



# Lamar Louise Curry Middle School

## Middle Years Programme

### Language Policy

#### **PHILOSOPHY**

At Lamar Louise Curry Middle School, language is an essential instrument for learning, communication, and expression. Teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language instruction, we are encouraging intercultural awareness, new outlooks, inquisitiveness, and an appreciation of our world's diversity. Through the exploration of language, students become communicators in our multilingual world.

#### **PRACTICES**

##### **Language & Literature**

In order to promote holistic learning within the context of the IB MYP, the stakeholders at Lamar Louise Curry Middle School recognize the significance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language throughout the implementation of the program. Language & Literature is limited to English as the language of instruction of the school, since students must meet English language requirements provided by the state standards. The development of Language & Literature is crucial as it allows students to make connections within and across subject areas, facilitated by key and related concepts, and Global Contexts. For assessment purposes, the IB MYP Language & Literature criteria are used along with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) grading policy. Language & Literature courses support both the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) and the IB MYP Language & Literature objectives.

##### **Language Acquisition (French and Spanish)**

The mastery of crucial language skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing – is a key component of a student's overall development. The importance of students becoming culturally and linguistically proficient in a second language (Language Acquisition) is recognized, and all students receive instruction in either French or Spanish. Realizing that not every student will reach the same level of language proficiency at the same time, a continuum of Language Acquisition courses is offered that meet both the developing academic and social needs of all learners in order for all students to achieve his or her personal best. Language Acquisition courses are assessed using the Language Acquisition Assessment Criteria for Years 1-3, and support the FSA.

The following reading practices will be implemented:

- Teachers will ensure that reading takes place in all subject areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate;
- Teachers will employ a variety of practices when planning for instruction, which includes, but is not limited to guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organizers, use of leveled reading material;
- Students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure and read aloud expressively;
- Students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, plays, trade books, short stories, newspapers/magazines, and informational text;
- Teachers will promote and incorporate supplemental reading incentive and support programs, such as Accelerated Reader and Reading Plus

- Teachers will utilize vocabulary-building techniques such as word walls, word of the day, use of idioms, and literary elements such as metaphors and similes across the curriculum, whenever appropriate.
- Teachers will require that students utilize the foreign language collection in the media center to read a variety of books (picture books, fiction, non-fiction) in French and Spanish.

The following writing practices will be implemented:

- Students' natural desire to communicate through writing will be fostered by giving real purpose to their writing, and by exposing them to varied, challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities;
- The writing process (planning, outlining, drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing), will be promoted consistently as age appropriate throughout the grade levels;
- Students will be given opportunities to express themselves in writing through a variety of genres, including but not limited to journaling, essays; students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use language specific to different subject areas;
- development of writing will be supported by providing constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults;
- Teachers will provide instruction in and model the correct usage of written and oral language conventions, including spelling, grammar, rules of punctuation, and handwriting.
- Several literary elements (i.e., foreshadow, symbolism, synesthesia, etc.) will be reviewed in order to teach good writing skills that allow for more interesting reading.
- Students will be encouraged to sign up for an interactive online typing program which monitors and tracks their progress until mastery of skills. They will also be made aware of a second site that has created several games and activities to help students gain knowledge of the keyboard.

## **Intensive Reading**

Students who have scored at level 1 or 2 on the reading portion of the FSA language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) have been assigned to an Intensive Reading class, which is in addition to their Language and Literature class. The intensive reading class is designed to increase the student's specific reading needs – decoding skills, fluency and/or comprehension of text – in order to achieve higher levels of success. Through the use of the Reading Program "Inside," students work on individual reading skills at a time. The program continuously monitors their language and grammar understanding. Another program used within the Intensive Reading class is "iReady." iReady is a personalized program. Depending on the students' progress within the program, mini lessons and prescribed activities are designated for the student.

## **ORAL LANGUAGE**

- teachers will model correct language usage in conversation, while being sensitive of students' cultural background and mother tongue;
- students will be provided ample opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, books on tape, listening stations, etc.;
- teachers will plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

Second language teachers support the school's reading, writing and oral language practices as well as the IB learner profile. Students receive instruction using an interactive, immersion approach to second language learning. Emphasis on grammatical structures, verbal and writing skills, and vocabulary development help students develop the tools they need to become effective, multilingual communicators. International understanding, cultural awareness, and historical knowledge are enhanced through the study of the customs, traditions and everyday life in French and Spanish speaking countries throughout the world.

## **MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT**

The mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of the students at LLCMS is English, which is also the language of instruction at the school. However, within our student population there are bilingual students, including those whose home language is a language other than English. Included in our multilingual, multicultural staff are speakers of several languages, who are often called upon to assist when translators are needed for parent conferences.

The majority of the faculty at LLCMS holds a certification in teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) from the State of Florida. The goal of the ESOL program is to encourage fluent language acquisition.

The media center supports the various languages taught in school and spoken at home. There are more than 1,000 books written in French and Spanish available for circulation from the media center. These books range from picture books to fiction and nonfiction books which cover a wide range of interests and reading levels. The reference collection also contains Spanish language encyclopedias. In addition, parents are encouraged to donate books from their native countries for our Mother Tongue Collection, which is a set of books used within the media center. This Mother Tongue collection represents the vast range of cultures from which our students come.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

The school has several formal and informal support services available, including:

- Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings can be called whenever a student is in need of additional support or early intervention in order to be successful in school. The RTI team members include administrators, MYP coordinator, special education teacher, general education teachers, reading teachers, student services personnel, and the student's parents.

- Gifted Resource

Students who have a current gifted education plan (EP) receive a full gifted curriculum. Their core classes are held with Gifted Certified teachers. These teachers use strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, critical thinking in reading and writing across the curriculum, and the exposure to various forms of literature and informational text. Gifted education teachers work collaboratively to develop interdisciplinary units with a global context focus. These units are designed to provide an avenue to international-mindedness and enhance the connection between the concepts presented in class to the "real world" setting.

- Special Education

Students with special education needs receive services from a special education teacher and/or general education teacher (when in an Inclusion setting for Language and Literature). The teacher uses strategies that encourage the mastery of essential language skills in an effort to maximize the potential of each student.

- Media Specialist

The media specialist works closely with teachers, students, parents and the school administration to ensure that any curricular and support materials that are necessary for the development of language are available. The media specialist is able to obtain print and non-print material for teachers, students and parents through inter-library loan. These materials include over 175,000 items in French, Spanish, German, Russian, Mandarin, Portuguese and Italian, as well as books on tape and large-print documents for the visually impaired. We also offer the Home Language Assistance Program (HLAP) for any ESOL student that needs additional assistance while completing class assignments or directions for testing. Students get translation assistance while attending the HLAP. This assistance is available for students during Math, Individuals and Societies, and Science.