



McKemy Academy of International Studies

Language Policy

Our IB Language Policy is a working document developed by our Site Council. The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programs designed and available to help our students attain these goals.

This policy is intended to provide an overview of our guiding principles for language learning at McKemy Academy which permeates the entire school curriculum with local opportunities that provide authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

I. School Language Philosophy

MAIS recognizes that communicating effectively in all subjects for a variety of purposes is key to academic success. Thus, all teachers become language teachers, and learners are central to effective communication in the classroom. We encourage students to develop their mother tongue to nurture their personal and cultural identities. A child's cultural identity is important to acknowledge and take pride in.

At MAIS, we provide opportunities to maintain the mother tongue. In addition, we encourage students to learn an additional language, Spanish, an integral language in our American Southwest community, as a way of promoting intercultural awareness and global citizenship. Students are encouraged to develop a maximum level of proficiency in all their languages of study.

Culture and Language Profile: MAIS has approximately 336 students as of the 2024-2025 school year. Of these, 46% identify as Hispanic, 36% identify as White, 5% as Black or African American, 8% as two or more ethnicities, 1% as Asian, 4% Native American, and .3% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Home language Percentage of students

- English 88.052%
- Spanish 12.397%
- Arabic 0.275%
- Vietnamese 0.275%

Many of these students with two languages are not fully proficient in one or both languages. Upon entry into our district, students who are identified as multilingual by the state required Home Language Survey, are

assessed for their English proficiency using the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA). If needed, students are placed into the appropriate level for language support. They are re-assessed yearly using AZELLA until they are deemed proficient. They are then monitored for two years.

All teachers in the state of Arizona are required to be fully endorsed in Structured English Immersion by their third year of teaching. This model is used to rapidly help English Language Learners learn the language of instruction. English is the language of instruction required by Arizona Law.

Spanish courses are currently taught. In the future, other languages may be included to cover the needs of our population. At that time, we will give recommendations for tutors in the language of choice by utilizing our alliance with the International Student Association at Arizona State University and Saturday schools and community classes available in those specific languages.

Overview of Language Programs

Language and Literature

English is our first language of instruction at MAIS. In Arizona, we are expected to maintain the Arizona College and Career Readiness standards. Translated literature from different countries as well as Native American and American Southwest stories are used to provide and promote cultural experiences.

English Language Learning (ELL) support is offered to students through our district. All teachers maintain a Structured English Immersion endorsement on their teaching certificates.

Language Acquisition

Students take Spanish year round except for the students who have not yet passed the AZELLA test. These students have a specific English Language Development class that they attend daily. These classes ensure that students are exposed to the target language 188 minutes a week.

Mother Tongue and Cultural Support

The 1:1 laptop initiative at MAIS allows students to seek resources and translations of materials into their mother tongue. The school practices an open-minded, flexible approach to students using their mother tongue in collaboration, research, internationally minded experiences and multicultural celebrations.

Tempe Elementary School district attempts to provide interpreters in all languages needed for parent teacher meetings and IEP meetings. Mentors for students and families are also provided for students new to the United States. Teachers, administrators and families meet with the mentors to provide support for both sides.

The district and school websites are translated into more than 50 languages using Google Translate. District information, including parent and student handbooks, bus schedules, and permission slips are sent home in English and Spanish. Translations for other languages are also available through the District.

Our media center houses informational and fictional books provided by the Indian Education Program to support our Native American population. A local alliance with Tempe Sister Cities provides international events and opportunities for our students to attend. International mindedness is embedded into our curriculum in every course. Summative assessments include diverse perspectives thus helping students to develop an understanding of diverse cultures.

Bilingual teachers, interns, and volunteers, as well as teachers with international living experiences, are sought out to encourage international mindedness and provide students with role models.

Provisions for Inclusion

English Language Learners (ELL)

Students who are not proficient in English but are in the process of developing proficiency are considered English Language Learners. These students receive targeted instruction and support within the classroom. Teachers utilize visuals, videos, and other techniques that are supportive of the English Language Learner. All teachers are endorsed in Structured English Immersion.

Special Needs

Students with Individual Education Plans or 504 plans have support from the counselor and district personnel, such as psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists to help them be successful in the inclusive classroom, including the Language Acquisition classroom.

Our Language policy will be reviewed annually, or as needed, with input from the school community and the Site Council.

Last reviewed and updated August 2024