

Westlake Middle School:

Language Policy

Disclaimer: This WMS Language Policy does not supercede any Mount Pleasant Board of Education Policy that may either directly or indirectly connect to these contents.

Westlake Middle School's (WMS) Language Policy is discussed and communicated to students and parents to ensure full understanding of language expectations during each school year. Effective during the school year 2017-18, an abbreviated version of the Language Policy is published in the student handbook. The full version of the policy is available on the school's website: <http://wms.mtplcsd.org>.

Language A: English

Language is a vital instrument for learning, communication and expression. Embedded in each subject area are vocabulary, literacy and language acquisition techniques allowing students to develop the communication skills necessary for their success in our local, national, and global societies. Through the exploration of language, students become open-minded communicators in our multi-lingual world. WMS uses English as our language of instruction, and also strives to embrace the native languages that our students bring to our community. Students whose first language is a language other than English are given support through our English as a New Language (ENL) program. All teachers in every subject area and grade level are given guidance, and when necessary, supported by the ENL teacher. This includes targeted advice on how to support ENL students in the general education areas. In addition, a reading specialist supports students at risk for not meeting standards. The following are common practices for English language instruction at WMS:

- The WMS Language and Literature program is aligned to the New York State Common Core English Standards, as well as the International Baccalaureate criteria.
- Language and literature teachers design MYP unit plans to support English language acquisition for all grade levels.
- All students are required to take English as a full-year course every year they are enrolled at WMS.
- Students whose home language is not English also receive ENL instruction.
- Special education students receive specialized instruction in language, as per their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- To support language development of our students across all content areas, teachers review and analyze student data to determine how to challenge and support each learner.
- Teachers across all content areas encourage support from parents by emphasizing the importance of reading at home, which promotes exposure to different types of texts that are important in everyday life.
- Immersive reading of fiction and nonfiction texts is encouraged and implemented in classrooms throughout all grade levels and subject areas.
- WMS has a Response to Intervention (RTI) Program which supports students struggling with English reading and writing.

Language B: Italian or Spanish

Westlake Middle School supports the development of two additional languages: Italian and Spanish. Through teaching these languages, we aim to foster lifelong learning and love of languages. The philosophy of the WMS language acquisition program is to promote a thorough understanding of diverse cultures. Students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become internationally-minded citizens. Through the study of other languages, WMS students are encouraged to develop an appreciation for languages and an intercultural awareness. This allows them to view the world as a collective whole and instills a lifelong understanding of global awareness. The following are common practices for language acquisition instruction at WMS:

- The WMS Language Acquisition program of instruction is aligned to the New York State Languages other than English Standards, as well as the International Baccalaureate criteria.
- The program includes reading, writing, listening and speaking, in addition to cultural appreciation.
- Language acquisition teachers design MYP unit plans to support language acquisition in Italian and Spanish for all grade levels.
- In grade 6, students begin with survey course in both Italian and Spanish referred to as *Introduction to World Languages (IWL)*.
- At the end of grade 6, students choose either Spanish or Italian for further study in grades 7 and 8.

Language Policy Summary

Each year at WMS all students receive formal instruction in English Language Arts (IB Middle Years Language and Literature), which includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. English as a New Language may be provided to non-English speaking students. In addition, all students receive an introduction to World Languages in grade 6 and instruction in either Italian or Spanish in grades 7 and 8 (IB Middle Years Language Acquisition). For additional information see the WMS IB Middle Years page.

History of Policy Development

In 2014-15, committees formed at WMS to develop the IB policies. The committees consisted of administration, teachers and parents, who met to establish the outline of the policies. During 2016-17, the policies were further refined by the IB Consultant, IB Coordinator, IB Steering Committee, by the teachers at a full faculty meeting and lastly, by administration. The policies are annually reviewed and updated by the IB Steering Committee.