

Renfroe Middle School/Decatur High School Language Policy

Philosophy

At Renfroe Middle School and Decatur High School, we believe that all teachers are teachers of language and that teachers who specialize in a specific content field are uniquely suited to teach literacy skills (speaking, reading, writing, viewing) within that content area.

Language A: English

English is the primary language of teaching and learning in both schools and the language through which information about teaching and learning is communicated. The IB MYP objectives, the IB DP Language and Literature guide, the English Language Arts Georgia Standards of Excellence (ELA GSE), and the Literacy Standards for Reading in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects for grades 6 through 12 provide a curricular framework for students' development of language skills across all of their subjects.

English language literacy teaching and learning are guided by the following principles:

- Reading, writing and speaking are critical to learning in all courses;
- Literacy skills are best developed in the authentic practice of each discipline;
- Emphasis on transdisciplinary skills within and across subjects is critical to developing students' facility with language;
- Students should have access to a wide variety of both high-quality academic and pleasure reading materials and should be expected to read to learn and to read for pleasure;
- Teachers should receive job-embedded professional learning in strategies to help students develop their literacy skills;
- Teachers should receive ample collaboration and planning time in order to plan for rich content area and interdisciplinary literacy instruction; and
- A strong media center and media program are critical to the development of students' language skills.

Language B: Second Language Acquisition

City Schools of Decatur (CSD) is committed to students' developing proficiency in at least two languages by the time they graduate. Students who matriculate through the CSD system receive Spanish instruction from Kindergarten through at least the 5th grade. While many students choose to continue with Spanish as their Language B course through the MYP, others opt to begin French instruction in 6th grade (Year 1 of the IB MYP). MYP and DP Language B Options are detailed, below.

MYP Language B Options:

Years 1, 2, and 3 MYP students (grades 6 through 8 at Renfroe Middle School (RMS)) continue to receive Spanish instruction as a core MYP subject or choose to begin French instruction. Years 4 and 5 of the MYP are grades 9 and 10 at Decatur High School (DHS). For years 4 and 5, many students continue to study the Language B they selected for Years 1 through 3. Other students either select a different Language B (from among Spanish, French, German, and Latin) or add a third language (from among the same choices.)

Students are required by City Schools of Decatur to take a minimum of two years of the same Language B in high school. Many students continue their Language B study beyond the MYP, taking additional years of the same Language B or adding or beginning an additional Language B from among Spanish, French, German, and Latin.

Diploma Program Language Options:

Students have the option to take either HL or SL Spanish, SL French or SL German as part of the full IB Diploma Program or as a stand-alone course.

Articulation of Language Acquisition from PYP to MYP and DP:

RMS and DHS teachers worked together to align MYP units of instruction across the first phases of the MYP assessment criteria. Clear articulation across the middle and high school Spanish and French language programs is designed to enable smooth and appropriate transitions between levels for students and ensure a common standard for teaching and learning language. The French program was initiated at RMS for the 2018-19 school year. School year 2019-20 will be the first year students will enter DHS having studied French as their Language B course for MYP at the middle school.

The table below lists all of the current modern world language courses offered at Renfroe Middle School and Decatur High School.

Modern Language Course Offerings: RMS and DHS

RMS	MYP Phases	DHS	MYP Phases
Pensadores	1 and 2	Spanish I	1 and 2
Comunicadores	2 and 3	Spanish II	2 and 3
Reflexivos	3 and 4	Spanish III	3 and 4
French I	1 and 2	Spanish IV	4 and 5
French II	2 and 3	French I	1 and 2
		French II	2 to 4
		French III/IV	3 and 4
		German I	1 to 3
		German II	3 to 5

	HL Spanish	All DP Language courses are two-year courses.
	SL Spanish	
	SL French	
	SL German	

notes: (1) As of school year 2019-20, all students entering MYP will take Pensadores or French 1. Students who meet the requirements for one course matriculate into the next course in the sequence, whether within or between the middle and high school. For example, a student who successfully completes Comunicadores in eighth grade at RMS will move into Spanish IV in ninth grade at DHS.

Language Learning Support

Mother Tongue: The overwhelming majority of RMS and DHS students have English as their mother tongue, but there are a small number of students who are bi-lingual or who have as their first language a language other than English. Somali and Arabic are the most common languages among that group of students. While there are no formal structures in place to help students to further develop their mother tongue, the media specialist and language teachers employ informal strategies to support the development and maintenance of the mother tongue for these students. These strategies include: enlisting interpreters, hosting social gatherings at school for families who speak the same language, partnering students with other students who speak their language and encouraging them to discuss and write about academic content in their mother tongue. The media specialist and language teachers researched and created a list of books that represent every language spoken in our school, including all languages spoken by students and all languages studied by students. This list includes titles related to IB curriculum and other titles of interest to young adult readers. They solicited a bid for purchase of these resources and created a vehicle by which donors could purchase them for our school. This program has not yet been implemented due to complications related to accepting donations, however, we hope to begin acquisition of these materials in the near future.

ESOL: A small percentage of students in the middle and high school qualify for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction based on their proficiency with the schools' primary language of instruction, English. Policies guiding the placement and support of these students are delineated in the Georgia Department of Education ESOL Resource Guide, excerpted below:

State of Georgia Rulings State of Georgia Law O. C. G. A. § 20-2-156 Program for limited-English-proficient students

The State Board of Education shall create a program for limited-English-proficient students whose native language is not English, subject to appropriation by the General Assembly. The purpose of this program is to assist such students to develop proficiency in the English language, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, sufficient to perform effectively at the currently assigned grade level. The state board shall prescribe

rules and regulations regarding eligibility criteria and standards as may be needed to carry out the provisions of this Code section. This program may also be referred to as the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

(Code 1981, §20-2-156., enacted by Ga. L. 1985, p. 1657, §1; Ga. L. 1987, p. 1169, §1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 618, §19.)

ESOL State Board Rule Code: IDDG 160-4-5-.02 LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE: PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs).

(1) DEFINITIONS. (a) English Learners (ELs) – students whose primary or home language is other than English and who are eligible for services based on the results of an English language proficiency assessment (b) English language proficiency – the level of language competence necessary to participate fully and learn successfully in classrooms where the primary language of instruction is English (c) English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – an educational support program provided to help ELs overcome language barriers and participate meaningfully in schools’ educational programs (d) Georgia Department of Education – the state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K-12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education. (e) Home Language Survey – a questionnaire administered upon enrollment to each student’s parent or guardian for the purpose of determining whether a language other than English is used by the student or used in the student’s home (f) Language assistance services – supplemental language support programs that promote academic language development for students with limited English proficiency (g) Local Educational Agency (LEA) – local school system pursuant to local board of education control and management (h) School – any school or special entity as defined in State Board Rule 160-5-1-.03 Identification and Reporting of Schools (i) State-adopted English proficiency measure – an English language proficiency test administered annually to all English learners (ELs) in Georgia for the purposes of determining the English language proficiency level of students; providing districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESOL programs; providing information that enhances instruction and learning in programs for English learners; assessing the annual English language proficiency gains using a standards-based assessment instrument; and providing data for meeting federal and state requirements with respect to student assessment (j) State-adopted English proficiency screening measure – a formal measure of social and academic English language proficiency that assesses students’ need for initial placement in supplemental language assistance services (k) Student Record – the state’s required end-of-year student data collection

(2) REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Eligibility for entry into and exit from language assistance. 1. Prior to entry into a school in Georgia, each student’s parent or guardian shall complete the required Home Language Survey to determine if a language other than English is used in the home or is

the student's native language or first language. All students whose native language, first language or language of the home includes a language other than English shall be assessed for English language proficiency using the state-adopted English proficiency screening measure. 2. Initial eligibility for language assistance services shall be determined by the student's score on the state-adopted English proficiency screening measure. (i) Students who have an English language proficiency score below proficient on the state-adopted English proficiency screening measure shall be determined to be English learners (ELs) and shall be eligible for language assistance services. Coding guidance for ELs can be found in the ESOL Resource Guide. (ii) Students who have an English language proficiency score at or above proficient on the state-adopted English proficiency screening measure shall be considered English proficient and shall not be eligible for language assistance. Coding guidance for non-ELs is located in the ESOL Resource Guide. 3. All ELs shall be assessed annually on the state-adopted English proficiency measure to determine English language proficiency. Students whose scores on the state-adopted English proficiency measure do not meet the state ESOL exit criteria shall continue to be eligible for language assistance services.

(b) Language assistance service delivery models. 1. LEAs and schools shall provide English language assistance to all ELs. Such assistance shall be provided through the state-funded ESOL program or placement in a locally-developed language assistance program approved in advance by the Georgia Department of Education. Approved instructional delivery models include: (i) Pull-out model – students are taken out of a general education class for the purpose of receiving small group language instruction from the ESOL teacher, (ii) Push-in model (within reading, language arts, mathematics, science or social studies) – students remain in their core academic class where they receive content instruction from their content area teacher along with targeted language instruction from the ESOL teacher, (iii) A cluster center to which students are transported for instruction – students from two or more schools are grouped in a center designed to provide intensive language assistance, (iv) A resource center/laboratory – students receive language assistance in a group setting supplemented by multimedia materials, (v) A scheduled class period – students at the middle and high school levels receive language assistance and/or content instruction in a class composed only of ELs, (vi) A dual language immersion model – students participating in a dual language immersion program receive their supplemental English language support from the teacher providing instruction during the English portion of the academic day. (vii) An innovative delivery model approved in advance by the Georgia Department of Education.

(c) Language assistance curricula and assessment. 1. Language assistance curricula in the state-funded ESOL program shall consist of plans of instruction which are adapted to the English language proficiency of students and are designed to develop: 1) listening, speaking, reading, writing and American cultural concepts and 2) the language of academic instruction used in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. 2. All ELs receiving language assistance shall be assessed annually for language proficiency.

ELs shall also participate in state assessments pursuant to Georgia State Board of Education rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs--Student Assessment

Reading and Writing Support: For students who struggle with reading and writing, as evidenced by both state-mandated end-of-grade Georgia Milestone assessments in English Language Arts for all MYP years and locally administered assessments of reading and writing (Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and teacher-created assessments), supports are in place to assist those students in further developing their skills:

- Reading/ELA support classes at the middle school: Remedial Education Program (REP) at the middle school and high school and Learning Center at the high school
- DHS Writing Center: available two afternoons per week; where students can get assistance from faculty and peer tutors
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention (MTSS/RtI): School-wide process in each school by which students who are struggling are identified and support strategies are systematically employed in the form of an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP)
- Special Education Services: Students who are identified with special needs in the areas of reading and writing receive intensive support and accommodations where appropriate to assure full access to the curriculum.

Role of the Media Centers in Language Development

The media centers at both schools play a critical role in the development of students' language skills. Media specialists support both teachers and students in selecting academic and pleasure reading materials; planning for and conducting research; developing academic integrity; critically analyzing sources; selecting and ordering instructional materials; managing existing collections; promoting wide reading among faculty and staff; helping support the Personal Project, Internal Assessments, and the Extended Essay; and generally providing supervision and guidance as students work to become independent readers, writers and thinkers.

Some features of the RMS/DHS media programs:

- Bi-weekly trips to the media center by all middle school ELA classes
- My Reading Life Program
- Accelerated Reader
- Extended library hours after school for students to come for support with writing or research
- Facilitating Extended Essay workshops for juniors in the Diploma Program
- Facilitated Internal Assessment workshops for juniors and seniors in the Diploma Program
- Access to JSTOR, PsychArticles, Galileo and many other databases to facilitate student research

- Media specialist created LibGuides designed to support course-specific projects or papers
- Spanish-language texts (novels, children's stories, some non-fiction) to supplement course reading materials
- Audio books to assist students who struggle with reading