



Overview:

We believe that all students can learn and experience success in a second language; to that end, we provide a foundation for the lifelong process of language acquisition. Our language program:

- fosters respect for other cultures
- prepares students to become productive members of a global society
- promotes awareness of one's own language and culture
- allows opportunities for interdisciplinary connections
- prepares students for collegiate endeavors

The Acquisition of Language

The Acquisition of Language is the key element of understanding, thinking, and learning. All activities that stimulate learning involve language. To this end, all teachers are teachers of language. This connection between language and learning is shared between teachers and students and includes parents as an essential component in this life-long learning process. Development of the mother-tongue is central to intellectual understanding and social growth. Additional languages inspire meaningful interaction that results in a broader development of personal understanding, linking the student to the world.

Language of Instruction

The Language of Instruction at Columbia High School is English.

Languages Offered

Huntsville City Schools offers the following languages at Columbia High School: Spanish, German, and French. Language Acquisition at Columbia High School begins in Year 4 for most students. Students who are new to the school system will make a choice between the offered languages. At Columbia High School, students will be encouraged to continue the study of the language they began at their middle school, and are required to continue the language that they have studied if they come Columbia High School's partner, ASFL.

Units are designed to blend MYP aims and objectives with the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards. Emphasis is placed on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Formative and summative assessments are used to enhance teaching and evaluate student progress, using MYP criteria. Courses encourage students to appreciate other cultures as well as their own.

Works Cited: Guidelines for developing a school language policy. International Baccalaureate Organization (April 2008).

<http://www.ibo.org>



The goal of Foreign Language Acquisition

At Columbia High School, the goal is to prepare each student to successfully complete all requirements and continue their language acquisition in the Diploma or Career Related Programmes. An ultimate goal is to prepare students to complete MYP 5 when doing their Personal Project and have 3 years of High School credit in Foreign Language by the time they complete the MYP at Columbia High School.

English Language Learner (ELL)

Using the *Home Language Survey* form that is issued to all students in the school system, English language learners are identified, as well as mother tongue languages. As required by federal and state law, the WIDA –ACCESS Placement Test is administered once a year to each student whose parents have reported on the *Home Language Survey* that their home language is not English. These students receive differentiated instruction that is modified to meet their needs. Students who qualify for ELL services meet with specialized instructors to increase their skill in the language of instruction until the student achieves a score of 4.8 on the ACCESS. They are monitored for up to 4 years to ensure that they are successful in the classroom with no assistance.

Classroom teachers have opportunities for staff development in ELL strategies and make accommodations for ELL students. Parent involvement is encouraged through the use of parent conferences, with a translator where necessary, and notes home to parents. The media specialists at both schools are aware of the language needs of students and update resources in the library to meet the needs of the variety of cultures represented in the school. Teachers, students, and parents assist the librarian with material recommendations.

Whenever possible, multicultural lessons incorporate the expertise of the students' mother tongue ability. Students and parents are also encouraged to develop the mother tongue at home. With volunteers, parents and peers, students can retain and grow in their knowledge of their mother tongue. ELL tutors and ELL teachers provide help. For MYP, the mother tongue of the students may be supported by placement in one of the foreign language courses offered. For the languages not taught in the schools, community resources are offered and information about private educational support is made available. In some supplementary textbook materials, multilingual summaries are available

Mother Tongue Support and Language A Support

Students whose mother tongue is not English are screened by a language proficiency test (ACCESS) developed by WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) Consortium. Students receive additional support as determined by the English Language Learner (ELL) department. Resources available to these students include tutoring during the school day, after school tutoring, parent sessions presented in the native language, language dictionaries, and translated written texts. Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity and native language while learning to speak and write English.

Works Cited: Guidelines for developing a school language policy. International Baccalaureate Organization (April 2008).

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