

**2018-2020**  
**Sunset Ridge Middle School and the Connecticut IB Academy (CIBA)**  
**MYP Language Policy**

**Philosophy**

As the Sunset Ridge Middle School and Connecticut IB Academy (CIBA) MYP partnership, we believe that the ability to communicate purposefully in a variety of languages and contexts is critical to fostering international mindedness, intercultural awareness, intellectual growth, and an understanding of various perspectives. Language is an essential component to the realization of the IB mission and for this reason must permeate all aspects of the Middle Years Programme.

Language is the vehicle for communication and the foundation of all learning. Its growth and development must be systematically taught and assessed for each student through a horizontally and vertically aligned curriculum. Furthermore, we believe that every staff member is a teacher of language and all students are language learners. By using academic language in precise and deliberate ways, the students and staff share and build knowledge together to develop new meanings and understand concepts. Through the language learning process, students become more effective communicators as they interact with the world around them, express themselves, and develop their interpersonal skills.

Because of the role of language in teaching and learning, expectations for language use in school are clearly explained and reinforced. The use of language in the school setting should always be culturally sensitive, respectful, precise, and representative of their own thinking. Please refer to the Academic Honesty Policy for more information. We encourage the use of academic language and vocabulary as students explain their thinking and make deep connections across content areas.

Students are empowered across diverse socio-cultural and various academic contexts through language acquisition. Students engage in critical reflection, expressing and affirming their identities, and ultimately become fully functioning members of the global community by building their language and communication skills. To help students recognize the value and importance of being proficient in more than one language, all students have the opportunity to learn a second language and are encouraged to become fluent. Students also develop an appreciation of the language and culture through interactive classroom and global experiences to become enthusiastic and open-minded young people who are respectful of, and have an appreciation for, linguistic diversity.

## **Guiding Principles about Language and Learning at Sunset Ridge/CIBA**

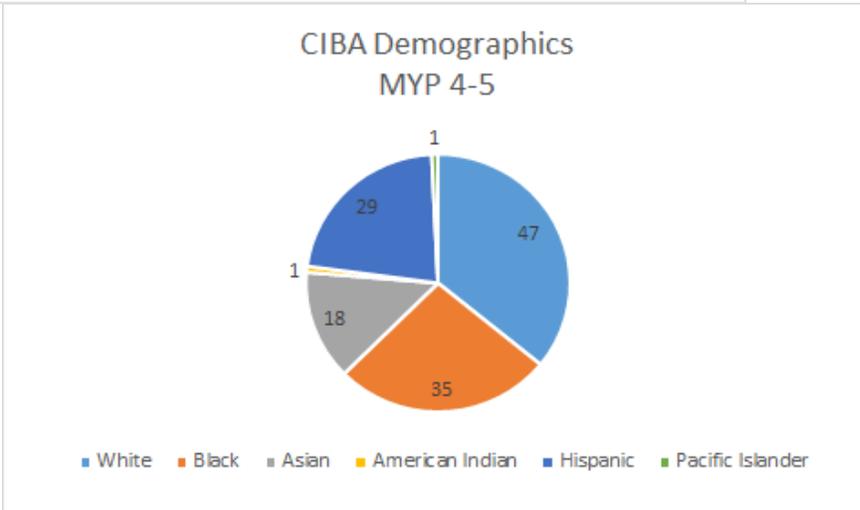
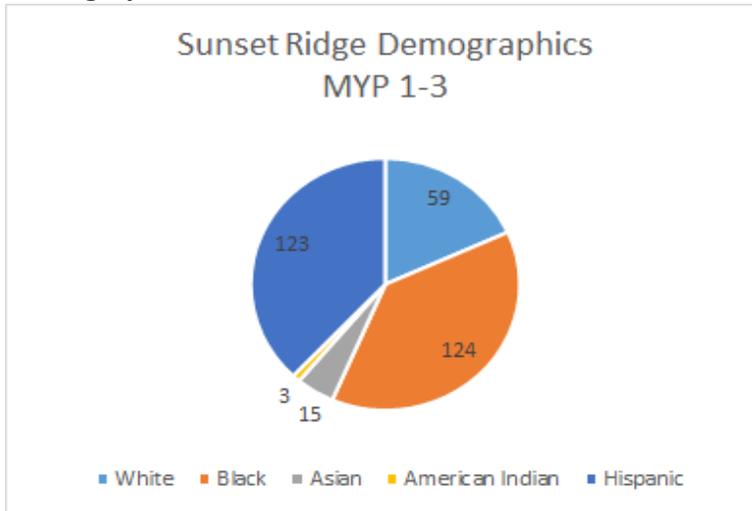
The following are the guiding principles for language and learning:

- We recognize, celebrate, and honor linguistic diversity.
- We support mother tongue development at home, at school, and in the community.
- We understand that our students come with many different language backgrounds to our school and will all progress at a different pace.
- We strive to teach classes at the appropriate phase(s) in response to the needs of all learners.
- We teach language through context and relate new information to existing knowledge to ensure that students learn in their zone of proximal development.
- We provide for language support beyond the classroom through ESL services.
- We accommodate different learning styles with differentiated instruction and assessment according to individual language learning needs.
- We engage in regular professional development sessions regarding language and how to incorporate reading and writing across the curriculum.
- We promote reading and writing both in and out of school.
- We strive to keep abreast of the most current research regarding language acquisition.
- We expect students will become fluent in a second language.
- We value language acquisition and recognize its impact on the IB learner.
- We plan and implement interdisciplinary units to enhance language learning.
- We recognize the importance of language in the realization of the IB mission.
- We honor and celebrate multilingualism.

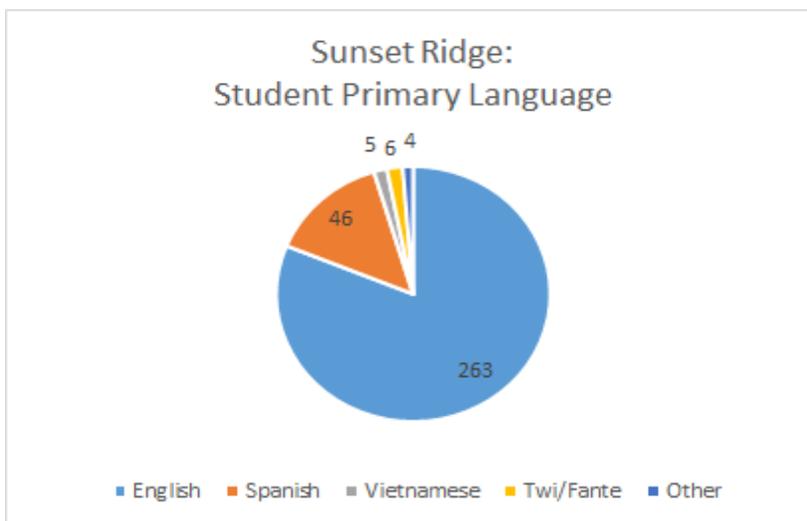
## **School Language Profile and Demographics**

The following pie charts are based on the 2018-2019 school year data for Sunset Ridge (MYP 1-3) and CIBA (MYP 4-5). This data has a direct impact on the language policy as our policy reflects the needs and honors the diversity of our students and their families.

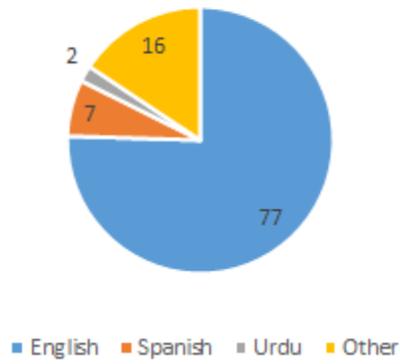
## Demographics



## Student Primary Language

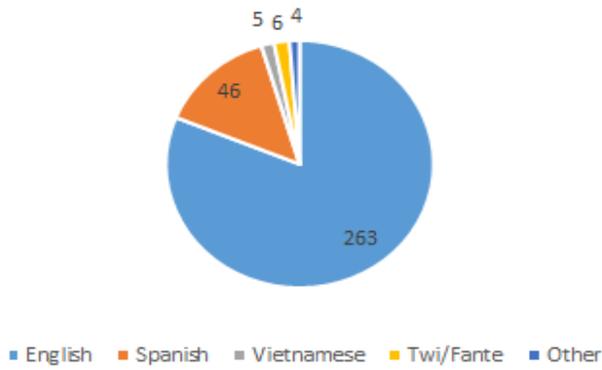


CIBA:  
Student Primary Language

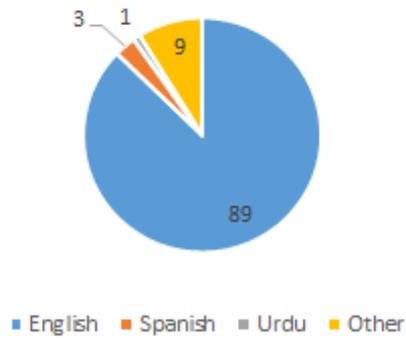


**Parent/Guardian Primary Language**

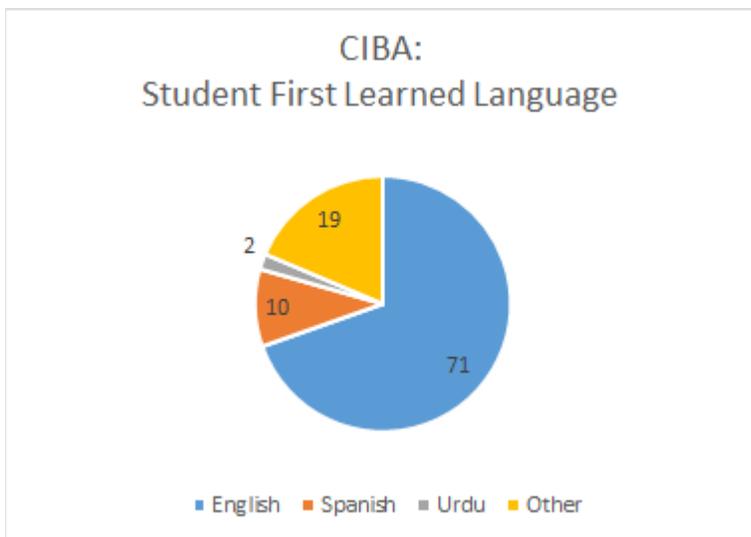
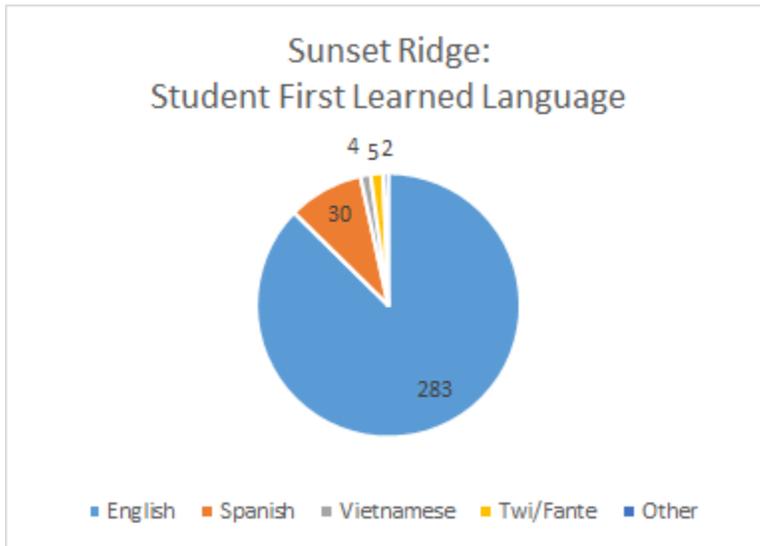
Sunset Ridge:  
Student Primary Language



CIBA:  
Parent / Guardian Primary Language



## Student First Learned Language



### Support for Students' Mother Tongue Development

We celebrate and honor language diversity through the recognition of students' mother tongues. Whenever possible, students share their cultures and mother tongue during class time and communicate information in their native language. Families are encouraged to continue speaking, listening, reading, and writing in their mother tongue to build a strong foundation for literacy development. Students are provided with the opportunity of presenting their learning in their mother tongue or incorporating some aspects into their work. Cultural events are planned to encourage community participation and develop appreciation for different languages. Students with similar or the same mother tongue are introduced to each other to maintain and honor their native language. In addition, our media centers offer support by providing a variety of multicultural literature so students can research their own cultures as

well as the cultures of others. We are committed to increasing the availability of these resources. All staff, include language acquisition teachers and district translators, help maintain communication between the school and families that is sensitive to language needs.

### **Support for Students who are not Proficient in the Language of Instruction**

English is our primary language of instruction. Although reading and writing are taught across all content areas, English is explicitly taught through Language and Literature, Reading (Sunset Ridge only), and, for students who qualify, in our English as a Second Language (ESL) program. All students are expected to effectively communicate in English both orally and in written form. As such, we employ differentiation, scaffolding and extended learning as modifications made to ensure student language development at each student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). With this in mind, SR/CIBA consider language proficiency in student placement.

### **Student Placement**

Throughout the year, students are assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively using both formal and informal methods. All Sunset students take the STAR Reading assessment as a universal screen. This information is utilized to group students in flexible instructional arrangements and provide differentiated instruction in Tier 1. All students receive reading and writing instruction in their Language and Literature and reading classes. Teachers collaborate using the data driven decision making process to analyze data, set SMART goals, and present targeted instruction based on their students' performance. In addition, students that require additional targeted instruction are also identified based on their STAR results and enter the SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) process. These students are provided with interventions such as Lexia and Reading Plus, depending on their grade level and instructional needs. While they are in the SRBI process, an action plan is created and their progress is closely monitored by a team of professionals to determine if the intervention needs to be changed/revised, continued or discontinued. When the student has reached grade level standards (proficiency), then he/she is exited from the SRBI process and monitored in Tier 1. Please refer to the Inclusion/Special Educational Needs Policy for more specific information.

### **Language and Literature/Reading**

At Sunset Ridge, in Language and Literature and Reading, students have been grouped based on their prior class and assessment performance. Regardless of the level that they have been placed, all students encounter reading that is at their independent and instructional levels. It is important that students read and write for pleasure, but also have experiences where they are required to grapple with complex texts. In the curriculum writing process, units have been built to include purposefully chosen texts that represent a multicultural lens and promote an appreciation for different languages and cultures. In addition, the Media Center purchases texts that mirrors the diversity and interests of our student population. We want students to see themselves in the literature they read and consider various perspectives. They engage in literature circles and interactive activities while learning reading and writing strategies and techniques. In the Language and Literature classes, the students engage with texts that support the statement of inquiry and conceptual understanding that is being explored.

### **CIBA Language and Literature**

At CIBA, due to the school's small student population, there are only two sections of Language and Literature for each year of the programme (MYP 4 and MYP 5). Students are not leveled in these classes. Instead, differentiation is of utmost importance for all students to meet their language needs. Formative assessments are given regularly. From these results, instruction is modified to determine which students need enrichment and which students need additional support. In these classes, students are often in collaborative groups which supports all students' language development. CIBA follows the same curriculum writing process as Sunset Ridge Middle School in that units include purposefully chosen texts from a variety of cultures and perspectives.

### **English Learners (ELs)**

Sunset Ridge Middle School and CIBA comply with all state and national regulations regarding services for those students identified as English Learners (ELs). Upon registration, parents complete a Home Language Survey where they self-identify the primary language used in the home, the language most often spoken by the student, and the language the student first acquired. If one or more answers are a language other than English, students are required to take the LAS Links Placement Test. Based on the results, students may be deemed eligible for ESL services. Each student has access to support services as appropriate depending on their English language proficiency levels (levels 1-5). At Sunset Ridge, the ESL teacher provides weekly instruction for all ELs. This instruction includes push in to content area classes as well as pull out for specific English language acquisition guided instruction. At CIBA, ELs take an ESL class based on the student's English language proficiency level. Despite the level of support that is given, efforts are taken in order to ensure that the instruction is aligned to the IB units of study through regularly consulting and collaborating with classroom teachers. Once a year, ELs are administered the LAS Links assessment to determine the students' English language proficiency level and determine continued eligibility and placement.

### **Learning of the Host Country or Regional Language and Culture**

At Sunset Ridge Middle School and CIBA, we are committed to providing all students with opportunities to learn about the English language and its various uses, dialects, and regional implications. Students develop the English language by experiencing it authentically in IB units of study and interdisciplinary units in the following ways:

- active participation through authentic learning
- utilization of a wide variety of texts, media, and genres
- interaction with texts that represent diverse cultures and perspectives
- representation of learning using a variety of modalities
- speaking, listening, reading, and writing for multiple purposes and audiences

## **Language Acquisition Courses**

Language acquisition is a critical component of the MYP and in the development of the MYP student. We encourage every student to become fluent in more than one language. To this end, it is the expectation that all students will take either Chinese or Spanish unless otherwise determined at a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting and written into an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The initial selection of languages that are offered was based on student backgrounds and interests. Many of our students come from families who speak Spanish but their levels of proficiency vary greatly including students who can speak fluently but do not know how to read or write in Spanish. Offering Spanish as one of the two choices for language acquisition honors our families and their backgrounds. It is another way that we show appreciation for their mother tongue and support its development. Spanish also benefits all students because there is an increasing Spanish influence in Connecticut. Learning Spanish will give students the opportunity to communicate with people in their community and abroad that they otherwise would not be able to. Chinese was chosen to be offered because of its influence in the world. It is a non-phonetic language which allows students to learn a language that is different than English and Spanish. Being fluent in Chinese opens up many opportunities for the students in a global society. Learning Chinese offers a challenging and rigorous opportunity for our students.

In MYP 1, a “language carousel” model is implemented where all students receive a semester of Chinese instruction and a semester of Spanish instruction. At the end of MYP 1, students and their families must decide which language they would like to continue and complete the language selection form (see Appendix A). This choice is permanent for MYP 2 and MYP 3. At the end of MYP 3, if the student has met all the criteria (average of 70% or above in MYP 1, MYP 2, and MYP 3), then he/she is awarded one high school credit for the successful completion of either Chinese 1 or Spanish 1. He/she continues the language in MYP 4 and MYP 5 in order to increase their proficiency. At CIBA, students also have the opportunity to learn a language through Pamoja if they would like to study French or if they have transferred into CIBA and the level that they require is not currently being taught. The language courses include French Ab Initio SL, Mandarin Ab Initio SL, Spanish Ab Initio SL, and Spanish B SL. For all years of the programme, students access Duolingo in the language lab on a regular basis for further practice and reinforcement at their individual level.

### **Phases**

Throughout MYP 1-5, careful consideration of students’ needs is taken when determining which phase to teach the course. The phase(s) has/have a direct impact on the curriculum writing process, MYP rubrics that are utilized, and instruction in the classroom. In some cases, two phases are taught in the same class. Regardless of what phase(s) the class is being taught, differentiation is critical as each student moves along his/her individual language learning continuum. The selection of the phase is based on overall student performance both in class and on summative assessments according to the MYP rubrics (Criteria A, B, C, D). Students are then grouped by similar performance and needs to the greatest extent as possible.

School	Year of the Programme	Phase(s)
Sunset Ridge	MYP 1	1
	MYP 2	1-2
	MYP 3	2-3
CIBA	MYP 4	3-4 (Careful consideration is made based on the previous courses that the students' have taken)
	MYP 5	5-6

It is important to note that we are continuing to refine the phases that the courses are being taught based on students' language acquisition level. Regardless of the phase in which the course is being taught, students should be immersed in the language and culture as much as possible. In addition, numerous opportunities should be provided for students to speak, write, read, and listen to the target language.

### **Communicating the Language Policy**

The language policy is regularly communicated to all staff, families, and stakeholders. It has been posted on both Sunset Ridge Middle School's and the Connecticut IB Academy's websites.

### **Reviewing the Policy**

The MYP coordinator will ensure that the language policy is reviewed and revised every two years to reflect the current needs of the school population and to ensure consistency with IB expectations. All staff at Sunset Ridge Middle School and CIBA are involved in the development of the language policy and agree to uphold it. All staff are responsible to ensure that the language policy is a working document, that it is followed and reflected upon.

### **Sources**

Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy (IBO, 2008)  
 Language Policy, Atlanta International School (AIS, 2011)  
 Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes (2008)  
 MYP Language Policy Bloomfield Hills, MI (2014)  
 MYP Language Policy English Talents School (2015)  
 MYP Language Policy International School of Belgrade (ND)  
 MYP: From Principles into Practices (2008)

Appendix A: Language Selection Form



**Sunset Ridge Middle School**  
**450 Forbes Street**  
**East Hartford, CT 06118**



Dear Sunset Ridge School Families,

At Sunset Ridge, our students have the opportunity to learn a second language through a Language Acquisition course in Spanish or Chinese. As sixth graders, students receive a half year of Chinese and a half year of Spanish. In these introductory classes, students are exposed to the language and culture of China and the Spanish-speaking countries. At the end of sixth grade, students select the language they wish to continue studying in seventh (MYP 2) and eighth (MYP 3) grades. In accordance with the IB Language Acquisition model, students must continue the same language of study for two years and cannot change their language course.

The two years of language acquisition at Sunset Ridge are equivalent to a level one language course at East Hartford High School. With a combined MYP 2, MYP 3, and final exam average of 70 / C-, the student may be eligible for one high school credit as well as placement in Chinese 2 or Spanish 2.

Please take time to discuss with your child their preference for language acquisition in seventh grade. This is an important decision since the language students take in seventh grade will continue in eighth grade, and changes cannot be made. We will try our best to give every student their first choice, but this may not always be possible.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Daniel L. Catlin  
Principal

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Please return by \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle your language choice for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade:

Chinese

Spanish

I understand the language choice that I have made is final and cannot be changed for 7th and 8th grade.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_