



Peoria Academy Language Policy

PA Mission Statement:

Peoria Academy is a diverse community of students, parents, and educators working together to provide a rigorous educational experience. Using progressive techniques that nurture the whole child, our independent school fosters maturation, resilience, and creativity.

Purpose of the Language Policy

This document outlines the school's philosophical, linguistic, and academic goals for students in our internationally-minded Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 language program. This document will also inform the school community of the teaching and learning practices regarding language curriculum and language acquisition.

Statements of Philosophy: *Creating global citizens*

PA asserts that the teaching and learning of language encourages intercultural awareness, introduces new perspectives, promotes open-mindedness, and develops an appreciation for global diversity.

PA believes that the exploration of language in our multilingual world develops students who are principled and caring citizens of the world through independent thinking and communication.

PA embraces language learning at all grade levels to develop knowledgeable students who challenge themselves and take risks to discover new ideas and perspectives across the curriculum.

PA students experience a balanced and reflective language program where English is the primary language of instruction, and Spanish is taught as an additional language.

PA uses language learning to inherently strengthen all aspects of the IB learner profile across grade levels.

Language Values

Language is a means for constructing a learner's social context.

- Language, including nonverbal communication, creates a social construct which guides appropriate social interactions.
- Language and language proficiency are developed through social interactions.
- It can be developed and used to promote social justice and an opportunity for changing the social mobility of the individuals involved in linguistic interaction.

Language is knowledge and a means to construct knowledge.

- Language learning and knowledge are mutually reinforcing: learners develop language as they develop thought, and they develop thought as they develop language.



- Language is communicated thought as it offers scaffolding for more complex thoughts.
- It is evidence of thought and a tool for thought.

Language promotes creation of meaning and is a means to express knowledge.

- Language creates meaning and expresses emotion.
- Language can be used to create new ideas in all disciplines.

Language is a system that is acquired and learned through generalizations and error correction in a natural and thoughtful way.

- Language is a system with rules and conventions that may be transferred between systems.
- Those conventions are built through generalizations, and the communicators need to be understood by the audience.
- Inconsistent correction of mistakes may cause fossilization of errors, misconceptions, and ineffective communication.

Language is essential to the promotion of identity.

- The role of language influences how students perceive themselves in various contexts.
- Students bring to school different linguistic backgrounds.
- Learners strive to embrace their cultural and linguistic heritage in a non-threatening environment of respect and open-mindedness.
- Students understand linguistic appropriateness given specific audiences and contexts.

Language Acquisition

Learning an additional language increases students' cultural competence in becoming more internationally-minded as global citizens. Starting in Pre-Kindergarten, students receive instruction in an interactive approach to Spanish. Upon transitioning into middle school in Grade 6, students continue their language learning in Spanish with emphasis on increased interpersonal, presentational, and interpretive communication proficiency via expanded exposure to varied vocabulary and grammatical structures in multiple contexts. Language learners develop the tools needed to become effective communicators. International understanding, cultural awareness, and historical knowledge are enhanced through cultural readings and by studying the daily life (products, practices, perspectives) of Spanish-speaking people around the world.

Language Acquisition Placement

Language acquisition is organized into six phases as described in the Middle School. The phases do not correspond to a particular age or grade level. At the end of Grade 6, students continue their language program of study at the appropriate phase of learning.

Language for Learning: Best Practices

- Our teaching will emulate the natural acquisition (communicative) of language, but we will also provide a framework for learning skills and tools.
- We will provide opportunities to construct knowledge by exposing the students to reading and viewing with varied purposes and audiences, as well as through the exploration of various genres.



- We will develop and expand our students' ability to express, represent, and understand thoughts, feelings, and experiences of self and others.
- We will encourage the usage and exploration of language synthesis as the students choose, develop, and present their projects and exhibitions. In this context, language (writing, reading, oral presentations, music, etc.) may be a means used to explore the chosen topic or as the outcome itself.
- We emphasize the importance of crediting sources and utilizing appropriate formatting and style guide, requiring students to cross-reference their sources.
- We value all teachers as language teachers. In all subject areas, students are exposed to the appropriate academic language through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. We consider math, science, humanities, the arts, and information technologies as other valuable language sources so that students continue to understand our world through these disciplines.
- Reading is a priority, and students are expected to read daily, both in and out of school. We are committed to a balanced literacy program, including shared, guided, interactive, and independent reading.
- We will promote oral language development by exposing our students to oral presentations and speeches, along with group discussions. This fosters student discursive and metacognitive development.
- We will encourage students and families to maintain and enhance their native language by continuing to speak, read, and write their language in their home. We also welcome opportunities for students and their families to share their native language and unique cultural experiences with our school community.

Review Process and Policy Communication

Each spring, representatives from the lower and middle school will form a committee to review the current Language Policy. The Language Policy will be reviewed by a team constituted of the following members:

- Lower & Middle School teacher representatives
- Lower School Coordinator
- Middle School Coordinator
- Principal

At the commencement of each school year, the coordinators will facilitate reflection on the policy and agreements with all teaching staff to ensure the policy is a working document evident in planning, teaching, and assessment. The Language Policy will be incorporated into the five-year program review for both the lower and middle school programs. Amendments to the policy will be made annually or as needed based on stakeholder feedback. The document is distributed to faculty and posted on the school website.

The Language Policy is best understood in connection with other key program documents, links to which are provided here:

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)



[Inclusion Policy](#)