

# Newport Mill Middle School

## Language Policy



### Philosophy

At Newport Mill Middle School, we believe that language development is the backbone to becoming knowledgeable learners, thinkers, and communicators. All teachers at Newport Mill are teachers of language, whether it is English, Spanish, French, or ESL. We believe that through language instruction we increase intercultural awareness and understanding. The Newport Mill community actively embraces the IB Learner Profile and Interdisciplinary Writing Assessments as integral components of teaching and learning language.

### School Language Profiles

#### Language of Instruction

The primary language of instruction at Newport Mill Middle School is English. Through schoolwide direct instruction, students develop the fluency and literacy skills necessary to ensure their ability to communicate effectively.

#### Additional Languages

Newport Mill offers second language instruction in the following languages recognized by the MYP: French, Spanish, and ESL.

### English/Language Arts

The English/Language Arts program addresses the five processes of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. These processes, which represent the fundamental core of literacy, are the tools that enable students to communicate. The five processes influence one another, and are therefore, integrated into meaningful and authentic teaching and learning situations. Speaking and listening form the bridge to reading and writing.

Language and literature represent the content and frame the processes of the English/Language Arts program. "Language is a system of sounds, vocabulary, syntax, and conventions of use" (Maryland English Language Arts Content Standards). Language is most effectively learned and assessed through authentic engagements with reading, writing, and speaking. Literature involves both poetry and prose. Prose also includes non-fiction, the main purpose of which is to provide factual information.

An effective, balanced instructional program supports the student in the development of reading and writing along a continuum of learning. Skills and strategies are revisited at many grade levels with increasingly complex content of learning and text. Instruction through the components of balanced literacy ensures that a comprehensive English/Language Arts program is implemented on a daily basis for students. Effective instruction in literacy utilizes the explicit instructional design of model, coach, and apply. The global release of teacher support fosters independent learners.

Balanced Literacy includes:

- reading instruction
- word study

- independent reading
- writing instruction
- independent writing

Literature is an integral part of the curriculum. Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written text. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information.

Reading is based upon five principles:

- Reading is a constructive process
- Reading must be fluent
- Reading must be strategic
- Reading requires motivation
- Reading is a continuously developing process

Reading involves the interrelatedness of the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It is an interactive process in which students construct and extend meaning from life's experiences, language, print, and non-print materials. Students read for literary experiences, to gain information, and to perform tasks. This supports the continuous development of the student.

Writing is a significant activity in MYP classes of all ages. Writing is a process of communicating meaning. "When composing, the learner generates ideas, reviews, makes adjustments, revises, and considers changes based on established and evolving criteria" (Maryland Content Standards).

- Writing is a process of making thinking visible.
- Writing is a process of constructing meaning through language and expression.
- Writing must be fluent and automatic.
- Writing must be strategic.
- Writing requires motivation.

## **Second Language Acquisition**

The goal of our foreign 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 foreign languages for meaningful communication in both spoken and written form. The foreign language program emphasizes language as it is used in real-life situations that students are most likely to encounter. Through foreign 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. At Newport Mill, students are required to take a Language Acquisition class every year as part of their schedule, unless they are recommended for a Reading or Math intervention class.

## **ESOL**

The goal of the ESOL program is to help the English Language Learners (ELLs) to be fluent in English and function linguistically and culturally in the Montgomery County Public Schools and in the mainstream of American society. Language Assessment System (LAS) is administered to students who have been identified as potential ESOL students. This assessment is used to determine the student's level of English

proficiency. This also guides our school in determining students who should receive ESOL services. The education of the ELLs is a responsibility shared by the ESOL teacher, the classroom teacher, all other appropriate MCPS staff, as well as the ELL student.

The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs presents an integrated approach of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This means that while the emphasis of the lesson may be on one particular skill for a while, the other skills need to be incorporated to complete the lesson.

### **Language Practices**

1. All teachers will create an environment to foster a variety of means of communication. Teachers will encourage students to demonstrate open dialogue in all interactions to understand the world through different lenses in specific disciplines. Teachers will model language through everyday use and directly teach vocabulary through each unit of inquiry.
2. The MYP Units will include the opportunity for personal choice and uninterrupted time for exploring multiple systems of communication in reading, writing, and mathematics. There will be opportunities for students to use language for making personal connections and exploring tensions and compelling issues. Teachers will plan effective, relevant and significant engagement to improve proficiency in all forms of language.
3. Students **will learn language** by the “doing” of language; speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students **will learn through language** as they discuss and reflect on what it is they are learning. Students **will learn about language** as they explore how language functions and the conventions that support communication in all subject areas.
4. Students will be given the opportunity to develop as critical thinkers, making connections and responding to tensions and issues they encounter. Teachers will evaluate the skills students have and the skills they need in order to become more proficient and independent learners.
5. Teachers will encourage a willingness to take language risks in different group settings. Teachers will encourage students to read for meaning, to make connections and find current issues to explore. Teachers will provide contextual direct instruction and opportunities to apply and practice language in new situations.
6. The media center has a wide-range of foreign language titles to support language acquisition and many of our English Language Learners.

### **Review of the Language Policy**

This will be reviewed and updated annually by the Newport Mill Instructional Leadership Team.