

Flathead High School

IB Programme Language Policy

Last Updated March 2016

The Mission of Flathead High School is to

- develop a community of engaged learners;
- promote compassion, knowledge and creativity;
- foster effective communication; and
- encourage independent and critical thinking.

Flathead High School seeks to create positive relationships among students, staff, parents and the community to provide a safe, respectful and energetic learning environment by:

- adopting personal responsibility for learning and growth;
- being engaged citizens with a global perspective; and
- striving for a healthy intellectual, emotional and physical balance.

Philosophy

We recognize that language is an inherent part of *all* curricula at Flathead High School and that *all* teachers are language teachers. At the same time we also recognize that a central tenant of the International Baccalaureate program is intercultural understanding and creating a better and more peaceful world. In short, language is the vehicle for *all* learning. Language study combines and facilitates global communication and cultural understanding.

As our community moves from a culturally isolated homogeneous status to one of increasing diversity and world involvement, FHS is making changes to reflect the emerging need. It is our goal to expose all students to the world that surrounds them. Language and culture go hand in hand. We know language study enhances cognitive skill, empathy and compassion, as well as communication. Language shapes culture and culture shapes language. It is through English that students begin to view the languages and cultures of the world. As students begin their studies of other languages they develop a deeper sense of being a member of a world community.

Language Profile

For all students and teachers at Flathead High School, English is the language of instruction. We have a small community of English language learners. Within Kalispell School District, for the 2015-16 school year, we have 27 students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) out of 5890 in our district population. We have only 2 out of 1370 identified as LEP at Flathead High School, although there are more who are not identified as needing assistance under the legal definition. The consistent population of non-English speakers comes from Mexico, Russia, and the Ukraine.

Kalispell Public Schools has a newly-created instructional program for any English Language Learner that aims to help him/her to successfully achieve in the classroom where the language of instruction is

English. To help these students meet Montana's proficient level of achievement on state assessments, and the opportunity to participate fully in our society, a student may be provided one or more of the following instructional programs:

- Title I
- District Reading Tutors
- Leveled Reading Group
- KMS/FHS/GHS Reading Intervention Program

Language Situations and Practices

District English as a Second Language Learners

Kalispell School District is a very homogenous community with generally fewer than 50 students out of 5,000+ that are identified as Limited English Proficient. These students are identified and evaluated on a case by case basis and given support as directed by the District Policy. There is also a small population of students that are speakers of other language besides English who are not considered LEP. The language of instruction throughout the district is English.

To meet the needs of the pool of English Language Learners the district has implemented the Support Team for English Language Learner Assistance (STELLA). This program uses resources in our school district and includes the Northwest Montana Educational Cooperative. Any student needing language support can receive these services. Our services for the emerging non-English speakers are currently weak but are being developed.

Process for Student Identification

- Criteria for Identification (http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/userfiles/-5/my%20files/criteria_lep_status.pdf?id=526)
- Home Language Survey (http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/userfiles/-5/my%20files/kps_home_lang_survey.pdf?id=527)
- Notification of Services (http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/userfiles/-5/my%20files/lep_notification.pdf?id=528)
- School Procedures (Time Line) (http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/userfiles/-5/my%20files/kps_services_timeline.pdf?id=529)
- STELLA (Support Team for English Language Learner Assistance) (http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/userfiles/-5/my%20files/kalispell_stella_template.pdf?id=530)

IB Programme

The language of instruction in our district is only English. We teach four years of French and Spanish as second languages. At Flathead High School we have, to date, registered fewer than 3 students, whose first language is something other than English, into the full IB Diploma Program. Students who are deemed highly competent in their first language are required to take a language other than English or their native language for their four year IB course of study in group two. To date we have only had Spanish speakers enter the program, so they take French. We recognize that the continued study of

these skills is crucial in one's language development. Because we have such a small population of students in this situation, the district does not offer more advanced courses in the mother tongue, so we will support the development of the mother tongue in other ways.

Content instruction in languages other than English is not offered. Emphasis is placed on the acquisition of English language skills. Resources for the support of mother-tongue are being accumulated. Books in Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian are in the library to allow these speakers to continue to develop their mother-tongue. The majority of the non-english speaking students we have at FHS come from these three cultures and continue to speak their L1 at home.

In 2014-15 Flathead High School added the International Baccalaureate Ab Initio Language exam option to our programme. We offer this program to meet the needs of students that have transferred into FHS from another school where they either did not offer language study or the student didn't start their studies as a freshman, and thus is unable to complete the four year minimum required for passing the Standard Level IB Language exam.

Language Policy Provisions

We recognize that the Flathead High School language policy is a document that will change as practices and the population of the partner schools evolve. While we cannot predict our future needs, we will examine the demographics of the many schools that feed into Flathead High School. We will revisit this document every 5 years or as needed depending on changing situations at our school. In addition, changes in the International Baccalaureate Programme and/or changes in the school's language program may require attention to the Language Policy. The committee will be made up of the Foreign Language department, the IB Coordinator and administration. We will also request the assistance of our current director of the Northwest Montana Educational Cooperative who is certified in English as a Second Language and aware of the changing needs in our district in relation to this population.

As a staff we recognize that we are ALL teachers of language. This is an ongoing discussion for our staff at Professional Development meetings. In support of the Common Core Initiative and Montana State Standards, our school has developed multiple tools that are intended to strengthen language skills (both spoken and written) across ALL curricular areas. This entails common vocabulary and expectations when teaching reading and writing. This effort has yielded a uniformity in effort that has positively affected the whole school. See the Assessment Policy for examples.

Communication of Language Policy

This policy is linked on the Flathead High School International Baccalaureate webpage and has been shared with teachers of the IB programme as well as the rest of the staff. Resources from the district and the state are available through the Montana State Office of Public Instruction as well as locally through our district IB Programme website and regular district policy site.

See the following links for other policies aimed at student achievement.

- Montana Standards for World Languages -Complete policy (<http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/standards/ContStds-WrldLang.pdf>)
- FHS IB Assessment Policy ([add link](#))
- FHS Special Education Needs Policy ([add link](#))

- State Resources for Limited English Proficiency Students
(http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/index.html?gpm=1_5#gpm1_5)
- Title III and English Language Learners - Montana Office of Public Instruction
(http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/index.html?gpm=1_5)

Appendix A: Montana Standards for World Languages

<http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/standards/ContStds-WrldLang.pdf>

“To relate in a meaningful way to another human being one must be able to communicate. Studying world languages, whether modern, classical or Native American, enormously increases one’s ability to understand culture and to see connections. These standards reflect the reality of language offerings in Montana today, and also envision the future of world languages for Montana’s students in K-12 language learning programs. All students are capable of learning a second language. Language learning should start early and be a sequential process leading to enjoyable lifelong learning. The earlier a student begins language learning, the more proficient the learner becomes. Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience.

“[Montana] must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to school from non-English-speaking backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language. To study another language and culture gives one the powerful key to successful communication: Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom.” (From Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century, EMC Publishing, 1996.)

Classical languages and some American Indian languages will often have a different communication focus than modern languages. The standards and benchmarks, designed to encompass all aspects of language learning, are applied as they fit the recognized purpose of the study of a particular language. Oral proficiency is not the major outcome of studying a classical language nor are reading and writing primary outcomes in learning all American Indian languages.

Communication

Content Standard 1— Students engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Content Standard 2— Students understand and interpret spoken and/or written language on a variety of topics.

Content Standard 3— Students convey information, concepts, and ideas to listeners and/or readers for a variety of purposes.

Cultures

Content Standard 4— Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives, practices, and products/contributions of cultures studied, and use this knowledge to interact effectively in cultural contexts.

Connections

Content Standard 5— Students reinforce and increase his/her knowledge of other disciplines through world languages.

Content Standard 6—Students acquire information and perspectives through authentic materials in world languages and within cultures.

Comparisons

Content Standard 7— Students recognize that different languages use different patterns and can apply this knowledge to his/her own language.

Content Standard 8—Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the culture studied and his/her own.

Communities

Content Standard 9— Students apply language skills and cultural knowledge in daily life.