

Cordova High School & W.E. Mitchell Middle School International Baccalaureate Programmes 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 re-evaluated 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. CHS also has 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 CHS who are classified as English Learners, Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) or Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) as of the 2022-23 demographic data available through the California Department of Education Dataquest system.

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	English Learner (EL)	Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)	Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)
W.E. Mitchell Middle School	15.2%	17.6%	1.5%
Cordova High School	20.8%	25.8%	2.8%

The most common home language of our EL students is Spanish, accounting for over 25% of our EL students. In addition to Spanish, large percentages of our students identify their home language as Russian, Armenian, Ukrainian, and Farsi.

MtMS currently offers courses in Spanish, and CHS currently offer courses in Spanish and French. Students at MtMS begin studying language acquisition in 6th grade with an Exploratory course in Spanish. 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 3, as well as the IB Diploma Programme Standard Level (SL) 2-year course for 11th and 12th graders and Higher Level (HL) for Spanish. CHS offers a sequence of Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses, levels 1-3, for students who choose to study their home language of Spanish as their World Language choice.

Language Philosophy

At MtMS 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 lifelong 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 CHS, we believe that language learning promotes internationalism and multiculturalism.

Language Objectives

At MtMS 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 districtwide
- Develop and improve students' oral and written communication
- Enable students to learn and use academic language effectively, appropriately, accurately, and confidently

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- 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

Language Development in the CP

As one of the core components of the CP, all career students will engage in a study of a second language. This language may not be their native language. Students will have the opportunity to choose their language of study. Through advice and guidance from the counselors, CP Coordinator, and Personal and Professional Skills teachers, students should choose a second language that fulfills and enhances their career path, as well as one that is of interest to them.

The language course must meet the following criteria:

- The chosen language interests the student.
- The language development will support and enhance the student's career pathway.
- The language development will provide opportunities for the student to acquire oral communication, writing skills, reading skills, cultural competencies about the target culture, and visual interpretation. Language development must begin in year 1 of the Programme and finish at the end of year 2, so there is a concurrency of learning. There will be a minimum of 50 hours of study over the two years.

Evidence of Learning

Students will create a portfolio to document their language development journey. Reflection is an integral and ongoing component of the portfolio.

The language portfolio can include the following components:

- a record of the activities, tasks and assessments
- reflections on learning experiences and understanding of other cultures
- a list of future goals that involve use of the target language
- certificates
- examples of work
- letters of acknowledgment

Students will be given choice in how the portfolio is organized. Some may choose to create a binder, while others may create a Google Site. In order to monitor progress and support students, the service

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learning coordinator/personal and professional skills course teacher will conduct regular informal and formal interviews with students.

Accessibility

Whichever path Diploma Programme (DP) students decide to take for their language acquisition journey, the study must include the following:

- Differentiation of learning to ensure student success and meet all learners' needs.
- Provide equal access and opportunity for all students, making accommodations and adjustments for learning or physical disabilities.
- Concept/theme based learning (lessons and concepts are taught in context, and not in isolation).
- Inquiry based learning.
- Student evaluation includes a variety of formative and summative assessments.

Language Policy Review

The Language Policy will be reviewed annually, beginning in the 2018-2019 school year by a group of stakeholders selected from the faculty, students, and administration of CHS and MtMS. 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.

Last reviewed 5/15/2024.