

Language Policy

Philosophy and School Language Profile

Hamilton Middle School's greatest strength is its voluminous diversity. Students and staff at Hamilton speak over 30 languages and represent six of the seven continents of the world. Our English Language Learner (ELL) population hovers around forty percent of our enrollment, growing each year. As holistic educators, we value the strengths that accompany biliteracy and strive to promote that among all students.

The diversity of language at Hamilton is honored through the multiple modes of communication used outside of the classroom with the greater school community. Community communication is delivered in English, Spanish, and Arabic and we have district central office support in offering translation services.

Hamilton Middle School offers Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 Spanish and French as subject requirements. Additionally, we have an entire team devoted to English Language Development (ELD) comprising of a Senior Team Lead, two Language and Literature focused ELD teachers, and one Math focused ELD teacher.

Language Practices

Across all Subject Groups:

- All staff are English Language Acquisition (ELA) certified through district required classes. This coursework is district provided and mandatory completion of the ELA certification, comprising of twelve credit hours, is monitored by the district.
- Educators complete daily lesson guides and unit plans with backwards planned differentiation. Posting key vocabulary in multiple languages, providing home language scaffolds, and offering high, medium, and low supports for various language levels are required by both Hamilton Middle School and Denver Public Schools.
- Denver Public Schools is under a federal mandate with court monitored visits to ensure that students are given access to grade-level content knowledge regardless of language level in our working language, English. Hamilton Middle School proudly complies with this mandate and our Instructional Services Advisory (ISA) committee has been recognized during these court monitoring visits for their exceptionality.
- All teachers are required to develop a daily Content Language Objective (CLO) with a language component. No matter the subject group, students are required to access these components of the CLO:
 - Content- What students will learn
 - Domain- Skill that is targeted
 - Supports- Differentiation by language proficiency level
 - Function- What students are doing with the language
- The required CLO is evaluated by our Senior Team Leads for each subject group weekly during collaborative planning time and the delivery is evaluated multiple times throughout the semester during scored teacher observations. Student achievement of the CLO is evaluated by required daily exit tickets.

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Language and Literature:

- Language and Literature educators are provided extensive guidance, resources, training and support to accomplish the essential work of student achievement in reading, writing, and communicating. Denver Public Schools, our district literacy partners, our network of team teachers and outside resources such as Accelerated Reader, Achieve 3000, and others are all partners in this important work.
- Academic language use is a requirement during all academic activities including passing period, recess, and after school activities. Teachers require complete sentence usage in verbal and written practice. Scholars are also encouraged to use their 1:1 Chromebook as a tool for grammar and spelling references when appropriate.
- Hamilton Middle School acknowledges and respects the individual professionalism and preferences of each subject instructor. Therefore, it is the preference of each teacher which mode of citation students use in a teacher's course. Acceptable citations for acknowledging original authorship include, but are not limited to: APA, Chicago Style, and MLA.

Language Acquisition:

- As Hamilton Middle School values intercultural communication and promotes developing students to become global thinkers, communicators, and inquirers, it is our goal that students acquire a second (or third, or fourth +) language. Students should advance through the Language Acquisition continuum phases and achieve higher levels of proficiency. They should be placed into the phase of the continuum corresponding to their predetermined proficiency level.
- Language Acquisition teachers will utilize various methods to achieve proficiency in all domains of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This includes instruction on vocabulary building and grammatical structures that are inherent to effective and accurate communication across all language domains. Through these methods, we aim to achieve the goals of learning language, learning through language, and learning about language.
- In their Language Acquisition courses, students will also experience cultural norms particular to the language of study. These cultural norms may be evident in the way speakers communicate (both verbally and non-verbally), as well as specific to learning about, debating, and comparing the products, perspectives, and practices found in the cultures where the target language is spoken.
- The shared goal in each Language Acquisition course is to provide students with the opportunity to improve competencies in each of the 5 Cs of language instruction: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.
- Students will progress through their Language Acquisition coursework by remaining in the same language of study for their entire tenure at Hamilton Middle School and will be given the option to choose which language to study prior to enrollment. Language Acquisition classes will be offered on a year-long basis to fulfill MYP coursework requirements.

Further Considerations

As we strive to support students holistically, legal requirements surrounding English Language Learners, as well as achieving high levels of support, may warrant substitution for coursework requirements. All students will experience inquiry-driven units in their courses regardless of the English Language Development requirement or general education requirement nature of their courses.

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Policy Maintenance

- The MYP Committee will review and make any necessary revisions each spring in preparation for the coming school year.
- Upon revision, the policy will be presented to Hamilton's School Leadership Team and Collaborative School Committee for approval.
- The policy will be posted on hamilton.dpsk12.org and will be distributed to students, parents, and staff at the beginning of each school year.

Sources

MYP: from Principles into Practice. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014.

Policy Translations:

Arabic Translation: [السياسة اللغوية bit.ly/LPArabic](http://bit.ly/LPArabic)

Spanish Translation: [Normas sobre el idioma bit.ly/LPSpanish](http://bit.ly/LPSpanish)