important factors in fostering international-mindedness through the promotion of cultural identity, intercultural awareness and global citizenship. We believe that all students benefit from the opportunity to acquire another language. Students make their target language selection in the spring of 5th grade. Formal instruction begins in 6th Grade (Year 1). Options for target language include *Spanish, French*, as recognized by MYP, and *Italian*. The MYP recognizes 6th grade as year 1, 7th grade as year 2, and 8th grade as year 3. Students receive one high school credit, from the combined years of 7th and 8th grade. Students begin Year 1 in the emergent phase with the goal of progressing through the levels of fluency. Students progress through phases, but remain in the appropriate year 1, 2 or 3 course by grade level.
Students experience 3 years of study of the Target Language in the middle school . All students grades 6-8 study one TL (unless otherwise exempt) and are committed to stay in the same language for all 3 years.

Language Acquisition Units are designed using the MYP framework and are taught in context, using thematic units, authentic multimodal resources. Immersion in the target language, as well as a multicultural lens is the approach, therefore a goal of 90% of target language instruction is provided in the language course of study. Language instruction and learning experiences provide opportunities for all leaners to understand other cultures and have a multicultural lens.
Language instruction takes place through the use of comprehensible input with a communicative approach. Language Acquisition integrates the four skills of communication: reading, listening, speaking, writing. In addition, there are three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational.
Students are assessed using both formative and summative assessments throughout each unit, which are documented on curriculum maps.
Students complete Checkpoint A exam (FLACS) at the end of year 3.

Literacy and Primary Language Instruction

While Language and Literature focus on specific content and fundamental skills of literacy, literacy is a foundation and cornerstone in every content area. We understand that all students progress at different paces, and view literacy for our students as the shared responsibility of all stakeholders: parents, students, teachers and administration. As part of our school's success plan, it is the shared responsibility for all curriculum areas to provide students with grade level texts and appropriate supports throughout the year. Reading and writing in the content area is taught meaningfully and in context. Literacy skills are approached through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with text, to explore and investigate.

Intervention Supports for Students

There are dedicated AIS (Academic Intervention Service) providers at Somers Middle School. There are two different types of AIS offered- AIS Literacy and AIS Math. New York State

mandates that if a student falls below benchmark on a state exams, they should be looked at closely to determine of further support is needed. This is done through grades, other assessment measure and teacher input, to determine if they would be in need of AIS services. The secondary focus of AIS to support literacy across all disciplines.

Assessments given are STAR exam (scoring below 41%). AIS literacy, students are given a benchmark assessment (Fountas & Pinnell) to determine if they are reading on grade level. The benchmark is a diagnostic tool to get to the root of a student's individual needs. Students are progressed monitored bi-weekly by leveled literacy Intervention Program, as well as STAR.

Exit criteria from AIS Literacy services are meeting or exceeding benchmarks on two consecutive STAR assessments, looking at sustained growth in a student's skills and meeting benchmark on the Fountas & Pinnell assessment. Classroom data, historical data and teacher and parent/guardian feedback are also taken into consideration before discontinuation of services.

If a student no longer receives AIS services, supports are in place for both enrichment and intervention through the period dedicated for WIN (What I Need).

English as A New Language for Learners:

Somers Central School District is 1% ELL. If students' home language literacy and/or math skills are two or more years below grade level, they are identified as SIFE (Student with Interrupted Formal Education).

Students are given the NYSITELL (The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners) in kindergarten or, if they are from another country, when they enter SMS. There are five levels: *Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding* and *Commanding*. If they test Commanding (the highest level) they are NOT ELLs and do not need ENL services. For the other levels, they are entitled to 180-360 minutes a week of push-in and/or pull-out ENL instruction.

ENL students get "time and a half" on all quizzes and test and are allowed to take the state math and science assessments in their native language.

Building level Supports for ELLs include: bilingual glossaries and word-to-word dictionaries, bilingual textbooks, assessments, and handouts, bilingual TA support, extra visuals (e.g., graphics, maps, charts, photos, videos), subtitled PowerPoints, lower-level English materials and differentiation in how students show what they know.

Review of Policy:

The team of policy writers will meet annually to reflect, revise and update the policy as needed. All staff have reviewed the policy and have agreed to uphold its implementation in the school.

Resources:

Guidelines For Developing A School Language Policy; IBO (2008).

Policy Writers:

Jenna Schettino- MYP Coordinator; Individuals and Societies Teacher
Jeff Getman- Principal
Jennifer Mangone- Assistant Principal
Dina Miller- Learning Support Coordinator
Jenna Crispo- Language Acquisition Teacher
Randi Hauser- Language Acquisition Teacher
Rebecca Pitke- ENL teacher

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