Oakmont High School Language Policy

Language Philosophy

Oakmont High School staff believe that all students can achieve academic success and recognize that language is central to learning. All teachers, in practice, are language teachers and continuous professional development is offered to all staff members. We expect that all students will acquire academic and interpersonal languages (English and additional languages). “Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development, cultural identity and intercultural understanding. Language then, is central to learning, as well as to literacy, and is thus closely related to success in school.”[1] Students will receive instruction and intervention to help all students perform at or above grade level.

Development and Maintenance of Mother Tongue

The term Mother Tongue can be used to identify a student’s language learned first, the language identified with as a “native” speaker, the language known best, or the language used most.[2] At Oakmont High School, approximately 77% of students self-identified as English heritage speakers. Our primary language of instruction is English.

All students are required to complete four English courses at Oakmont High School. This is a district-wide graduation policy. This complements the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) system requirement (a-g) for English of 4 years.

Through the current California State Standards, teachers employ practices to emphasize the development of language skills within subjects. Each subject has specific vocabulary. The vocabulary will assist in comprehending the concepts as well as being able to effectively communicate in that subject.

Example of instructional strategies and learning tasks are:

- Use of word walls
- Direct instruction of academic vocabulary
- Identification of Tier 2 words
- Direct instruction of Tier 3 words
- Translation services and applications to support comprehension of assignments and classroom tasks with guidance on responsible use.
- Sentence frames and sentence starters
- Perform complex literacy tasks (i.e. classifying, grouping, close reading, and annotating)
- Exposure to text at or above students’ grade levels
- Reading and comprehending complex text

We offer a Native Spanish 1 and Native Spanish 2 class for students with native-like fluency in Spanish and basic language skills who wish to develop and enhance the integrated skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students who pass Native Spanish 2 in the sophomore year are highly recommended to move to IB Spanish HL in their junior year.

In order to support students in the development and maintenance of their primary language (other than English), students can fulfill their Language other than English a-g requirement by

- studying at non-English language programs or academies in the community or
- providing proof of education in a non-English primary language school through at least 6th grade

[1] Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes 2008

[2] Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes 2008

Multilingualism: Teaching and Learning in a language other than English
Although learning a language other than English isn't a graduation requirement for our district, Oakmont High School promotes multilingualism for all students. The a-g requirement has a minimum entrance requirement of 2 levels of learning a language other than English. Our school promotes this a-g requirement for the UC/CSU system by offering 4 levels of both French and Spanish and IB ab initio SL, SL and HL. Students are encouraged to achieve multilingualism and earn the California Seal of Biliteracy.

The major emphasis of our Spanish 1-4 or French 1-4 course sequence is to develop personal communication skills in the target language. The students have opportunities to listen and read for comprehension, and to speak and to write in patterned and planned responses with some spontaneous conversations. The curriculum includes the following: vocabulary development, pronunciation practice, development of listening and reading comprehension skills, short writing assignments, and reading authentic materials as well as grammar skills as they relate to topics studied. Students will be introduced to culture appropriate to the level of the language they are studying. As the students progress through the sequence they expand on thematic vocabulary (including idiomatic expressions), practical use of various verb tenses and moods, as well as complex grammar structures as they relate to the topics studied.

In the 4th course, students continue to build on their communicative abilities with a focus on authentic resources and discussion. Students review grammatical concepts from previous courses as well as explore more complex language in realistic contexts. Students who enter 9th grade with previous French or Spanish Language courses can place at a higher level in our course sequencing and have access to IB Language courses.

All students enroll in Oakmont High School, no matter their proficiency level in English. Students who assess as English Language Learners are placed into EL support classes depending on their level of knowledge of the English language. In California, we are required to provide English language support for students where English is not their primary language. Oakmont High School offers a four course sequence to support students in their English language acquisition. This aligns to the California English Learner Roadmap. Our third English language development course meets the requirement for one CP English course.

Inclusion and Equity of Access
All students, regardless of their proficiency level in English, will be encouraged by their teachers, counselors and other staff to take at least one IB course. Counselors will work with each student to help them understand the course requirements and content and identify which class(es) they would like to register for. All students are counseled on language opportunities in Spanish or French. Students create a 4 year academic plan to map out their Spanish or French language pathways.

Depending on the student's mother tongue experience and levels of English learned, students can self-teach the Language A curriculum in another language besides English. School-supported self-taught curriculum for Language A is provided by IB and the IB Coordinator will determine if resources are available and a student is able to participate in the self-taught option.

Transcript translations are also provided for our students who come to Oakmont High School with courses studied in another country. Our Registrar uses the transcript translations to align courses the student has already taken with classes and credits for their Oakmont transcript. This allows for students to study high school curriculum in other countries and receive credits for their courses passed.

The school communicates information with families through the ParentSquare application. The ParentSquare application will automatically translate any message home (email, text, and voice) to the requested correspondence language that families provide when registering for school. The school website can be translated into any language that Google Translate is programmed for. This covers all of our families with correspondence language requests besides English. Staff have access to the Language Line - a phone service that is used to

translate phone calls and meetings with parents who communicate in languages other than English. For school events, parents can request translation services.

Professional Development of Staff

Professional Development is provided to staff members to complement their CLAD credential skills and further support academic language development in the classroom. These will support both the development of the English language and second language acquisition.

- Identify students who struggle with knowledge of academic vocabulary
- Foster higher levels of student talk (v.s. teacher talk) – making positive use of student
- collaboration and communication for learning
- Develop more performance tasks (for students) that involve more use of language – i.e.
- presentations, Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level 3 and 4 assignments, technical reading and writing projects, group work
- Break down and understand complex text through the use of primary source documents and technical writing to formulate and synthesize and to create something new
- Delivery of best first instruction

Review Process for Language Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Oakmont IB Teacher Team, IB Coordinator, and Leadership Team. Areas that need to be updated, refined or re-aligned with IB policy will be communicated to the Head of School who, with the Administrative team and IB Coordinator, will determine the appropriate action needed to address changes

This policy will be published on the Oakmont High School website.