THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AT MARY MAE JONES

LANGUAGE POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

Through inquiry and strong relationships, The International School at Mary Mae Jones develops internationally minded learners who pursue excellence, embrace diversity, take meaningful action with integrity, and demonstrate compassion in a global society.

VISION STATEMENT

To ensure high levels of learning for each student.

Philosophy

At The International School at Mary Mae Jones, we believe language is essential for learning, communication, and participation in a global community for ALL students. As communication evolves, we are committed to supporting students in becoming multilingual learners. Multilingualism affirms cultural identity and fosters international-mindedness.

Language acquisition encompasses reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We nurture this development through a language-rich environment that includes books, written excerpts, periodicals, environmental print, read-alouds, virtual resources, and teacher and student writing. Students are provided opportunities to research, present information, and practice active listening and questioning skills. Teachers model language use and learning while fostering a positive attitude toward language and literature.

We recognize that language acquisition varies for every learner, including those using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Instruction is designed to normalize diverse language learning needs, incorporating whole-group learning and specialized programs.

Additionally, we are committed to improving the available resources that support all home languages within our school community. A structured acquisition plan will be developed to ensure equitable access to materials in students' home languages, reinforcing our dedication to inclusive language development.

Practices

The International School at Mary Mae Jones utilizes the High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) adopted by Bentonville Schools to support language instruction. Grounded in the *Science of Reading*, our approach follows the *Simple View of Reading* framework, which connects word recognition and language comprehension.

Reading is explicitly taught using systematic, research-based literacy strategies to ensure equitable access to strong foundational skills. Writing instruction is integrated through structured, evidence-based practices emphasizing organization, sentence structure, and coherence. This dual focus on reading and writing enables students to engage deeply with language across all subjects.

Assessment and progress monitoring are critical to literacy instruction, ensuring that each student receives targeted support for reading and writing development.

Assessment

Students are assessed in oral, written, and visual language skills, with both the process and end product evaluated. Growth is measured through:

- pre-assessments
- formative and summative assessments
- peer and self-assessments
- formal and informal assessments
- state-standard evaluations.

Assessment results are communicated to parents through TeacherEase, report cards, conferences, and student work samples. (See *Assessment Policy* for details.)

Support for Language Development

In order to support all learners, our school provides various language development supports, including:

- Special Education: Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) guide language instruction for eligible students in the least restrictive environment.
- Response to Intervention (RtI) / Student Success Team (SST): A multidisciplinary team supports students needing additional interventions.
- Library Services: The librarian collaborates with teachers, curates multilingual materials, and organizes author visits to inspire reading. In addition, the librarian collaborates with Bentonville Schools to assist in participation with *All Bentonville Reads*.
- Technology: Tools such as Chromebooks, interactive TVs, and assistive software support language learning and communication.
- Interventionists: Provide differentiated instruction and monitor progress.
- ESL Services: The ESL teachers provide targeted instruction and support to students learning English as a second language. They collaborate with the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) to assess individual student needs and customize ESL services accordingly. ESL teachers also advocate for English learners, working closely with general education teachers to ensure all students have equitable access to instruction.
- Counseling Services: Small group programs develop communication skills, while student council initiatives build public speaking and advocacy skills.

Second Language Instruction

All students, kindergarten through fourth grade, receive daily Spanish instruction. Language learning supports international-mindedness by embedding cultural studies within lessons. Students explore diverse cultures through reading, writing, listening, and speaking in Spanish, fostering an appreciation of multiple perspectives. Songs, poems, chants, and stories enhance memorability and engagement.

Advanced Spanish Camp is available through Navigator Enrichment Camp, offering additional opportunities for language immersion beyond the school day.

Home and Family Language Profile

Our school embraces the linguistic diversity of our families, who represent many home languages and dialects. Families identify their home languages during registration in addition to an information survey conducted annually. For a complete list of languages, see Appendix A.

To support home language development, our school:

- Encourages students and families to use their home languages with pride.
- Provides bilingual books and multilingual resources in our library.
- Features a monthly home language greeting used in classrooms and assemblies.
- Organizes a Multicultural Night to celebrate language and culture.

Plan for Implementation and Review

The Vision and Policy Development Coalition as well as the Language Policy Committee and the school Leadership team of The International School at Mary Mae Jones will oversee the implementation of this policy. Steps include:

- Communicating the policy to parents in multiple languages via the IB Coordinator and school website.
- Classroom teachers reviewing the policy with students and providing reference materials. ● Regular evaluation by the Principal and Assistant Principal through classroom observations and discussions.
- Policy reviews every three years or as needed to align with best practices and community needs.

This policy reflects our commitment to equitable language learning opportunities for all students, fostering multilingualism, cultural appreciation, and academic success.

Appendix A

As indicated by parents at registration, the following languages and/or dialects are spoken in the homes of The International School at Mary Mae Jones families:

Arabic, Bengali, Badaga,, Chinese, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marshallese, Pingelapese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu Vietnamese.

Resources:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Bentonville Schools Board Policy
Code 5.5: Gifted and Talented
Code 5.6: Special Education
Code 5.10: English Language Learner

Bentonville Schools Inclusive Practices Model

International Baccalaureate Organization.
(2023). *Academic Integrity in the PYP*. IB.
(2022). *Access and inclusion policy*. IB.
(2023). *Assessment principles and practices-Quality assessments in a digital age*. IB.
(2008). *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*. IB.
(2018). *Language Scope and Sequence*. IB.
(2024). *Learning and teaching*. IB.
(2020). *Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB programmes*. IB.
(2025). *Making the PYP Happen* (digital source), IB.
(2024). *Programme standards and practices*. IB.
(2024). *The learning community*. IB.
(2024). *The learner*. IB.