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IB-MYP LANGUAGE POLICY

LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY - “Crucial for the success of the programmes is a rich development of language and literacy for all learners. The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding” (*Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, 2008*.)

St. Francis of Assisi School provides language instruction along a continuum. Initially the child learns basic literacy skills. The child learns to read and use language as a communicative tool. The child is then able to transfer some of these understandings and concepts when learning another language (*Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, 2008*).

The second stage of language instruction is using language to learn. Language is used to develop new meanings and to construct knowledge about the world. Literacy becomes increasingly important in doing this as more abstract learning takes place through dense academic texts in school. The ability to access the language of these texts is referred to as a cognitive academic language proficiency or CALP by Cummins (1979, as quoted in *Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, 2008*).

Third, the student’s instruction culminates in learning about language. The student gains insights into the various genres used by writers to communicate in a purposeful way. The student also makes effective choices in choosing the best genre for the writing task.

LANGUAGE PROFILE - Approximately 90% of the population of St. Francis of Assisi School speaks the English language as the “mother tongue.” The school has a culturally diverse population, with about 20% of our student and faculty community either first or second generation immigrants. Among the countries of origin are Argentina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, China, India, Pakistan, The Philippines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, and France. Several students are bilingual, but none are bilingual in Spanish, which is our second language of instruction. All students Pre-K to 8th grade are offered Spanish as a second language. Students in the IB MYP receive a minimum of 50 hours of Spanish instruction per year.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION (ENGLISH) - Since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication. The teachers meet regularly in their departmental groups (primary and middle) to create a dynamic framework to ensure the articulation of language acquisition skills across subject areas and grades. This includes phonetic and structural analysis skills; vocabulary development; factual, inferential, and critical comprehension skills ; and language expression.

The school follows the Archdiocesan Course of Study. At the middle school level this curriculum is integrated with the IB MYP units of study.

“All IB programmes value language as central to developing critical thinking, which is essential for the cultivation of intercultural understanding, as well as for becoming internationally minded and responsible members of local, national and global communities. Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development. The six skill areas in the MYP language and literature subject group—listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting—develop as both independent and interdependent skills. They are centred within an inquiry-based learning environment. Inquiry is at the heart of MYP language learning, and aims to support students’ understanding by providing them with opportunities to independently and collaboratively investigate, take action and reflect” (*Language and Literature Guide, IBO, 2014*)

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS NOT PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH - St. Francis of Assisi School uses an inclusion approach to instruction. Students with learning differences progress with the support of a Learning Specialist, Title I services, and through differentiation, accommodations, and modifications of lessons within the classroom. Adjustments may include the following:

- the use of a pocket translator, translation software
- allowing more thinking time to plan a response
- elaborated input - the provision of more explanation in simpler language
- modelling and reinforcing language
- recasts - restating a response with correct language
- questioning to guide students’ thinking and expression
- increased use of student to student verbalization to allow the student the opportunity to practice language skills
- assessment accommodations - reducing the breadth of material to be learned or the length of the response

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SPANISH) - The IB MYP requires the study of at least two languages to support students in understanding their own cultures and those of others. The study of a second language is essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness and the student’s identity as a member of local, national, and global communities. The acquisition of a second language greatly contributes to the holistic development of students and to the strengthening of lifelong learning skills.

At St. Francis of Assisi the second language of instruction is Spanish. In addition to developing proficiency in Spanish, the students gain an understanding of cultural heritage. The instructor encourages an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from one’s own and other cultures, leading to involvement or service in one’s own and other communities. A final instructional goal is to foster curiosity and an interest in lifelong learning.

Students Pre-K to 4th grade receive Spanish instruction once a week and 5th graders have instruction twice per week. Middle school students receive instruction three times

per week.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the IB Planning Committee in June. Suggested revisions will be submitted for approval by the principal. New faculty members will be updated on the policy in August.