

COLEGIO ALBANIA

LANGUAGE POLICY



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1. Language Philosophy

Language is fundamental for all successful learning and to take part in academic processes across the whole curriculum. It plays an important role in forming internationally minded people with intercultural understanding. At the heart of cognitive growth is language, by which meaning and knowledge are constructed; essential for the social communication and emotional well-being that influence learning. The students' own language(s) and culture(s) play a central role in this process. Reading, writing and language are intrinsically important to the learning process. Therefore, all teachers are teachers of reading, writing and language. Teachers are responsible for the acquisition and correct use of language by their students irrespective of the subject area being taught.

At Colegio Albania, we aim to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least two languages. Language development in more than one language enriches personal growth, provides cognitive advantages and is essential to the development of international mindedness. We strive to address the particular challenges of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue by providing an integrated, well-implemented language program at all school sections.

All students are encouraged to express themselves and develop communication skills through a variety of media (technological, artistic, kinesthetic, listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting and viewing, etcetera). We meet the needs of our students through differentiated language instruction, strategies and activities. We are committed to providing a learning environment that promotes and supports effective communication and language development.

As we aim to continuously improve our language instruction, we are implementing programs that help students advance learning at every level. With that in mind, best practices such as guided reading, balanced literacy and other instructional strategies are taking a fuller role in student literacy development. We believe that increasing engagement in and progress of monitoring these approaches will ensure that every child develops their potential in becoming a lifelong speaker, reader and writer.

2. Core Beliefs of Colegio Albania

- All teachers are responsible for the instruction of language skills, and all students should be expected to have high standards of linguistic performance (written, reading, spoken) in all classes.
- Students will use both languages Spanish and English to develop linguistic skills, as tools for inquiry and in pursuit of new knowledge. Teachers and students are expected to promote the use of language according to the language of instruction.

- Teachers, parents, students, administration and other stakeholders should be exemplary models of the pursuit of language skills and work together to set high linguistic standards.
- Language teaching should be consistent and developmentally appropriate allowing all students to learn at their own rate with the expectation that they will demonstrate continuous growth regardless of starting proficiency.
- Language support will be provided to meet the needs of all students, including but not limited to those needing special services. Staff will work with all students so they may achieve mastery of the functional language skills through in and out of school opportunities, including Intensive English/Spanish programs as well as tutorials and individualized support.
- Stakeholders should continuously research and apply new knowledge about language instruction.
- Ongoing feedback will support language development through varied and various class assessments as well as standardized materials.
- Language learning involves learning language, learning about language and learning through language.
- Students should be provided with an interactive and dynamic environment in order to develop language skills by exposing them to a wide range of resources, materials and literature.
- A variety of resources, learning styles and teaching strategies will be used to enhance the development of language skills.
- Reasoning skills and aptitudes should be stimulated through planned transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary units.
- An appreciation and positive attitudes towards reading, writing and speaking will be fostered.
- Respect for the students' own cultural identities and those of others will be developed and encouraged.

3. Primary School Language Program

3.1. Language Profile

In order to promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the PYP, Colegio Albania incorporates the teaching and learning of language throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. The mastery of language skills is a vital part of a students' overall development. All of our students receive an enriched language instruction in which English is the primary language used in Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Computers, Library and English. Other areas such as Spanish, Music, Drama, Physical Education, Social studies local, Thinking/Language Skills and Religion are taught in Spanish.

The language of instruction in Pre-Kinder begins with the mother tongue and progresses to second language instruction by the end of the year. Kinder transitions into a fully immersive homeroom classroom that continues throughout the program.

At Colegio Albania we believe that bilingual language acquisition, aligned with learning about different cultures, provides students with opportunities to develop international-mindedness supported by the attributes in the IB learner profile. As a result of exposure to, and experience with a second language (English), students are encouraged to develop intercultural awareness, new perspectives, a culture of curiosity, and an appreciation of the richness of our world's diversity.

Furthermore we believe mother tongue language development is fundamental for maintaining dynamic cultural identity and emotional stability. The students have ample opportunities to expand communication skills in their mother tongue. Instructional time promotes cognitive growth through mother tongue usage to enrich personal growth; helping students value their native language and culture. A solid foundation in their mother tongue allows students to develop stronger literacy abilities providing them with the power to learn other disciplines reflecting on their own learning process and acknowledging language concepts and thinking skills.

Language teaching integrates the skill areas of speaking & listening; viewing & presenting; reading; and writing. Students receive instruction using an interactive approach to language learning; reflected in our programme of inquiry, PYP unit planners and individual lesson plans.

We adopted a Balanced Literacy approach which supports the PYP inquiry, agency and skills for lifelong confident readers and writers. This program begins since Pre-K to build and reinforce essential reading and writing skills throughout the entire PYP program. The workshop model is implemented to maintain consistency in teaching approaches and is based on Teachers College Readers and Writers Units of Study. This fosters an environment for independent work space as well as collaboration and differentiation.

3.2. The Intensive English Program

The Intensive English Program in the Primary School is designed to support children who require assistance in bridging the language gap in order to become successful in mainstream classrooms. The program's mission is to ensure that each English Language Learner develops linguistically, academically, and cognitively within a supportive environment. The program is structured in two ways providing support for students both outside of the classroom (Pull Out) and inside the classroom (Sheltered).

Pull Out practices implemented include

- using "comprehensible inputs"--content presentation methods that take into account students' language and experience;
- eliciting students' use of English;
- taking advantage of students' language and thinking resources;
- infusing language development into content instruction
- emphasizing the development of the required communicative skills so that students can interact successfully with content as well as with their peers and teachers.

Sheltered (shadowed) practices implemented include

- facilitation of the transition of Intensive English Program students from special language instruction to English-only, mainstream instruction by providing content area instruction while students are still in the classroom.
- the language demands of the lesson are adjusted in many ways including:
 - modifying speech rate and tone
 - using context clues and models
 - relating instruction to student experience
 - adapting the language of texts or tasks
 - using methods (e.g., demonstrations, visuals, graphic organizers, or cooperative work) to make academic instruction more accessible to students;

Exiting the Intensive English program

Students leave the Intensive English Program upon completion of the following stages:

- Analysis of student data, which includes:
 - IES and Homeroom Teacher observations
 - Students performance in subjects in which English is the language of instruction
 - MAP test scores/growth
- The case is discussed in Student Follow-up meetings for final decision and then presented in the Promotion and Evaluation Committee meeting.

3.3. Language Assessment

The language assessment in the PYP at Colegio Albania is an ongoing process, based on continuous observation and feedback concerning all language areas and skills. We have

implemented a wide range of assessment methods, such as portfolios, reading running records, self and peer assessment, rubrics, student-led conferencing, standardized testing such as MAP tests, as well as teacher-student conferencing, both individually and in small group, as per the structure within the Balanced Literacy Program.

4. Middle and High School Language Program

4.1. Dedicated Language Instruction and Instruction in Target Languages

All students take dedicated language instruction classes in both Spanish and English.

Spanish

5 – 7 grade: 6 hours per rotation

8 – 9 grade: 5 hours per rotation

10 – 11 grade Diploma program – Literature high level: 5 hours per rotation

English

5 – 9 grade: Language A and Language B: 6 hours per rotation

10 – 11 grade Diploma program

Language and Literature: 6 hours

Language B English/Spanish: 6 hours

Depending on student needs and staffing, approximately half of all classes in other disciplines are offered in English, and the other half are offered in Spanish.

4.2. Placement and Promotion in English Classes

Upon entering the Middle Years Program year 1 students are grouped taking into consideration elementary teachers' recommendation and MAP tests results.

In Middle School, Language A and Language B classes are offered. Small grouping is observed in order to provide students ample opportunities to master the language.

Students also receive support in content area classes (Integrated Science, Social studies and Math) through shadowing to support subject based content comprehension. This support is provided based on the availability of staff.

Throughout the year and at the end of the year, student's performance is evaluated for promotion from the language acquisition program to Language A classes. Students'

progresses in classes and on standardized tests are considered, as well as writing and reading sample tasks.

4.3. New Students

The English Unlimited placement test is used to assess English proficiency to those students who have taken English classes before entering the school.

Students coming to Colegio Albania with little to no English proficiency are placed in the Intensive English program.

4.4. Intensive English / Spanish Program

The Intensive English / Spanish program has been implemented to meet the needs of our varied student population. Students that exhibit little to no English / Spanish proficiency are placed in classes that follow the guidelines indicated in the International Baccalaureate Language acquisition guide. Phases are used to assess and monitor students' progress. If needed, content area teachers design tests and study guides in the mother tongue to ensure students' comprehension of specific content area concepts (Math, Integrated Science, Biology, Chemistry, Social Studies).

5. English / Spanish Language in the Middle Years Program (5 – 9 grade)

5.1. Language A in the MYP

English Language A (Language and literature) in MYP is offered to students whose skills in reading, writing and speaking in English are of sufficient level to study the language through the use of literature.

Spanish Language A (language and literature) classes are mandatory for those whose native language is Spanish.

All classes adhere to the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program and focus on providing worldwide applications to the study of language. Students are assessed with Language A criteria and are challenged appropriately to continuously increase their level of proficiency.

Adaptations to course instruction and assessment may occur upon recommendation from the Special Services Department.

5.2. Language B in the MYP

Language B classes are also offered in Middle School to meet the needs of our diverse population. Small grouping is observed in order to provide students ample opportunities to master the language.

Students also receive support in content area classes (Integrated Science, Social studies and Math) through shadowing to support subject based content comprehension. This support is provided based on the availability of staff.

All classes adhere to the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program and focus on providing worldwide applications to the study of language. Students are assessed with the corresponding criteria and are challenged appropriately to continuously increase their level of proficiency.

5.3. English / Spanish in the Diploma Program (10 – 11 grade)

The Area leader and MYP Year 5 English teachers meet and make recommendations regarding either language A or Language B courses when entering the Diploma Program. Other factors like students' personal interests and the number of courses or subjects offered by the school are also considered.

Like in the Middle Years Program, Spanish Language A (language and literature) classes are mandatory for those whose native language is Spanish.

Adaptations to course instruction and assessment may occur when needed upon recommendation from the Special Services Department.

5.4. Language Assessment

The language assessment in the MYP at Colegio Albania is an ongoing process, based on continuous observation and feedback concerning all language areas and skills. We have implemented a wide range of assessment methods, such as portfolios, reading running records, self and peer assessment, rubrics, MAP test as well as teacher-student conferencing.

5.5. American Diploma

Students are continuously assessed in both programs using approved IB rubrics and expectations. In addition, student results on standardized tests such as the MAP and Pruebas Saber are used for the school to reflect on language instruction. There are several ways in which students can be awarded the American Diploma including achievement in the TOEFL (score: 79) or SAT exams (reading and writing: 480 and essay 10 point or more in total with no component being graded less than 3).

5.6. Bilingual diploma

In addition, candidates for the Diploma Program who have completed these conditions through multiple languages may be eligible for a bilingual diploma of the International Baccalaureate, when they pass and meet one of the following criteria:

- Completion of two languages selected from the studies in language and literature subject group.
- Completion of one of the subjects from the individuals and societies, or sciences subject groups in a language that is not the same as the candidate's nominated studies in language and literature language.