



LANGUAGE POLICY

Benjamin Elijah Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School IB Partnership

Benjamin E. Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School facilitates a language philosophy that recognizes the necessity for language proficiency. We believe that language support encompasses practices and skills that allow students to understand and communicate in spoken and written formats, hence all teachers at Benjamin E. Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School are language teachers. Through language, students are able to explore areas of interests, become lifelong learners, and effectively communicate in a diverse, multicultural world.

English is the language of instruction, except for the World Language courses, Spanish and French. An ongoing collaborative effort with the district's English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department results in increased retention, student motivation, and support. Concurrently, attentive implementation of the Common Core Curriculum and World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) result in further attainment of English language proficiency while integrating content.

Federal and state laws require information to be collected about the primary and home language of every student upon enrollment in the school district. Collection of language data takes place via a survey provided by Atlanta Public Schools. The survey is currently available in twenty-one languages.

LANGUAGE NEEDS

Fluency in both oral and written communication is an essential component in promoting local, national, and global awareness. Language instruction at Benjamin E. Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School encourages effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in all classes. Through curricular incorporation of the Approaches to Learning Skills (ATLs) in IB pedagogy, Social Skills and Communication Skills will be appropriately developed and enhanced among students. Proficiency in English as a second language alongside students' mother tongue language will advance learners' mastery and requisite mobility.

Second-language proficiency fosters global connections. Reading materials from a variety of languages and cultures support the essential global awareness expected of IB learners. The Media Center houses materials that cater to the diverse needs of language learners.

CURRENT PRACTICES

Benjamin E. Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School students are provided instruction in English/Language Arts yearly. At Benjamin E. Mays High School, World Language instruction is offered to the majority of students in Years 4 and 5, grades 9 and 10. Spanish or French is required for two years in the same language as a graduation requirement. Students can elect to continue their studies in World Language instruction in grades 11 and/or 12 beyond their graduation requirements. At Jean Childs Young Middle School World Language is required every year. World Languages courses aim to build competence in speaking, reading, and writing in a second language.



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The World Languages Department within the district and Atlanta Virtual Academy are additional resources that assist with language learning and support. Atlanta Virtual Academy offers an extended curriculum which includes the following World Languages: Chinese, French, Latin and Spanish. Access to interpreters allow parents who speak languages other than English to actively participate in their child's education.

Non-native English speakers are instructed according to their proficiency as determined by the WIDA Can Do Descriptors. ESOL instructors provide individualized instruction in a small classroom setting to students whose WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) ranges from Entering (ELP-1); Emerging (ELP-2); Developing (ELP-3); Expanding (ELP-4); Bridging (ELP-5) to Reaching (ELP-6).

ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND FLUENCY

Formative and summative assessments of language learning are vital to evaluating the efficacy of current pedagogy and consequential student understanding. Formative assessment is demonstrated in a variety of forms in the classroom setting virtually via class discussions, interactive games, collaborative assignments, and short written responses. Summative assessment is demonstrated through formal writing, research projects, speaking presentations and standardized assessments, all of which validate expected competency.

If expected competency is not evident, teachers are expected to re-teach standards. At Benjamin E. Mays High School, all teachers provide a dedicated weekly tutorial day for an additional hour after school. Supplemental home assignments that promote student responsibility are also an integral part of bridging the gap between what is learned in class, and what can be learned through Self-Management Skills.

SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Benjamin E. Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School will support all students in language acquisition in the following ways:

- Implementing reading and writing strategies across the curriculum.
- Selecting and providing access to literature from a variety of cultural backgrounds and perspectives.
- Providing multiple opportunities at all levels of instruction for students to read, write, and speak.
- Allowing students ample choice in their reading materials and encouraging reading for enjoyment.
- Providing differentiated instruction for students with learning disabilities and students who are academically talented and gifted.
- Assessing students formally and informally in the classroom using check-ins, writing prompts, reading comprehension checks, reading skills assessments, speeches, and essays.



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SUMMARY

Benjamin E. Mays High School and Jean Childs Young Middle School are committed to developing an opportunity for ongoing support for mother tongue language as well as development of native tongue excellence for all students. When needed and/or requested, members of the school community representing other languages will be afforded the opportunity to get translators for meetings and conferences. Adherence to WIDA Can-Do Descriptors, course offerings, data collection and teacher support play vital roles in language development. Commitment to new developments in the language policy and philosophy will be ongoing.