

Central High School Language Policy

Philosophy

Language is the key to precise communication and is inextricably linked to learning and understanding. The linguistic and cultural framework of language affects a student's perspective and understanding of concepts. Language, in all its forms, enables interpersonal and intrapersonal connections that lead to lifelong learning.

We believe that:

- All teachers are language teachers.
- Language is a primary means of learning and communicating.
- Language acquisition is to be promoted as a partnership between all members of our community including parents, students, teachers and staff.
- First languages help form cultural and personal identity and should be respected.
- The shared experience of learning language creates cohesion among students from diverse backgrounds and promotes international-mindedness.
- Learning world languages is an integral part of becoming a global citizen.

The study of one's own language and other languages amplifies one's ability to explore and understand the world and all its disciplines. Language study, especially that including authentic literature, allows students to better understand different cultures and perspectives, opening the door for the genuine awareness and appreciation of diversity.

Due to language's profound link to learning, all teachers need to utilize language to empower their instruction and their students. By being intentional with their language, teachers are able to clarify concepts through precise communication. Concurrently, teachers are responsible to educate their students about how to communicate properly within their given disciplines.

School Language Profile

Language of Instruction

The primary language of instruction at Central High School is English. Professional development emphasizes reading and writing across the curriculum. Therefore, in all classes, students are developing their literacy and overall proficiency with the primary/target language.

Graduation Requirements in English Language Arts

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires that students earn four credits of English in order to graduate. In English classes, students are prompted to think critically about characters, setting, theme, purpose, and point of view by considering the cultural and historical context of the work. Therefore, students are able to connect literature to social and personal development. Student writing assignments include analytical, persuasive, informative, and expository essays in which students must focus on the organization and clear communication of thoughts and arguments. Students are also called upon to present ideas orally in both the presentational and conversational setting. This requires students to present and defend their own ideas while considering others' ideas in order to reach conclusions collaboratively regarding the literature.

In addition, students can choose to enhance their proficiency with the English language through a variety of elective courses including: speech and debate, broadcast media, theatre, and journalism.

Accommodations for Working Language Learning

Accommodations are provided to those students identified to have language-related learning disabilities. Services are provided to students who have educationally identified impairments of speech (articulation) or the cognitive processing of language. Students needing special education services are identified by using assessments that comply with state requirements. Students qualify for services based on discrepancies between cognitive ability and performance that have a significant impact on the student's ability to access the curriculum. State requirements and assessments can be found on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website (www.dese.gov).

The local and national requirements regarding meeting the needs of all students with disabilities are based on the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). An IEP (Individual Education Plan) team consisting of regular education teachers, special education teachers, parents, students, and other qualified professionals determines the accommodations, modifications, and related services necessary for the student to access a free and appropriate public education. Such accommodations commonly include (but are not limited to) extended time for oral or written presentations and therapies provided by a certified speech and language pathologist.

Teachers are regularly prompted to reflect on student data and collaborate regarding remediation. Such remediation includes differentiated instruction that includes but is not limited to accommodations related to language. Teachers are expected to ensure that students understand all necessary instructions and media and to guide students in the development of written/oral components appropriate to their level of language proficiency.

Language Acquisition Programs

Central High School has comprehensive French and Spanish programs available to all students within the school. Each program offers approximately ten different courses to accommodate students at their given levels of proficiency. All courses integrate all communicative skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and cultural understanding) and relate linguistic concepts to real-world themes and tasks. This curriculum is designed to align with ACTFL's proficiency guidelines, IB language development phases, DP Language B objectives, and district-mandated instructional goals. Central High School administrators and counselors accommodate the programs with requested resources and promote the program throughout the scheduling process. The library further supports language acquisition by maintaining a collection of French and Spanish literature. Students with particular interest in their target language/culture can also amplify their study with extracurricular clubs sponsored by department faculty, including honor societies for French and Spanish students.

IB Expectations for Language Acquisition

Students enrolled in the IB Diploma Program (IBD) are required to complete a prescribed series of honors courses that lead to completion of the Diploma Program Standard Level (SL) or Higher Level (HL) course in Spanish or French. Students electing to enroll in individual IB courses or those participating in the IB Career-Related Program (IBC) also have access to this series of courses based on interest and having met prerequisites. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their students' course selection process and are required to sign/approve their students' DP/CP two year course of study.

Students enrolled in the IB Career-Related Program (IBC) are presented with various options to complete the 50 required hours of language development. These options include both lecture and online courses offered through the school district and local universities. IBC students complete the language development portfolio as part of their Personal and Professional Skills (PPS) course. The portfolios are distributed for evaluation to

language-appropriate instructors and are evaluated per a rubric focused on evidence of growth in each communicative skill/objective.

All students enrolled in 9th and 10th grades at Central High School are highly encouraged to pursue learning of an additional language as a part of the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP). These options include both seated and online courses offered through the school district.

Accommodations for English Language Learners

Central High School also provides English Learner (EL) services to 9th-12th grade students who speak a primary language other than English. The program typically services students representing approximately twenty-five different first languages. A student's enrollment in the English Language Development (ELD) program is based upon his/her English proficiency as indicated by the ACCESS test in compliance with the WIDA consortium and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Detailed identification procedures can be accessed at

<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/compliance/ell-special-education> or
<http://www.springfieldpublicschools.org/pages/SPSMO/About/Services/E-M/ELL>.

Based on ACCESS results, English Learners receive individualized language plans that include accommodations addressing the four main communicative skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Some ELs are enrolled in sheltered ELA courses that develop English proficiency and academic vocabulary through a modified and scaffolded version of the district's ELA curriculum. Newcomers (ELs who have been in the country fewer than 12 months) also have access to ELD courses where they develop their English proficiency, learn school procedures, and receive support in other ways appropriate to their ILP and individual situation. In addition, some ELs may receive accommodations such as extended time and assistance on tests, especially those with an extensive reading component.

Support for First Languages Other than English

Instruction of English Learners is modified with consideration to their ILPs and individual situations. Supplementary materials in a student's first language may be an appropriate modification in some situations. For students to be able to research in their first language, the Central High School library maintains subscriptions to multiple databases, most of which maintain collections of articles both originally written in and translated to various languages. In addition, the library has developed a collection of novels and other works written in or translated to the first language most commonly represented in our student body. These resources are available to students for both academic and recreational use.

Native Spanish and French speakers are also welcome to take upper level courses in those languages to improve their literacy and overall proficiency with the language. For many EL students, this provides a class in which they can simultaneously learn and serve as classroom experts. They are able to enrich the learning experience of other students by sharing their own cultural and linguistic experience as they expand their own understanding to include cultural perspectives and vocabulary from other countries/dialects. When funding and enrollment allow, we create a separate section of Spanish for native/heritage speakers that more specifically focuses on their particular learning needs.

IB Diploma Program or IB Career-Related Program students who speak a first language other than English, Spanish, or French are allowed to enroll in a School Supported Self Taught Language A. Students who choose this option work independently with support from language A and language B instructors. This support ensures that students adhere to IB requirements regarding structure, content, pacing, and assessment. Per IB guidelines, these students connect with an educated native speaker so that they have guidance as they develop their literacy with the first language.

Recognition of Achievement in the Area of Language Development

Students who demonstrate significant proficiency in at least two languages can qualify for the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy. Said proficiency can be evidenced by English language arts end of course exams, ACT scores, ACCESS test results (for EL students), IB/AP exam results, the AAPPL test, or another exam that measures proficiency in both written and verbal contexts. Requirements for second language acquisition align with the intermediate-mid proficiency per ACTFL proficiency guidelines (IB Language Acquisition Phase 4). Students are encouraged to strive for the seal regardless of their first language.

Central High School also awards district sponsored Seals of Excellence and the Bowman Scholarship to students who have demonstrated substantial study and interest in the acquisition of a second language.

Collective Commitments

Considering Central High School's language philosophy and profile, educators will:

- be intentional with our use of oral and written language in the classroom to facilitate clear and accurate communication.
- help students develop appropriate communication skills within each subject area.
- recognize a language's connection to every level of knowledge and understanding.
- assist any/all students who have language-related learning difficulties.
- allow speakers of languages other than English to integrate their own linguistic/cultural backgrounds into the classroom whenever appropriate for learning objectives.
- encourage students to utilize foreign language study as a way to communicate and think as global citizens.
- teach students to appropriately use technological resources to augment and facilitate both language acquisition and first language support.

Document Distribution and Revision

This policy is to be printed in the Central High School IB Program Handbook that is available to parents, students, and staff through the Central High School website (<https://www.sps.org/Page/4280>). In addition, this policy should be referenced in course syllabi as appropriate. Staff and other stakeholders may suggest revisions at any time and should submit such suggestions to the IB program coordinator(s). Any revisions will then be written and reviewed annually by the writing committee or those holding equivalent positions. Whether or not suggestions have been submitted, the document will be reviewed annually.

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