Mesa Public Schools
IB K-12 continuum
Language Policy

Philosophy

The Mesa Public Schools International Baccalaureate K-12 continuum serves a student population and community with diverse language needs and experiences. We welcome these students, and strive to create a learning environment that validates diverse language backgrounds while preparing students to enter the global marketplace. In this effort, IB continuum schools and their faculty:

- Recognize that all teachers, regardless of content area, are language teachers
- Prepare all students to be fluent in English
- Encourage students to pursue competency in multiple languages
- Foster an environment where all languages and cultures are appreciated and valued
- Assist students in maintaining and developing their mother tongues whenever possible
- Utilize instructional materials that integrate multicultural and diverse perspectives

Profile

Students attending Mesa’s IB continuum schools represent a diversity of language needs and experiences. Some of the populations we serve include:

- Mother tongue English students with limited or no exposure to a Language B
- Mother tongue English students with some exposure to a Language B through a primary or middle school experience
- Bilingual Hispanic students who have acquired both English and Spanish since birth
- Bilingual Hispanic students whose parents speak Spanish only but are English proficient as a result of attending school
- Bilingual students of English and another language (Farsi, French, Hungarian, Navajo, Russian, Thai, Tongan, etc.)
**Language A**

Mesa’s IB continuum schools offer a rigorous, engaging Language A curriculum in the English language.

**Language B**

Mesa’s IB continuum schools have implemented a Language B program that allows students the opportunity to achieve proficiency in one or more second languages.

**Primary Years Program (PYP)**

The PYP program at *Summit Academy K-6* offers students a strong, engaging Language B curriculum that adheres to the curricular framework of the PYP. Students are regularly exposed to Spanish as a Language B. Students receive 60 minutes of Spanish instruction weekly in grades K-6.

**Middle Years Program (MYP)**

The MYP at the *Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies*, the *Summit Academy 7-8*, and *Westwood High School* offers students a strong, engaging Language B curriculum that is guided by the fundamental MYP concepts of holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication. All students are required to pursue competency and literacy in a second language. We currently offer students a choice of Spanish or Mandarin Chinese as a Language B. Once students select their language B, they are required to continue studying that language throughout their MYP years.

The MYP at the *Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies* offers students a strong, engaging Language B curriculum in their choice of either Spanish or Mandarin Chinese. Our language B curriculum is crucial to developing international mindedness in our students. Through our program, students are required to explore the varied cultural practices of countries where the target languages are spoken. Exploration of international perspectives is embedded throughout our curriculum.

Students at the *Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies* begin their study of Language B in the 4th grade. During the 4th and 5th grades, students receive 60 minutes of Language B instruction in both Mandarin Chinese and Spanish all year on a 3-day rotating basis resulting in 60 hours of instruction per year for each language. Beginning in 6th grade and continuing through 8th grade, students receive 60 minutes of Language B instruction daily in either Mandarin Chinese or Spanish throughout the entire school year. This provides students with approximately 180 hours of instruction per year in the language of their choosing.
At the **Summit Academy 7-8**, students begin their study of Language B in the 7th grade, and continue through 8th grade. Students receive 56 minutes of Language B instruction daily. This provides students with approximately 180 hours of instruction per year in the language of their choosing. Students may choose either Spanish or Mandarin Chinese for their Language B.

At **Westwood High School**, students continue their study of Language B in years 4 and 5 of the MYP program. Students receive 55 minutes of Language B instruction daily. This provides students with approximately 180 hours of instruction per year in the language of their choosing.

**Diploma Program (DP)**

The DP at **Westwood High School** offers students a strong, engaging Language B curriculum that allows students to communicate competently and prepares students for the Standard Level Language B exam, Ab Initio Standard Level, or Higher Level exam (Spanish only). Students in the DP may choose to study Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, or French as a Language B.

**English Language Learners (ELL)**

Mesa’s IB continuum schools are required by Arizona State law to adhere to specific policy guidelines with students whose mother tongue is not English.

In Arizona, students whose mother tongue is not English are classified as PHLOTE (Primary or Home Language Other Than English) students. By law, these students are required to demonstrate English proficiency on the AZELLA (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment) test, adopted by the State Board of Education. Students are administered the AZELLA test at least annually until they demonstrate proficiency, at which point they are reclassified as FEP (Fluent English Proficient) students. While classified as PHLOTE, students are required to be enrolled in an ELD (English Language Development) program.

In the 2008-09 school year, school districts were legally required to offer ELD programs consisting of a four-hour daily block of English (Conversation, Reading, Writing, & Grammar). This requirement makes it increasingly difficult to offer the IB curriculum for PHLOTE students. In order to meet the requirements of MYP (students receive instruction in 8 content areas), parents of PHLOTE students may choose to opt out of the ELD program’s required 4-hour language block so that they may experience the full IB curriculum.
**Mother Tongue Support**

Mesa’s IB continuum schools are committed to the continued support and development of students’ mother tongues. Whenever possible, we have committed resources in an effort to carry out that commitment.

Currently, students at Westwood High School, whose mother tongue is Spanish, have access to two years of Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses designed specifically to enhance student literacy and fluency in the mother tongue. In the next few years, we hope to coordinate our Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses to allow students whose mother tongue is Spanish to take the Spanish Higher Level exam as part of the DP.

Students in the MYP program at the Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies, the Summit Academy 7-8, and Westwood High School, whose mother tongue is Spanish or Chinese, are currently able to enroll in a Language B course in their mother tongue.

All IB continuum students and their families are encouraged to maintain and enrich their mother tongue by continuing to speak, read and write the language in their home. Mesa Public Schools provides translation services in 170 different languages through the English Language Acquisition Department.

**Intercultural Awareness**

Mesa’s IB continuum schools are dedicated to developing intercultural awareness and international mindedness amongst its students.

**Summit Academy K-6** will develop international mindedness by seeking connections between students’ own cultures to find universal experiences. The staff will also invite community members to share cultural and social experiences.

Furthermore, Summit Academy K-6 continues to encourage students to undertake projects such as raising funds to build a school in Kenya, Africa through the Free the Children organization. Our students have also successfully helped students and families in Africa to free them from child labor and allow them to attend school.

**The Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies** continuously works to develop both intercultural awareness and international mindedness within students. The media specialist ensures that there are plenty of books and resources (in Spanish, Chinese, and other cultures and languages) in our media center available for student checkout and reference. The media center is also home to a rotating display that highlights cultures from around the world. Students are offered access to databases and other online reference sites in order to research culture and languages from around the world.

**The Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies** also hosts speakers from different ethnic backgrounds who help promote international diversity on our campus. This has included the Mesa Chief of Police who is of Cuban descent, as well as Latin dancers instructing our students in popular
South American dances. Students at the Academy are invited to share their cultural experiences, especially through their studies in courses such as Humanities and their Language classes. Often, students will bring in cultural artifacts to share with their classmates to enhance the curriculum for all students, and to celebrate other cultures. Students partake in studies of painters, poets, writers, musicians, and other historic people from different world cultures. Students complete internationally minded art displays, as well as listen to and perform music from diverse cultures in band, orchestra, and music technology.

Students answer such questions as “What kind of global citizen am I?” by studying scientific inventions, medical advances, disasters, and important people. Our language-A classes include literature from several cultural perspectives and from diverse authors. With the international focus provided in our curriculum and the cultural awareness supported and encouraged among our staff, students at the Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies truly develop an intercultural awareness and an international mindedness.

*Summit Academy 7-8* believes students should have the ability to think internationally - outside of their own views, attitudes and experiences. Students are encouraged to remain intellectually and emotionally open to new or different ideas, experiences and cultures. International mindedness is promoted through acceptance, appreciation and awareness of other cultures and their values. The teachers and staff at Summit Academy embrace and demonstrate their commitment to international education. Our required curriculum addresses political, economic, and cultural perspectives from around the world, providing opportunities to make cultural connections and comparisons.

*Westwood High School* has a rich tradition of developing intercultural awareness. Each year, for example, Westwood celebrates Culture Week. This week allows student groups, including the Latino Club, Native American Club, Chinese Culture Club, French Club, Ebony Club, and others the opportunity to showcase their histories and cultures. This week culminates with the annual Cultural Assembly, where the entire student body has the opportunity to share in the dances, music, and cultural rituals of a variety of cultures represented on Westwood’s campus. That same day an international fashion show is held at lunch, allowing students the opportunity to show off their native dress. Students also have access to a Multicultural Literature class that immerses students in the literature and culture of a variety of cultures. The popularity of this class is such that we have recently introduced a Native American Literature class on campus.

*Westwood High School* is also home to a strong Model United Nations club. Over the past few years, students in the club have participated in international conferences in England, Ireland, France, and Greece. These conferences require students to prepare in-depth policy statements on a variety of international issues, and discuss the challenges and possible solutions associated with those issues. Participating students come from schools around the world, representing a wide variety of nationalities, languages, and cultures. In some cases, our students are able to stay with host families who immerse students in the day-to-day operations of a household in a foreign country. As a result, our students and teachers have created overseas friendships and created new understanding of the diverse world in which we live.