

(J) IB LANGUAGE POLICY

Uplift North Hills Preparatory Language Beliefs

At Uplift North Hills Preparatory (UNHP) we believe that all scholars who pass through our doorway are language learners and our teachers are language instructors. Teachers will endeavor to inspire a love of language learning in scholars in order to enable them to reach their highest potential. Our community is diverse, and each scholar has his or her own background and unique contributions. Recognizing and supporting scholars' mother tongue is crucial to their growth and to their perception of identity. We also believe that in order to be responsible citizens, scholars' skills in English must be honed, and an understanding and respect for our world and its peoples is further developed through the acquisition of a secondary language in addition to the mother tongue. Thus at Uplift North Hills Preparatory we are committed to the promotion and support of language diversity.

Language and the Uplift North Hills Preparatory Mission Statement

“The mission of Uplift North Hills Preparatory is to provide an education that empowers scholars to reach their highest potential and inspires a love of learning.” We believe that a course of study that fosters fluency in scholar's primary language of learning and an in-depth understanding of at least one secondary language is key to achieving both of these goals. It also nurtures another key UNHP goal, that of “creating a diverse community that embraces the ideals of responsible citizenship in an environment of respect for our world and its peoples.”

Uplift North Hills Preparatory Language Profile

- The majority of UNHP scholars are fluent in English and speak English at home.
- A large minority of our scholars speak a diverse array of world languages at home. Most are fluent in English as well, though some need additional assistance, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.
- The most common language grouping spoken at home other than English, making up over 25% of the UNHP scholar population, is South Asian languages, such as Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, and Tamil.

A further sampling of our language diversity includes:

- Languages of central and western Asian origin, such as Farsi and Arabic
- Languages originating in East Asia such as Korean, Mandarin, and Vietnamese
- Languages of African origin such as Somali
- Languages of the Pacific such as Tagalog
- Languages of European origin such as Russian, Portuguese, and Spanish

Language Programs at Uplift North Hills Preparatory

The primary language of teaching and learning at North Hills Preparatory is English. This arises from both a firm belief in the importance of the English language for global communication and the fact that as a public school in the state of Texas we are required to offer English language instruction. We also believe in the vital importance of the acquisition of at least one secondary language, and so we go beyond the state of Texas Distinguished Diploma requirement of three years of high school instruction in a single foreign language. Both English language instruction and secondary language instruction are detailed below.

English Language Instruction (Language A)

Scholars receive instruction in English grammar, writing, and literature in every grade from Primary through Diploma Programs. Additionally, the language of instruction of all groups other than Language B is English. Scholars needing additional help in English due to a lack of fluency are eligible for ESL services from an ESL certified teacher, or if their difficulty arises from a learning or physical differences they may receive additional support. All scholars, regardless of the reason for their need for additional assistance in English, may receive additional support through our advisory period and after school tutorials.

Accepted Protocols

Handwriting

- In Primary Years, the Zaner-Bloser model is the designated form of instruction at North Hills Preparatory. Scholars are encouraged to experiment with their written expression as they develop and all forms are accepted as long as they are legible. From Middle School through the Diploma Program, no formal instruction or handwriting protocol is required, and all forms are accepted as long as they are legible.

Spelling

- Common American spelling protocols such as Webster's are acceptable.

Citation

- Citation of sources in research work is expected. The concept is introduced in Primary Years, with growing emphasis as scholars progress through the continuum from Middle through Upper school and the Diploma Program. The accepted convention for citation at North Hills Preparatory is Modern Language Association (MLA).

Secondary Language Instruction (Language B)

At Uplift North Hills Preparatory scholars receive Spanish instruction for 45 minutes weekly throughout their primary years (grades 1-5). When beginning Middle Years (6th grade) scholars are given the choice of taking French or Spanish language, receiving over three hours of instruction per week. Scholars continue in either French or Spanish at a minimum through at least their 11th grade year, while IB Diploma candidates take French or Spanish through the end of their 12th grade year.

Philosophically UNHP would like to offer a wider variety of secondary languages, however enrollment and funding constraints make this difficult. We have chosen a focus upon French and Spanish in order to offer a high quality program of instruction. We are exploring ways to utilize our resources as effectively as possible and are investigating the feasibility of adding additional language options.

Language Learning Philosophy of the North Hills Foreign Language Department

We believe that scholars should be immersed in the target language as early as possible. We use as much French and Spanish as possible in the classroom and use the target language exclusively starting at level 2 (the level of most 9th grade scholars at Uplift North Hills Preparatory). It is very challenging for the scholars at first, but once the initial challenge is overcome, it proves to



be the fastest and most effective way to help them improve in all four skills—speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Our course objectives are based upon the “Standards for Foreign Language Learning” as defined by the American Council of Teaching of Foreign Languages:

1. **Communication:** The scholars communicate using all four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing.
2. **Connections:** The scholars use the language to make connections with other subject areas and to acquire information.
3. **Cultures:** The scholars gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures
4. **Comparisons:** The scholars develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing their own language and culture to another.
5. **Communities:** The scholars use the language beyond the classroom for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Curriculum

Our English and secondary language curriculum is formulated by Uplift North Hills Preparatory and our parent organization, Uplift Education. This curriculum incorporates required state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills), International Baccalaureate standards, and the best practices and standards of other respected bodies, such as the American Council of Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Enrichment of Mother Tongue and Secondary Language Acquisition

Though the primary language of instruction and communication at Uplift North Hills Preparatory is English, we believe that mother tongue and heritage languages are important to a scholar’s identity. We endeavor to foster this through encouraging scholars to be aware of their culture and to share it with others. We believe this not only helps scholars to develop their own cultural identity but also broadens all of our horizons and moves us towards being more aware members of the world community. Parents are encouraged to share books in mother tongue languages with the school and we have added these to our library resources. Parents also are encouraged to give cultural presentations to classes, and speakers are often provided to read to scholars in the languages represented in our school, particularly in Primary Years. In accordance with both research and best practice, we encourage our parents and scholars to continue to speak in their mother tongue at home. This strengthens the individual’s language skills and instills a sense of confidence and cultural pride, while enabling our school community to celebrate its differences.

Uplift North Hills Preparatory organizes many activities with the goal of the encouragement of culture and cultural awareness, such as Uplift North Hills International Week, the International Dance Club, and Model United Nations. The Foreign Language Department seeks to accomplish the “communities” goal of extending language beyond the classroom by organizing French and Spanish clubs that sponsor events celebrating French and Spanish language and culture and viewing newly released movies in French and Spanish. Excellence in secondary languages is further encouraged through scholar membership in national French and Spanish language honor societies.

We are conscious that more can be done to enrich mother tongue and secondary language experiences, and continue to investigate ways to improve our programs in these areas and



internationalism in general. At the same time, we at Uplift North Hills Preparatory believe we have made significant strides towards our goal of fostering self-identity, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, and international awareness amongst our diverse school community.

Policy Revision

This policy was reviewed and revised on May 2019 by the committee of parents and educators as listed: Katie Biela, Nicolau Marques Pereira, Graham Bartlett, Kathryn Vernon, Karen Edwards, Cindy Tsimberg, Stephen Patterson, Matthew Kingsley, Pratibha Sinha, Lauren Trebert, Lauren Heavin, Julie Hills, Heather Pereira, Bindhu Mathews, Rachel Follett, Veronica Moore. Additionally, the policy will be reviewed and revised annually in December by a committee of parents and educators. Any changes and/or revisions are determined by the committee and communicated to all interested parties via the following venues: student handbook (also posted on the school website), in the weekly newsletter with a link to the school website, and in person during the curriculum meetings in January.