

Thomas Jefferson High School; Kilo Middle School; Totem Middle School

2012 Language Policy

The goal of our language program is to encourage all students to be competent and confident as they read, write, speak, and listen. Every teacher on our campus is a teacher of language, and we embrace the language diversity of our school community. Language learning should be transdisciplinary, authentic, inquiry based, and promote critical thinking through a variety of teaching tools and strategies. We know the mother-tongue language as well as learning more languages positively language affects intellectual growth and enhances a child's cognitive development. We recognize all languages as a form of communication in and outside of our classrooms.

Our communities believe that the study of language provides a powerful means by which one gains understanding of culture, perspective and communication. Additionally, we believe that:

- Language is a primary means of communicating and learning
- The acquisition of language is a life-long process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth.
- Proficiency earned in one language aids the students in acquiring competencies in other curricular areas.
- Language is an expression of culture and must be valued as an integral part of a student's identity.
- Language learning promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding.
- Teachers must strive to recognize the language needs of all students and work to serve these needs.
- Equity of access to IB courses is a fundamental right of all students.

Language A:

- The language of instruction at all three schools is English.
- The district power standards and learning targets have been aligned with the MYP Language A aims and objectives outlined in the MYP Language A Subject Guide.
- Teachers balance effective learning with opportunities for risk-taking and reflection.
- Courses emphasize trans-disciplinary themes explored through the various Areas of Interaction.
- Materials include a wide variety of texts, media and genres.

IB Language B Offerings

- Teachers balance effective learning with opportunities for risk-taking and reflection.
- Courses emphasize trans-disciplinary themes explored through the various Areas of Interaction.
- Materials include a wide variety of texts, media and genres.
- The district power standards and learning targets have been aligned with MYP Language B aims and objectives in the phases outlined.

Students begin Language B study with Spanish at grade 6 beginning with the 11-12 school years. Students will continue Language B Spanish through 10th grade. Students who enter our Middle Years Program in 9th grade have the opportunity to also choose from French or Japanese as their Language B.

English Language Learner Program: Our schools have a comprehensive, state-mandated support program for English Language Learners. Students are, upon arrival, tested and appropriately placed into three-tiered ELL program. Mainstreamed courses have teachers trained with 2nd language background strategies and students are supported by the ELL teachers. Students are tested annually to determine their exit from the program according to state guidelines.

Communication with Non-English Speaking Parents and Guardians: The Federal Way School District recognizes the value of effective and timely communication with parents and works to foster such communication. Newsletters are available in several languages. Professional development for teachers focuses on embracing cultural differences and celebrating personal identities within the school community. In the case of communicating with parents who do not speak English, the district / schools offer and contract with interpreters to provide phone call and conferencing assistance. Interpreters are available at all student led conferences and some highly attended parent events. Some district printed communications are available in our most common mother tongues (Russian, Spanish, and Korean). There is a conscious attempt to hire office personnel who can speak more than one language.

Mother Tongue Support:

Within our student population there are multilingual students, including those whose home language is a language other than English. Information regarding a student's home language is solicited each year in registration materials. That information is linked to the student's name in the data base that each teacher can access. All subject teachers are expected to promote students to use their mother tongue language to support their understanding of the subject content which will also nurture the development of their mother tongue language. Students are encouraged to pursue studies of their own cultural heritage and native language to enhance their cultural perspectives. In common areas, multiple languages are heard and accepted although English is the language of instruction. Included in our multilingual, multicultural staff are speakers of several languages, who are often called upon to assist when translators are needed for support of students, teachers and parents. Content area teachers have attended training for vocabulary and comprehension scaffolding for meeting the needs of second language learners. The media center offers student access to books, periodicals, and databases and other online reference sites so that students can research cultures and languages from around the world. There are also clubs that promote the celebration of the different cultures within our schools. These students perform at assemblies, speak at various community events, lead mentor programs for younger students and help enhance and broaden the international perspective.