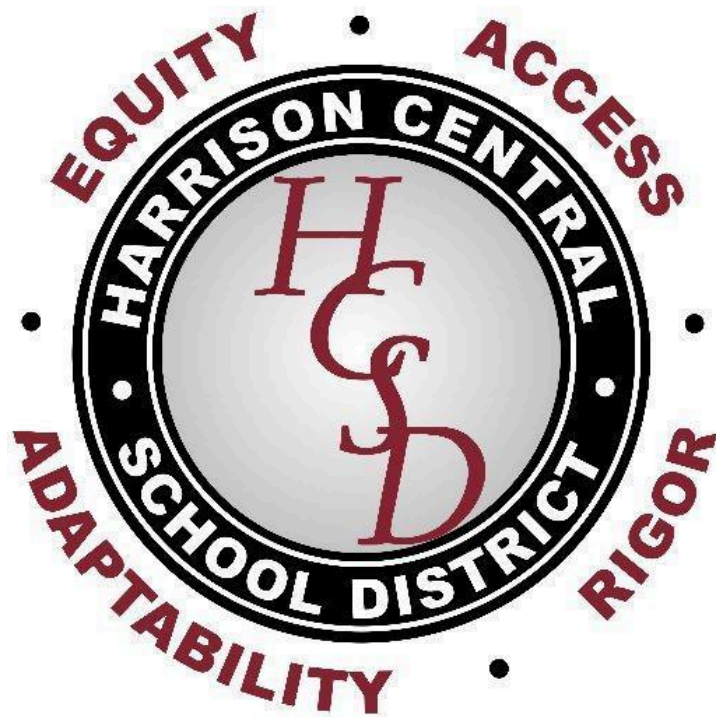


Language Policy



Harrison Central School District

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme

LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

The primary language of instruction at the Harrison Central School District is English; however, the members of our student body and faculty speak over 30 languages.

The Harrison Central School District (HCSd) is committed to providing high-quality, personalized instruction of language through transdisciplinary units of study. Elementary students are engaged and challenged as they learn language, learn about language, and learn through language while helping to build fluency and mastery. Language learning includes the development of home and family languages, languages of the school, and additional languages and literacy. If students need additional support as they develop their language skills, those supports are provided through a variety of personalized pathways such as reading classes, academic intervention services (AIS) for English, Speech and Language Therapy, and English as a New Language (ENL) classes.

Language learning is central to all experiences shared in the classroom as it is through language that we discover who we are, what we believe, and how we will communicate and cooperate with others in order to share ideas and solve problems. Instruction for all students is implemented with an awareness of and responsiveness to their language capacity and learning needs. Our goal is to help students progress towards mastery of the English language and exposure to at least one additional language other than English. Our policies are guided by relevant state standards and research-based practices.

THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

For Harrison's elementary schools, the language of instruction is English. It is the main academic and social language used by students, teachers, and staff within each school.

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Language is interwoven into every aspect of our classrooms through various social and academic learning experiences. All instructors are teachers of language. Students learn to communicate confidently and creatively, and with awareness of the power of language to have an impact on others. This is reflected in their language choices concerning style, tone, words, expression, and gesture. Through language, students make meaning, express their identity, develop international mindedness, become literate and effective inquirers, and communicate with a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.

We appreciate that students make meaning and develop understanding through four modalities of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through language and literacy, students uncover perspectives in multimodal texts and learn about the power of

communication. Literature is a source of pleasure as well as thoughtful provocation, as students use it to explore other ways of knowing and seeing the world.

Our Programme of Inquiry demonstrates that language is integral to all aspects of our curriculum. Key concept questions drive instruction, while provocation, inquiry, transdisciplinary skills, and research promote the development of higher-level thinking skills and the understanding of new concepts. Social interaction and cooperation are essential elements of our Programme of Inquiry and result in a joyful learning community. At the heart of our Programme of Inquiry is the IB learner profile, which promotes students being open-minded, reflective communicators who are caring, knowledgeable, and willing to take risks in order to expand their horizons. All elements within our Programme of Inquiry promote authentic language development in our PYP classrooms.

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Students will begin learning an additional language other than English beginning in second grade. Two World Languages teachers will rotate through all four elementary schools throughout the school year, spending a total of ten weeks in each school (five during the first half of the school year and five during the second half of the school year). During these five-week periods, a unit of study that exists outside of the program of inquiry will be delivered to students. These units are built around the transdisciplinary themes of who we are and how we communicate. Instruction during each five-week period will occur every day for thirty minutes. By the time students reach the end of fifth grade, they will have experienced eight distinct world languages units that will build their foundation for international mindedness and continued study of languages at the secondary level.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Student growth and development are assessed and monitored utilizing multiple measures at the macro and micro levels. Teachers identify the relative strengths and areas for continued growth of students at the individual and group levels. Progress monitoring occurs continually through formative and summative assessments. Information gathered through this process of data collection and analysis helps teachers to better understand the individualized needs of all students. This information is reviewed frequently by individual teachers and teams of teachers to identify patterns and trends in the effectiveness of strategies utilized and implemented within a classroom, across a grade level, and throughout the District.

ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE

The Harrison Central School District continues to welcome English Language Learners (ELLs) students and their families, who add richness to our school community. As we immerse our students in the English language, we also assist them in developing a deeper understanding of their own cultures, as well as the diverse cultures in the United States and in the world.

ENL teachers work closely with families, classroom teachers, and administrators to create a personalized program for our ENL students, recognizing that they need time and support to acquire the English language. Depending on their proficiency in English, students may receive support in an integrated ENL setting that consists of an ENL and general co-teach pairing to support content accessibility. This approach is beneficial to all students, ELLs and native speakers of English. Students may also receive support in a stand-alone ENL setting, in which ELLs are scheduled for an ENL class for more targeted support.

To measure their growth in the English language, ELLs take The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test yearly. Once a student reaches identified levels of proficiency, they exit ENL services but continue to receive support through two years of transitional services.

SUPPORT FOR MOTHER TONGUE

Teachers are trained to recognize the importance of maintaining each students' primary language to support the development of a secondary language. Families are encouraged to continue the development of their mother tongue while enhancing literacy skills in the primary language to the fullest extent.

The District has used technology to enhance communication with our multilingual families. The District's website and other community-wide messages are easily translated into home languages for families. The District also provides translated documents and interpreters as needed.

Teachers have engaged in professional learning to develop a greater understanding of two high-incidence languages within our student population; Spanish and Japanese. Study groups take place throughout the year, which help teachers acquire some basic language and gain intercultural understanding in order to enhance family communication.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Harrison Central School District offers a variety of professional learning opportunities for teachers through our in-service catalog. Many of the courses offered center around best practices for language teaching and learning for both English Language Arts and English as a New Language. In addition to our in-service catalog, teachers routinely engage in grade-level meetings, faculty meetings, and professional learning opportunities to enhance their pedagogy in this area.