

Language Policy

Lawton Chiles Middle Academy - March 2011

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to guide each student to attain extraordinary achievement and a continuous desire to learn in an ever-changing global environment.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Lawton Chiles Middle Academy Language Policy Committee was led by the librarian and consists of one representative each from Language A, Sciences, Mathematics and Humanities, in addition to the MYP coordinator designee. (Susan MacDonald, Lisa Rosa, Jon Coombs, Beverly Brown, Marsha Yoder, Susie Kallan)

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Philosophy

Basic Assumptions

- Reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing competencies are integrated throughout students' learning experiences and throughout the eight subject areas.
- Benchmarks for the state standards are repeated as needed in course sequences. As students progress from one course to the next, increases should occur in the complexity of materials and tasks and in the students' independence in the application of skills and strategies.
- Learning tasks and materials accommodate the individual needs of students.
- Updated technology is available for students to develop competencies.

Major Concepts/Content

Lawton Chiles Middle Academy strives to provide integrated educational experiences in reading, writing, listening, viewing, speaking, language, and literature throughout the subject areas. Content includes, but is not be limited to, the following:

- Using the reading process to construct meaning from a wide range of literary, informational and technical texts
- Using the writing process to communicate information and ideas
- Using listening, viewing and speaking strategies
- Understanding the power of language and using language in authentic contexts
- Understanding the common features of a variety of literary forms
- Responding critically to visual, oral and written texts

School-wide Goals

All members of the Lawton Chiles Middle Academy community are aware language acquisition is at the heart of our mission statement. Writing and communicating are imperative if we are to participate in a global community. To this end, the members of the Lawton Chiles Middle Academy's Language Policy Committee have established the following goals to be reviewed and evaluated annually:

- All community members will develop and refine the skills necessary to effectively communicate in a global environment.
- Students will develop an appreciation for other languages and cultures.
- All community members will cultivate a global environment within our school.
- Students will articulate their feelings and experiences in standard language as well as Language B.
- Students will use appropriate terminology specific to each subject area.
- Faculty will emphasize authentic learning experiences and encourage intellectual curiosity among all community members.
- Students will be equipped with the lifelong skills necessary to function in a 21st Century environment.

LANGUAGE COURSES

Language A

The primary language of Lawton Chiles Middle Academy is English while Spanish is taught as the second language. English (Language A) is taught according to the guidelines set forth in our state standards, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. It is our belief all faculty members are language teachers and are expected to incorporate the teaching of language into their curriculum. LCMA's "Universal Expectations" (see the next page) are posted in every classroom, setting forth the grammatical expectations each student is to maintain in their classroom work. Faculty members promote "school based inquiry" using library resources, such as online databases and Internet resources found on the library's web site, "Destiny". Students understand when thinking of language diversity, that "texting" should be referred to as a third language and is not appropriate in the majority of school or professional environments.

For our students whose mother tongue is Spanish, the library provides Spanish books, DVD's and periodicals to enhance the understanding of their own culture.

LCMA Universal Expectations

	Expectation	How will teachers incorporate these ideas?	Comments
1	Complete Sentences	Require complete sentences & check for them.	Not everything needs to be in CS, but students need to understand that it is expected of them, at times, in all classes.
2	Correct Capitalization	Check for the basics like proper nouns.	people's names, named buildings, titles, countries, etc.
3	Proper End Punctuation	Be sure that sentences end with appropriate end marks.	periods, question marks or exclamation marks (used sparingly)
4	Correct Spelling of Basic Words	Check for correct spelling.	common words, such as they're vs. their vs. there, where vs. were, etc.
5	Outlining	Model & require that students use proper outlining format.	(when appropriate)
6	Appropriate Verbal Communication	Emphasize the importance of using correct grammar in students' speech.	"I am"; "we are", etcetera

LANGUAGE B

At this time all students with the exception of those engaged in intensive reading take foundation-level Spanish as Language B each year. Students in year 3 have the opportunity to take high-school credit Spanish as their language B course; all other students in years 1 – 3 take what is described by our district and state as “advanced Spanish”. Next year, if approved, we will be offering Honors Spanish 1 for high school credit to some of our more advanced 7th graders and a year later, Honors Spanish 2 for high school credit to these students in their 8th grade year. In the coming year our goal is to hire a fifth Spanish teacher so that even those students in intensive reading will have three years of Spanish. Every Spanish course follows the IB subject area guide and is taught for a full year, encouraging students to build their skills in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. These are the same skills that are identified as integral to our school’s philosophy, emphasizing to students the inter-relatedness of all eight MYP subject areas. In addition, students develop an awareness and appreciation for their own culture and the culture of others. Teachers use differentiated instruction and a variety of teaching strategies in the classroom to maximize student learning.

ASSESSMENT

Students are continually assessed using rubrics and formative and summative assessments as outlined in *MYP: From principles into practice*. Teachers will offer a variety of assessment types including projects, presentations, discussions, tests, essays and other forms of written communication, in addition to self and peer evaluations. Students may also be assessed using external requirements such as FCAT and Discovery tests. Parents and students alike will receive feedback on student progress in multiple areas including student behavior; performance related to MYP criteria; performance related to the MYP Areas of Interaction; performance related to state exams; and performance related to the district grading system. Furthermore, a sequence of expectations which categorizes a students’ overall proficiency as beginning, intermediate or advanced, building up to the 8th grade, are being developed in each subject area.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

While we have students who speak Spanish as their native language, we do not have any students who are non-English speaking. In other words, all of our students speak English fluently. For this reason, we do not currently offer any additional services. Our guidance

department at the school monitors the status of each of our students every nine weeks. Should this situation change, we would address the needs of non-English speaking students.

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

According to surveys originating from our district, languages spoken in the homes of our L.C.M.A. students include English and Spanish. Throughout the year, the school provides opportunities for students to engage in multicultural activities, many of which are embedded within the curriculum of our subject areas, such as the study of various cultures in humanities and through literature in Language A and reading classes. In addition, we provide opportunities that enhance the curriculum such as bringing in acrobats to perform and educate our students about the customs, language and culture of China. We also have a guest speaker program established so that parents who immigrated to the United States or who lived in another country can come to speak to our students. We have suggestions and guidelines posted for creating a presentation posted on our website. After parents speak, they reflect on their experiences and turn their notes and self-reflection in to the coordinator or classroom teacher. We make those notes available to the families that have requested copies so they can discuss them with their families, and we use the reflection to help us improve our program. Our hallways reflect our international mindset as each of the signs is printed in Spanish and Chinese in addition to English. The cafeteria staff searches for international recipes and makes side dishes and salads from a variety of countries. They include the dishes along with the name, a description and the country of origin on the salad bar for all students to see and taste. Our library demonstrates evidence of our school's global perspective as it houses multicultural periodicals, books and online resources for students to peruse for research or leisure. We offer students books and magazines printed in other languages in addition to translated works.