



LANGUAGE POLICY

North Miami Middle School (#4789)



I. Overview and Philosophy

North Miami Middle School is located in the Northeast section of Miami-Dade County and is comprised of a diverse community of single-family houses and multi-family apartment homes. The families who reside within our boundaries come from a variety of linguistics backgrounds. In turn, the school recognizes this situation and firmly embraces the fact that language is an integral part of communication and is essential for academic success.

With this philosophy in mind, the school employs faculty and staff from diverse linguistics backgrounds and provides various accommodations to ensure that students' as well as parents' needs are met. School leaders deliver oral messages in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole at all open functions. Documents that are sent home to parents (e.g., notices of events, student progress notices and tutorial opportunities) are written in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

The school aims to facilitate learning and fully engage students and parents by providing the following:

- Mother-Tongue Accommodations
- Language Development in English (Language A) skills
- Language Acquisition opportunities (Language B) in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Language Acquisition opportunities (Language B) in French and Spanish
- Community Language Support Services

II. Mother-Tongue Accommodations

More than two-thirds of our current 853 currently enrolled students speak a language other than English and although our language of instruction is primarily English, North Miami Middle School takes pride in its effort to accommodate the various first languages (mother tongues) that students bring to our school environment. These students enter our learning community at various levels of the language continuum and are accommodated in various situations by our staff members, many of whom are bilingual or multilingual.

Our school operates a Home Language Assistance Program (HLAP) for students learning English as a second language. The program currently staffs two individuals (one literate in Spanish and one literate in Haitian Creole) who operate HLAP by assisting students in their home language during three core classes (Mathematics, Science, Humanities) when the students are having difficulty understanding the lesson.

During formal assessments (district and state exams), second-language learners are housed together and given assistance with exam directions in their mother tongue. Moreover, these students are provided with Haitian-Creole to English or "Spanish to English" dictionaries and given extra time to complete their examinations. When the need arises, Miami-Dade County Public Schools attempts to provide service once a week of translators/tutors for students whose first language is a relatively uncommon language to this school district (e.g. Russian, Portuguese, Japanese, or Chinese).

III. Language Acquisition (English)

Provisions for 2nd Language Learners in the Language of Instruction

North Miami Middle School operates an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program that is staffed by two veteran teachers who excel in English language instruction for second-language learners. ESOL students are identified during the registration process, whereby the parent/guardian is required to complete the "Home Language Survey." This document informs the registrar of the student's language background so that the proper decision can be made through initial assessment with regard to placement in a Language A (Language of Instruction) course.

For ESOL students, two of their six classes are ESOL courses, a language development course and a language Arts (Language A) course, both taught through research-based methodologies. The ESOL program develops students through four levels of proficiency, with a fifth level for students who have exited the ESOL program through demonstration of English proficiency. Students at Level 5 are shadowed for two years upon exiting to ensure success in course classes taught in English.

In the three non-ESOL courses (Mathematics, Humanities, Science), ESOL students are provided with classroom strategies to assist them in acquiring course content while still learning English. Teachers in these three subjects use such strategies as "Think-Pair/Share," audio learning, grouping, the use of visualizations, hands-on learning techniques, and technologies such as computer-assisted learning and PowerPoint presentations. Many members of our faculty speak second languages, including French, Spanish, Portuguese, Telugu and Haitian Creole and can assist students with course content while in the classroom. For students who are just learning English, teachers in these courses often pair the new ESOL student with a student proficient in both English and the new student's mother tongue to facilitate learning of both course content and English.

ESOL students are evaluated on a regular basis, through formative and summative evaluations. Additionally, students take an annual language proficiency test that measures their growth towards English language acquisition. Within the Developmental Language Arts class as well as Language Arts Through ESOL class, differentiated instruction is the primary mode of instruction. While students are immersed in the target language, every effort is made to reach all students through careful and strategic lesson planning which are student centered. A multitude of strategies are incorporated to help students develop confidence while learning the language.

IV. Language Acquisition (French & Spanish)

MYP Language B Instruction

North Miami Middle School offers both French and Spanish as additional modern languages to broaden students' abilities to communicate and understand the world at large. Compulsory in each of our MYP's three years, the French and Spanish courses focus on language development, communicative competence, literacy skills, composition, cultural awareness, applications, and experiences in and outside of the school community. Sustained instruction over a three-year period, Language B courses are sequential, with Year 1 students enrolled in either M/J Beginning French or M/J Beginning Spanish; Year 2 students enrolled in either French 1 or Spanish 1; and Year 3 students enrolled in either French 2 or Spanish 2. All Language B courses are year-long courses, totaling approximately 200 hours of instruction per school year. French and Spanish 1 and 2 students build on knowledge gained in the prerequisite courses. Students leaving our three-year MYP program will be prepared to take either French 3 or Spanish 3 in their first year of high school.

Differentiated instruction over a three-year period – A variety of methodologies are used to develop students' abilities to communicate in Language B. In addition to the use of a course textbook, students are involved daily in speaking, listening, and writing in Language B. Students are asked to complete various types of projects, some dealing with geographical awareness of countries speaking French and Spanish while other projects involve the creation of student-created magazines, travel brochures, maps, and shopping guides. Extended learning experiences to local language centers, restaurants, cultural events, and historic landmarks also are used to develop students' understanding and appreciation for French and Hispanic culture. It is believed that an increase in cultural awareness will also enhance students' abilities to perform better on standardized exams.

V. Media Center

Our Media Center library houses a selection of books, both fiction and non-fiction, in Spanish and French. It also houses a computer technology area where students can access digitally access material in several languages. Student aides who speak Spanish and Haitian Creole are also available to assist students in their mother tongue. The media center is currently undergoing an expansion to provide students with even more opportunities.

VI. Community Language Support Services

North Miami Middle School maintains on staff a Community Involvement Specialist who provides translations in either Haitian Creole or Spanish for parents, teachers, and other community members vested in the learning process. The administrative team and the office staff are comprised of individuals who also are proficient in the in Haitian Creole and Spanish.

Review Process

The school's language policy committee is led by the Language Acquisition ESOL Department Chair. The committee is required to meet yearly to review the policy and make adjustments as needed.