

We review our IB Policies annually at the beginning of the school year with our IB Committee, Faculty and Staff members. In addition, the policies are shared with our Parent Organization and SAC Committee and published on our school's website. All members are given the opportunity to offer suggested feedback for revisions before final publishing. The most recent version of our Language Policy is November 2023.



# Language Policy

## Freedom 7 Elementary School of International Studies

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### Philosophy

#### What are our views on language?

We believe that all students are natural learners of language, and all teachers are teachers of language. Language is the foundation for clear thinking and expression. It enables the learner to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings, and ideas. Through transdisciplinary learning, students are exposed to a variety of literature and informational texts creating thinking, feeling, articulate and balanced internationally minded citizens. We aim to produce literate students who are capable of meaningful communication. Language proficiency through inquiry is essential for students' intellectual, social, and emotional development. Competence in language and exposure to world languages enables students to function in society and fulfill their potential as individuals and lifelong learners.

### Purpose

#### What is our purpose regarding language instruction?

Our purpose as a school is to develop internationally minded students who contribute to our global community. To achieve this purpose, we embrace native and second language development as foundational components. Language enables learners to express and understand cultural needs, feelings, ideas, and experiences. Students develop their understanding of language through the Approaches to Learning. As language use and structures are fostered, students become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who embody the characteristics of the IB Learner Profile.

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## **Principles**

### **What are our guiding principles?**

Teachers strive to develop a caring language community, in which the students feel confident that they are accepted and supported by others in language learning.

- We are faithful in fostering language development that is respectful to the commonality and individuality among students.
- We foster creativity and confidence in communication using a variety of modalities and languages.
- We recognize that language is the primary connection between home and school.
- We actively support and encourage the development of native and second world languages.

## **Policies**

### **What are our essential agreements regarding language?**

- Faculty members maintain current knowledge regarding research and best practices in language learning through school, district, and state professional learning opportunities.
- The PLT (Pedagogical Leadership Team) ensures faculty is updated with district and state policies and practices regarding language.
- The classroom teacher is responsible for the instruction of ICT (Information Communication Technology). The Media Specialist works collaboratively with classroom teachers for planning and instruction related to ICT.
- There is a shared responsibility for the purchase/acquisition of resources to implement the language policy effectively and to maintain the Center for Inquiry (CFI).
- The district and school administration make funding available and conducts periodic reviews of materials on hand. The school Media Specialist solicits input from teachers and other sources and makes recommendations for the purchase of books and materials. The school community contributes to the school media collection through donations and fundraising efforts.

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- The school's language policy is shared with all stakeholders.
- The school community shares responsibility through commitment to professional learning. Teachers select professional learning sessions to attend (both virtual and live). Professional learning opportunities may be suggested for individual/groups of teachers by the IB PYP Coordinators and/or School Administrators based on individual and/or IB program needs.
- Communication with parents and the school community about language teaching and learning is included in: school and classroom newsletters, the school's web page, faculty meetings, School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings, student-led conferences, orientation meetings and parent night meetings.
- Language instruction aligns with current ELA Florida state standards, IB Standards and Practices and is differentiated across all grade levels.
- All students Grades K-6 receive weekly world language instruction in Spanish.
- Through the MTSS process students may receive necessary language intervention including but not limited to Speech and Language services.
- English Language Learners and English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL) students receive instruction according to state and district policy delivered by ESOL qualified classroom teachers.
- Text sets are collaboratively selected and utilized to support the units of inquiry across all grade levels.
- Freedom 7's Assessment Policy establishes the connections between language learning and assessment.

## **Practices**

### **What are our language practices?**

English is the primary language of instruction. World language instruction includes Spanish (K-6). Language learning involves learning about and learning through language. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and ICT literacy are considered interactive and interrelated. The following practices are incorporated for language learning:

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### *Reading*

- Reading instruction is based on the Science of Reading through both informational and literature texts.
- Reading instruction is differentiated by content, process, and product in order to meet the needs of all students.
- District curriculum resources -Benchmark Advance (K-5) and Saavas Grade 6 texts, approved Junior Great Book stories and other approved unit connected novels and resources are utilized across grade levels.
- Assessment of reading includes: i-Ready Diagnostic Assessments, STAR Reading & STAR Early Literacy Progress Monitoring (K-2), District required Benchmark quarterly assessments, District Fluency Assessments, Florida Assessment of Student Thinking Progress Monitoring (FAST- Grades 3-6) and other reading assessments to support unit concepts and skills.
- Approved primary sources and informational texts are used for research and gathering new information (Approved guest speakers, real-life situations, Document Based Questioning, Quality Questioning).

### *Writing*

- Writing instruction is integrated with a transdisciplinary approach throughout all classrooms using current district provided resources and other approved resources.
- District required writing assessments provide structured opportunities for writing and are used to inform instruction across grade levels 1-6.
- Differentiated writing instruction is provided for all students.
- D'Nealian manuscript handwriting instruction is provided in grades K, 1 and 2.
- D'Nealian cursive handwriting instruction is provided in grades 3 and 4, with an expectation of legible cursive handwriting at grade 4.
- Students in grades 5 & 6 develop fluent D'Nealian cursive handwriting.

### *Listening*

- Students develop unique perspectives about the information presented in classrooms by teachers and peers as a springboard for collaborative conversations.

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- Students listen to make connections to what they hear (which can be shared through speaking opportunities).
- Students maintain an open mind to information being presented.
- Students formulate questions about or connections to content and ideas heard.

### *Speaking*

- Oral presentation opportunities are provided throughout the curriculum and include individual and group presentations.
- Discussion between and among students is widely used as a means of expression.
- Speaking opportunities are considered essential and are provided for both formal and informal purposes.
- Speech pathology services are provided for students as needed.

### *Information Communication Technology*

- Students are provided varied opportunities to view, listen, read, and write using technology in all classes beginning in kindergarten.
- Use of ICT and Center for Inquiry resources are utilized and integrated within the curriculum.
- Students are instructed in the safety and use of the internet when researching and presenting ideas and projects.
- ICT is used in a variety of ways to support reading with various research sources, drill and practice software programs, and assessment methods.

### *World Language Learning*

As the PYP Learner Profile supports international awareness and respect for other languages, Spanish is the school's world language of instruction. Beginning in Kindergarten and through 6th grade, students are provided with instruction in Spanish. Support of Spanish language learning includes:

- At least 40 minutes of weekly instruction for each student
- Emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, and basic conversational Spanish.
- Common phrases and vocabulary are to be integrated into all classrooms and used daily by students and teachers.
- Formative and summative assessments showing growth are regularly conducted throughout the year.

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- Student evidence of learning is documented within the Toddler student portfolios.

*Native/Mother-Tongue support is provided in a variety of ways:*

- English Language Learner (ELL) strategies for instruction.
- Interpreters are utilized as needed.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in language activities in the classroom.
- Books written in Spanish are available to learners in the World Language Lab.
- Students use native (mother-tongue) languages through participation in various school presentations.
- WORLD TV is utilized to support awareness of representative student languages.
- A World Language Club is offered by our World Language instructor before school as an Enrichment activity. Interested students and families participate in a variety of activities focused on native language and cultural awareness.

*Family Involvement of Language Development:*

- Families are informed about language development opportunities and resources via the district and school websites, individual teacher websites, school newsletters, Focus/E-mail messages, and Friday Folders.
- School hosts families for curriculum nights related to language development.
- Parents participate in Student Led Conferences and may offer input on the language development goals of their children, as per our parent student contract.
- Parents are given the opportunity to request Parent/Teacher conferences at any time to offer background information and input on their child's language development, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and Educational Plans (EPs.)
- Approved (district process) parents may volunteer at the school as Guest Speakers, Guest Readers, Small group literacy center volunteers, Center for Inquiry assistants, Mentors for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Exhibition Groups, for our annual International Festival where they can help with performances, etc. that celebrate native languages across the school. This allows for a variety of opportunities for families to participate in the language development of students.
- Families whose students are involved in the World Language and Geography Clubs may participate in the language development of participants by sharing their cultural identities promoting respect for diversity.

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- Our school's Center for Inquiry houses a variety of books written in the Spanish language and other native languages across the school. Many are related to varied cultures represented within our school. This allows families to utilize resources in order to celebrate and share their individual cultural identity.

## **Professional Learning**

### **What is our responsibility for professional learning in language?**

All professional learning related to our Language Policy directly connects to: IB Standards and Practices and Florida's state standards across all subject areas. Teachers' personal knowledge and experience are key to effective language instruction.

The Pedagogical Leadership Team (PLT) ensures that the staff is aware of appropriate professional learning opportunities and will recommend appropriately. All teachers, including the Pedagogical Leadership Team, will share newly acquired knowledge from professional learning related to language with other faculty members.

The school provides professional learning quarterly focused on the School Improvement Plan goals centered on ELA standards (grammar, spelling, writing, speaking) and current practices in each grade level. The Pedagogical Leadership Team will facilitate professional learning through weekly PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to address new standards and ensure language policy implementation.

A variety of professional learning resources are available for the staff in the Center for Inquiry to meet the needs of the teacher, students, and implementation of the curriculum. These resources provide teachers with current research and best practices related to language learning. The Center for Inquiry houses professional journals, multilingual books, and media that is accessible to all staff. Resources are updated yearly to include up to date information based on current research related to language learning.

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