**Language Policy**

**Mission Statement**

Largo Middle School strives to inspire students to be internationally minded, critical thinking, responsible global citizens who have a passion for lifelong learning and service.

**Philosophy**

At Largo Middle School, language is a crucial component for learning, communication, and expression. Language drives instruction as it creates a sense of appreciation of our world’s diversity. Teaching and learning through language instruction encourages intercultural awareness and respect for differences of others. Language is used to communicate our needs, feelings, ideas and experiences as well as understanding others. Through exploration and language, students become communicators in our multilingual world. All teachers are language teachers within their content area and beyond.

**Language & Literature**

In order to promote holistic learning within the context of the IB MYP, the faculty and staff at Largo Middle School recognize the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language throughout the implementation of the program. The language of the school is English and instruction of Language & Literature is in English. 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, and Global Contexts. Therefore, all students are required to take Language & Literature every year. For assessment purposes, the IB MYP Language & Literature criteria are used along with the Florida B.E.S.T. Benchmarks. Language is the medium through which the entire curriculum is taught and learned. It facilitates communication and incorporates the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and media literacy. We value and encourage students to respect the language, literature, and culture of their home country while also better understanding our language of instruction, English. We strive to create a caring language community in which all students feel accepted and supported.

**Language and Acquisition (French and Spanish)**

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 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 the developing needs of all learners in order for all students to achieve his or her personal best. Language Acquisition courses are assessed using the Language Acquisition Assessment Criteria for years 1-3 and the Florida World Languages Standards. Second language teachers support the school’s reading, writing and oral language practices as well as 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. Students receive a minimum of three hours of language acquisition instruction weekly.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year with Language** | **French** | **Spanish** |
| **1** | Beginning French | Beginning Spanish |
| **2** | French 1 | Spanish 1 |
| **3** | French 2 | Spanish 2 |

**Mother Tongue Support**

The mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of the students at Largo Middle School 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. Students are encouraged to share their language knowledge and culture with the school community through school-wide special events. 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.

One third of the faculty members at Largo Middle School hold a certification in teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) from the State of Florida or are endorsed in ESOL. The goal of the ESOL program is to encourage fluent language acquisition using state-recommended standards.

The media center supports the various languages taught in school and spoken at home. There are more than 150 books written in Spanish and French ranging from fiction and nonfiction books to picture books and support books for learning English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Arabic, Hebrew, Native American, and sign language. These books cover a wide range of interests and reading levels. In addition, the media center is starting a new Mother Tongue Collection in which parents are encouraged to donate books from their native countries. These books will represent the vast range of cultures from which our students come. The media center has a large amount of nonfiction books about countries and cultures from all over the world. The media specialist works closely with teachers, students, parents, and the school administration to ensure that any support materials that are necessary for the development of language are available. The media specialist holds orientations for teachers and students so that they can effectively access the many resources that are available to the school.

**Positions that Support Language Instruction**

| **Position** | **How staff supports language instruction** |
| --- | --- |
| **ESOL Teacher** | The English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers provides specific instruction to students who are learning English. |
| **Language & Literature Teachers** | Provide inquiry based instruction utilizing the key and related concepts in Language and Literature. |
| **Bilingual Assistants** | Work with students to ensure they understand expectations and instructions in classes using their mother tongue or other resources |
| **Language Acquisition Teachers** | Teach students how to read, write, speak, and listen in another language using various strategies |
| **Intensive Reading/ Reading Support Class Teachers** | Provide interventions to students who may need remediation with language development skills |
| **Literacy Coach** | Ensures staff members are supported when providing language instruction across the school |
| **Assistant Principal of Curriculum** | Oversees the appropriate scheduling of students based on language needs |
| **Media Specialist** | Provides students books and resources in various languages and supports language classes |
| **Data Management Technician** | Facilitates families entering our school with the Home Language Survey to ensure students receive any necessary language supports |

**Roles and Responsibilities that Support Language Instruction**

| **Staff** | **Parents/Guardians** | **Students** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Staff will ensure that reading, writing, speaking, and listening takes place in all content areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate; * Staff will employ a variety of practices and strategies when planning for instruction and provide meaningful feedback * Staff will utilize vocabulary-building techniques, including academic vocabulary, whenever appropriate and model correct usage of written and oral language conventions * Staff will model correct language usage in conversation, while being sensitive of students’ cultural background and mother tongue; * Staff will plan activities that help promote language development utilizing the IB approaches to learning * Staff members will provide assessments to detail student progress using IB criteria and Florida State Standards and Benchmarks * Translated materials and a translator will be available when needed | * Parents will emphasize the importance of language skills * By monitoring student progress on assessments, parents will stayed updated on student’s language development * Parents will use Focus portal, agendas, and teacher communication to understand how students are working on reading, writing, speaking, and listening in all their courses * Families will encourage students to read and write at home and speak to them about concepts they are learning about * Parents will help students acquire reading material for pleasure when possible * When learning a new language, parents provide students opportunities to practice the new language(s) | * Students will complete coursework to the best of their abilities * Students will have access to an independent reading book to read whenever possible * Students will reflect on their language development progress in both their Language and Literature courses and Language Acquisition classes * Students will be open-minded when learning about other cultures and the languages they speak * Students will practice self-management and organization skills by utilizing resources provided to them such as dictionaries, word wall, and sentence frames |

**Example Accommodations and Programs Available to Support Language Instruction**

* Dictionary in Mother Tongue
* Intensive Reading and Reading Skills Classes
* Language Development Classes
* Translated Directions
* Extended Time
* Chunking of texts and assignments
* Use of visuals
* Graphic organizers
* Extended Learning Program (ELP)
* Small group testing
* IEP and 504 plans
* Talking Points – translation app

**Intensive Reading**

Students who have scored at level 1 or 2 on the reading portion of the FSA Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) have been assigned to an Intensive Reading class, which is in addition to their Language and Literature class. The intensive reading class is deliberately kept small, 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 course uses iReady curriculum which employs text book, online, and multi-media resources to teach and reinforce a variety of critical reading skills.  The intensive reading course will be substituted for the Language Acquisition course to satisfy state law.  Upon a student’s demonstration of proficiency, the Language Acquisition course will be reinstated on the student’s schedule as learning a second language is paramount to globally minded thinkers.