



## Language Policy

### I. PHILOSOPHY

- A. At Providence Hall Charter School (PHCS), we believe that language is the primary means of communicating and learning; therefore, all educators are language teachers. With this understanding PHCS strives to develop the qualities of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile in all classes and in the school community. The fundamental IB concepts are developed in all classes by providing opportunities for all students to further communication skills, establish intercultural understanding, and make connections for holistic learning.
- B. Each teacher has the responsibility to help students obtain knowledge, understanding, and the ability to communicate in their subject areas. To this end, PHCS provides professional development opportunities for all administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff to help facilitate language learning and development.

### II. SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROFILE

- A. The primary language of instruction and communication at PHCS and the surrounding community is English, and is taught as Language A in the junior high IB Middle Years Program (MYP) and at the high school in the IB Diploma Program (DP). Consequently, all classes, with the exception of Language B classes, are conducted in English.
- B. Spanish is taught as our Language B at the elementary through the IB Primary Years Program (PYP). Students are instructed in Spanish along with their classmates and are taught during the week at the appropriate grade level.
- C. At the junior high MYP level, Chinese is added as an option for their Language B. As a result of interest and enrollment in the high school, DP currently only offers Spanish. Students take benchmark tests administered by a qualified bilingual staff member, and are placed in a Language B class at the appropriate phase.
- D. At PHCS we believe that each student's cultural background and identity must be realized and respected and that the opportunity to learn a new language and continue to develop one's first language are equally important. We view both teachers and family as important resources to reinforce learning the language of instruction as well as maintaining mother tongue fluency.
- E. Student enrollment at PHCS is based on a lottery system; therefore, students from any nationality or language background can enter the school upon selection from the lottery. Currently our student enrollment is drawn mainly from the surrounding neighborhoods, which are largely middle class, white, and English speaking. As such, the percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) at our school is less than 1%.
  - 1. Our ELL learners are identified and leveled using the WIDA screening test (World Class Instructional Design and Assessment).
  - 2. Each year ELL students are re-tested and re-leveled based on their language proficiency.
  - 3. ELL students are then provided modified assignments and assessment tasks according to their language ability, and their instruction is scaffolded equal to their language ability.
  - 4. ELL students may receive similar accommodations to Special Needs students as described in our Special Needs and Inclusion Policy.



### III. LANGUAGE A INSTRUCTION

- A. For students to be lifelong learners and productive members of the global community, a basic understanding of communication is needed. Language A meets this need by guiding students to understand how to communicate through written and verbal language. Oral skills are also improved by the continued practice of listening and responding.
- B. Each student at the junior high and high school participates in Language A instruction for 80 minutes a class period on a block (A/B) schedule. This ensures that all receive the minimum of 50 hours of instruction in the MYP and 240 hours for the HL class over the two years.
- C. Junior High MYP
  - 1. Students will be exposed to a balance between language and literature as they develop skills and understanding through the study of a broad range of genres and world literature, as well as language learning in context.
  - 2. Students will write a minimum of one informational essay, one argumentative essay, one piece of creative writing, and one research paper as well as having numerous opportunities to speak publicly in presentation format and group discussions. IB Rubrics will be the basic grade scale on which each written assignment is assessed.
- D. High School DP
  - 1. Students will build upon the foundation gained in the MYP.
  - 2. Group 1 English courses strive to ensure the continuing development of a student's ability to express themselves in a variety of forms of language.
  - 3. All students are enrolled in the English A Language and Literature HL Course, fulfilling both DP and state graduation requirements.

### IV. LANGUAGE B INSTRUCTION

- A. As an IB school our objective is to further intercultural awareness and international mindedness. At PHCS we understand that language is vital in achieving this objective.
- B. The ability to communicate in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education and intercultural understanding.
- C. With this understanding, PHCS has chosen to offer
  - 1. Spanish as a second language taught at the elementary school,
  - 2. Spanish and Chinese as the second languages taught at the junior high.
  - 3. DP Spanish at the high school.
- D. By exploring these languages and cultures, students will start on their journey in taking their place in the human and global community. This exploration encompasses aspects spanning from grammatical concepts to cultural traditions and philosophies.
- E. Students at the elementary receive Spanish exposure instruction from Spanish instructors with their grade level peers for 60 minutes a week, totaling 35 hours per year.
- F. As the students advance through the junior high MYP and enter high school they are able to move through the three phases offered.
  - 1. Most 6<sup>th</sup> grade students enter and start the exploration of culture and language with Phase 1, by continuing their learning of basic vocabulary and phrases to help promote communication.
  - 2. Most 7<sup>th</sup> grade students move on to Phase 2, and continue their language learning and exploration of culture.



3. 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> grade students continue through Phases 1-6, depending on skill level, deepening their understanding and ability to interact with the language and culture.
- G. Students who enter the DP in 11<sup>th</sup> grade will be placed in the appropriate phase depending on previous experience with the language and will continue with either Spanish SL or Ab Initio course. Spanish instruction at high school meets the DP requirements of 150 hours for the SL course.

## V. MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT

- A. To promote an intercultural community within our school we welcome students from all cultural backgrounds and languages. All students are able to enter our enrollment lottery and foreign exchange students may also be admitted, based on our allotment of foreign exchange student positions received by the school from the Utah State Office of Education each year. Foreign exchange students get no preference from living with a PHCS family and sibling priority doesn't apply.
- B. As students with a mother tongue other than English study within our school we recognize the importance of supporting the student's mother tongue. At PHCS we do this through teacher support, media materials available in the mother tongue, and professional development opportunities for teachers to facilitate language growth.
- C. Students are provided access to materials and instruction that is appropriate to their language learning level as identified through WIDA testing.
- D. Our ELL students receive scaffolded instruction with an ELL certified teacher who also facilitates their accommodations or modifications on assignments depending on need.
- E. We acknowledge that language is central to learning as well as the development of both personal and cultural identity. Thus, every attempt will be made to support a student's mother tongue as well as developing proficiency with the English language.

## VI. ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE RESOURCES

- A. Every month PHCS receives magazines and books in Spanish, Chinese and English for students to read at their leisure. These resources are located in a prominent place within the library and attention is drawn to them by both signage and the librarian to help students' access and use them. Multiple copies are provided in the library, and can be taken to teachers' classrooms for use. Books are housed in the library continually.
- B. Some resources have been purchased in Spanish, French and Chinese, which are the Mother Tongues' that we currently support.
- C. Some resources, including translated works, textbooks and resources in the Mother Tongue are already available in our library for languages that we are currently instructing. A portion of the library budget is set aside every year to purchase new or additional resources for students who arrive at our school.
- D. We are looking to procure more resources in more languages.

## VII. POLICY USE AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually as our student body changes and as our needs with regards to language acquisition may change. This review will be led by the IBe Coordinators, Language teachers, ELL teachers, and any other subject teachers that wish to be involved in the review.