

Middle River Middle School

IB MYP Language Policy

Vision and Mission

- **The Vision:** Middle River Middle School will prepare all students to graduate as 21st century learners to become competitive in tomorrow's global community
- **The Mission:** Middle River Middle School aims to provide a safe, diverse, and rigorous academic experience for all students. In order to prepare our students for high school, college and careers, we will:
 - i. Promote high academic standards through collaborative learning
 - ii. Encourage appropriate and responsive behaviors
 - iii. Establish good values and citizenship

Philosophy:

At Middle River Middle School, we understand that through language and language learning we are able to make connections and become globally minded. The staff at Middle River Middle recognize and emphasize the importance of supporting the many facets of language for all of our students. Language can take the form of verbal, nonverbal and written communication, which are all instrumental in supporting our students' ability to interact with and respond to the world around them. Students should have the knowledge necessary to apply literacy and language skills to varying concepts to build deeper understandings. Students should be immersed in all forms of language through authentic and meaningful contexts. Students need multiple opportunities to practice and then apply language skills at a level that is developmentally appropriate and responsive. As such all teachers commit themselves to be teachers of language as they promote effective communication skills that are necessary to be competitive in a global society.

Language Profile: Currently at MRMS we have 25 students classified as ELL and 12 students who have exited ELL services within the last two years. Of these 25 students, 17 speak Spanish at home, 3 speak Yoruba, and 1 student speaks Urdu, Arabic, Chinese, and French respectively at home. Our 25 students classified as ELL are Native to the United States (17), Nigeria (3), Pakistan (1), Gambia (1), Honduras (1), Iraq (1), and Mexico (1). We do not have an overwhelming population of ELL students due to our school district having ESOL centers spread throughout the county to best provide support. Baltimore County Public School Policy allows for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to choose between an English to Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) center or a student's home school. While our district requires that ESOL centers (which we are not) provide resources and staffing to support LEP students, LEP students from our community can opt out of those services and choose to attend Middle River. We currently have 21 students classified as LEP, and while they have refused ESOL services in selecting our school, it is still our responsibility to meet the needs of every student. Additionally, we offer translated documents and translators for meetings whenever necessary. For the students

classified as ELL, they participate in the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) by taking the Assessing comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) assessment, which provides information on their level of instructional needs.

Classroom Instruction-

- All teachers are teachers of language and literacy. A major initiative and focus area for BCPS is literacy and encourages/requires all content teachers to teach and reinforce literacy skills. MRMS prioritizes literacy as well and works with teachers to ensure effective reading and writing strategies are infused into teaching and learning in ways appropriate to each content area.
- The primary language for classroom instruction is English except for in Language Acquisition classes which are encouraged to be taught in the target language. We have been able to schedule our first language Spanish speaking students into their own class to continue to develop their language skills as a first language.
- Language and Literature- All students take Language and Literature during years 1, 2, and 3 of the MYP. This course requires students to read a variety of texts (fiction and non-fiction) and to write in a variety of style (narrative, argumentative, explanatory, poetry, etc).
- Language Acquisition- We offer 2 additional language options to our students. All students are enrolled in a Language Acquisition course except for our students enrolled in Reading Foundations classes due to the needs of the students as well as demands of the schedule. The languages offered are Spanish and French.

Mother Tongue Development- Middle River Middle School recognizes the importance of supporting the mother tongue in order to preserve culture, communicate with parents and families, and to support students cognitively. We are able to work closely with translation services to communicate with parents in person and via written or verbal communication.

For students whose mother tongue is not English, our language of instruction, students may receive additional classroom support through one or more of the following differentiation strategies:

- Using visuals and demonstrations in the classroom
- Getting support from partnered students, encouraging collaboration
- Getting materials and readings ahead of time
- Utilizing graphic organizers
- Modifying assignments where writing is not critical to the objective
- Additional checks for understanding
- Activating prior understanding

- Extended time for assignments
- Using language aids (dictionaries or translators) for assignments that are not language dependent but working to reduce dependency on these aids.
- Using body language in addition to verbal cues
- Allowing students to use mother tongue where appropriate- We have established a Spanish class for Native Speakers as a response to our growing Hispanic population.

ESOL: We have a very small population of students that would be categorized as ELL (2%) as we are not an ESOL center in our district. The students that we do have that require ESOL services are served by the general education classroom teachers. They have an individual LEP (Language education plan) that identifies the necessary accommodations needed for the student to succeed. WIDA testing is conducted yearly to determine ELL status as well as progress.

Language Support:

- a. Using library
- b. All subjects
- c. Parental support
- d. ESOL office support – translating documents, translating services

Interdisciplinary responsibility for language development (Further Considerations):

Teachers and staff are committed to engaging in continuing professional development around the topics of language learning and literacy through the school year. The IB Learner Profile as well as the Global Contexts provide excellent opportunities for teachers to promote language skills across disciplines.

Review of the Language Policy

The MRMS language policy will be reviewed as part of a collaborative process involving representation from all stakeholders and will be reviewed bi-annually. In addition to reviewing the policy, the review committee will give specific attention to our progress in support for mother tongues and support for students who are not yet proficient in English