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**School language philosophy**

Learning to communicate in a variety of ways and in more than one language is an essential part of responsible global citizenship. Language allows students to connect and collaborate with others and to understand diverse perspectives. Language fluency allows for students to articulate deeper conceptual understandings, and display critical and creative thinking that is central to the IB. Facility with language also helps students navigate the academic and social challenges of adolescence.

Staff members at Julius West Middle School and Richard Montgomery High School are committed to language instruction across all content areas. We acknowledge that all teachers play a critical role in students learning both through and about language using the particular lens of their subject groups. As principled and purposeful communicators, we all play a part in modeling language use and development.

**School and community language profile**

As schools situated in an internationally diverse community, Richard Montgomery and Julius West seek to support multilingual learning that provides access to language development in a range of taught and home / personal languages. The schools' primary language of instruction and communication is English. The most common language spoken at home other than English is Spanish. Within the community, significant numbers of students speak Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, French, Brazilian Portuguese, Arabic, Amharic, Korean and Urdu.

Where feasible, bilingual communication is provided to students and families in both English and Spanish. In addition, all District communication is provided using students' designated language of communication - parents can adjust the language of communication in ParentVue. The digital communications are available in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Amharic. The schools use the Language Line communication tool to access realtime translation services when needed to contact families and guardians regarding student

needs. In addition, both schools employ a significant number of school staff members with multilingual capabilities who can engage families in their home languages.

### **School support of multilingual and multiliterate development**

**Literacy** is a critical focus area for our educational program. All teachers are considered teachers of language. Therefore, they explicitly teach vocabulary strategies, integrate varied Command Terms into objectives, lessons and documents, and structure frequent opportunities for student discourse. Teachers engage in regular professional development to enhance literacy instruction. Each school develops a yearlong professional development action plan with a literacy sub-focus, highlighting training goals, action steps, and monitoring checkpoints.

Proficiency in a world language, along with an understanding of other cultures, will help students become active participants in an increasingly diverse and globalized community. All students are encouraged to take a **Language Acquisition** course starting from the first year of the programme and continuing throughout the programme to develop language fluency. Students may take courses in Chinese, French, or Spanish. Students who are native Spanish speakers may take a Spanish course designed to enhance their reading and writing skills in the target language. All language courses are taught 90% or higher in the target language in order to build listening and speaking fluency.

All students are also enrolled in a **Language and Literature** course to learn how to interpret varied texts and to communicate ideas clearly in speaking and writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. This course integrates the processes of Language Arts: reading, writing, listening, speaking, presenting, and viewing. The goal of the secondary Language and Literature program is “to create literate, thoughtful communicators, capable of controlling language effectively as they negotiate an increasingly complex and information-rich world.” Students read a variety of novels, poetry, short stories, plays, non-fiction works, and visual texts, and complete common tasks such as essays, creative works, and multimedia presentations, which allow them opportunities to demonstrate and deepen their learning.

### **Support for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs)**

Students whose home or personal language is not English participate in our **English Language Development (ELD)** program, which focuses on developing fluency in speaking, reading, and writing in English. Upon arrival in MCPS, students are evaluated for language proficiency using the WIDA ACCESS assessment. This assessment determines the student’s proficiency level, which is re-evaluated annually.

Teachers use assessment data along with academic performance to determine appropriate instructional placement and eligibility for exit. Emergent Multilingual Learners are placed in as many content area classes as possible in order to encourage linguistic and social development. Emergent Multilingual Learners receive support in their mainstream classes through differentiation, accommodations, and dedicated support staffing on a co-teaching model. The schools’ Departments of Emergent Learner & Multilingual Education (DELME) are primarily responsible for the support and placement of students within the program.

Within the larger ELD program, Richard Montgomery hosts a program in Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) which exists to provide educational support to students with little or no formal educational history or a significant disruption in their educational pathway. Information and qualifications for access to this program [are described here](#). Students in the METS program may receive aspects of MYP instruction in some of their classes. Exceptions to MYP requirements, where appropriate, are governed under the school's [Inclusive Education Policy](#).

### **Support for home/personal language development**

In addition to ensuring students' language development in English, the schools support students' development and maintenance of home and personal languages by offering language acquisition courses that are designed to meet their unique needs. The schools offer three levels of a Spanish for Spanish Speakers course for students whose native language is Spanish. Upon completing this course, students may transition into Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture, or into the Diploma Programme language courses for 11th and 12th graders. The option to pursue a bilingual IB diploma is available in Spanish and French. Students who enter the partnership through the French language immersion program at Maryvale Elementary School are permitted to take advanced language courses at Richard Montgomery High School in order to ensure they progress in their language studies.

In the event that an MYP student who has initially selected to study a language other than their personal or home language, but would later like to switch to studying their home language at school, this will be permitted to the extent possible within the course offerings at the school. For example, a student whose home language is French and decides in year 1 to pursue Chinese, but later wishes to pursue French as their language of study may be permitted to do so with the guidance of the World Languages Resource Teacher. The World Languages Resource teacher will administer a placement assessment to determine the most appropriate placement for the student.

The schools' media centers maintain a diverse collection of texts and online resources to meet the needs of the range of home and personal languages in the school community. Language and culture clubs at both schools additionally support students' home and personal language practices. These include:

- At Richard Montgomery High School: Chicas Charlando, Bilingual and Biliterate Spanish Club, National Spanish Honor Society, Chinese National Honor Society, La Société Honoraire de Français, Monsoon (South Asian Student Cultural Magazine)
- At Julius West Middle School: La Familia, LEAD

### **Inclusion and equity of access to multilingual instruction**

In order to ensure that as many students as possible pursue the language options available in the schools, school counselors strongly encourage an appropriate language acquisition placement for all students. Where students are recommended for a support or response to intervention that makes placement in a language acquisition course impossible, the

In the event that a student's educational management team (EMT) indicates that a language acquisition placement is inappropriate to the student's educational needs and goals, that assessment will be followed and revisited along with the student's other educational program goals.

In addition to the schools' three continuum languages, Richard Montgomery also offers two elective languages (Latin and American Sign Language) which students may pursue in addition to their other selected language acquisition course. Where these are considered educationally appropriate for students with particular educational needs, these remain an alternative option for students in years 4 and 5 of the MYP and for 11th and 12th graders outside the Diploma Programme.

## **Structure and support of language instruction in the Diploma Programme**

### **Language A Instruction**

English is the primary language of instruction at Richard Montgomery High School. In the Diploma Programme, English A (Literature and Language & Literature) is offered as an HL (higher level) course. In addition to English language instruction, reading and writing is supported across the content areas, as the responsibility of all teachers is to improve students' ability to communicate both orally and in writing.

### **Language Acquisition**

The goal of the RMHS world language program is to educate students in a language and culture in order to make them knowledgeable and active members of a global society. Students learn to use world languages for meaningful communication in both spoken and written form. The world language program emphasizes language as it is used in real-life situations. Through world language study, students develop sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic heritage of other groups, understand their influence on U.S. culture, and become prepared to participate in a society characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity.

Students in the IB DP at RMHS complete one or more years of a second language. We offer Chinese, French and Spanish classes for all grade levels. RMHS offers IB Chinese, French, and Spanish for the DP at both standard level (SL) and higher level (HL). Students testing at standard level may test in year 1 of the DP as anticipated candidates assuming that they have reached an appropriate level of proficiency in their target language.

### **Procedures for the publication and review of this policy**

This policy was last reviewed and revised in fall 2022, and is published on the school website. Changes to the policy are made on an as-needed basis as changes occur in the school's practices and procedures..