

# **Lexington Middle School**

*An International Baccalaureate Candidate Program*

***INSPIRE PREPARE EMPOWER***



## **Language Policy**

**2016-2017**

## **School Language Philosophy**

At Lexington Middle School, our mission is to inspire, prepare, and empower students to make their world a better place. Reaching this goal begins with language skills, the foundation of learning. To be successful now and in the future, students must be able to use reading, writing, speaking, and listening in ways that are appropriate for various purposes and audiences.

Our inquiry-based curriculum provides students with engaging opportunities to learn and practice their language skills. All LMS teachers are language teachers, providing literacy instruction and support in context so that students develop and apply literacy skills that are relevant not just to specific content areas but to the world at large. Such transfer of language skills both supports and is supported by the IB Approaches to Learning (ATL) and Learner Traits that are essential components of our curriculum and school culture.

## **School Language Profile**

English is the language of instruction in seven of the eight core classes:

- Arts
- Design
- English Language Arts (Language and Literature)
- Math
- Physical and Health Education
- Science
- Social Studies

In World Language (Language Acquisition) courses, instruction is delivered in the language of the course. Lexington Middle offers the following World Language Courses:

- French
- German
- Latin
- Spanish

## **Language Courses**

Our curriculum offers engagement with diverse ideas and perspectives so that students develop a better understanding of various cultures

including their own. Accordingly, students are expected to become proficient in their own language and a second language.

In English Language Arts (ELA) courses, students develop their literacy skills in English through a variety of engagements with diverse texts. Students read fiction and non-fiction on historical and modern topics written by authors from different cultures and time periods. Writing within these classes is in response to texts and includes critique of authors' use of information and word choice to convey ideas. Within these parameters, student choice in reading and writing materials, topics, and genres is accommodated as often as possible. Small group and whole group discussions in which students practice oral communication and body language support the acquisition and development of reading and writing skills. These varied application opportunities enable students to refine current literacy skills and develop new ones.

Similarly, World Language courses provide instruction in oral and written communication by immersing students in real-life contexts and scenarios. Students read texts in a variety of genres and respond to these texts through written and oral communication. Partner, small group, and whole group discussions support students' development of verbal communication and body language. Development of language skills in World Language class includes attention to culture. In addition to becoming literate in written and verbal communication, students develop an understanding that while cultures are diverse, they also have elements that unify us globally.

### **Limited English Proficiency**

Students who are not native English speakers may qualify for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. English language learners (ELL) are identified through elementary school records and middle school enrollment forms. To determine the level of ESOL service needed, the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS), which includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing portions, is administered and the level of support identified. Students scoring four and below are scheduled for weekly instruction with the LMS ESOL teacher who provides on-site services that address students' needs academically and culturally. The ACCESS

tool is also used to monitor student progress. A score of five indicates that students are able to exit the weekly program and move into the monitoring phase. Monitoring is provided to students for two years after exiting the weekly support level and includes periodic conferences with the ESOL teacher along with grade monitoring.

### **School-wide Rules and Expectations for Language Use**

The LMS Academic Honesty Policy and the LMS Language Policy work in conjunction to provide a solid structure for language use and development. The LMS Academic Honesty Policy explains that language expresses the ideas of others and that proper documentation is expected when students use those ideas in their own work.

Through ELA classes in all grades, students are taught proper citation practices including bibliographic styles. To further support this learning, eighth grade students use the Big6 research method to structure the inquiry process including source citation during their community project. As the LMS Academic Honesty Policy and LMS Language Policy move toward full implementation, teachers in all subject areas will expect students to properly cite and document sources using the MLA bibliographic style.

### **Media Center**

The LMS media center provides access to multiple language resources for students and teachers. One database used school-wide is DISCUS; several resources in DISCUS provide translations of the articles and other materials found on their sites. In addition, fiction and nonfiction books are available in all modern languages taught on our campus. Several books in Latin are also available. Our media specialist also supports the language-learning needs of our school through her digital modules and face-to-face lessons in the Big6 research model. In addition, she sponsors a student book club during the school year, promotes community reading contests, and maintains the LMS summer reading blog.

### **Extra-Curricular Cultural and Language Offerings**

Clubs and other opportunities that support the development of language skills and cultural understandings include the following:

- Book Club
- French Exchange Student Program

- Global Artisans Club
- International Peace Day
- Junior Classic League
- Junior Debate Club
- Mock Trial
- Musical Theatre productions
- Spring International Arts Festival
- Student Council

### **Other Resources and Supports**

School-wide professional development goals are aligned to literacy development and provide teachers with strategies to support language learning across content areas. Additionally, graduate courses in content-area reading and writing are offered year-round by the district for a nominal fee. Also offered are graduate courses for teachers who wish to develop their own second language skills so that they are better able to communicate with students and parents who are not native English speakers.

### **Language Policy Committee**

The LMS Language Policy Committee consists of several members of the LMS community including the media specialist, one World Language teacher, one ELA teacher, one science teacher, the Assistant Principal for Instruction (API), and the school principal. Each member offers skills and insights that support development and implementation of our language policy. Both the WL teacher and the API learned English as a second language; the principal is a native English speaker who became fluent in a second language. Their unique experiences as second language learners allow them to provide the learner's perspective to the language policy. In addition, the media specialist, science teacher, and ELA teacher are working toward the addition of a reading teacher endorsement to their teaching certificate; included in the coursework is a class that focuses on literacy acquisition. As the school language policy is implemented, this committee will seek feedback and make adjustments as needed to the policy.

