

Marietta City Schools International Baccalaureate Program District Language Policy

Rationale

The vision of Marietta City Schools is for all students to learn to their fullest potential. The district mission states, “In partnership with families and the community our mission is to prepare each student to maximize career, college, and life opportunities”. The Marietta City Schools’ Language Policy supports both the vision and the mission of the district by affording students the opportunities experienced through the development of English and the acquisition of a second language. The purpose of this policy is to describe how the IB program will develop the language skills of all students through an intentional focus in all subjects. We believe that all teachers are teachers of language.

School Language Philosophy

The school language program provides consistent exposure to language learning through the acquisition of productive (speaking, writing) and receptive (listening, reading) skills. The program is committed to developing students’ abilities to apply language skills in academic and real world environments.

We recognize the central importance of language development in learning. Thus, in addition to studying Language and Literature, there are school-wide commitments by teachers of all subjects to help students develop their language skills. We also affirm the IB principle of learning a second language, as it promotes intercultural awareness and prepares students for our increasingly globally interconnected world. Therefore, students study Language Acquisition, Spanish or French, in each of the district’s IB programs (PYP, MYP, DP, and CP). Further, students are encouraged to continue to develop any other languages they have exposure to, and parents are encouraged to contribute to the development of their child’s home language.

Beliefs Held About Language Teaching and Learning

We believe that all students are capable of learning or acquiring a second language in academic and social contexts. We believe in promoting academic achievement by requiring students to simultaneously advance in English and develop in a second language.

Language of Instruction

Language A, English, is the principal language of instruction at our school and is taught each year in all IB programs. English instruction is mandated as cross-curricular by the Georgia Standards of Excellence and therefore is a key component of the curricula of all PYP, MYP, DP, and CP subject content instruction.

Language Acquisition

The primary aim of the Language Acquisition course in all IB programs offered is to encourage students to gain competence in a second language with the long-term goal of balanced multilingualism. This is in recognition of the role that a second language has in appreciation of cultural diversity and global mindedness.

The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the home language enrich personal growth and help facilitate international mindedness and understanding.

In our school community, we aim to foster students' ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence, and imagination in at least two languages.

Learning languages provides students the opportunity to:

- expand their view of the world;
- develop in social contexts, interacting with others;
- encourage critical reflection on the relationship between language and culture, language and thought;
- expand opportunities for meaningful leisure activities (such as travel, film, and other media);
- develop their intellect;
- improve knowledge of the home language;
- help to build practical skills that may be used in other disciplines;
- foster their understanding of the interrelation between language and human nature;
- teach and encourage respect for other ethnic groups; and
- increase their sense of accomplishment and self worth.

Language Diversity and Support for Home Language

We recognize that our schools are part of a culturally diverse community with complex language and learning-related needs. Students who are English Learners (ELs) receive additional language support through the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. This support varies depending on individual student language acquisition needs, subject content, and grade level. To support language diversity and home language development, students are encouraged to continue honing their language skills at home and in their community. To support parents who may be English learners, the district provides many publications in different languages and provides translators for parent-teacher conferences.

Professional Development for Teachers

We recognize that administrators, teachers, library media specialists, and other school staff require professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching. This is achieved through official IB training and through professional development offered by the district, school, and professional learning communities.

PYP

In the district's two PYP schools, A.L. Burruss Elementary and Sawyer Road Elementary, we believe that all teachers are teachers of language. We believe language builds the framework for transdisciplinary learning, thinking, and communicating across the classroom and the community. It is imperative for students at both schools to not only learn language, but to also learn through language and about language.

We believe that learning happens in the form of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students. Authentic learning arises when students construct meaning through oral language (listening

and speaking), visual language (viewing and presenting), and written language (reading and writing).

We believe language is vital to the development of higher order thinking skills. We believe language leads to a greater cultural understanding. This understanding develops internationally-minded students who practice global citizenship.

Our purposes for second language instruction:

- Learning a language enhances students' ability to learn and provides them a deeper understanding of language uses.
- Language learning provides students greater cognitive flexibility and memory.
- Language instruction promotes a climate that is culturally sensitive.
- Language instruction fosters a global community where a second language is an asset and provides students with a sense of global citizenship.
- Language instruction develops cross-cultural communication and social interaction skills.

MYP

The Marietta City Schools' MYP Language Program is designed to assist students in acquiring and refining the linguistic skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century. This goal is achieved by employing the MYP Language Aims and Objectives as well as our district's guiding principles and state mandated standards to our instructional practices. Students are encouraged to use written language in a myriad of contexts as a means for expressing themselves powerfully, purposefully and creatively while reflecting on their learning and their lives, as well as connecting with the world. All Middle Year IB students are encouraged to embody the Learner Profile to become lifelong learners who realize that they have a role in creating a better and more peaceful world. In all classes, students read, speak, write, listen, and view in a variety of ways and for a number of purposes. Utilizing the inquiry based approach of the MYP curriculum framework, students explore language and become communicators in a multilingual world.

The primary aim of Language Acquisition in our MYP is to encourage students to gain competency in a modern language other than their home language, with the long-term goal of balanced multilingualism. Acquisition of language is structured within years 1-5 (grades 6-10) so that the final aims and objectives set by the IB for this subject are met effectively. We provide **sustained** language study in which students study the same language in each of the five years of the MYP, and the language learning spans the entire school year of each grade level. Students are introduced to the MYP choices, Spanish and French, at the end of 5th grade, are scheduled into their chosen language in 6th grade/year 1, and are given the opportunity to develop their language skills to their fullest potential over the five-year program.

Within the Middle Years Programme, students will read a variety of texts including narrative, informational, and argumentative. Through reading instruction, students will locate, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to create new knowledge. Another critical aspect of Marietta City Schools language instruction is the acquisition and application of listening and speaking skills in order to enhance comprehension and communication.

In order to provide students with an authentic and diverse language and literature learning experience, teachers will:

- Use the MYP aims and objectives as best practice
- Instruct with Reading/Writing Workshop methodologies where appropriate
- Facilitate reading in all subject areas
- Provide cross curricular connections between texts when available
- Utilize a variety of texts and media including global works and perspectives
- Group students based on interest, ability, and data
- Use formative assessments to drive instruction
- Design reading/writing instruction with authentic summative assessments
- Participate in state and federally mandated assessments
- Provide opportunities for students to take action within the larger community
- Focus on multiple learning experiences
- Provide opportunities to increase intercultural awareness through language instruction

DP

In IB World Schools offering the IB Diploma Programme, a language policy should enable a student's language profile to be developed by providing opportunities for learning *ab initio* and Language B. The IB Language B SL Year 1 class is designed for students who have successfully completed two or more years in the honors language class or equivalent or higher proficiency in the target language. The *ab initio* class is designed for students with little or no experience in the target language. The Marietta High School IB Diploma Programme began offering the *ab initio* classes in the fall of 2017.

CP

The IB Career-related Programme options for language development at Marietta High School include:

1. Diploma Programme Group course
 - a. If the student is taking two or more other DP courses, the DP Group 2 course satisfies the requirement.
 - b. If the DP course is the student's second Diploma Course, the student must study beyond the DP course syllabus. For example, if the student's DP course is IB Spanish SL and the exam is taken in Year 1 of the CP, the student might study further by taking the HL course in Year 2 of the CP but would not be required to take the exam. Alternately, the student might begin study of a different language.
2. Another non-DP foreign language course within the MYP that the student has not already studied.
3. Online language study through the Georgia Virtual School.

This district policy should be reviewed annually and revised as necessary following the review.