

# Discovery Middle School

## Language Policy

### **Philosophy**

All teachers at Discovery Middle School are language teachers as the study of language is the foundation for all learning. Language allows students to become learners through communicating, listening, comprehending, and sharing information. The study of a second language provides students the opportunity to develop international understanding, compassion, and respect.

### **Language of Instruction (Language A)**

The language of instruction at Discovery Middle School is English as the majority (58.4%) of our students speak English as their primary language.

### **Language A Resources**

Our building staffs a Literacy Facilitator to assist teachers of all subject areas in implementing reading, writing, listening and speaking strategies into the content areas. The Literacy Facilitator is available to meet with subject areas during Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. Another district resource is *Reading Through the Content Areas*. This resource offers lessons and strategies for all content areas when implementing literacy.

### **Second Language Course Offerings (Language B)**

All students at Discovery take Spanish as a second language. Spanish is a yearlong course. We offer three levels of Spanish: year 1, year 2 and year 3 along with offering heritage classes for our native Spanish speakers at each of those levels. Heritage 1 focuses on basic literacy, as well as the culture of Latin America. Heritage 2 focuses on the history of Mexico and Spain and develops more advanced communication skills. We have three full time Spanish teachers to fulfill these requirements.

When students leave Discovery after taking all three years of Spanish, they are eligible for one high school credit for Spanish 1.

### **Waiving Language B**

Our number one priority is to meet the needs of all students. Some of our students do not participate in the Spanish course because they have other significant needs. Students who take an English intervention class do not take the Spanish course. Intervention classes are for those students who are not at grade level in reading. They include Literature Focus and Intensive Literature classes. These students take an intervention class in addition to their Language A class. Because this class takes another spot in their schedule, the students in an intervention do not take Spanish. Fortunately, the focus of the intervention classes is to help students meet grade level standards. Once students have

found success and consistently score at grade level, they no longer take the intervention class and instead move into a Spanish class.

Some IEP students and those students in the Structured Communication Classroom do not take Spanish because of specific needs within their IEP's.

### **English Language Learners**

Discovery has 74 students who are in the English Language Learner (ELL) program. Sixty of those students speak Spanish, 7 speak Chukese and 7 speak Russian.

In order to meet the needs of ELL students, our teachers have a variety of resources. There is a resource coordinator at the school level to assist teachers with locating resources. Each building also has a Literacy Facilitator to assist teachers in the classroom and help with classroom teaching strategies. All teachers receive sheltered instruction training which can also be used to assist ELL students. Teachers work to meet the needs of all students and modify assignments and curriculum as needed. ELL students who need reading intervention are enrolled in either Literacy Focus or Intensive Literacy.

### **Language Diversity**

Thirty-one percent of our student body speaks a language other than English in the home. Twenty-six percent of our students speak Spanish in the home. Russian is spoken by 1.7% and Chukese is spoken by 1.6% of students in the home. Vietnamese and Ukranian account for the other 1.7%.

### **Interpreters**

In order to help our non-English speaking parents get involved in their child's education, the district employs interpreters.

### **Parents' Assistance at Home**

Parents can assist their students as language learners in many ways. Encouraging children to read and write as much as possible will help the development of language. Reading books, newspapers or magazines and writing letters, shopping lists or to do lists are a great way for students to see the day-to-day importance of language.

Parents do not have to speak Spanish to assist their children in the study of a second language. Parents should demonstrate a willingness to learn and use Spanish along with a positive attitude towards learning other languages. It is not necessary to encourage the use of Spanish in a non-Spanish speaking home. Simply continue to model proper usage of the family's mother tongue and this modeling will help the students in their study of a new language.

### **Review and Update Plan**

This language policy will be reviewed every two year by the MYP Coordinator and the subject area/Area of Interaction leaders.