Marietta Sixth Grade Academy International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme

Language Policy

Date(s) revised: Spring 2019, January 2022, March 2022, March 2026

Marietta City School's vision is for all students to learn to their fullest potential.

Marietta Sixth Grade Academy's mission is to strive to develop connected, global learners.

Marietta Sixth Grade Academy's vision is to aspire to be the gateway to learning excellence.

Language philosophy

The language philosophy supports our school's mission. We believe language is essential to learning and contributing to our mission to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people that embrace intercultural understanding and strive to make a better world. Through interdisciplinary, authentic learning experiences, we nurture students' to inquire, act, and reflect in ways to do so. To this end, we agree that all teachers must work synergistically to teach language with our purpose and beliefs propelling us towards our vision. Through this process, we strategically work to create an environment where each person in the school community celebrates and has respect for the diverse languages, cultures, and backgrounds present and beyond. We feel that these actions help to build the self-efficacy and identity affirmations of all.

Belief Statements (Whole school guiding principles)

We believe:

- language is vital to developing critical thinking.
- critical thinking is necessary to cultivating intercultural understanding and the international-mindedness characterized by the IB learner profile.
- language plays a key role in identity affirmation.
- language learning contributes to ongoing academic and personal successes.
- language learning expands the ability for effective expression and reflection.
- multilingualism and support for the mother tongue contribute to intercultural understanding, self-identity, and expansion of communication opportunities.
- equity in access to high-quality language instruction, high expectations, appropriate scaffolds, and differentiated instruction based upon learners' individual language portraits is a student right.
- In constructivist, inquiry-based approaches to conceptual learning alongside practices that emphasize respect for our common humanity

Statement of language philosophy: We believe that language learning should affirm cultural identity, promote intercultural understanding, and contribute to expanded, effective communication for academic and personal successes so as to make a positive impact locally and globally.

Language policy review

The language policy will be reviewed bi-annually and with the following considerations for requirements:

- Support for mother tongues
- Support for students who are not yet proficient in English
- Compliance with the local/national regulations for SEN

District curriculum administrators, teachers, academic coaches, and coordinators developed our language policy in a collaborative process. In addition to the original roles, stakeholders that have reviewed and contributed to the revision of the policy include heads of school, media specialists, students, and parents. The school district's IB coordinators serve as the steering committee to be responsible for overseeing this bi-annual/annual process.

Language profile

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Languages used in the school community</th></tr>
<tr><td>Languages of teaching and learning</td><td>Language and literature: English
Language acquisition: French and Spanish</td></tr>
<tr><td>Languages of communication used in the school and outside the classroom</td><td>English
Mother tongue outside classroom</td></tr>
<tr><td>The range and types of mother tongue and other languages in the community</td><td>Student Primary Language:

<table>
<tr><td>Akan-Twi-Fanti</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Arabic</td><td>2</td><td>0.31%</td></tr>
<tr><td>English</td><td>429</td><td>65.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td>German</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gujarati</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Haitian Creole</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Japanese</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Portuguese</td><td>8</td><td>1.23%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Spanish</td><td>197</td><td>30.17%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vietnamese</td><td>3</td><td>0.46%</td></tr>
<tr><td>African</td><td>6</td><td>0.92%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Asian</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Europea</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maya</td><td>1</td><td>0.15%</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

Language education logistics

Marietta Sixth Grade Academy serves a multicultural, multilingual community with a diverse population and robust language needs. Our school practices for **planning** for language and literature and language acquisition courses stem from our commitment to going beyond meeting the needs of all students by leveraging resources in ways that create a culture characterized by academic rigor, equity, and caring open-mindedness. Our goal is to be a gateway to learning excellence. We plan with these aspirations in mind as we seek to infuse a spirit of inquiry throughout the school community to ignite a passion for learning in students.

All teachers are proficient in speaking and writing English and are language teachers.

Grade level subject group professional learning communities adhere to well established expectations and procedures for designing and delivering a coherent, guaranteed and viable approach toward the school-wide development of language.

•Teachers with English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certification and expertise design specialized instruction for English Language Learners (ELL)

•English Language Learners students have total immersion in subject group courses based upon ongoing assessment and achievement of established thresholds.

•English Language Learners are supported with in-class and self-contained support based upon established thresholds.

•Hallway flags representing various nations

•French and Spanish are offered at the beginner level

•English is promoted as it is the host country language.

•All languages are valued.

•Universal design for learning includes the following intentional, consistent actions:

- Assessment for learning
- The teaching of language through relevant, real-world contexts
- The planning and execution of learning scaffolds for all students as needed

Language development

Language development is paramount to cognitive, affective, and social learning and being. Structured inquiry is the approach to teaching and learning language that we focus on in our learning experiences as we strategically integrate these three areas with purpose. Using MYP unit planning process we incorporate the state's required standards for language development across all subjects in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in meaningful ways.

Marietta Sixth Grade Academy student admission is based solely on residency within the school attendance zone, the city of Marietta, a very diverse community. Student diversity provides a rich opportunity for all teachers to attend to and build upon and support the various language needs of our learners. For those whose mother tongue is not English, our host country language, students receive classroom support through an in-class, co-taught model to the extent possible and may receive pullout services as well in Language and Literature classes. The strategies used to develop language includes, but is not limited to the following:

Vocabulary Instruction

- Portions of lessons for explicit vocabulary instruction
- Repeated exposure to new words in multiple contexts
- Opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts
- Strategies for developing independent vocabulary learners

Comprehension Strategy Instruction

- Text selection for reading level of students
- Explicit instruction for and guided practice with strategies
- Application of strategies to different texts
- Specific, directed talk about strategies

Discussion of Text Meaning and Interpretation

- Engaging content and texts that promote multiple interpretations
- Stimulating, open-ended questions that invite reflection, inference, and connections
- Small-group and whole-class extended discussion
- Discussion protocols and formats

Student Motivation and Engagement

- Meaningful, engaging learning goals
- Positive learning environment that promotes student autonomy
- Relevant literacy experiences connected to
    - student interests
    - real-world application
    - current events
- Conditions to promote higher reading engagement and conceptual learning

Writing Process

- Daily practice in components of the writing process
- Gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student
- Student selection and use of appropriate writing strategies

Writing for a Variety of Purposes

- Expansion of students' concept of audience
- Understanding of different purposes of writing
- Emulation of features of good writing
- Techniques for discipline-specific tasks

Community of Writers

- Collaboration among students as writers
- Opportunities to give and receive feedback
- Student choices of writing topics
- Connection to real-world topics and audiences

Intensive, Individualized Interventions

- Reliable screening assessments

- Interventions to meet student's identified needs

Language Acquisition

Language learning is fundamental to students' identity affirmation. World language courses are offered in French and Spanish. They will also obtain information, knowledge, and understanding of another culture while reinforcing knowledge of other disciplines. The program follows the state standards for the introduction of language instruction as outlined in the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Assessment

Teachers design instructional units according to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and align them to MYP objectives. MYP Assessments are based on holistic learning and IB standards. In order to provide the student with guidance, teachers provide an IB MYP rubric to students when MYP assessments are given. Each subject area has specific assessment tasks and related MYP criteria. Each criterion is assessed in each course at least 2 times each year. Achievement Levels are determined based on performance on the total score of all MYP criteria for each subject area and are assigned using guidelines provided by the International Baccalaureate. MYP final grades accompany the 4th quarter report card. These grades give feedback on student performance on various assessment tasks that measure student mastery of MYP objectives and GA Standards of Excellence content. MYP feedback is not part of a student's cumulative academic average

Formative assessment is used to provide immediate feedback, plan for differentiation, and support learning. Subject group area teachers and academic coaches use their MYP subject guides to plan assessment objectives and activities.

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is administered three times/year to set goals and adjust instruction for students. State required Georgia Milestones End of Grade assessments, Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA), and the ACCESS for ELLs for English Language Learners) are included in the summative assessment program. More in-depth information about each of these assessments is included in the Assessment Policy.

Mother tongue development

The mother tongue development is supported by literature in a section of the media center that are written in the languages of the student body. Students are able to use their native language in activities and settings that do not require the host country language for academic learning experiences.

The school has a Multicultural Club to support the mother tongue of native speakers as well as assisting language learners the opportunity to immerse themselves into the language and culture beyond the language acquisition courses offered.

English Language Learners (ELL) and support for students who are not yet proficient in the language of instruction

The ESOL program provides support services for students according to their assessed proficiency levels. The state determines the process for identifying and providing services for English Language Learners (ELL). A developmental language profile is kept on ELL students so as to meet local and state guidelines for supports.

Students entering MSGA with a limited ability in English skills are given small group, specialized instruction in the Language and Literature course with students needing intensive English instruction. The English proficiency levels further determine the classes in Mathematics and Science that they are scheduled to with an ELL teacher present to co-teach with the teacher of record.

The effectiveness of the differentiated strategies and supports is measured with the ACCESS for ELL state test and the Measures of Academic Progress assessment, which measures academic growth.

Additionally, MSGA has 4 bilingual teachers, 3 bilingual support staff and 7 ESOL certified teachers.

Learning Commons Support

The Learning Commons is a student-centered "place" with a feeling that communicates a sense of care and belongingness. The Learning Commons invites learning in MYP Global Contexts, promotes the IB Learner Profile, supports the Inquiry-Action-Reflection Cycle, and serves as a space for practicing Approaches to Learning Skills. By creating an environment that reflects our school's philosophy and mission for an experience that builds agency through Voice, Choice, and Ownership, our hope is for students to know that we believe in them as people and their abilities.

Language policy alignment with other IB school policies

The language philosophy and policy align with the admissions, academic honesty, inclusion, and assessment policies.

Alignment to our academic honesty policy

Our language policy aligns with our academic honesty policy in that both support our students' development as principled, reflective communicators. The MYP action cycle, Inquiry-Action-Reflection, process is ongoing in language planning and learning as well as how students are guided to implore academic honesty at all times.

Alignment to our admissions policy

The language philosophy and policy align with the admissions policy in that we support all students to help them progress in language learning. We believe that all students belong and plan structures, staffing, and learning experiences to empower them to achieve linguistically.

Alignment to our inclusion policy

The language policy aligns with the inclusion policy in that we have a universal design for learning (UDL) approach for both. UDL provides support and structures so that the broadest number of students have access to the MYP and opportunities to experience rigorous and challenging curriculum.

Alignment to our assessment policy

The language policy aligns with the assessment policy in that both encourage student voice, choice, and ownership of learning. The use of formative and summative data allows for specific feedback for learning. This process is an inclusive practice and programs, staffing, materials, and learning experiences are put in place to provide learners with the best opportunity to become knowledgeable, inquiring, caring communicators.

Communication of the Policy

The language policy is posted on our school's public website.

APPENDIX 1-MYP language acquisition continuum The developmental phases are used to provide a differentiated progression for students once placement is determined. The placement in the six phases guide scheduling so that not more than two consecutive phases are in one class. The planning of courses throughout the continuum use the philosophy and practices presented in the Language acquisition guide (2020) and Language acquisition teacher support material 2020.

APPENDIX 2-Policy for ELL, SEN, and Gifted at MSGA

English Language Learners (ELL)

ELL specialists use strategies to accelerate the learning of students, whose first language is not English. These strategies provide maximize access for ELL students to the International Baccalaureate curriculum, and social environment in the school and beyond.

The ESOL program develops the student's language skills in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. TESOL principles for supporting ELL students are icons of the program which are to "know our learners, create conditions for language learning, design high quality lessons for language development, adapt lesson delivery as needed, and monitor and assess student language development.

Strategies used to develop ELL students include, but are not limited to the following:

- The use of cooperative groups to provide opportunities to problem solve, discuss, negotiate, and think with peers
- The use of a constructivist approach
- Application of knowledge to provide lots of opportunities for students to apply language and literacy skills
- The provision of clear expectations, rubrics, and high quality work models
- Professional learning for staff through an ESOL coach and ESOL teacher specialists

Special Education Needs (SEN)

Our students are at the center of all learning. Their diverse backgrounds, strengths and challenges are considered when planning and implementing places, people, processes, and procedures to remove barriers to learning and providing access to an IB education. As such, we have adopted the principles presented in *The IB Guide to Inclusive Education: A resource for whole school development* of "affirming identity and building self-esteem, valuing prior knowledge, scaffolding, and extending learning".

Strategies used to develop students with Special Education Needs (SEN) include, but are not limited to the following:

- Avoid long periods of direct instruction
- Use visuals and multimedia
- Think aloud
- Provide instruction for background knowledge and academic vocabulary gaps
- Guided instruction including adequate wait time
- Breakdown complex material into manageable chunks
- Teach pre-requisite skills
- Allow for additional time
- Deliver instruction in meaningful ways

- Reciprocal teaching, listening and viewing stations, visual displays, graphic organizers, inquiry circles, labs, and simulations

These strategies are enacted in a holistic and interdisciplinary approach.

Gifted Program

Eligibility and delivery of services for the gifted program is determined following the state department of education rules. The school Gifted Committee actively searches for potential candidates for gifted testing and considers referrals from teachers, parents, or students.

The Marietta City Schools Gifted Standards are used to guide the planning for advanced learning opportunities.

APPENDIX 4- Language and Literature Advanced Placement Criteria

Marietta city schools
A Georgia Charter System

Placement Criteria for Grades 6, 7, and 8
Final Grade and all Achievement Scores must be met for initial placement.

Last revised January 2022

Definitions
Honors: Courses labeled Honors are more rigorous, in-depth courses.
Accelerated: Courses labeled Accelerated cover the standards of 1.5 courses over one school year.
Carnegie: Courses labeled Carnegie are high school courses for which students earn Carnegie credit towards graduation. Students taking these courses need to be aware that while the credit counts toward graduation, the grade is **NOT** included in the high school Grade Point Average (GPA). Students may not decline credit for these courses, and students will not be allowed to retake the course at the high school if credit is earned.

Marietta Sixth Grade Academy Placement Criteria Class of 2029				
Current Course	**Final Grade**	**Achievement Score(s)**	**Recommended Course**	**Notes**
5th Grade Math	≥ 90% in Math	Math MAP ≥ 80% NPR **and** Math EOG ≥ Proficient	Accelerated Math 6/7*	A Gifted/Advanced Content course.
	≥ 80% in Math	Math MAP ≥ 65% NPR **or** Math EOG ≥ Proficient	Honors Math 6*	A Gifted/Honors course.
	≤ 79% in Math	Math MAP ≤ 64% NPR **and** Math EOG ≤ Developing	Math 6	Consideration for Honors Math 6 will be given to students who exceed the placement criteria.
Advanced Content 5th Grade Math	≥ 85% in Math	Math MAP ≥ 80% NPR **and** Math EOG ≥ Proficient	Accelerated Math 6/7*	A Gifted/Advanced Content course.
	≤ 84% in Math	Math MAP ≥ 65% NPR **or** Math EOG ≥ Proficient	Honors Math 6*	A Gifted/Honors course.
	≤ 84% in Math	Math MAP < 65% NPR **or** Math EOG < Proficient	Math 6	
5th Grade Science	≥ 80% in both ELA and Reading	Reading MAP ≥ 65% NPR **or** ELA EOG ≥ Proficient	Honors Science 6*	A Gifted/Honors course.
5th Grade Science	NA	NA	Science 6	
5th Grade ELA	≥ 80% in both ELA and Reading	Reading MAP ≥ 65% NPR **or** ELA EOG ≥ Proficient	Honors ELA 6*	A Gifted/Honors course.
	NA	NA	ELA 6	
5th Grade Social Studies	≥ 80% in both SS and Reading	Reading MAP ≥ 65% NPR	Honors SS 6*	A Gifted/Honors course.
	NA	NA	SS 6	

*Probationary status will be in effect for all students who do not maintain an average ≥ 80%.

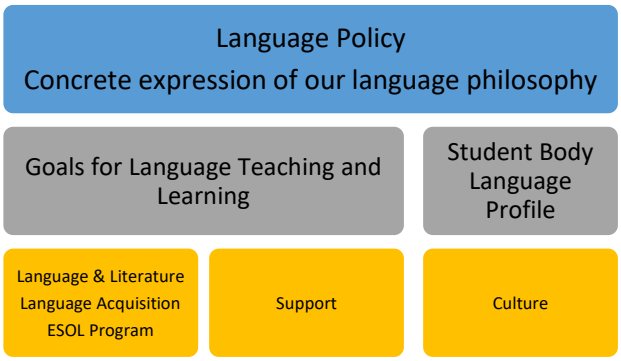
Gifted identified students are automatically served in Honors Social Studies. Placement in one of the other Accelerated/Honors courses is subject to meeting the placement criteria.

Students working above grade level may submit a waiver to be considered for placement in an Honors or Accelerated course.

APPENDIX 5- Communication of the Policy Visual Supports

IBelieve. IBecome. IBelong.

A.L. Burruss-Sawyer Road-Marietta Sixth Grade Academy-Marietta Middle-Marietta High



APPENDIX 6- Documents Used to Inform Policy

Language and Learning in the IB Programmes. IBO, 2014
Guidelines for school self-reflection on language policy. IBO, 2012.
MYP: From Principles into Practice. IBO, 2021.