

## **Dobbs Ferry School District MYP Language Policy**

The Dobbs Ferry Middle School and High School Language Program is designed to support students in developing the language skills needed to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To this end, teachers in all subject groups plan learning experiences based on the IB Learner Profile, MYP criteria, NYS standards and our district philosophy regarding teaching and learning. Students engage in a variety of experiences with both written and spoken word. These learning experiences are a means for students to express themselves while also reflecting on both their learning and the world around them. The learning experiences are also designed to promote the development of interpersonal communication skills. Students are exposed to a vast amount of academic vocabulary while reading, writing, speaking and listening within each of the subject groups. These learning experiences promote the integration of the learning of language within all subject groups. Implementing the MYP philosophy allows for students to become strong, competent and effective communicators.

### **Instruction and Assessment in Language and Literature**

The primary language of instruction of Dobbs Ferry Middle School and Dobbs Ferry High School is English. Students in Language and Literature classes engage in a variety of learning experiences rooted in the Common Core Literacy Standards, as well as MYP objectives. These experiences include but are not limited to novel studies, vocabulary activities, close reading instruction, evaluating and analyzing texts and developing and sharing work in a social context. World literature is also explored in Language and Literature classes.

Students are assessed in Language and Literature classes using both formative and summative methods. Formative assessment provides information to teachers to assist in guiding further instruction. Examples of assessments can include essays, public service announcements, speeches, poems, responses to prompts, conferences and observations. Teachers use both MYP criteria and Common Core Literacy Standards for assessment purposes.

Students in Language and Literature classes who need additional support are placed in support classes such as Advisory, Content Lab or AIS (Academic Intervention Services) classes. Students are also encouraged to attend T-periods for assistance with assignments as well.

### **Instruction and Assessment in Language Acquisition Classes**

Language Acquisition classes are currently offered in French, Italian and Spanish. Students continue in their selected language for all five years of MYP. Language Acquisition classes provide students with speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in the target language as well as foster cultural understandings. Vertical curriculum alignment of Language Acquisition classes from Year 1 through Year 5 ensures a smooth transition from year to year.

Students are assessed in Language Acquisition classes using both formative and summative methods. Formative assessment provides information to teachers to assist in guiding further instruction. Examples of assessments can include integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills; analyzing grammatical structures; emphasizing vocabulary development; journal writing and participating in authentic assessments. Teachers use both MYP criteria and New York State Standards for assessment purposes.

### **Mother-Tongue Support**

Dobbs Ferry Middle School and Dobbs Ferry High School recognize that although a child may learn to speak English in a relatively short period of time in some cases, it usually takes several years to develop the academic skills to work on the level of native English speaking peers. With this in mind, students are encouraged to use their native languages to aid in their transition to English. New York State accommodations include the use of bilingual dictionaries and electronic translators on state exams for students who are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). The ELL Coordinator provides MYP teachers with information, support and suggestions on how to work with students who are non-native speakers of English in their classes.

### **Support for Students Who are Not Yet Proficient in the Language of Instruction**

As previously stated, the primary language of instruction in Dobbs Ferry Middle School and High School is English. The Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District provides a comprehensive, freestanding and New York State Education Department approved English as a Second language/English Language Learning program for its limited English proficient students. All students in Dobbs Ferry Middle School and High School are provided with equal and equitable opportunities to achieve the same educational goals and standards in all programs, including the Middle Years Program.

Students in need of ESL/ELL services are identified upon entrance to Dobbs Ferry Middle School and High School. Once identified, students receive appropriate English instruction based on their specific needs. A New York State licensed and experienced English as a Second or Other Language Teacher provides this instruction. Students are evaluated annually to determine their levels of proficiency and receive additional support beyond proficiency in order to maximize academic achievement. The ESL/ELL Coordinator and teacher maintain a close connection with content-area teachers to monitor student progress in all academic areas as well as the students' emotional and social development. All New York State mandated accommodations are provided for English Language Learners.

### **Learning of the Host Country or Regional Language and Culture**

Students are encouraged to share and deepen their understanding of their native language and cultures, as well as local and regional cultures. English Language Learning/ESL classes provide academic opportunities to do this. Awareness of other cultures is also emphasized in the different subject groups, such as Individuals and Societies, Language Acquisition, and Language and Literature. Additionally, the schools' International Club, Foreign Language Clubs, Sign Language Club and Cultural Awareness Club provide regular activities and experiences for students to share their own cultures and languages and to learn about those of others.

## **Policy Review**

All stakeholders will review the MYP Language Policy on a bi-annual basis: teachers, students, parents and administration.

## **References:**

Dobbs Ferry Middle School Student Handbook

Dobbs Ferry High School Student Handbook

Dobbs Ferry High School Teacher Handbook

*MYP: From Principles to Practice* (IBO September 2014)

*Programme Standards and Practices* (IBO 2014)

*Guidelines for developing a school language policy* (IBO 2008)