

Massena Central High School

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Language Policy



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Acknowledgement of Resources

Content in this document is based on the following publications from the International Baccalaureate®:

- *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*, 2008
- *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes*, 2008

Relevant Terms Defined

Mother Tongue

The term 'mother tongue' may denote the language learned first, the language identified with as a "native" speaker, the language known best or the language used most ("Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes" 1).

English as a Second Language (ESL)

This is term used to describe an individual whose mother tongue is not English, but is being instructed to read, write and converse effectively in English.

Limited English Proficient (LEP)

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP." These individuals may be entitled to language assistance.

English Language Learner (ELL)

ELL describes students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses.

Philosophy and Principles

As an IB World School, we at Massena Central High School (MCHS) believe that language is essential to communicate and learn effectively. Because language development is a life-long process, we strive to give each student the language skills he or she needs to succeed in current academics studies, higher education and the work environment. As our mother-tongue is English, our philosophy is that all teachers are English teachers, regardless of their assigned discipline. Each teacher must focus on the enrichment of vocabulary, as well as the development of students' oral and written communication skills. Also, every faculty member attempts to foster an appreciation for literature with the goal of increasing global and multicultural awareness.

In addition to the emphasis placed on building English skills, MCHS offers and encourages students to enroll in one or both of our foreign language options: French and Spanish. We recognize that the ability to communicate in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding.

MCHS is committed to ensuring the Diploma Programme is accessible to all students. This includes students whose mother tongue is a language other than English. We do this by offering extensive services to ELL (English language learners) and LEP (limited English proficient) learners while encouraging these students to maintain, celebrate and share their mother tongue and culture.

The information in this document is informed by the

- International Baccalaureate® mission statement
- Massena Central School District's mission, vision and core beliefs
- the IB learner profile

International Baccalaureate® Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Massena Central School District Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs

Our Mission

Massena Central School District aims to educate, inspire and empower all students to fulfill their potential as learners and citizens.

Our Vision

We aspire to be a leading educational community that values diversity and prepares students to meet today's goals and tomorrow's opportunities.

Our Core Beliefs

1. Students are the first priority.
2. All students can learn and deserve a quality education that includes a variety of pathways.
3. We strive for excellence, have high expectations of our educational community and value progress as much as perfection.
4. We act with character and integrity at all times.
5. Everyone is entitled to a safe, healthy and nurturing learning environment.
6. Parents and guardians play a pivotal role in students' success.
7. The school is the heartbeat of our community and everyone benefits when we all work together.
8. All members of our diverse community are treated equally with respect and dignity.
9. Fiscal responsibility is a key factor in making decisions.

IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Language Profile

The language of instruction at MCHS is English except in the Language B courses. Currently, we have no ELL or LEP students at the High School.

At the time of enrollment in Massena Central School, a Home Language Questionnaire must be completed by the parent or guardian of students identified as new entrants. Students whose guardians indicate that a language other than English is spoken at home are assessed to determine their level of language proficiency (with both an oral and reading test). If a student scores below the 40th percentile, he/she is identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and is placed in the appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Based on their level of proficiency, the student receives one to three ESL instructional periods per day. The student is then reassessed annually to determine if they continue to be LEP and what services need to be provided.

Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition at Massena Central begins in Junior High. In Grade 8, students choose to take either French or Spanish. At the end of Grade 8, the students take a comprehensive exam to get one high school credit toward graduation (Note: In the case of failure in Grade 8, the student would repeat Spanish/French 1 in Grade 9 and take a local exam to receive the one credit of foreign language required to graduate high school). In High School, the student can then choose to progress through Levels II, III, IV and V.

Students may take a third language as approved by the Language Department in the Junior/Senior year after having passed the Level III course and exam. In this case, the student skips Level I and begins Level II. As a senior, the student may take Level III.

Every Diploma Programme student must take one subject from Group 1 and at least one subject from Group 2. The Group 1 option is English A: Literature Higher Level. Group 2 options include Spanish B Standard Level and French B Standard Level. Choice of language in Group 2 depends upon the student's preference, level of proficiency and literacy in that language and his/her overall program of study.

A Diploma Programme student would choose either French B or Spanish B his/her junior year. On a case-by-case basis and as need arises, MCHS allows the opportunity to register for *Ab Initio* languages. In these cases, teachers differentiate their instruction and assessments within the SL classroom to meet the needs of these candidates.

While we have not yet had a need for a special request or school supported self-taught (SSST) course, we would readily provide the option to any student in order to maintain his/her mother tongue. To ensure a well-resourced course was provided to a student, recommendations and guidelines would be taken from the following publications:

- all of the Language A: literature school supported self-taught support material (on the PRC)
- Language A: literature school supported self-taught alternative oral assessment procedures
- prescribed list of authors for each of the 55 language A courses
- prescribed literature in translation list for all courses in studies in language and literature
- Language A: literature school supported self-taught oral commentary questions

Language Development and Support

Practices

The following practices impact language development:

- Reading takes place in all subject areas and students are exposed to a variety of genres.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies and tools to differentiate instruction for all levels of language proficiency.
- Writing skills are developed in all subject areas by incorporating the use of journaling, writing structured essay/short-answer responses, essays of all kinds and research papers.
- Students are provided an abundant number of opportunities to develop oral language skills through oral presentations, debates, speeches, poetry recitations and dramatic readings.
- Full diploma students become better communicators by participating in CAS experiences and meaningfully reflecting upon these experiences.
- MCHS offers Spanish/French Clubs, Interact Club, Mock Trial and Spanish/French National Honor Societies to enrich experience in English and second languages.
- Foreign exchange students typically audit IB courses. This allows foreign exchange students to develop better English language skills (and MCHS students benefit from being exposed to another language and culture).
- If a student is bilingual, he/she is encouraged to use their second language to enhance class discussions and presentations.
- Resources can be obtained by our library media center for students in different languages.

MCHS acknowledges the importance of developing a student's mother-tongue language in promoting personal identity, cultural heritage and overall learning. We support English Language Learners in our ESL program at every grade level. If a student is identified as Limited English Proficiency, General Education Teachers also receive support and guidance from the ESL instructor. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate and devise strategies for each student's success in the classroom.

The parent/guardian of a student identified as an English language learner or as limited English proficient shall be informed in his/her native language, if necessary, of the student's identification for and/or participation in an English language learner instructional program, as well as other school related information. The ESL teacher will communicate weekly with the parents/guardians to ensure that the mother tongue is preserved while learning a new language.

Professional Development

MCHS faculty participate in many literacy-focused professional development opportunities. These include workshops on text-based writing, differentiating instruction, building effective assessments, Bloom's Taxonomy and vocabulary strategies.

Language Policy Implementation and Review

Acknowledged as a working document, this Language Policy is reviewed by IB faculty, MCHS administration and the Language Department Chairpersons at the start of each academic year. The policy is available as a hard copy and on the school's website.

Reviewed: May 2022