



Brentwood Middle School Language Policy



Philosophy

At Brentwood Middle School we believe that language is the key to learning and literacy and leads to success in all content classes. Language gives us the ability to communicate ideas, learn, and think. It allows us to interact with a variety of people. We believe it is the most important link to the world around us. We value language as key to developing critical thinking; therefore, all MYP teachers at Brentwood are Language teachers who teach the skills of communication and literacy across the content classes.

At Brentwood, we value language development and understand that in order to be internationally minded, students must communicate in more than one language. All students are enrolled in either a French or Spanish class, or they are students who are in an ESL/CLD class to acquire their target language: English. The acquisition of language is an active process taught through authentic experiences integrating the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is Brentwood's goal to develop the language skills of each student to the highest level, enabling them to communicate successfully in local and global communities and build intercultural understanding.

Background

Brentwood is made up of a rich mosaic of students from the United States as well as other parts of the world. The diverse languages, cultures, and nationalities found within Brentwood means there are varying levels of academic and language proficiencies. Brentwood students come from over 10 countries with many reporting that they speak a language other than English at home, primarily Spanish. Students come from other different countries with approximately 7 different mother-tongue languages other than English spoken. Of the 437 student population, 143 students are identified as English Language Learners as identified by the WIDA-ACCESS. Overwhelmingly, English is the language of instruction and communication used in the school. Brentwood has 26 students enrolled in English Language Development courses.

Mother Tongue Support

English is promoted as the language of instruction at Brentwood Middle School. All students are enrolled in a Language Arts blocked class of 85 minutes daily each year. Language Arts classes include: 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Language Arts, Advanced Language Arts, or Corrective Reading

The development and maintenance of English for all learners is supported by regular assessment of student learning. Students complete a variety of school, district, and state mandated exams. These assessments are both formative and summative. Student results are reviewed and utilized for proper Language Arts placement annually for students and to inform future instruction for teachers. Language assessments include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Three writing tasks annually:

- Persuasive writing task
- Expository writing task
- Narrative writing task

2. Two Common assessments with data cycles that address common core standards

3. School City Assessment administered at midpoint in year to check before state test

4. PARCC annual test: state test of English Language Arts/literacy

Brentwood Middle School recognizes that language is key to all learning, and therefore all teachers are language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication. Therefore, all teachers are expected to:

- a. Have students reading and writing across all curriculums.
- b. Teach the vocabulary of their respective curriculums.
- c. Have students convey meaning of content through speaking
- d. Have students communicate with fluency in social and academic contexts

Language Acquisition & Development

At Brentwood Middle School, all students have equal access to IB courses regardless of their English language background. Brentwood School offers an Oral Language B and Oral Language C class (with the focus of language development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills) to non-native English speakers.

At Brentwood Middle School, all students must enroll in a 12-week foreign language class designed to allow students to communicate in the target language by practicing skills in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). A pretest is administered at the beginning of the course to determine 2nd language proficiency, and post-test is administered at the end of the 12 weeks. To assure preserving students' mother tongue, extension activities and inclusion of higher level synthesis questions are performed.

Brentwood Middle School has many practices and resources in place to involve parents in the planning of their student's language profile and development. These include the following:

1. Parent Teacher Conferences are held two times annually. Parents are invited and encouraged to make appointments with their student's teachers at any time during the year. Translation if needed for parents is offered
2. The distribution of the results of the WIDA tests and explanation of test and results before the end of the year which helps determine placement of language classes for following year.
3. Open House/Community Night is held annually. Parents are invited to learn about Brentwood Middle School's culture, policies, and practices
4. Parent phone calls and robocalls are routine allowing parent/teacher communication with Spanish translation.
5. Parents can access the school and teachers' websites for assignments and school news
6. Parents have access to parent portal to access students' grades and assignments

Brentwood offers English Language Development courses for CLD students. The primary purpose of these courses is to develop communication skills, build vocabulary, and focus on reading, writing, and cultural norms. These courses are intended to serve students who are relatively new to English, as required by the Office of Civil Rights. This series of courses builds capacity for non-English speakers to acquire academic and social language. Brentwood follows the State of Colorado measure of district growth of English Learners through English language proficiency assessment results (WIDA-Access).

Brentwood students come from many countries with many reporting that they speak a language other than English at home, primarily Spanish. Therefore, French is offered as an option to these students as their language acquisition class, and Spanish or French for English-speaking students.

Cultural Appreciation

Brentwood Middle School is a culturally and ethnically diverse school that develops an understanding of the perspectives of students from different backgrounds. Brentwood emphasizes on developing global awareness, cultural understanding, bi and/or multilingualism, and global engagement. Brentwood develops students' ability to think critically about a range of global issues in all subject areas including science, social studies, math, and English.

- Teachers teach students about global issues and people from a wide range of cultures and traditions. Cultural awareness is promoted by the following:
 - Teachers structure their teaching to acknowledge different perspectives
 - Teachers use scaffolding techniques in instruction for students who are English Language Learners

- Teachers draw on materials from a range of different cultures that promote understanding and multiculturalism
- Teachers and administrators maintain contact with families
- Culturally diverse annual assembly
- Culturally diverse displays in classrooms and hallways
- Culture Fair/Exhibition

Language in the Learner Profile

Keeping with the Learner Profile and the MYP, Brentwood utilizes a language-specific Learner Profile as it pertains to the students and teachers.

Inquirer - use language to gain new information or knowledge in order to make sense of the world.

Thinker - able to express thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly

Communicator - competent users of oral and written language in a variety of situations; listen attentively to details; speak confidently; read and write with fluency and comprehend what is conveyed

Risk-Taker - willing to attempt to read, write, and speak in all situations

Knowledgeable - have acquired vocabulary and understanding to discuss literary styles

Caring - show caring in use of language and the effect language has on others

Principled - aware that language is powerful and has a profound effect; must use it responsibly

Balanced - express themselves orally, visually, and in written form and balance listening and speaking when communicating with others

Reflective - reflect on their language and usage and development and continuously work towards proficiency

Open-minded - respect the differences and similarities in languages, dialects, and personal communication skills

Our language beliefs hold true for all students and we will continuously strive to provide opportunities for our students to learn in rich language environments, keeping in mind the individual needs of each child. Overall, Brentwood is committed to developing lifelong language learners who use their skills to make a positive difference in the world.

