

Proviso Mathematics & Science Academy International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Language Policy

Philosophy

The Proviso Mathematics & Science Academy holds that each faculty member is a teacher of language. All teachers model the use of appropriate and academic language in their interactions with students and students are expected to do the same. At the same time, we recognize that not every student enters with the same linguistic background, abilities, and needs. Although the language of instruction at Proviso Mathematics & Science Academy is English, we hold that each language and culture is to be respected, celebrated, and fostered.

We place such a great importance on language acquisition that we continue to require all students to take a minimum of two years of the same world language (at a time when many local secondary schools have reduced world language instruction to an elective). Many of our students, even those who are not part of the Diploma Programme, opt to continue in language acquisition for all four years of high school. Additionally many of our students believe that there is both personal satisfaction and great benefit in seeking proficiency in more than two languages and therefore elect to enroll in a third.

Language Profile

The student body of Proviso Mathematics & Science Academy is a community of learners from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, with a high percentage of heritage Spanish speakers. As Proviso Mathematics & Science Academy is a selective enrollment, public high school, there is a very low percentage of limited English proficiency students.

The language of instruction of the school is English and we offer language acquisition in French and Spanish. Language A is offered in English (HL) and in Spanish (SL).

Support for the Mother Tongue

We have students who are bilingual (whose native language is not English). We encourage the mother tongue by offering heritage speaker classes prior to the Diploma Programme years. We have also added Spanish A SL to the Language A options. Should the need arise, we would offer the self-taught Language A option as well.

Practices

Students who meet the Proviso Mathematics and Science Academy selective enrollment requirements are invited to enroll, regardless of their legal/documentation status. This is also the case for those who apply to the Diploma Programme.

Prior to enrollment and class selection in Proviso Mathematics and Science Academy, students who are heritage speakers of a language other than English or who have had prior instruction in one of our Language B offerings, are given a placement test to determine their level of ability in second language acquisition. Prior to entering the Diploma Programme, students may be placed in higher level language acquisition or heritage language specific classes. We currently offer language acquisition courses in French and Spanish.

Once registered in the Diploma Programme, students are given a choice of French or Spanish offered as Language B SL. We now offer Spanish A SL as well. Should it be deemed necessary, language acquisition may be offered at the Ab Initio level.

Support

In consideration for the high number of Spanish heritage speaking students and their parents, interpretation/translation services (for both oral and written communications) are provided by Spanish speaking faculty/staff as well as through outside translation services. For those parents whose native language is something other than English or Spanish, outside language translation services are utilized.

Students determined to be in need of additional support in the language of instruction (in this case, English) could receive services in two ways. Students could be cohorted in an English class and provided language support by a teacher dually licensed in English and ESL (English as a Second Language). Additionally, PMSA students could receive support through a case management system in which ESL- and Bilingual-endorsed teachers provide tutoring and language support through regular check-ins. PMSA will make determinations for language support based on student enrollment needs.

There are a variety of structures in place at the school level for those students in need of language support. Group and individual peer tutoring is offered during all student lunch periods in our student services center and may be available before and/or after school. Faculty assistance is available by arrangement before and/or after school or during student lunch periods. Saturday school is held bi-monthly, allowing students small group and one-on-one teacher assistance and giving students access to a variety of school resources.

Our Learning Resource Center (LRC) has both fiction and non-fiction titles in both French and Spanish and additional resources are available through the LRC databases. The librarian closely monitors student interaction with the available resources and additional language materials may be added as need and/or demand increases.

As every teacher is a teacher of language, teachers across curricular areas are given continuing professional development in order to support language instruction in the classroom and language learning is reinforced across the curriculum. We have extensive holdings regarding literacy in our on-site professional library that can be accessed by faculty to further enrich language learning in every classroom.

This Language Policy is posted on the PMSA website under the IB Diploma Programme tab. This language policy is subject to review and revision by a voluntary committee composed of members of the Proviso Mathematics and Science Academy faculty, who take faculty, student, parent, and community feedback into consideration during the review and revision process. The policy is then submitted to administration for approval and may additionally be subject to district approval.

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