

Sheila Tarr Academy of International Studies

Language Policy updated 2022-2023



Language of Instruction

The study of foreign languages adds a dimension of enrichment that should be an academic experience. English is the language of instruction in Sheila Tarr Academy and connects all elements of the curriculum. Language proficiency, which includes performance and comprehension of oral language (listening and speaking), visual language (viewing and presenting), and written language (reading and writing), is key to learning and growth in all subject areas. Therefore, all subjects, with the exception of Spanish, are taught exclusively in English with the goal that students reach a level of proficiency in all areas of English language across a concept-driven curriculum.

Opportunities for inquiry and sharing, such as public speaking; reading and responding to fiction and nonfiction selections; collaborative learning groups; responsive, expressive and non-fiction writing; and peer reading, exist to help students hone expressive and receptive language skills. Current language practices are based on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts through the NV Academic Curriculum Standards (NVACS) and EL standards to support student learning.

Spanish Language Instruction

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade receive instruction in Spanish twice weekly for fifty minutes. Instruction is provided by teachers who specialize in the area of Spanish. The purpose of this instruction is to immerse students in the language and expose them to the unique perspectives and practices provided by learning a second or other language. Students will apply Spanish curriculum within content areas of instruction and we support multilingualism in classrooms through Google Translate and Class Dojo translates.

We know research supports that students are better able to speak and understand a second world language when a foundation for bilingualism is built in the younger years. Research also demonstrates that second language learning at an early age supports higher academic achievement, provides cognitive benefits to students, and impacts their beliefs and attitudes about language learning and other cultures.

Language Assessment

English language development is emphasized in application across the curriculum. Assessments ensure that instruction is differentiated, based on student needs and grade level

curriculum. Interventions are in place for students needing assistance in achieving literacy goals based on developmental levels.

Tarr utilizes school, district and state testing to provide detailed, actionable data regarding student progress. Students identified as second language learners may be progress monitored using nationally-normed assessments in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Information gathered from these assessments determines the strategy of language instruction. For further information regarding assessments at Sheila Tarr Academy please refer to our Assessment Policy.

Mother Tongue Support

We strive to support the diverse population within our school and we encourage parents and students to continue to communicate in their mother tongue language. Communicating in the mother tongue is crucial for cognitive development and cultural identity. Our literacy center (Library) has a multitude of books and videos that support a variety of world languages. We are committed to adding books that support the mother tongues represented in our student population. Additionally, Internet access and online translator programs are accessible from the students' one-to-one devices.

Additionally, parents are invited into the classroom and to school events whenever possible to share their language and culture. For the purpose of communicating with parents and the community, English is the operational language at Tarr Academy.

Professional Development:

Ongoing professional development is key to meeting the changing needs of a diverse learning community. A variety of professional development opportunities are offered to support and empower teachers and students. Additionally, collaborative planning provides an opportunity for sharing of strategies and tools among staff members on a regular basis.

The Tarr Academy language policy will be reflected on and revised as needed.

International Baccalaureate Programme Standards and Practices:

Standard Culture through policy implementation (0301)

Culture 1: The school secures access to an IB education for the broadest possible range of students. (0301-01)

Culture 4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language (0301-04)

Culture 1.1: The school implements and reviews an access and/or admissions policy that clearly describes the conditions for participation in the school's programme(s). (0301-01-0100)

Culture 1.2: The school provides relevant support materials, resources and structures to promote access to the school's programme(s) for as many students as reasonable. (0301-01-0200)

Culture 1.3: The school provides opportunities to access the programme(s) for the broadest possible range of students. (0301-01-0300)

Culture 4.1: The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)

Culture 4.2: The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)

Culture 4.3: The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)

Culture 4.4: The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)