



# Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center Middle Years Programme Language Policy



## **PHILOSOPHY**

At Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center, language is a vital instrument for learning, communication, and expression. Teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language instruction, we are encouraging intercultural awareness, new perspectives, curiosity, and an appreciation of our world's diversity. Through the exploration of language, students become communicators in our multilingual world.

## **PRACTICES**

### **Language & Literature**

In order to promote holistic learning within the context of the IB MYP, the stakeholders at Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center recognize the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language throughout the implementation of the program. Language & Literature is limited to English as the language of instruction of the school, since students must meet English language requirements provided by the state standards. The development of Language & Literature is crucial as it allows students to make connections within and across subject areas, facilitated by key and related concepts, global contexts and Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills. Therefore, all students are required to take Language & Literature in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades (Years 1-3). English Language Arts (ELA) standards are embedded within all elective courses.

For assessment purposes, the IB MYP Language & Literature criteria are used along with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) grading policy. Language & Literature courses support both the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) and the IB MYP Language & Literature objectives.

### **Language Acquisition**

The mastery of essential language skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing – is a vital part of a student's overall development. The importance of students becoming culturally and linguistically proficient in a second language is recognized, and all students receive instruction in either French or Spanish. Realizing that not every student will reach the same level of language proficiency at the same time, a continuum of Language Acquisition courses is offered that meet both the developing academic and

social needs of all learners in order for all students to achieve their personal best. Language Acquisition courses are assessed using the Language Acquisition Assessment Criteria for Phases 1-3. The criteria support both the CPalms Standards and the IB MYP Language Acquisition objectives for grades six, seven, and eight (Years 1-3).

The following reading practices will be implemented in Language & Literature:

- reading will take place across the curriculum whenever appropriate;
- a variety of practices will be used when planning for instruction, which includes but is not limited to: differentiated reading instruction, vocabulary, and graphic organizers.
- students will be encouraged to read for information, literary analysis, independent practice, and read aloud for fluency;
- students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, plays, short stories, district-adopted anthologies, periodicals (both print and online), and informational text;
- teachers will promote and incorporate supplemental reading incentive and support programs, such as i-Ready, MyON Reader, and activities sponsored by the media specialist;
- vocabulary-building techniques such as affixes, word of the week, use of idioms, and literary elements will be utilized across the curriculum, whenever appropriate.
- Teachers will recognize student writing through online “Falcon Favorites Book Review” (sponsored by the Media Specialist).

The following writing practices will be implemented in Language & Literature:

- students’ natural desire to communicate through writing will be 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 will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through a variety of genres. These opportunities include but are not limited to: journaling, essays, and Scholastic Scope writing activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop, and use language specific to different subject areas;
- development of writing will be supported by providing constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults;

- development of writing will be supported by providing constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults;
- teachers will 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 will be reviewed in order to teach good writing skills that allow for more interesting reading—"tricks" used by authors to capture their audience.

### **Intensive Reading**

Intensive reading instruction is offered to students identified as needing focused and concentrated reading instruction, in addition to the regularly scheduled Language & Literature 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. This course utilizes *Inside Through National Geographic*. The students who are placed in this course are those who score at Level 1 or 2 on the reading portion of the Florida Standards Assessment Test (FSA).

### **ORAL LANGUAGE**

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

Language Acquisition teachers support the school's reading, writing and oral language practices as well as the IB learner profile. Students receive instruction using an interactive, immersion approach to second language learning. Emphasis on grammatical structures, verbal and writing skills, and vocabulary development help 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.

## **MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT**

The mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of the students at FCM is English, which is also the language of instruction at the school. However, within our student population there are bilingual students, including those whose home language is a language other than English. Included in our multilingual, multicultural staff are speakers of several languages, who are often called upon to assist when translators are needed for parent conferences.

More than a third of the faculty members at FCM hold a certification in teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) from the State of Florida. The goal of the ESOL program is to encourage fluent language acquisition using state-recommended strategies through immersion in a regular classroom setting.

The media center contains a wealth of resources that support the development of mother tongue languages. The media center maintains a circulating collection of books in French and Spanish, supporting the languages taught. The foreign language library books represent a variety of picture books, fiction and nonfiction, on a range of reading levels. In addition to circulating collection which number close to 1,000 books, the media center also maintains a variety of foreign language videos and audio books as well. The media center also provides guidance to students and parents on how to access a variety of digital and online sources of books in English, French and Spanish. Among others, these resources include TumbleBooks and MyON, which are subscription based services provided by the District. Additionally, the media center has created a special collection of books in various languages spoken by our students, but are beyond the Spanish and French taught in school. In that special Mother Tongue Collection are books donated by students and parents over the years. The collection includes books in Japanese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, German, Italian, Dutch, and other languages spoken by our current and former students. Students particularly enjoy looking at books that they “think” they know, i.e. Dr. Seuss titles. The pictures are familiar, but the words may be in Japanese.

## **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, MYP coordinator, special education teacher, general education teachers, reading coach, student services personnel and the student’s parents.

- Gifted Resource

Students who have a current gifted education plan receive Language Arts and Advanced Academics instruction from certified gifted education teachers in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. These teachers use strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, reading and writing across the curriculum, and the exposure to various forms of literature and informational text. Gifted education teachers also work collaboratively with other subject area teachers to develop interdisciplinary units within a Global Context. These units are designed to provide clearer insight for students as they focus their inquiry on concepts and skills, in order to create a deeper level of understanding.

- Special Education

Students with special education needs receive services from a special education teacher. The special education teacher uses strategies that promote the mastery of essential language and math skills in an effort to maximize the potential of each student. The SPED program provides collaboration support facilitation and/or consultative services for eligible students who have an Individual Education Plan in order to meet the students' different needs. Support facilitation is an in-class support model provided during regularly scheduled, intermittent or varying times of the day and/or week. In consultative services, the general education teacher and the SPED teacher meet face-to-face or via conference call on a regular basis to plan, implement, and monitor instructional alternatives designed to ensure that the student with a disability is successful in the general education classroom.

- Media Specialist

The media specialist works closely with teachers, students, parents and the school administration to ensure the availability of curricular and support materials that are necessary for the development of language. The media specialist holds workshops for both teachers and parents so that they can effectively access the many online resources that are available to all stakeholders in the school district. In addition, the media specialist works collaboratively with language teachers to promote lifelong reading in multiple languages, and is able to obtain print and non-print material for teachers, students and parents through inter-library loan. These materials include over 175,000 items in French, Spanish, German, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese and Italian, as well as books on tape and large-print documents for the visually impaired.

**Reviewed and adopted by consensus of the faculty on March 15, 2017**