

**NORTH MIAMI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME
LANGUAGE POLICY**

PHILOSOPHY

At North Miami Senior High School it is understood that language is a primary means of communicating and is crucial to lifelong learning. To be successful, students must be able to use language effectively, appropriately, accurately and confidently. Moreover, students must be able to express themselves in both oral and written form, and in a variety of contexts and purposes. We recognize that through language, students develop critical thinking skills, social skills, and are provided with the building blocks of language necessary for acquiring knowledge related to all areas of the IB Diploma Programme curricular framework and the IB Learner Profile. Therefore, the acquisition of language is viewed as a life-long process and every teacher at North Miami Senior High School is a language teacher. We teach language through context and relate new information to existing knowledge.

Students in the 21st century must learn to adapt to their ever-changing environments. Therefore, the mission of North Miami Senior High School is to assist all students in becoming productive citizens in a global society. We recognize that students must become both culturally and linguistically proficient in their primary and in a second language. Language learning refers not only to the acquisition of a second language, but also includes the importance of multicultural understanding and sensitivity to speakers of other languages.

PRACTICES

GROUP 1: LANGUAGE A

In order to promote holistic learning within the context of the IB Diploma Programme (DP), the stakeholders at North Miami Senior High School recognize the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language throughout the implementation of the program. English is the primary language of instruction of the school, since students must meet English language requirements provided by the state standards. The development of Language A is crucial, as it allows students to make connections within and across subject areas facilitated by the Areas of Interaction. All students are required to take Language A: Literature at the Higher Level in grades eleven and twelve. For assessment purposes, the IB DP Language A: Literature criteria is used along with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) grading policy. Language A courses support both the National Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSS) in Florida for English Language Arts (ELA), and the IB DP Language A objectives. Required Summer reading in Language A is developed, required and enforced by English Language Arts and Intensive Reading Departments at the end and beginning of every academic year, helping to ensure students maintain their Language A learning gains over the two and half month summer break.

GROUP 2: LANGUAGE B

The mastery of essential language skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking, listening, and language (i.e. vocabulary, formal writing) – is a vital part of a student's overall development. The importance of students becoming culturally and linguistically proficient in a second language (Language B) is recognized and all students receive instruction in French, and Spanish, which are also offered to non-IB students as Regular, Honors, and AP foreign language classes, as well as beginning levels of Spanish for Spanish-Speakers. In realizing that not every student will reach the same level of language proficiency at the same time, a continuum of Language B courses is offered that meet the developing needs of all learners in order for all students to achieve his or her personal best. All IB students are required to take a Language B course in grades nine through twelve. The choice of level (Standard or Higher) depends upon the student's preference, level of proficiency, teacher recommendation, and the student's overall program of study. For assessment purposes, the IB DP Language B criteria are used along with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) grading policy. Language B courses support the Florida Common Core Standards (CCSS) and the IB DP Language B objectives to ultimately maximize of achievement of the IB Learner Profile. Students also articulate from elementary and middle schools in the district with three to nine years of prior Language B academic coursework, oftentimes with immersion-learning for many of the languages and levels at the various schools.

The following reading practices will be implemented:

- reading takes place in all subject areas and students read across the curriculum whenever appropriate;
- a variety of practices are used when planning for instruction, which includes, but is not limited to guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organizers and use of leveled reading material;
- students are encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure and read aloud expressively;
- students are exposed to a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, plays, trade books, short stories, newspapers/magazines and informational text;
- teachers promote and incorporate supplemental reading incentives and support programs, such as Reading Plus, Achieve3000, etc.;
- vocabulary-building techniques such as word walls, word of the day, use of idioms, and literary elements such as metaphors and similes will be utilized across the curriculum, whenever appropriate.

The following writing practices will be implemented:

- students' natural desire to communicate through writing is fostered by giving real purpose to their writing, and by exposing them to varied, challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities;
- ensure consistency of the promotion of the writing process (planning, outlining, drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing), as age appropriate throughout the grade levels;
- students are provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through a variety of genres, including, but not limited to, journaling, essays; students will

be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use language specific to different subject areas;

- development of writing is supported by constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults;
- teachers provide instruction in, and model, the correct usage of written and oral language conventions, including spelling, grammar, rules of punctuation, and handwriting.
- Several literary elements (i.e., foreshadowing, symbolism, metaphor and simile, etc.) are reviewed in order to teach good writing skills that allow for more interesting reading.

INTENSIVE READING

An intensive reading course is required for students identified as needing focused and intensive English reading instruction, in addition to the regularly scheduled Language A class. These classes are designed to increase the student's specific reading needs – decoding skills, fluency and/or comprehension of text – in order to achieve higher levels of success. The students placed in this course are those who do not achieve passing scores on the annual end-of-year Florida Standards Assessment English Language Arts Test (FSA-ELA). The state-initiative, "Just Read! Florida," requires progress monitoring of these students. They take the online Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (PMRN FAIR) three times per year. In addition, they take the Beginning-Year and Mid-Year Reading Assessment, as well as the, "WriteScore," Written Assessment. All exam data for each student are readily available online to all state and district personnel, school staff, the community and parents. Data are analyzed, shared, and discussed at regular intervals among all stake-holders in a variety of contexts.

ORAL LANGUAGE SUPPORT

- Teachers model correct language usage in conversation, while being sensitive of students' cultural background and primary language.
- Students are provided ample opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, audio books, listening stations, etc.
- Teachers plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

Second language teachers are the major supporters the school's reading, writing and oral language practices. Students receive instruction using an interactive, immersion-approach to second language learning. Emphasis on grammatical structures, verbal and writing skills and vocabulary development also contribute to helping students develop the tools they need to become effective, multilingual communicators. International understanding, cultural awareness and historical knowledge are

enhanced through the study of the customs, traditions and everyday life in French, and Spanish-speaking countries throughout the world.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SUPPORT

The primary language of the overwhelming majority of the students at North Miami Senior High is English, which is also the language of instruction at the school. However, within our student population there is a large number of bilingual students whose home language is a language other than English. We have an English Language Learners (ELL) Department for Levels 1-5 English language learners. Included in our multilingual, multicultural staff are speakers of several languages, who are often called upon to assist when interpretation and translation are needed for parent contact and conferences. ELL at our school is a primary course pathway to support our school's influx of students newly arriving from around the globe in learning English, especially from the Caribbean and Latin America. For several decades now, each new teacher hired in our district, in total 67 districts around the state, must become Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META) compliant by earning 20 continuing education points, or completing 1 college level course during their first three years of applying for and receiving temporary teaching certification. META compliance is one of the main requirements towards obtaining a first 5-year professional teaching certificate. META is a Florida law set forth in the LULUAC et al. vs. Florida Department of Education Consent Decree, ensuring that language minority students have equal access to all instructional programs and services.

Natives-speakers of our Language B course offerings often are placed in the advanced level of their home language so they can receive differentiated, independent instruction provided by these foreign language teachers. Thusly, they feel they have a "home away from home," i.e. a feeling of security and feeling understood when they first arrive to this country. If these speakers are also identified as Levels 1-4 English Language Learners by means of an English entrance language exam, they are also automatically placed in the ELL course track at our school.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The school has several formal and informal support services available, including:

- **Response to Intervention:** Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings can be called whenever a student is in need of additional support or early intervention in order to be successful in school. The RTI team members include administrators, DP Coordinator, special education teachers, general education teachers, reading coach, student services personnel and the student's parents.
- **Gifted Resources:** Students who have current gifted education plans (also under the umbrella of the IEP program) may receive core academic instruction from certified gifted education teachers. These teachers teach and assist content area teachers in using strategies that further encourage vocabulary

development, reading and writing across the curriculum, and the exposure to various forms of literature and informational text that supplement the core curriculum in all content area classes.

- **Exceptional Student Education (SPED):** Students with exceptional education needs receive services and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Plan from an ESE teacher or specialist. IEP plans are always provided to content area teachers by an ESE specialist. The ESE teacher and the content area teachers use strategies that promote the mastery of essential language skills in an effort to maximize the potential of each student by accommodating these students according to the mandates of their IEP plans. Recurring IEP meetings always take place with content area teacher input, including different content area teachers being in attendance at IEP plan meetings in order to support the ESE specialists, the parent, and the student. As of 2015, all 5-year teacher certifications renewals require a minimum of 20 continuing education points, or 1 college course in ESE. ESE co-teachers are assigned to Intensive Reading teachers when a minimum of ESE students is reached per class period over 25 students in total, with a maximum of 32 regular and ESE students combined.
- **Language Arts (LA) / English Language Learners (ELL - formerly known as ESOL):** The LA / ELL Departments work closely with teachers, students, parents and the school administration to ensure that any curricular and support materials necessary for the development of English language for Level 1-5 learners are available. The LA / ELL Departments disseminate strategies, information, and may hold workshops for both teachers and parents so that they can effectively access the many online and offline resources that are available to all stakeholders in the school district. Additionally, the LA / ELL Departments are able to obtain print and non-print material for teachers, students and parents through various resources.

All teachers in the school learn as much as possible about the cultures of the students, build pride in the students' cultural background, create an environment where students develop a sense of belonging and feel psychologically and physically safe, avoid textbooks and material that present cultural stereotypes, send out materials that are in the students' home language, and use cultural differences to bring school and family together. Over half of the school-wide announcements on campus and all of the robocalls at the school and district level are in English and Creole.

- **Reading Coach:** The Reading Coaches work with classroom teachers and students to improve reading, writing and language skills. Their responsibilities include participation in team meetings including chairing the Literacy Team, sharing information about district and state initiatives, supporting teachers with instructional strategies and assessments, providing supplemental resources for struggling readers, assisting with the reporting and analysis of data to meet the needs of diverse learners, training teachers and students on the use of computer-based programs and working with students in small groups in their classrooms and in the Media Center.

ALL STAFF

Finally, all teachers in the school learn as much as possible about the cultures of the students, build pride in the students' cultural background, create an environment where students develop a sense of belonging and feel psychologically and physically safe, avoid textbooks and material that present cultural stereotypes, send out materials that are in the students' home language, and use cultural differences to bring school and family together. Over half of the school-wide announcements on campus and all of the robocalls at the school and district level are in English and Creole.