



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2851 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657

phone 773.534.5725 fax 773.534.5784

[www.agassizschool.org](http://www.agassizschool.org)

## Agassiz Elementary School Language Policy Table of Contents

### **Section 1: Introduction**

- Agassiz School Mission and Vision
- Language Philosophy
- School Language Profile (Students and Staff)
- Language Policy Development
- Annual Review

### **Section 2: English Language Learners and Mother Tongue Support**

- ELL, Bilingual Programming, and Mother Tongue Support

### **Section 3: Language Acquisition**

- Instructional Practices for Arabic in the PYP
- Instructional Practices for Japanese in the PYP and MYP
- Instructional Practices for English at Agassiz
- Integration of Language
- Equity of Access to IB PYP and MYP Students

### **Section 4: Access and Intervention**

- Response to Intervention (RtI)

### **Section 5: Agassiz Community Stakeholders**

- Staff Professional Development
- Parental Involvement
- Communication

### **Section 6: Glossary**

### **Section 7: Works Cited**



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2851 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657

phone 773.534.5725 fax 773.534.5784

www.agassizschool.org

## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **Our Mission**

Our promise is to provide a nurturing and rigorous learning environment. We will instill within our students a love of learning by identifying their positive distinctions through academics, the arts and athletics. We empower students to be responsible, contributing members of an international community.

### **Our Vision**

As a result, Agassiz students strive to be life-long learners who are persistent problem solvers, are inquisitive about the world, have a strong sense of self, and articulate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through ongoing reflection.

Agassiz students strive to be empathetic by understanding different perspectives while being mindful of their unique viewpoint.

Agassiz students strive to be caring and principled, and to possess a foundation of knowledge that enables them to build a more peaceful world.

### **Language Philosophy**

The Agassiz Vision and Mission Statement, as well as the IB learner profile attributes, allow students to focus on the qualities of life-long learners who are aware of their language profile and express themselves in more than one language. We believe the learning of language is a shared responsibility within the school community. All community members, teachers, students, and parents have a role in supporting active language learning, both within and across subjects. The learning of language is a critical component in the development of international mindedness in an International Baccalaureate programme.

#### ***Learning of Language:***

Beginning in Kindergarten, Agassiz students have an opportunity to learn an additional language. Our language programs are designed to provide all students with the skills and knowledge within the context of a local and global community so they can successfully contribute to and actively participate in the world.

#### ***Learning about Language:***

Students explore how language works and become effective communicators who understand their place in a multi-lingual, global community. Students understand the need to communicate is instinctive and develop an understanding of how to use language in their everyday lives.

#### ***Learning through Language:***

Students are encouraged to use language as a tool when reading, writing, viewing, presenting, listening, and speaking for a variety of audiences and purposes. Language also serves as a vehicle for the inquiry process where students explore the functional and aesthetic roles it can play in their learning throughout the school day. Teachers support



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School



**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

2851 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657

phone 773.534.5725 fax 773.534.5784

[www.agassizschool.org](http://www.agassizschool.org)

students learning of language, learning about language, and through language in relevant, engaging, and challenging units of inquiry.

### **School Language Profile (Students and Staff)**

The primary academic and instructional language spoken at Agassiz Elementary School is English. In alignment with the Common Core State Standards, schoolwide English Language Arts instruction focuses on the development of literacy, fluency, and comprehension skills necessary for students to effectively communicate for a variety of purposes.

#### ***Student Language Profile***

The mother tongue of most Agassiz students is English. Other languages spoken by students include: Arabic, Bosnian, Chaochow/Teochui (Chinese), Ewe, Farsi, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Mandarin, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

#### ***Staff Language Profile***

The languages other than English spoken by Agassiz staff include: Arabic, Assyrian, French, Japanese, Greek, American Sign Language, Polish, Spanish and Tagalog.

### **Language Policy Development**

The following key steps were used to develop the language policy:

- Language policy committee established
- Survey of teachers regarding philosophy of teaching language to all students
- Parent language survey to determine the language(s) spoken in the household
- Draft of language policy created
- Feedback of draft from various constituents (leadership team, primary and middle school teachers, reading specialist, language acquisition teachers, bilingual coordinator and governing body)
- Revisions of draft made and policy finalized
- Publication of the language policy to all stakeholders

### **Annual Review**

Annually, IB PYP and MYP teachers, as well as school administration will review this policy to make any warranted changes.



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School



**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

2851 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657

phone 773.534.5725 fax 773.534.5784

[www.agassizschool.org](http://www.agassizschool.org)

## **Section 2: English Language Learners and Mother Tongue Support**

### **ELL, Bilingual Programming, and Mother Tongue Support**

Our English Language Learners (ELLs) receive English as a Second Language (ESL) pull out and push in support. If a classroom teacher is endorsed in ESL, support is also provided in a student's homeroom. If there are more than 20 ELL students who speak the same language, we also provide bilingual services to them in their mother tongue. Qualifying 2nd-8th grade students may also participate in the CPS Newcomer Program, which takes place during the summer. Additionally, many of our staff are bilingual and provide language support throughout the school day. Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue to express their ideas and their learning. Agassiz teachers and staff are also exploring how to incorporate translanguaging, or the ability of a student to draw upon multiple languages naturally and flexibly, in our classrooms.

We take an additive approach to language and believe students gain language proficiency when provided with the opportunity to use both their mother tongue and their host language. Many Agassiz students attend weekend language classes to continue the development of their mother tongue and support is provided in school to ensure students can use their preferred language when communicating with teachers or with their peers. We strive to support and highlight language learning through our annual process fairs, through classroom family visits where culture, tradition, and language are shared with students, as well as through the physical environment. Our school and classroom libraries provide students with texts in their mother tongue, as well as in Arabic and Japanese, the language programs at Agassiz.

At Agassiz, we support our students and their families whose mother tongue is a language other than English. We encourage families and their children to use and develop their mother tongue at home. We believe that promoting and developing a student's mother tongue can accelerate their rate of English language acquisition, as well as increase their confidence and enhance their international mindset. Therefore, we support the maintenance of students' mother tongue while they acquire an additional language, and when possible, provide parents with the support and resources in their mother tongue.

## **Section 3: Language Acquisition**

### **Instructional Practices for the Provision of Arabic:**

Students in Kindergarten through Fifth grade participate in Arabic class once a week for 60 minutes. Currently, we have two native speakers of Arabic on staff. Arabic instruction focuses on all domains of language acquisition: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students learn through instructional units of inquiry that are developed according to the Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards. These foreign language standards focus on communication, cultures, communities, and making connections and comparisons.



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School

## **Instructional Practices for the Provision of Japanese:**

Students in Kindergarten through Eighth grade have Japanese class twice every six days. Students are taught in heterogeneous groups with differentiated inquiries and expectations according to their language phase. All four language domains are taught to all phases of learners with a greater focus on listening and speaking in the initial phases, and on reading and writing in the more advanced phases. Japanese curricular units are developed employing the IB PYP and MYP subject guides, the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages Standards and the Common Core Language Arts Standards. Each unit develops core vocabulary, grammar constructs, and concludes with a final summative task that allows students to use what they have learned for a real-world purpose. In MYP, final summative tasks are assessed in the following criteria twice a year: A: Comprehending spoken and visual text, B: Comprehending written and visual text, C: Communicating in response to spoken, written and visual text, and D: Using language in spoken and written form. Additional information regarding the IB MYP Japanese curriculum can be found in the IB-MYP Language Acquisition subject guide.

## **Instructional Practices for the Provision of English**

In alignment with the Common Core State Standards, we incorporate and ensure a balance of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the English language throughout our Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes.

### *Reading*

We practice a balanced reading approach, which includes comprehension of informational and narrative texts, looking at the vocabulary and parts of speech, exploring language in expository and narrative texts, as well as oral and silent reading fluency in texts.

### *Writing*

We teach students to compose, write and revise expository, narrative and argumentative/persuasive texts on a variety of assigned, as well as self-selected topics. We write for a variety of purposes.

### *Speaking and Listening*

We explicitly teach speaking and listening dialogically, academically, and conversationally. We emphasize active listening and civil discourse as a part of our teaching.

## **Integration of Language within Subjects**

Reading, writing, speaking and listening are utilized in every subject area in the Primary Years and Middle Years programmes. Explicit instruction in how to read primary documents, expository texts, and other required texts, both digital and in print, takes place in every classroom. Students are required to learn and use academic vocabulary in all the disciplines, as well as articulate their ideas and thoughtfully engage in discussions across subject areas. Students are expected to write in the persuasive, expository, and narrative forms in all the disciplines. Scaffolding and differentiation within these subjects is used to provide all ELs access to the curriculum.



## **Equity of Access to IB PYP and MYP Students**

At Agassiz School, we use the federally mandated Response to Intervention (RtI) model to ensure equity of access to our curriculum to all students. At the primary and intermediate levels, students have access to the Primary Years Programme. At the middle school level, that is access to the Middle Years Programme. In the following section, the implementation of RtI at Agassiz is outlined.

### **Section 4: Response to Intervention (RtI)**

#### **Response to Intervention (RtI)**

At Agassiz, it is important we meet the language needs of all our students. In some cases, students may need language support (speaking, listening, reading and/or writing) beyond daily classroom instruction. In this case, Agassiz uses a tiered support system called Response to Intervention (RtI). Each tier provides increasing support and the process is designed to improve each students' academic performance, as well as their confidence.

#### ***Tier 1***

*Tier 1* is the first level of classroom-based intervention and is comprised of the curriculum in which all students are instructed. Students are assessed using both formal and informal assessment tools at regular intervals to determine growth.

#### ***Tier 2***

*If adequate progress is not made with Tier 1 support, a student is moved to Tier 2.* Students in *Tier 2* are given additional small group or individualized instruction within the classroom.

#### ***Tier 3***

*If adequate progress is not made with Tier 2 supports, then a student is moved to Tier 3.* Students are referred for Tier 3 intervention, which provides small group (not more than 4) or individualized instruction outside of the classroom 3-5 times per week for 30 minutes. If progress is not made, a referral for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is considered.

### **Section 5: Agassiz Community Stakeholders**

#### **Language Professional Development for Staff**

All educators at Agassiz Elementary School are responsible for supporting the development of student language. Professional development is provided annually to staff by the bilingual coordinator and focuses on supporting all students in their acquisition of the host language, as well as their mother tongue. Previous professional development has focused on the following:

- Determining how ELs are identified
- Assessing and exiting ELs
- Examining teacher misconceptions regarding ELs
- Learning how ELs experience school with and without adequate supports



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2851 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657

phone 773.534.5725 fax 773.534.5784

[www.agassizschool.org](http://www.agassizschool.org)

- Learning the difference between content specific and general academic vocabulary and how to effectively teach both
- Engaging in strategies for providing comprehensible input to ELs
- Scaffolding classwork to make it accessible and meaningful for ELs

Agassiz staff also completes a survey regarding their perspectives on cultural and linguistic diversity, which informs future professional development and allows the staff to discuss the instructional practices that best support the language diversity in our school community.

### **Parental Involvement**

Agassiz holds a variety of parent events throughout the year, including three process fairs, parent grade level meetings, and guided classroom visits/walkthroughs. Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom to share their cultural heritage and their family traditions. Parents and students are also surveyed annually to determine their cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds, which is used by teachers use to help identify connections between and amongst students in the school community. This information is also used to target our library book purchases and to focus our classroom cultural studies throughout the year.

### **Communication of Language Policy**

The following are ways Agassiz will communicate the Language Policy to its community:

- All PYP and MYP teachers will be given the opportunity to review the policy with IBC.
- The IBC will share the policy with the governing body.
- The language policy will be available on the school's website



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2851 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657

phone 773.534.5725 fax 773.534.5784

www.agassizschool.org

## Section 6: Glossary

**Host Language:** The host language is the language of the school in which it is located. Agassiz’s host language is English.

**Language Acquisition:** Language acquisition describes the process in which a person learns a language and the communication skills, either in their mother tongue or in a foreign language.

**Language Phase:** Students are placed in phases, which reflects their level of fluency in a language. There are six phases, and these are not dependent on a student’s year level.

**Language Proficiency:** Language proficiency is a measurement of how well an individual has mastered a language. There are four domains to language proficiency: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

**Mother-Tongue:** The language students uses at home and/or outside of the classroom/school environment. This term includes other terms, such as: first language, home language, native language, and heritage language. This term also includes American Sign Language (ASL).

**Translanguaging:** Translanguaging is a process in which students draw on known languages, naturally and flexibly, combining their elements to meet communicative and social needs.

**Response to Intervention (RtI):** Response to Intervention is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs.

## Section 7: Works Cited

IBO. *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*. Cardiff: IBO. 2008.

IBO. *MYP Language Acquisition Guide*. Cardiff: IBO. 2014.

IBO. *Primary Years Programme Language Scope and Sequence*. Cardiff: IBO. 2009

IBO. *Primary Years Programme Principles into Practice: The Learner*. Cardiff. IBO. 2018

IBO. *Translanguaging*. Cardiff: IBO. 2018

Lattimer, Heather. *Reading for Learning: Using Discipline-based Texts to Build Content*

*Knowledge*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2010. Print.



Academics



Arts



Athletics



International Baccalaureate  
World School