



Archbishop MacDonald High School
Language Policy
Updated December 2024

Purpose

1. Recognize that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication.
2. Outline how students are to learn at least one language in addition to their home/personal language.
3. Describes how the development and maintenance of home/personal languages for all learners will be supported.
4. Ensures practices are in place to provide inclusion and equity of access for all learners, including those who are learning a language other than their home/personal language.
5. Ensures multilingualism supports multiliteracies and considers sociocultural circumstances in the school.
6. Describes how languages of the wider community are respected and promoted.
7. Considers the role of parents in supporting and planning language development.

Philosophy

Language is the foundation for communicating and inquiring and essential for the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Language permeates the whole curriculum; listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing are necessary skills for knowledge acquisition and construction of meaning. Language is used and expressed differently in different contexts and audiences and will change over time. Acquisition of language is an ongoing process as learners develop skills, knowledge, and concepts to achieve fluency and proficiency. Furthermore, language enriches personal development and facilitates international mindedness. It is important to respect and build upon a child's first language. Experience in one language benefits the learning of other languages.

Beliefs and Values

- All teachers are language teachers.
- Language is a social means of exploring and communicating meaning.
- Language is a way of communicating thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- Using prior knowledge to build upon a child's repertoire of language skills.
- Language learning is a shared responsibility of all teachers.
- Multilingualism, multiliteracy, and multiculturalism are assets and are further developed through home and family languages, languages of the school, additional languages, and literacy.
- Text is not limited to conventional/traditional print as it refers to anything that provides readers, writers, listeners, speakers, viewers, and thinkers with the potential to create meaning (Neilsen, 1998).
- Language learning enhances global understanding and develops sociocultural competence.
- Translanguaging strategies help students make meaning of content and language across languages.

Rationale

A language policy is an integral part of an IB World School. This policy outlines guidelines for the use of languages in the school and in communication with other parties. It is a working document that guides the learning practices for staff and students. There are significant implications to the implementation of the policy, including but not limited to, school operation, languages of instruction, the acquisition and development of learning resources. The use of languages can have a significant impact on student learning, in particular a student's view and understanding of culture, international mindedness, and language structure. Students should be provided with multiple, authentic opportunities to learn language, learn about language, and learn through language.

Objectives

- Support children in the Language of Instruction as outlined in the Alberta Education English Language Arts Program of Studies.
- Build confidence and competence as foundation skills in French and/or Spanish as a Second Language, while building towards fluency.
- Provide support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) Learners including accommodations, opportunities for community engagement and connections to intercultural services and parent resources
- Facilitate and encourage the process of learning new languages in the future.
- Provide opportunities to express identity through cultural diversity and inclusion.
- Facilitate literacy, inquiry, and communication.
- Support home and family language learning, to maintain and enhance students' cultural links through ECSD, One World...One Center and other community partners.
- Utilize students' language diversity within school contexts to enhance the quality of the DP.

These objectives are maintained by the following curricular supports which include:

- Alberta Education Program of Studies literacy components in subjects areas offered at the school
- Alberta Education Literacy and Numeracy / Literacy Documents
- DP curriculum and policy support documents
 - Developing Academic Literacy in IB Programmes Document
 - Guidance for Developing a School Language Policy Document
 - DP Subject Guides from Principles into Practice Document
 - DP Assessment: Principles and Practice Document
- subject specific language and literacy support materials and resources for different grades
- Edmonton Catholic Schools One World...One Center

One World One Center

Edmonton, Catholic Services, One World...One Centre provides wrap around services that support, encourage and assist students and families newly arrived in Canada, as well as the staff in our schools. This includes opportunities for community engagement, English as an additional language supports, parent resources for newcomers, registration and assessment information as well as intercultural services to bridge communication and build relationships between educational partners,

families and the community. One World...One Center promotes cultural diversity and inclusivity, creating a welcoming and respectful space for individuals to come together and learn from one another by fostering connections and understanding between different cultures.

- [ECSD One World...One Center video](#)

Language Programs at MAC

A **French immersion program** is an educational program where subjects are taught in French as the language of instruction. In grades two to twelve inclusive, French may be used as the language of instruction up to a maximum of 80% of the instructional time. French immersion programs are designed for learners whose first language is other than French. The language of communication between home and school will normally be English.

An **international language program** is a program in which the second language, including French, is studied as a subject for developing communication skills and cultural awareness.

Multilingualism, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism

The term “multilingualism” in the IB refers to linguistic ability in more than one language and recognizes that each of a student’s languages may be developed to different levels, and within different contexts, depending on their social and academic experiences. In addition, multilingualism has cognitive benefits (Kessler, Quinn 1980; Zelasko, Antunez 2000) relating to attention and focus, problem-solving thinking skills, and thinking about language.

Multilingualism is significant in building international mindedness as it gives students insight into the thinking and perspectives of the self and others. Language enables students to gather and compare points of view, and to show empathy, compassion, and respect.

Archbishop MacDonald is a diverse learning community that celebrates diversity and inclusion to create a safe and caring community. Students are treated with dignity and respect and are encouraged to celebrate their cultural heritage through numerous student groups, celebrations, and inclusive learning environments. All students, staff, and families of Edmonton Catholic School Division are welcomed, accepted, and supported as children of God; therefore, any discrimination is unacceptable and will be addressed.

Instruction of English, French, and Spanish Languages at the IB Level

Within the context of teaching language, teachers strive to:

- promote inquiry-based authentic language learning.
- focus on the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of language learning.
- incorporate the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry.
- develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy.
- interrelate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy.
- promote consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages.

To provide students with an authentic learning experience, teachers must use the DP aims and objectives as well as the Alberta Education Programme of Study and Literacy protocol.

Language Acquisition Learning

The DP focuses on developing the elements that will encourage the child to continue their involvement in learning an additional language.

According to research these elements include the learner:

- having an established foundation in the first language
- having a positive experience in the learning of an additional language
- having attributes such as empathy and openness to risk taking
- participating in language instruction that seeks to develop skills in the five categories of language competency as defined by Canale (1983):
 - grammatical competence (referring to knowledge of vocabulary, sound, and grammar)
 - sociolinguistic competence
 - discourse competence (linking elements of language together to take part in certain kinds of discourse, for example, conversation)
 - strategic competence (knowledge of appropriate strategies to use if communication breaks down and knowledge of how to learn language)
 - cultural competence (includes sensitivity toward attitudes, norms, behaviors, and cultures in which the other language is spoken).

Supporting the development of these elements is our focus, with the ultimate goal being to have students use an additional language for the purposes of real communication.

Additional languages are utilized, where feasible, in other subject areas. Teachers create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and use the Learner Profile as a fundamental guide to support the development of the learner to be successful in an additional language.

Language B, Language ab Initio, & Immersion Programmes

The chart below outlines DP Language Acquisition task requirements that align with the language acquisition phases at our school sites.

Language ab initio Courses	Language B Courses	French Immersion Program
Spanish 10 3Y	French 10 9Y	French as a Second Language (FSL)
Spanish 20 3Y	French 20 9Y	FSL 10
Spanish 20IB ab initio	French 20IB SL	FSL 20
Spanish 30 3Y	French 30 9Y	French 20IB HL
Spanish 30IB ab initio	French 30IB SL	FSL 30
		French 30IB HL

Challenging of Language Exams: Students at MAC may challenge a language exam and receive the appropriate number of credits. Students wanting to take advantage of this opportunity need to contact the Languages Department Head.

Language Pathways in the DP

- Students who want to achieve a *full IB Diploma*
 - Must take a second language from grades 10 through 12.
 - May choose to anticipate French 20IB and 30IB SL only.

Assessing Proficiency in English Language

Students who qualify for English as an Additional Language (EAL) Learner funding in our school division are assessed using the Alberta Education K-12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks. All teachers are aware of the communicative and specific language strands, competencies, language levels and proficiencies within the ESL benchmarks to provide appropriate modifications to the student's individual programming. Students can be identified between levels 1 – 5 on the Alberta Education EAL benchmarks. All students are assessed for their primary and secondary language proficiencies in reading, writing, speaking and listening using a variety of formal and informal measures.

Both social and academic language acquisition is important for English language learners. Jim Cummins distinguishes between two important aspects of language development: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.

BICS focuses on the conversational fluency of English. This is the language used in social situations when we chat informally with our friends about the events of the weekend (e.g., soccer match, family outings and celebrations).

CALP focuses on the language required to achieve academic success. Academic language is necessary to engage in cognitively demanding learning tasks that are aligned with programs of study. When we explain concepts, give opinions, participate in a debate, summarize text or write a research paper, we are using CALP.

BICS and CALP develop simultaneously in the learning environment.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Supports

Students receive EAL support in the classrooms through differentiated instruction practices and modifications to programming where necessary. Students who require many adaptations to programming will have an Individual Program Plan (IPP). All students have access to division family liaison workers who offer language translation and support services for students and their families through One World...One Center.

Policy Review Process

A committee comprised of IB Coordinator, Learning Services Team, Languages Department and school administrators are responsible for updating the current policy annually and reporting back to the IB faculty and school community. Additionally, the committee is responsible for providing professional development to the school community on the implementation of good practices that foster a culture of diversity and multiculturalism.

This policy was reviewed, amended and updated on the 1st of December 2024, by Jennifer Vandendooren.

References

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