

Language Policy

OMAHA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
An International Baccalaureate World School



The Central High School Language Policy outlines the goals for language learning at CHS. It includes English as the language of instruction, World Languages, and the English Learners department.

Philosophy

Omaha Central High School recognizes language as the key to learning. Thus, all teachers are in essence teachers of language. All teachers are responsible to facilitate the development of students in reading, writing and oral communication.

CHS embraces the IB philosophy encouraging students to be effective communicators in their first language as well as an additional language. Although we recognize not all students will meet this goal, we support all students having the opportunity.

Language study encompasses more than reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It involves the exploration of culture(s) associated with a specific language, promotes personal growth, enhances cultural identity, and develops effective, independent thinking, and fosters clear, precise communication.

The study of languages and cultures facilitates international mindedness in both students and staff.

Language Profile

Omaha Central is a large urban school with a long-standing reputation for academic excellence. Through many generations, we have developed and maintained the rigor of our writing program.

Omaha has been designated a relocation center for various United Nations world refugees including individuals from Afghanistan, Burma/Myanmar, Bhutan, Somalia, Sudan, the Karen people, Thailand and Nepal. As the “downtown” high school, Central is the school many of these students attend.

Although the dominant language at Central High School is English, more than 20 languages are first language for students. These languages include but are not limited to Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, French, Hmong, Icelandic, Karen, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Nuer, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese. Approximately 29% of the school population is Hispanic. Hispanic families receive academic support through the production of many materials in Spanish. Dependent upon numbers, key resources and materials are translated into additional languages as needed. Central High School has one full-time and one half-time Spanish speaking bilingual liaisons as well as access to district liaisons who are fluent in a variety of languages.

A second language is not required for graduation by Omaha Public Schools, however, two consecutive years of the same second language are encouraged by teachers and counselors as a frequent prerequisite for college admission.

Overview of language study at Omaha Central High School

- English is the primary language of the school
- French (years one through four and AP), German (years one through four and AP), and Spanish (years one through four, AP Language, and AP Literature) are available through the World Language department
- French (SL), German (SL), and Spanish (SL and HL) are choices for IB Language B
- A Spanish for Spanish Speakers sequence is available to students
- English Learner services are available for students

English

- English is the language of instruction.
- The year-long study of English is required at grades 9, 10, 11, 12.
- Honors English is available to students at grades 9 & 10 and is encouraged for pre-IB students.
- Advanced Placement English Language and Advanced Placement English Literature are available in grades 11 & 12 to students not involved in the IB Diploma Programme.
- All IB Diploma Programme students take IB English Language A: Literature HL.

World Languages

- Central High School has twelve district feeder middle schools and attracts students from parochial and neighboring district schools.
- Middle schools offer a variety of World Languages (Chinese, French, German, and Spanish).
- Many students study a year of a second language in middle school. Depending upon their success, they may enter high school at the second-year level. They also have the option to review the first-year level, and/or choose a different second language to study.
- Students whose first language is Spanish are encouraged to pursue the sequence of Spanish for Spanish Speakers. This sequence is available to students who are fluent in speaking, reading, writing and listening both English and Spanish. This sequence of courses is also available to our EL (English Learners) population. We believe that development of a student's first language enhances development of an additional language. After two years of Spanish for Spanish Speakers, students may take AP Spanish Language and then AP Spanish Literature.

- CHS offers accelerated Spanish and French sequences in which students cover the traditional three-year curriculum in two. This sequence is available to students concurrently enrolled in Honors English 9 and Honors English 10. Students will then take either Honors Spanish/French 7-8 (4th year) and Advanced Placement Spanish/French Language or two years of IB Spanish SL or IB French SL.
- In August 2017 CHS added Spanish ab Initio to accommodate a student interested in pursuing the IBDP but not at a level to study Language B. In the 2018-19 CHS supported a student's Language A Self-Study in Hebrew. In 2022-23 IBDP students will be pursuing French and Spanish ab Initio.

English Learners (EL)

- The EL program is designed to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).
- Specialized instruction provided by trained EL teachers and paraprofessionals encourages development of the students' abilities to speak, listen, comprehend, read and write English.
- The goal is for students to participate fully in the mainstream school curriculum as quickly as possible.
- English Learners are held accountable to the same standards as non-EL students for graduation.
- EL sheltered classes are available for 1st year English and United States History. These classes meet the required state standards but provide a modified environment as students transition to the mainstream curriculum.
- EL provides support for maintenance of the student's first language and pride in individual cultural heritage.
- Summer classes are available to EL students to provide additional support for improving English and/or credit accrual.
- Teen Literacy is available to high school EL students who arrive with little or no previous education in their first language.
- The Migrant Education Center (TLC) is also available for eligible students.

Extended Opportunities to Develop Language and Culture

- Teachers from Mexico, Japan, and India
- Parent Meetings
- World Language Club
- Music classes
- Art classes
- City festivals
- Library materials including books and periodicals available in multiple languages
- Diversity club
- International films
- Tutoring
- Latino Leaders
- Kaneko Arts outreach
- Spanish National Honor Society
- Thrive Club
- Guest speakers
- Service opportunities throughout the community
- International Exchange Students
- Teacher sponsored summer travel
- MOD (Minority Opportunities Day)

Language Policy Review

The language committee will review the Language Policy biannually. It is anticipated as the IB programmes at Central High School grow, the policy will evolve and will be modified.

2016-2017 Cathy Andrus, Tom Wagner, Megan Kaminski-Doloto, Erica Meyer, Jodi Martinez

2018-2019

2020-2021

2021-2022 Cathy Andrus, Paul Nielson, Jon Flannagan, Jennifer Stastny, Megan Kaminski-Doloto, Erica Meyer, Kathryn Rude

Resources

DP Language courses: overview and placement guidance. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate. 2021

Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate. 2008

Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate. 2008