

Language Policy

Shaker Heights City PYP Schools



[Link to MYP Academic Language Policy](#)

The purpose and philosophy of language development and multilingualism in Shaker Schools

In Shaker Schools, we believe that all teachers teach language. Receptive and expressive language make a complex web of connections within the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry and beyond the classroom. We further believe that language is a medium for inquiry, conceptual development, and it is central to affirming our student identities, international-mindedness, cognitive, social, and emotional development. We believe language constructs meaning and knowledge. Therefore, it is our responsibility to provide an integrated, caring, multilingual, multimodal environment for all learners, this includes language that is not oral, such as that used by Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and American Sign Language users. Shaker Heights Schools will ensure the value of learner diversity and aim to provide equal access to the curriculum for all learners through our language programmes and as guaranteed in our access policy.

Language and literacy-rich environments foster a love of lifelong learning. A learner's experiences are framed through a continuum of phases of language development. Shaker Schools have three harmonious purposes for language development: "learning language, learning through language and learning about language." Key to this is learning our instructional language, English, and by acquiring another language, Spanish.

Our language learning communities utilize inquiry processes to help develop globally-connected citizens with intercultural understanding and provide authentic opportunities for conceptual development. Inquiry is the leading pedagogical approach in designing and implementing receptive and expressive language experiences in the Shaker Schools. Language is central to creating, understanding, exploring, and gaining knowledge. Conceptual language learning is an integral part of all inquiry processes, resulting in varying types of action.

Historically, Shaker Heights Schools value and appreciate the diversity of people and cultures within our community. We are an inner-ring suburb within proximity to thriving universities, hospitals, and museums. Our community includes families from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. We value each student's country of origin and home language through multiple means of empowerment, leading to a meaningful exchange of intellect, perspectives, and shared humanity. Ultimately, we leverage the diversity to create a shared understanding of human commonality and shared guardianship of the planet.

We believe that language and culture are interrelated; learning a language is a vehicle for building intercultural understanding. We believe that a student's home language or dialect is an important part of his or her identity. We respect and appreciate the various languages and

dialects within our school community. This diversity enhances students' ability for expression, increases empathy for others, and forms a sense of pride in who they are. We believe that the home languages and dialects in Shaker Schools enhance and enrich the learning environment and the school community. Multilingualism and intercultural understanding are, in fact, a right and a resource for learning. To that end, in addition to a plethora of home languages and the development of English, every student will learn a second language starting in first grade.

Shaker PYP schools encourage and support the cultural and linguistic differences of our students and their families.

International-mindedness and Learner Profile as related to this policy

International-mindedness is a continuous process of growth and development. It is infused throughout the PYP frameworks, disseminated and reflected upon throughout the units of inquiry with language. International mindedness is embedded in the school's culture through the mission statements, global engagements, multilingualism, Learner Profile development, and multiple opportunities to grow intercultural understanding. Furthermore, learners have access to diverse, culturally informative reading material and expansive learning and teaching resources in multimedia formats. In total, these provide all learners the dispositions and skills to develop international-mindedness. As per the Equity Policy and district values, language is used to reflect upon and build enduring understandings about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Decision-making related to this policy

This policy secures crucial language development through an IB education to the broadest range of students in all grades of our five PYP schools. The success of all students in our PYP is instrumental to decision-making and curriculum development as it relates to language learning. This policy necessitates how funds, resources and personnel are distributed at the highest levels of the district. Likewise, language development for all students demands decision-making and curriculum choices at the micro level. These choices include, but are not limited to: additional language development, resource purchases, staffing decisions, scope and sequence documents, planner design and completion, differentiated language and assessment practices, supports for language development through inclusion and ELL (English Language Learners) instruction as needed, access to and learning with appropriate resources and technology tools, and an understanding of and adherence to all IB policies so that every child is provided the best opportunity to succeed in the PYP.

Language is a transdisciplinary element that permeates the curriculum. It is our responsibility to ensure that scaffolded learning experiences occur such that the learner can access and build on his/her learning. Student participation and understanding are increased by ELL services which support students, families, and teachers. Additional language development in Spanish begins in grade 1 and is scaffolded through grade 4.

Additional language curriculum development connected to this policy

The Shaker PYP schools offer all learners Spanish from first through fourth grade. PYP students learn Spanish from the age of seven because it increases and affirms:

- the capacity to think, talk and reflect on how languages work
- cultural identity
- cognitive flexibility
- creativity
- problem-solving skills
- exploration of multiple perspectives
- international-mindedness

Language learning and teaching are social acts dependent on relationships with the self and others' context, environment, and world. The PYP Spanish programme of inquiry embeds the Learner Profile and the attribute of “communicator,” as well as approaches to learning and teaching. Through an additional language, the PYP learning community builds intercultural understanding and gives students more capacity to create a better and more peaceful world for all.

Rights and responsibilities associated with this policy and best practices

In Shaker Schools, all teachers are teachers of language. Shaker Schools support all students in language acquisition in many ways, including, but not limited to, the following ways:

- Providing parents ways to plan and guide their child’s language profile and development
- Providing PreK language-rich classrooms offered to all district families
- Implementing research-based language instruction across the curriculum
- Integrating literacy instruction as the foundation for our units of inquiry, instilling an intrinsic love of literacy through a balanced literacy approach
 - Providing supports to those students struggling with literacy through Literacy Specialists
- Allowing students ample choice in reading materials that mirror and explore the experiences and cultures of the student body
- Selecting and providing access to multimedia and literature from a variety of cultures, including classics
- Integrating literacy and development of writing skills in Spanish
- Providing multiple opportunities at all phases of the writing process for learners to express their ideas through written expression within various genres.
- Assessing students formally and informally in the classroom for differentiated instruction, through the process of check-ins, writing prompts, reading comprehension checks, reading skills assessments, speeches, and essays
 - Building student agency in which the learner creates goals, paths for learning based on self or peer assessments and movement along a continuum of growth
- Analyzing progress by daily observations and formative assessments, as well as standardized tests:

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) three times each year (grades K through 4)
- Ohio State Tests ELA yearly (Grades 3 and 4)

Shaker PYP Schools will support all those with Limited English Proficiency in, but not limited to, the following ways:

- Providing parents ways to plan and guide their child’s language profile and development
- Knowing the language needs for each school which includes the diversity of home language/mother-tongue
- Providing consistent instruction with a Highly Qualified English Language Learning (ELL) teacher
- Completing early assessment K-12 using the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessments (OELPA) and Ohio English Language Proficiency Screeners (OELPS) to monitor language development progress:
 - Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment K-12 (OELPA)
 - Annually in spring to all students in the ELL program
 - Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener K-12 (OELPS)
 - Administered to all new potential ELL students based on Home Language Usage Survey (HLUS). If the family indicates on the HLUS that another language is spoken in the home, the screener is administered.
 - Language Assessment System Pre-K (Pre-LAS)
 - Administered at beginning of the year to all new potential ELL students and throughout the year when new likely ELL students enroll
- Contracting interpreters for parent and teacher communications and/or to translate print materials.
- Encouraging students to share their home language with class and schoolmates through morning announcements, oral presentations, and written communications.
- Encouraging families to borrow various materials from the ELL teachers, including books, dictionaries, bilingual books, books on tape and CD, flashcards, etc.
- Using digital translation tools to communicate with our ELL families

Resources/supports needed for Language Development

There are many and varied resources needed to ensure access to the programme. These currently include the following resources as funded by the district.

- The essential **Written Resources** for the Academic Integrity Policy include, but are not limited to:
 - [Language and learning in IB programmes](#)
 - [Language scope and sequence](#)
 - [Learning in a Language other than the Mother Tongue in IB Programmes](#)
 - [Guidelines for developing a school language policy](#)
 - [Ohio Department of Education standards](#)
 - [From Principles to Practice: Learning and Teaching](#)
 - [From Principles to Practice: The Learner](#)
 - [From Principles to Practice: The Learning Community](#)

- [IB Standards and Practices](#)
- [Guide to Programme Evaluation](#)
- [IB section on the website](#)
- [PYP section on the website](#)
- [Shaker Schools Equity Policy](#)
- IB Online materials as accessed through [My IB](#) and Programme Resource Center
- All training documents/virtual resources attained in IB training
- [Shaker Heights City Schools Student Handbook](#)
- [School Board Policies](#)
- Differentiated learning materials
- [State laws regarding the education of English Language Learners](#)
- [Federal laws regarding the education of English Language Learners](#)
- Shaker Heights City School District is committed to the success of all students, thus has dedicated personnel to guarantee inclusion. These **Human Resources** include but are not limited to:
 - Classroom teachers
 - Language acquisition teachers
 - ELL teachers trained in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Intervention Specialists
 - Literacy Specialists
 - Director of Curriculum and Instruction
 - Instructional Coaches
 - IB Coordinators
 - Director of Pupil Services
 - Elementary Special Education supervisor
 - Principals
 - Members of the school community who provide translation
 - PTO
- Those human resources are furthered by **Community Resources**, which include, but not limited to:
 - Members of the community who provide translation and/or experience with varying languages
 - The District contracted translation services from HI Translation
 - Community resources and language practices are available to families at various events such as Curriculum Night, Library Night, New Family Orientation, Kindergarten Round-up and Orientation, Registration process.
 - Librarians from the Public Library also visit the school to help students get excited about the summer reading program.
 - Developing a Love of Reading: The PTO, faculty, and staff work together on a variety of initiatives to create a love of reading throughout each school year which may include Book Fair, vacation learning options, extended day programming, and literacy events.
- **Non-human resources** which include, but are not limited to:
 - Budgeted amounts in the District's Financial Plan.

- Time and coverage for teachers to address language development and prepare the second language's integration into units of inquiry.
- School libraries, including:
 - home language collections
 - Mirrors and Windows, Social Justice, collections
 - reflect multiple cultures and international-mindedness
- Literary and informational text resources to support instruction within and outside units of inquiry.
- Various writing programs
- Instructional time provided to facilitate rich language experiences: Daily 5 or similar structure, ELL services, intervention sessions, Spanish classes
- Students are encouraged to bring books in their home language from home to read while at school.
- **Physical spaces** for learning which include, but are not limited to:
 - School Libraries
 - Classrooms with ample physical space where the teacher can show language development anchor charts, monitor, and provide feedback while students use electronic devices, work collaboratively or independently
- **Virtual spaces** which include, but are not limited to:
 - Library
 - Online translation programs such as digital translation tools: Duolingo, picture/word dictionaries, etc.

Structures in place to ensure the policy is implemented

The District complies with Ohio Compulsory Education Laws ensuring access to public education for all, including ELL students. Since all of our schools have the International Baccalaureate PYP, this policy shows commitment to educating all, given any language learning variability. Additionally, by budgeting, planning, and providing the above-listed resources, the district continues to make an extensive and consistent commitment to language learning in the IB PYP.

The building administrator, coordinator, and teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of the Language Policy. The librarian, library aide, teaching staff, coordinator and administrator are responsible for researching resources to implement the language policy.

Professional development to support good practice

Professional learning is essential for educator growth and to implement best practices. It is also crucial to ground philosophy and anchor instructional paradigms. The Learning and Teaching department will explore, participate in and provide professional learning related to language learning and communication across content. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will monitor and implement a professional learning plan that best serves this District to ensure that all relevant personnel have a contemporary understanding of language learning and the instructional implications of most current research and knowledge.

Relationship between this policy and other policies

Specifically, the language policy links to the access, inclusion, and assessment policies because modifications for students will be made so that every child can learn, share, and be assessed in ways that access thinking not dependent on language. The [Access Policy](#) ensures that all Shaker residents will have access to our elementary schools; the [Inclusion Policy](#) outlines and ensures how modifications are guaranteed by law for students who need language modifications; the [Assessment Policy](#) outlines and confirms that assessments will be wide-ranging, modified as needed and appropriate for all learners, including ELL students. The [Academic Integrity Policy](#) will be explained, especially in Exhibition years in students' home language as necessary. Lastly, all of the PYP policies will be shared with the community online and in multiple languages.

Review and revision cycle

The District will monitor and evaluate the impact of the Language Policy to ensure that it regularly informs learning and teaching. The Language Policy will be continually cross-referenced with other working documents such as our state standards, IB standards and practices, different policies, and relevant documents.

Documentation and storage of this policy will be the responsibility of the IB district coordinator and PYP liaison. Policies will be shared and revised as necessary with District and Building Leadership Teams, located on the district IB website for community access. Bi-annually, district coordinators will capture and use compliance data about this (and all other) policies through surveys to key stakeholders. Bi-annually and during self-study years, coordinators will review, revise and readopt policy documents.

Communication plan

Policies will be shared and revised by District and Building Leadership Teams and then communicated on the IB website and individual school websites.