

McAuliffe International School

Language Policy

Steering Committee: Stephanie Gronholz, MYP Coordinator, Language & Literature teacher, and English Language Development teacher; Steve Foster, Individuals & Societies teacher; Maggie Leshin, Language & Literature teacher; Becky Middleton, Language acquisition (French) teacher and Gifted and Talented Coordinator; Carlene Wickens-Madsen, Sciences teacher

Past Committee Members: Servane Reimer, parent; Anne Walker, Language & Literature teacher and Literacy Coordinator; Molly Walsh, parent and journalism teacher

Updated 16 November 2016

Language Philosophy

At McAuliffe International School, we believe in the power of language to communicate our values, our beliefs, and our selves. McAuliffe students speak, read and write in all disciplines according to the appropriate expectations of each subject. Students learn to speak, read and write like mathematicians, poets, scientists, musicians, artists, athletes, historians, and geographers, or any other role they find themselves in as students.

We acknowledge that students may come to middle school speaking multiple languages, and that the language of the home is not always the language of the school. We aim to nurture the mother tongue while promoting multilingualism. Acquiring a new language to meet these aims not only has intellectual benefits, but also allows McAuliffe students to become more internationally-minded.

Language Profile

McAuliffe International School's student body of 923 is composed of the following racial groups:

- White: 578
- Hispanic: 131
- African-America: 103
- Asian: 30
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 2
- American Indian: 4
- Multiple Races: 75

Upon enrolling in Denver Public Schools (DPS), all students submit a home language questionnaire. This questionnaire identifies the languages spoken in the home, the language most often spoken by the student, and the language that the student first acquired. As the mother

tongue of the host school is English, the majority of students speak English. Additionally, the following languages have been identified through the home language questionnaire:

- ❖ Amharic – 4
- ❖ Arabic – 2
- ❖ Chinese, Mandarin – 5
- ❖ Czech – 1
- ❖ Dutch – 1
- ❖ French – 1
- ❖ German – 3
- ❖ Hungarian – 1
- ❖ Italian – 1
- ❖ Japanese – 1
- ❖ Kunama – 2
- ❖ Polish – 1
- ❖ Portuguese – 3
- ❖ Romanian – 2
- ❖ Somali – 1
- ❖ Spanish – 56
- ❖ Urdu – 1
- ❖ Vietnamese – 2

English language proficiency is assessed using the state’s standardized ACCESS test. Reading diagnostic tests and progress monitoring are offered in English through the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and interim exams. Results of these assessments, in addition to a body of other evidence, are used by teachers for planning and instruction.

Language Practices

- ❖ The language of instruction at McAuliffe International School is English.
- ❖ Teachers operate from the understanding that a culturally responsive environment is key for promoting student engagement and success.
- ❖ MIS views all teachers as teachers of reading and writing. To that end, content teachers share these common instructional strategies:
 - pre-teaching academic vocabulary
 - turn and talk
 - claim-evidence-reasoning paragraph structure
 - Interactive reading annotations

Teachers will collaborate around implementation of these strategies during beginning-of-the-year teacher work days. Anchor posters will be available for teachers to post in their classrooms.

- ❖ During a daily “homeroom” period, students spend time in the “Reading Zone” with age-appropriate young adult and classic novels of their choosing. Each classroom is equipped with a library of books that the teachers have obtained based on librarian

recommendations and student requests. The library has a robust collection of books, including some in French, Spanish and Mandarin.

- ❖ All teachers communicate with parents through Edmodo and Infinite Campus Messenger when at-home reinforcement of literacy practices is appropriate.
- ❖ As a requirement of the district, all teachers have English Language Acquisition (ELA) training, which promotes oral and written English through best practices for English language learners (ELLs) and the general student population.
- ❖ Teachers of Language and literature, Individuals and societies, Sciences, and Mathematics meet weekly in data teams to refine instructional strategies that will promote student growth towards interim and end-of-year reading and writing assessments.

Language Practices: Language and Literature

- ❖ Language and literature courses fulfill the requirements of the district and state, these courses are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and thus focus on the following strands:
 - reading: literature
 - reading: informational text
 - writing
 - speaking and listening
 - language
- ❖ All language and literature students receive explicit vocabulary instruction and practice using new words in the context of the novels and short stories they are reading.
- ❖ Language and literature teachers use texts from a variety of cultures and historical time periods, including texts in translation.
- ❖ Students who need moderate literacy supports receive in-class interventions, which includes access to texts read-aloud through a digital support called Learning Ally.
- ❖ Students who need significant support in phonics, fluency, oral reading and comprehension receive extra support through a literacy intervention course that uses Orton-Gillingham/SuccessMaker.

Language Practices: Language Acquisition

- ❖ MIS offers language acquisition courses in Spanish, French, and Mandarin.
- ❖ Students who speak a language other than English at home take an English Language Development (ELD) course. ELD supports students in moving along the WIDA continuum in speaking, writing, reading and listening. When possible, the skills taught align with language and literature coursework.
- ❖ The department gives beginning-of-the-year assessments to determine language acquisition course placement.
- ❖ Students must study one language throughout their experience at McAuliffe. Only when the student has achieved proficiency in phase 4 (equivalent to the end of 8th grade) can he or she transfer to another language.

- ❖ If students are enrolled in a reading and/or math intervention course, they transition to a language acquisition class at strategic intervals only after they've successfully completed a remedial course and there is room in their schedule.
- ❖ Some students come to MIS with years of instruction in an additional world language because they attended a dual immersion or full immersion elementary school. Students in this situation enroll in Heritage Spanish or Advanced Mandarin. French-speaking students participate in advanced group tutoring. These students engage in a language acquisition course exclusively in the target language, using the national curricula of France and Spain when appropriate. Some students add a third language (for example, a native English speaker who spoke Spanish in a full immersion elementary school took French 1 for Year 1).
- ❖ Language acquisition teachers use a pedagogy based on Comprehensible Input (CI), which includes Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). TPRS strategies build communication skills through immersion and inquiry and without explicit instruction in grammar.
- ❖ Students read classical and contemporary texts in the target language from well-stocked classroom libraries.
- ❖ To increase the frequency with which students speak in the target language, due to block scheduling, the following practices are encouraged:
 - conversation opportunities
 - Skype, penpals
 - extracurricular events
 - family interactions

Policy Maintenance

- ❖ The language policy steering committee, or substitute representatives, will review the language policy at the beginning of each academic year. Significant changes in philosophy, practice, or student demographics will require that the committee revise the policy.
- ❖ The MYP coordinator will communicate changes to the Building Leadership Team.
- ❖ The most recent language policy will always be available to the school community on McAuliffe's public website.