

Palmer High School

Language Policy

Palmer High School recognizes that language is fundamental to all learning because it permeates the entire curriculum. Therefore, throughout our curriculum we foster the development of the language of instruction, world languages, and the mother tongue.

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Mission and Vision Statements

IB Mission

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Palmer High School Vision

To create a culture of caring and a culture where we believe in every student and their ability to learn.

Palmer High School Mission

To prepare life-long learners, community assets, and citizens of integrity.

Language Policy and Vision

Every teacher at Palmer High School is a language teacher and recognizes the importance of this role within the IB philosophy. By integrating language into every aspect of the curriculum, we are teaching students the importance of culture, diversity, and sensitivity towards others which in turn enhances their personal growth, cognitive development, and facilitates international understanding. Through the strong emphasis on language, our goal is to foster a deep understanding about language and a love of literature.

All courses within the Palmer High School IB Diploma Program are instructed and assessed in English, and so fluency in the reading, writing, and speaking of English are required to participate in IB courses.

Students at Palmer High who qualify for support as English Language Learners, are offered a comprehensive program through which they acquire the skills and knowledge needed to access the regular curriculum. Through assistance from our school district, and under the direction of Jane Bell, English Language Learner teacher, Palmer High provides support to students and their families to enable them to adjust to a new language, learning environment, and culture.

Palmer High also offers Language A: English options at a variety of levels: Reading 1 and 2 for English language learners or students who need extra support in reading, English 1 and 2, the standard courses to prepare for IB Literature and Language & Literature courses, and a course called Interdisciplinary Writing and Analysis for ninth and tenth grade students who are ready for accelerated education in reading and writing in English. In addition to our IB courses, Palmer High offers several elective courses in English designed to expose students to different styles of writing and literature.

For our entire student population, Palmer High offers three Language B options. On campus, we offer Japanese (ab initio and SL) and French SL. Online, Palmer High offers Spanish via Apex and Pamoja. French and Japanese courses are vertically aligned to ensure that students enrolling in levels 1 and 2 are prepared to begin studying their Language B within the IB program as high school juniors. Students enrolled in Spanish must work independently to pass Spanish 1 and 2, but after that receive support from the IB Coordinator and their Pamoja-assigned instructor for Spanish SL or Spanish ab initio SL.

All incoming 9th grade students are strongly encouraged to enroll in one of Palmer High School's three language programs, both as a sign of the importance of and our commitment to language learning and all of its benefits to students and to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in the full Diploma Program by meeting prerequisite requirements in their 9th and 10th grade years.

All aspects of our language program require formal as well as ongoing informal assessments. These assessments are used to plan appropriate instruction and to evaluate student progress.

Central to Palmer High's Language Policy is the opportunity for teaching students the importance of culture, diversity, and sensitivity towards others. Programs and activities which support this include:

- Sister-City/Sister-School Exchange Program with Saroma, Japan
- The hosting of exchange students from other countries
- International Club
- Study abroad trips to France with the French language classes
- International trips with the Music department
- International trips with the History department
- International trips with the Science and Math departments

Mother Tongue Resources

Many Palmer High students speak languages other than English at home, and we encourage families to continue speaking, reading, and writing those languages.

Palmer High school believes language provides the means for thinking and communicating and is fundamental for learning. Learning a language is not enough; through a language we appreciate the complexity and richness of culture. Mother tongue development is necessary for cultural identity. Therefore Palmer High School must recognize and support the mother tongue of each student.

Languages spoken at home of Palmer High School students include English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, German, Yup'ik/Inupiaq, Albanian, Portuguese, Mein, Samoan, and Filipino.

The purpose of supporting a mother tongue is to help students obtain and maintain fluency in their native language, to support the development of literacy skills in their native language, and to celebrate and value students' home cultures.

Outside of the support provided by Jane Bell, English Language Learner teacher, Palmer High offers support via electronic resources, texts and textbooks in translation (where available), and the support of our librarian to access additional resources.

Connections to other IB Policies

Language and Access

To ensure that all students at Palmer High School have access to the IB Diploma Program, support and resources are available to support students who are either proficient or lacking proficiency with the English language. Students in 9th and 10th grade classes in all subject areas receive instruction to ensure their readiness to read, write, and speak about academic subjects in IB courses. Students who need assistance with English proficiency are identified as soon as they enroll as students at Palmer High, and are given the support, resources, and opportunity to increase fluency before enrolling in IB courses.

Language and Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of learning, and students' abilities to both understand their assessments and produce work as part of those assessments is essential to learning within the IB Diploma Program and Palmer High School. The Assessment Policy clearly outlines the definitions for and means of assessment within the IB program.

Language and Inclusion

All students are entitled to support while learning, and the language and inclusion policies line out the ways in which students can ask for and receive support for their learning, with and without 504 and Individualized Education (IEP) plans.

Language and Academic Integrity

Palmer High School's Academic Integrity Policy includes clear definitions, rights and responsibilities, sanctions and monitoring processes, and steps for teaching students about academic integrity, including within their Language A and B courses.