

Ortiz Middle School

Language Policy

School language Philosophy

Ortiz Middle School believes that language learning is an essential element of a student's educational experience and that the learning of multiple languages assists students in creating connections between his or her mother tongue and any language learned later. We believe that all teachers at Ortiz are language teachers, and through professional development, equip all of our teachers with the necessary skills to help students grow linguistically. Ortiz believes that multilingual students are a vital part of our learning community and strives to create an environment with a global perspective that is friendly to language learners of all ages.

MYP

Following the guidelines of the MYP curriculum, as well as district and state curriculum, students each take at least one language A class. Students in the 6 grade will take English and Reading. Students in the 7th and 8th will take English Language Arts. Students in the school's ESL program will take English and Reading. Students also take one language B class, in this case Spanish. Within the Language B Spanish classes, students may test into the Heritage Speaker class, designed for those with previous experience in the language.

Second Language Acquisition

Ortiz Middle School understands the importance of second language fluency in an internationally-minded environment and strives to ensure that all students are proficient in two or more languages. Since language learning is a continuum, Ortiz offers multiple levels of Spanish to continue to engage students at higher levels. With the ultimate goal of proficiency in mind, students coming from different backgrounds with different levels of prior experience in the language will provide different outcomes in terms of proficiency. Our goal is for students to be able to communicate effectively in both a professional manner and a colloquial manner and understand the language to the best of their ability, understanding that their abilities will range depending on their prior experiences.

Second language support

Students requiring additional support in second language acquisition can attend drop-in tutorials with their Spanish teacher. Additionally, students may request appointments with their teachers to clarify any points of confusion. Teachers strongly encourage students to use these tutorial hours or visit the teacher to address any difficulties they might be having. Additionally, students can find Spanish books available to be checked out from the library, as well as authentic world realia to assist them in language acquisition.

Mother tongue support

We believe that the need for a continued education in a student's mother tongue is of utmost importance. For Spanish speakers, the Heritage Speaker class fulfills that need by encouraging the students to use their mother tongue for complex tasks, such as literature analysis and communicating professionally. Additional mother tongue support for languages other than English and Spanish exists by

way of bilingual dictionaries for students, as well as staff support who speak the same mother tongue. Also, mother language is supported through the use of several annual diversity programs open to the community. Lastly, many documents handed out to parents are given in English, Spanish and Vietnamese to help support the mother tongue at home.

Teacher Support

Language is vital for learning, communication, and expression. Ortiz recognizes that all teachers are language teachers charged with the responsibility to promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the MYP. To support student second language acquisition and the mother tongue, teachers will

- ensure that reading takes place in all subject areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate;
- employ a variety of practices when planning for instruction, which includes, but is not limited to guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, Thinking Maps, use of leveled reading material;
- encourage students to read for information, read for pleasure, and read aloud expressively;
- expose students to a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, plays, trade books, short stories, newspapers/magazines, and informational text;
- utilize vocabulary-building techniques such as word walls, word of the day, use of idioms, and literary elements such as metaphors and similes across the curriculum, whenever appropriate.
- require that students utilize the foreign language collection in the library to read a variety of books (picture books, fiction, non-fiction) in Spanish.

All teachers will undergo professional development that supports language acquisition in the classroom by participating in the district's Literacy in the Middle initiative.

The policy will be available to all stakeholders on the school website, and will be reviewed annually.