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**Fienberg – Fisher K- 8 Center**

**IB World School**

**PYP Language Policy**

**I. PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE AND BELIEFS**

1. **PHILOSOPHY**

Fienberg-Fisher K-8 Center recognizes that language in all its forms is the foundation to all learning. Language provides individuals with a voice and serves as a vehicle of expression. We believe that fostering a student’s mother tongue as well as the primary language of the school allows them to become better equipped to contend in our diverse world. In order to provide our students with complete immersion in our languages we consider our instructional and non-instructional staff members language teachers. It is through real experiences and teachings with native speakers that we will promote and develop language in our students.

1. **PURPOSE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY**

This language policy is an evolving document developed by staff members from various programs and backgrounds at our school. The policy was established in alignment with the standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Curriculum.

The intention of this policy is to provide guiding principles for the learning of language at FFK-8 Center. By way of this policy, we envision a school curriculum doused in authentic learning through a culturally rich and diverse environment. Our policy is a statement of agreement—one to which the staff and community of FFK-8 Center are committed to so we can achieve our mission of creating life-long learners.

1. **BELIEFS**

We believe in cultivating an appreciation of the power and diversity of language. Language is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and developing sensitivity to others. The acquisition of more than one language enhances ones personal growth and helps facilitate international –mindedness. As language, by its very nature, is integrated into all areas of the curriculum every teacher within the school is considered a language teacher. At FFK-8 Center we aim to develop students with the ability to think and express themselves confidently, clearly, creatively and proficiently in at least two languages.

**II. LANGUAGE PROFILE**

Our student body and staff is composed of multi-ethnic and multilingual individuals. Over 80% of our student body speaks a language other than English at home. They have over 10 different mother tongues and come from a wide range of countries. All of our administrative and teaching staff speaks English and the second language spoken by the majority of the staff is Spanish; some of our staff members also speak French 2, Haitian Creole 1, Hebrew 1, Portuguese 1, Turkish 1 and Italian 2.

**III. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers are required to attend several training a year in order to maintain themselves at the forefront of current educational trends. In order to provide the same expectations in regards to language, educators will be offered on-going training focused on integrated language instruction throughout the year. The English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator will ensure that staff receives on-going professional development opportunities and will monitor that strategies are successfully implemented.

**IV. LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

All students are required to study English as Language A at FFK-8 Center. However, for many of our students, English is a foreign language, over 80% of them speak Spanish. Therefore, in addition to learning Language A students also attend Spanish classes. We believe that developing a child’s mother tongue can accelerate the rate of English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem, and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness throughout the school and community.

1. **ENGLISH**

In each level of the school, students study English language and literature. When students begin their educational career at FFK-8 Center they begin by studying English as their primary language of instruction. Students who enroll with little to no exposure to the English language usually qualify for our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program.

1. **SPANISH**

Students at FFK-8 Center can attend one of two kinds of Spanish classes. The first ‘Spanish S’, is geared towards students who speak Spanish at home. ‘Spanish S’ classes maintain oral fluency while making their students literate in Spanish. The second kind of Spanish Class, ‘Spanish SL’, is geared at non-native Spanish speakers. ‘Spanish SL” instructors establish communicative oral fluency first and then work on reading and writing. Both the ‘Spanish S’ and ‘Spanish SL’ classes use authentic materials in their lessons to facilitate the acquisition of this language. The Media Center contains over 400 titles in Spanish, including books, videos and CD-ROMS.

To further enhance the mother tongue of many of our students and provide non-native speakers to gain the ability to learn Spanish, the school implemented an Extended Foreign Language (EFL) Program. This program provides one hour of daily instruction to students in these classrooms. Currently, the EFL Program is implemented in two kindergarten classes, one first-grade class, one 2nd grade class and one 3rd grade class. In the following years the EFL Program will expand to 4th grade and then to 5th grade.

1. **OTHER MOTHER TONGUES**

The Media Center also contains titles in French and Russian. When a student enters our school, parents complete a form about their linguistic background. The ESOL coordinator shares this information with the Media Specialist, who works to obtain reading materials in that language. These books come from students’ families and community organizations as well as from bookstores. In many cases our Media Specialist is able to locate materials in different languages through our local Public Library. In instances where we may need translations we pair families with staff members who are fluent in their language. are sufficient, the school will seek to employ a mother tongue teacher in partnership with the community.

**V. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS PROGRAM**

1. **ESOL SUPPORT CLASSES**

English language learners who are unable to fully access the academic curriculum delivered in English receive specialized instruction in English language acquisition from qualified staff on a regular basis. This type of instruction is done in small group sessions where children receive one-on-one support. This support happens through pull-out or push-in methods.

1. **IN-CLASS OR CO-TEACHING SUPPORT**

This program provides students who require more assistance in acquiring English a chance to learn the language with modifications to instruction while remaining in the classroom. Through in-class ESOL programs the teacher heading this class is required to become ESOL endorsed. If the teacher is not endorsed than a co-teacher who is endorsed is placed in her class during Reading/Language Arts. During this time students’ needs are accommodated through instructional strategies which include the widespread use of visual aids, oral retelling, TPR (Total Physical Response) and peer tutoring. Consistent monitoring of ESOL students and parent consultation is provided in keeping with state mandates and IB standards.

**VIII. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**

1. **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The school uses multiple methods to communicate with parents the critical importance of maintaining academic proficiency in the mother tongue. Parents are our mother tongue teachers when students are not in school. FFK-8 Center will offer workshops for parents each year in order to better convey the importance of their child’s mother tongue.

1. **PUBLISHED MATERIALS**

As previously mentioned, students, parents and staff members at FFK-8 Center originate from different countries. To maintain consistency in published materials, American English spelling will be used for our formal written documentation. Furthermore, due to our large population of Spanish speakers all formal written documentation will also be provided in Spanish.

**IX. COMMUNICATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY**

The language policy will be introduced to the FFK-8 community through multiple pathways including staff meetings, grade level meetings, parent workshops and student orientations and/or assemblies. The policy will also be featured on our FFK-8 Center Website. New staff will become familiar with the document during new staff orientation.

**X. REVIEW PROCESS**

The language policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis as part of the curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan.