MYP Language Policy

Statement of Philosophy that Supports Student Learning:
The MYP recognizes that the study of language is the foundation for all learning. Language study develops international understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth, and promotes effective communication. We view all teachers and parents as essential contributors to the language learning process and understand that the most conducive environment is a safe environment of mutual respect, integrity, and dedication. We pledge to provide challenging curriculum, differentiated and varied instruction, and diverse learning experiences in a global society.

In accordance with the district’s language arts philosophy to produce effective communicators, we believe that an effective and rigorous language curriculum is crucial to MYP students. We challenge all students to use their minds, while providing them with the instruction, the assessment, and the support they need to meet the district and the Colorado Common Core Standards. The MYP curriculum embraces the aims and objectives of the IB programme which develops inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people. Additionally, global contexts increase understanding of languages and cultures, and encourage students to explore globally significant ideas and issues. Our language program encompasses these content goals:

1. Oral Expression and Listening
2. Reading for All Purposes
3. Writing and Composition
4. Research and Reasoning

OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGES

- English is the language of instruction
- English as a subject is taught through:
  - Language and literature in the MYP programme
  - ESL as a support program
- Modern Languages are taught through:
  - French and Spanish in the MYP and DP.
- Linguistic Cultural Opportunities.
  - The school offers a multitude of opportunities to gain exposure to various languages and cultures though parent involvement, festivals, music, art, assemblies, co-curricular clubs and curricular units.
Students whose native language is not English may use native language resources and language skills to help facilitate their learning within the classroom.

TEACHING OF LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS

All students:

- are given access to support services as appropriate.
- are taught language by all faculty and have the opportunity to read and write across the curriculum.
- are encouraged to become fluent in more than one language.
- are encouraged to express themselves, orally and in writing through a variety of media and situations.
- are encouraged to apply a balanced program of instruction and language.
- are encouraged to develop a love or appreciation of language and literature from a variety of cultures.
- are given time to reflect on their own work, as well as share and develop their work in social contexts.
- have access to, and are taught through, a variety of technological and information resources available in multiple languages.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English is the primary language of instruction in Academy D-20. Our IB schools have worked diligently to build strong vertical articulation to prepare students to complete their Language and literature studies successfully. In addition to English language instruction, we support reading and writing across the curriculum; we believe that it is the responsibility of all teachers to improve our students’ ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. For Language Acquisition classes, the language of instruction is either French or Spanish. Language skills are taught at all grade levels. Many of the skills are introduced in elementary school; some are introduced in middle school. All skills are explored in more depth and reinforced each successive year. These skills are ongoing and are refined across all grade levels throughout the year.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

It is the expectation that all MYP students take Spanish or French. The study of a world language has been included in the District #20 Board of Education definition of a core subject in
its academically rigorous curriculum. The State of Colorado has presently identified four areas of focus for State Standards for World Language:

1. Communication in Languages Other Than English
2. Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures
3. Connections with Other Disciplines and Information Acquisition
4. Comparisons to Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture –

We believe that world language study is crucial in the development of the MYP student. All students should have opportunities to participate in world language study at the earliest possible age and to continue to advanced levels of study. Learning a second language at an early age has a positive effect on intellectual growth. It enhances and enriches children’s mental development. It opens the door to other cultures and helps children understand and appreciate people from other countries. It leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening. We are providing programs that are proficiency based and are taught in a dynamic, interactive environment utilizing a variety of strategies. The ultimate goal of world language instruction is for students to use their second language as a tool in educational pursuits, career opportunities, and for personal growth and enjoyment. The MYP World Language curriculum embraces the aims and objectives of the IB programme, which develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people. By using the MYP global contexts, teachers help students to increase their understanding of languages and cultures, and explore globally significant ideas and issues.

Our schools accommodate students who are new to the MYP program by placing them in an appropriate language class. We also have students who are part of a French immersion program in elementary school. Because of this, immersion students are often much more advanced by the time they enter middle school. The uniqueness of an immersion program is that the world language is not taught as a subject. Instead, the language becomes the language of instruction for part of the curriculum. Articulation between the two schools has created a streamlined curriculum for these students.

Academy District 20 has been using a world language common assessment the last three years for students who have completed Spanish 1 and 2 and French 1 and 2. The collected data is studied from year to year as teachers plan their curriculum horizontally and vertically.

Finally, MYP students in the middle school have had access to the Rosetta Stone Language Lab. Further planning will be necessary to incorporate the use of this lab on a regular basis.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Predominantly, our students speak English. Those students who are new to this country and are learning the English language for the first time are enrolled in a separate program for English instruction. Both Mountain Ridge Middle School and Rampart High School provide ESL instruction through their ESL programs. Students are integrated in most of their classes but
there are resources for instructional support. Rampart also teaches classes in the evening which are geared towards ELL parents.

Parents have the right to choose the English Language Development program service type. Academy District 20 offers either a comprehensive English as a Second Language (ESL) Magnet School program in 10 designated schools or a Mainstream English Language Learner program which is in all district schools. Our middle school ESL magnet program provides instruction for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students from different language and cultural backgrounds. The ESL teacher provides instruction to beginning students in Language Arts and supports their work in other academic areas.

Our high school ESL magnet program provides classes which offer full academic credit in English and Social Studies at the beginning, intermediate and advanced English proficiency levels. The average high school student schedule consists of eight classes per week. ELL students take six or seven regular classes and one to two ESL classes. Students are provided with direct help in their other academic classes when necessary. The ESL teacher regularly consults with classroom teachers to help students with their courses and contacts counselors to plan the transition from high school into further education careers.

**INSTRUCTION FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

Our program serves students at all levels of academic readiness. This means that we must have safety nets in place for those students who come to us with below standard proficiency in language skills. These students, identified by our state assessment test and other assessments, may benefit from a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan. Teachers use STAR, a program which marries small group differentiated instruction with a computer based fluency and vocabulary program. The aims of this class are to accelerate the growth in reading beyond one to two years in a school year. This course serves students who are more than two or three years behind what the state identifies as on-grade level in reading. The reading class does not take the place of Language and Literature but it may keep students from being able to take a Language Acquisition class. The state mandated ILP (Individual Literacy Plan) is written for students who may read below grade level. It is direct instruction for students who are lacking in targeted areas: reading, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary skills. Teachers receive student ILP folders and are provided with specific strategies to meet their individual needs. Data is on-going and is transferred from year to year through an online database.
MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION
Because the majority of students in our schools speak English, we do not have a program set aside for mother tongue instruction. Language Acquisition teachers and district translators help maintain communications between the school and parents when the parents do not speak English.

Students who speak another language at home are supported in our buildings. We have had students share their culture during class time and even present information in their native language over the intercom at the start of a school day. Some classes have special culture days where community members help to educate our students. Students with unique language needs, Mandarin, for instance, have been introduced to other students so they can support each other as they learn English or simply as they maintain their native language. Our media centers offer support by providing a wide variety of multi-cultural literature so students can research their own cultures as well as the cultures of others.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION
Students are required to take a Language and Literature class every year of the MYP. Because language skills are fundamental to all other subject areas, many steps have been created to support achievement in this area. In the past we have had classes for literacy in the content area and universal rubrics for writing have been posted in all classrooms. Teachers have also attended several professional development days where the focus was on literacy in the classroom. Currently, the middle school has an enrichment class in place. Part of that class is dedicated to language skills, with many classes being grouped by proficiency level. The AVID program, in place at RHS, allows students to gain organization and study skills needed for their success. Responsibility for language instruction is interdisciplinary, since these skills are necessary in developing life-long learners. Teachers plan together at each grade level in bi-weekly professional learning communities to ensure the rigor and quality of each lesson. At Rampart High School content area teachers meet weekly. Teachers at the middle school meet bi-weekly with their teams to ensure all possible opportunities for cross-disciplinary instruction in language development are taken.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER
The media center plays a pivotal role in the support of language development. Our Library Media Center has a variety of texts in Spanish and French. Language Acquisition teachers are promoting these books through assignments. The media center provides supplemental resources to all subject area teachers to be used in the text sets for each unit of study and
actively seek teacher input as to what sources are needed to support curriculum. From videos and bibliographies to texts and databases, teachers can utilize a variety of resources. We have an extensive collection of multicultural literature which we promote through various school-wide activities. The LMC tracks these titles and promotes these titles through displays, book talks, and school wide events.

- the language policy includes (as applicable):
  - support for mother tongues
  - support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction
  - learning of the host country or regional language and culture.

the language policy takes into account the needs of students in the provision of courses from the language and literature, and language acquisition subject groups.

**Works Cited**

