



Louise R Johnson Middle School
School of International Studies



Language Policy

Philosophy

All teachers at Louise R. Johnson Middle School are language teachers. We believe that language is fundamental to all learning and instruction. It permeates all aspects of the school climate and the curriculum, including our school mission statement. At Louise R. Johnson Middle School, our mission is to inspire all students to achieve academic excellence, embrace global diversity and become lifelong learners. These tenets cannot be reached without effective language instruction. Language development is the core of our curriculum, whether it is the language of instruction, the mother tongue of the student, or any additional language. Our belief is that language learning equips students with a respect for and understanding of other cultures, including the many language groups and cultures that coexist within our school.

Language of Instruction

The language of instruction at Louise R. Johnson Middle School is English and is the language of the host country (The United States of America). English is taught to all students in 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades through the Language and Literature subject. The learning of English is promoted through the content and activities of

Language Acquisition

Louise R. Johnson Middle School is committed to equipping students with the skills necessary to develop fluency in at least one other language in addition to English. Our Language Acquisition courses are designed for this purpose. French and Spanish are the language of instruction in our Language Acquisition courses. Language Acquisition indicates that the language of study is not the student's mother tongue, nor has the student reached native or near native competency. During years one, two and three the students will be enrolled in Language Acquisition everyday throughout the entire school year.

Upon enrollment, students, along with their parents, will make an informed decision as to which language he or she will study. Course overviews, guidance staff, administration, and language acquisition instructors are available to parents to assist them in planning their children's language profile and development.

For students who enter from the Primary Years Program (PYP) and wish to advance their Language Acquisition studies, classroom instruction will be differentiated to meet his or her needs. Teachers will utilize activities based on multiple intelligences presented in a variety of formats. Students' interests will be stimulated while recognizing his or her learning styles and readiness skills. Moreover, the teacher will adapt the complexity of the task to the students' strengths and abilities by transmitting information in different ways using graphic organizers, audio /visual devices, and the integration of technology in the classroom. Students will be provided with multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate learning, through using language in spoken and written form and text.

English Language Learners (ELL)

The ELL program at Louise R. Johnson Middle School is designed to support those students whose mother tongue is not English. Students are evaluated upon entering the district at the school site to determine if a student is in need of and eligible for services. Training requirements for teachers are set forth by district and state mandates and are based on the subject area taught. Teachers are then responsible for providing the English Language Learner with the most appropriate accommodations to ensure he or she is successful in the classroom and that all material is presented in a manner that allows the student to express his or her knowledge of the subject.

Mother Tongue Support

Supporting the development of the mother tongue is imperative to the development of a child's cognitive skills. Studies show that a student with strong skills in the mother tongue acquires strong language skills in general, thus helping the student develop fluency and proficiency in the language of instruction (Cummins, 2006). Language is a part of a child's identity, therefore, recognizing and supporting the mother tongue and the culture of a child serves to provide the child with a positive outlook on both learning and his or her self-image.

At Louise R. Johnson Middle School, we have resources in place specifically designed to support the development of the mother tongue. The media center offers a variety of literature in the majority of the languages and cultures represented by our students. The students are encouraged to continue communicating in his or her mother tongue within the home and in social settings. Opportunities presented to the school for mother tongue development in the community are provided to families upon request.

Cummins, Jim. "Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why is it Important for Education?". 8 Feb 2006. www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/mother.htm

Language Integration

It is our belief that language is best taught in context. Students need an opportunity to interpret and use the specialized vocabulary found in each area of study. This is of particular importance with the use and interpretation of mathematical, scientific, and technological information. These areas not only have specialized vocabulary but also unique symbol systems. This learning cannot effectively take place isolated from language learning in a broad sense. For this reason Language and Literature standards are reflected in the tasks of each of the other seven subject groups and interdisciplinary connections and lessons are encouraged through meaningful associations developed by both teachers and students. Additionally, teachers are provided with ongoing opportunities for training and support with regards to integrating literacy into the content area through our monthly department and grade level meetings as well as our monthly professional learning community meetings/trainings.

Assessment

It is our belief that assessment shines a light on student achievement. It is used to guide instruction and learning experiences. By using assessment to guide our teaching, we create the desire in students to make meaningful connections to and between the curriculum content. For the direct assessment of language, our staff utilizes the MYP criteria found in the Language and Literature and Language Acquisition subject guides in our Language and Literature and Language Acquisition classrooms. Tasks for assessment are constructed under the guidelines of summative tasks for these subject groups. Internal standardization of tasks is achieved through a peer review process conducted by all Language and Literature and Language Acquisition instructors. The peer review process is utilized to assure the task meets all levels of the associated rubrics and that the assigned rubric scores for a given student are consistently rated effectively against all rubric indicators. Additionally, cross-curriculum and interdisciplinary standardization of tasks is developed through our professional learning communities. Our professional learning communities consists of instructors from diverse subject groups and are designed to develop professional conversations aimed at implementing the International Baccalaureate principles and practices to support high student achievement.

School-Wide Language Development Plan

Activities:	Person(s) Responsible:	Completion Date:	Resources Needed:
Implementation of school wide writing programs –My Smart Write	ELA Teachers	To be used all year	Collections online Time for PD
Writing across the curriculum	All teachers	Throughout the year	
Professional Learning on writing strategies	ELA Team Leader		
Collaboration within the Language Arts Department and with all other departments on writing strategies and use of rubrics	Instructional Team Leaders	Monthly ILT meetings	
Student writing workshop lead by ELA department.	ELA teachers	Throughout the year	
Professional Development for staff from our ELA Lead Teacher.	ELA lead teacher	TBD	
Student writing assessments utilizing the IB criterion	ELA Teachers	Throughout the year	
Analyzing – involves demonstrating an understanding of writer’s choice			
Organizing – involves organizing ideas and opinions using different forms of communication			
Producing Text – involves the production of written and spoken text focusing on the creative process and the connections between the writer and audience			
Using Language – provides the opportunity to develop, organize and express themselves			

Policy Review

The International Baccalaureate leadership team at Johnson Middle School annually reviews this language policy. Any changes or modifications that are made must then be brought up for discussion and agreement with the entire school community.