

# Language at ALASCA

## Preliminary Language Policy & Programme

School year 2020 - 2021

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# Glossary

Definition of some terms

**First Language** - The Language the student is most proficient in (often referred to as native language, the language spoken at home, mother tongue or best language)

**Studies in Language and Literature** - the course of study taught at native, near-native level for our students

**Literacy** - the ability to read and write

**Language Acquisition** - Course of study offered at school for students learning a language that is not their best language

**Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)** - refers to language development used for social purposes

**Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS)** - refers to language development for academic purposes

# Preface

Language is important. Knowledge of languages is important. This language knowledge is not only about the (foreign) languages you learn at school. It is also about how these languages are offered and given, how those languages are discussed in other modules and how other languages can be given a place at school. A good language policy makes it possible to jointly search for connections and differences between the languages offered. In addition, an inclusive language policy pays attention to everyone's first language and concretises how that home language can also play a good role at school.

Language is communication. Those who have mastered a language can express themselves confidently in that language. It is a creative and intellectual medium to understand and articulate knowledge and ideas. Language guarantees growth and development. With language you learn as a person to respond appropriately and respectfully to other knowledge, ideas and opinions of your fellow man.

In order to give that indispensable function of language a relevant place, it is extremely important for our school to have a strong language policy. That is why we strive for an active and participatory language policy that follows from our school vision. This means that together with the team, together with our students and their parents / carers, we want to shape a language policy that is supported, supported, monitored and implemented by everyone. We strive for a visible language policy that creates linguistic opportunities to guarantee everyone's personal development as a person.

# School profile

## School type

ALASCA is a new, ambitious school offering pre-university education (vwo+) and senior general secondary education (havo) and a candidate school to offer International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The school is part of the Amsterdam school group Esprit Schools.

Academic year 2020-2021, the school will be our fifth year. The school is currently busy developing the curriculum for year 5 in upper secondary education as well as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The senior years (years four, five and six in secondary education) of the national curricula offer two subject profiles: 'Society' and 'Nature'.

## School size

In the junior years (the first three years of secondary education), each year level consists of two forms: A and B. Each form has an average of 55 students and all students take lessons together regardless of the vwo or have advice given by their primary school. The lessons are thematic interdisciplinary and are developed and offered by at least two co-teachers. In the senior years, all year levels consist of two "profile classes": one for the 'Society'- subject choice and one for the 'Science' subject choice. The lessons are partly developed and offered in a modular way and there are two co-teachers in one class. Here too, both vwo and havo students attend classes together until the end of year 5.

In concrete terms, this means that each year level has an average of 110 students. The school's target is a population of no more than 800 students.

## School organisation

The school has a relatively 'flat' organizational structure in which teachers have broad responsibilities according to the principle of shared leadership. The teachers are organized into mentor teams and educational committees. The mentor teams are responsible for the guidance and managing an year level, while the educational committees are responsible for developing a school-wide development theme.

The school management consists of a head and deputy head. They develop and monitor the main points of school policy. The team of teachers, the mentor teams of each year level and the educational committees are accountable to each other and to the school management.

# Necessity and Reason

## External incentives

The “frame of reference Dutch language”<sup>1</sup> has been in force by law since August 2010. This reference framework has been introduced to optimize the connection between the educational sectors and to increase the language proficiency level. For the essential moments in a person’s educational career, it describes the fundamental and the target level of language skills. This defines unambiguously the intended curriculum for the Dutch language education. By offering guidance regarding the goals and the desired outcomes, it ensures a continuous learning pathway. In addition, the reference framework provides a legal basis for applying the level difference between havo (3F) and vwo (4F). The reference levels consist of the following domains: oral language skills, reading, writing, glossary and language use<sup>2</sup>.

The European Commission advocates that all citizens of the European Union should speak two other (second) languages in addition to their mother tongue (their first language). Since 2001, in order to express the levels of language proficiency through a uniform system, Europe has had an international framework for describing proficiency levels: the European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The CEFR describes what you should be able to do in a foreign language to demonstrate that you have mastered a modern foreign language on one of the six levels (A1 for beginners, C2 for *near native* speakers) of the CEFR.

Within each proficiency level, the CEFR distinguishes five skills: reading, listening, conversation, speaking and writing. In describing the different domains of the second language internal (school) assessments and the second language final exams, the national curriculum agency (SLO) uses the skills levels of the CEFR. Just as for the Dutch language curriculum, this provides guidance for an unambiguous curriculum with a continuous learning pathway for foreign languages.

## Internal incentives

In the summative assignments of Dutch and foreign languages modules, certain gaps came to light in the language skills of our first class of students. The results were disappointing and little progress was made. In order to rectify this situation as quickly as possible, and to avoid “contamination” in the new classes, the language teachers, together with the deputy head, has regularly worked on a continuous learning trajectory for the language education in the first three years levels. In this intensive collaboration the need for a school-wide approach in the field of language skills was expressed. In addition, during the development of the senior years and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, the urgency for a structural and strategic plan to improve our teaching practice to our students' language learning needs became ever greater. In term 3 of the 2019-2020 school year, the language teachers were asked to draw up a language policy and a compiler was appointed.

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<sup>1</sup>referentiekader Nederlands’

<sup>2</sup> mondelinge taalvaardigheid, lezen, schrijven, begrippenlijst en taalverzorging

# Vision on language and language policy

The starting point of ALASCA's vision on language and language policy is the school's own vision and mission. Our mission is to provide our students with the best possible education, even if that means breaking with a number of customs and conventions in the educational world.

## The ALASCA alumnus

Our educational approach is aimed at encouraging students to get the most out of themselves. We have high expectations of them and encourage students to be ambitious. In this way we help students, after 5 or 6 years, to leave our school as autonomous, critical, ambitious, analytical thinkers and doers, with a strong moral compass. They are interested in the world around them and would like to contribute to it. They have a well-founded opinion on the big questions of our time. They have the confidence to experiment, discover, make mistakes and take a critical look at themselves.

## Our vision on learning

At ALASCA we provide education from a broad perspective on learning, whereby the development of self-confidence, the acquisition of an investigative and reflective attitude, the development of a moral compass, the sharpening of analytical skills and the acquisition of ready knowledge always go in hand. Continually, we are looking for ways to let students direct their own learning process, challenging them in more complex thinking skills. Metacognitive skills are therefore core skills in our school.

## Liberal Arts & Sciences

The school chooses to remove the barriers between the mono-disciplinary school subjects as much as possible. The fundamental guiding principle for the school is to offer broad and academic perspectives on the big question of our time using a liberal arts and sciences-programme. Issues such as Identity, Sustainability, Globalisation and Ethics therefore play an important part in our curriculum. Research skills, philosophy and digital skills, i.e. design and programming play an important role too. Finally, the artistic and creative skills also form an important component of our education. It goes without saying that in order to acquire these skills learners need not only to think, but also to act, to design and to make.

Concurrently, students work on their own sense of value and develop their personal perspectives on fairness and justice, both in a local and in a broader, international context. The school is therefore strongly committed to knowledge of the English language and has a curriculum with an international focus. A part of the education and study material is therefore also in English. Spanish is the second foreign language we offer in our curriculum. Its strong position as a world language motivates this choice to fit in with the international character of our curriculum.

## The beautiful risks of our education

We expect a lot from our learners. We value getting our learners to become independent in their learning, thinking and work. They receive much freedom and responsibility which they learn to use to do new things and take risks. Taking risks and cherishing high expectations go together, as is visible in the lessons and the lesson materials, in our language and the room we give to our learners, in the demands we make of our learners, in our guidance and in our (out of school) activities. Learners of varied ability and aptitude (havo and vwo) follow

the education together, yet the primary focus of our education is the more challenging level (vwo+), making expectations to be high for everyone. We understand that making mistakes is part of learning and that some learners need extra time to acquire certain knowledge or skills. Hence we do not downgrade the learners on possible weaknesses, nor do we ask learners to repeat a year. In fact we give our learners time to complete modules at their own (slower) pace and to achieve the required level of mastery in the end.

The teachers also take conscious risks when they choose to work at a school where a lot of things are different from the way they were used to. Our teachers choose to apply their professionalism to the full extent at a school where a lot of things are in development; where not much is fixed let alone carved in stone, and where research, reflection and improvement all belong to the core of the profession.

## Language horizontally - language vertically

The role that language has within our education stems from our vision. Here, too, we have had to break with a number of customs and conventions that determine the language curriculum in traditional Dutch education.

In the junior years, language is offered in the different modules developed by our teachers. Each module follows the principle of backwards design and the emphasis is on acquiring language skills. The language skills that are to be acquired by the students are expressed in learning objectives. Using a summative end product, students show to what extent they have achieved the learning objectives of the module. To give the teacher and the student insight into the development of learning before the summative tests, formative testing is used. These formative tests guide the learning trajectory and process of the student and guarantees a high degree of differentiation and an increase in approaches to learning, i.e. self-management.

In the senior years, language is largely developed and offered according to the same principle as in the lower years. The most notable difference is the division into subjects and modules. In the first half of the day (morning), the languages are offered monodisciplinary and therefore as subjects. In the second part of the day (afternoon), the languages are offered in a multidisciplinary and therefore modular way. A second difference is the disappearance of the summative end products. The student's progress is monitored formatively in each term. Consequently, an average of four formative aims are evaluated per period and per language. This formative process is completed with summative school exams and central final exams in years 5 (havo and vwo) and 6 (vwo).

Throughout the junior and the senior years, there is a vertical and a horizontal learning track which guarantees continuity, cohesion, coherence and completeness of the language curriculum. Both learning paths are established through participatory consultation within and outside the language team. The trajectory towards the learning outcomes is expressed by a continuous learning track per language. It monitors the continuity, completeness and evaluation of the language-specific trajectory and is inextricably linked to the horizontality of the curriculum. Here we are constantly looking for connections and differences between the languages and the other modules within our curriculum. The result of this view on language teaching is innovative and unique. The Language and Reading module is a concrete translation of this vision. In an alternating combination of two languages (Dutch and / or English and / or Spanish), the different subject teachers work together. This means that both languages are approached simultaneously. The Language part of the module, focuses on discovering the linguistic connections and differences between the languages offered in order to develop a deeper language understanding. In the Reading part, all attention is focused on the development of a continuous reading experience. Students discover both literary and non-literary texts and get to work with different types of texts. The end product of a module is multidisciplinary and / or interdisciplinary. In a multidisciplinary assignment, students work on a product in which the input of both languages forms one connected product. On an interdisciplinary level, the Language and Reading module contributes to other, non-language modules by developing and evaluating language-specific skills that are part of the final product of those modules. Examples of such modules are Amsterdam, Big History and Universe.

Core objectives and final objectives that cannot be addressed in a multi- or interdisciplinary module are still offered in the form of language-specific (and therefore monolingual) modules. In the junior years, this concerns the language modules Dutch, Cambridge English, Spanish and Introduction to German. In the senior years, these modules become the traditional subjects of Dutch, English, Spanish and language-specific exam training. In addition to these subjects, the languages are also partly modular and therefore offered interdisciplinary in modules such as Dystopia, Future Planet, Propaganda, etc. Where an interdisciplinary module is not possible, connections are sought with other subjects. In the senior years, students with a recognised language-based learning disability can replace the Spanish course with the Philosophy & Technology module.



# Language Practice at ALASCA

## Language profile

ALASCA started in 2016 as a Dutch school. All the students entering with their most proficient language spoken to be Dutch. A census was made of the languages spoken at home, and desires to learn to speak other languages and for a year students were given the opportunity to independently learn any of the 10 or so languages that the Dutch government officially offers an school exam for. After that opportunity ceased to exist and the language background was not monitored.

Spring 2020 all junior students and teachers were asked to fill out a language survey. Of the 197 students only 2 students did not speak Dutch at home. This does not mean that they cannot speak Dutch of course as all students at the school are fluent speakers of Dutch. As can be seen in the Situation Analysis further down, the actual language situation is not so monolingual as it seems. In fact 25% of our students speaks another language at home in addition to Dutch. Yet in the current school practice this is hardly used.

## Language Support at present

From the start the school had provided provided support to students whose most proficient language is not the school's language(s). In the junior years the working language is Dutch being the most proficient language of our students most of who were born and raised in the Netherlands. In the senior years, the working language is English in the IB Diploma Programme, and most students will not speak English as their most proficient language. In anticipation to this a few supportive measures are in place.

1. In the junior years students are provided English language acquisition lessons, and English support lessons are provided in case a student's English appears to fall behind.
2. In the years leading up to the Diploma programme an growing number of modules use English as the language of instruction (aside of modules that keep using Dutch) in addition to regular language learning classes. By being immersed in an English speaking environment students effectively learn the language using a strategy we refer to as CLIL: content and language integrated learning.
3. The quality of the Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) activities in the English modules are monitored. Both in design and practice by a teacher with a CLIL background and in collaboration with the Language department of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. The CLIL supports the acquisition and use of English by learners who do not speak English as their home language.
4. All students in the IB Diploma Programme years will have followed the above language modules as well as the CLIL modules during the prior years and they will have shown adequate English proficiency to be admitted to the Diploma Programme.

# Situation Analysis

After four years of implementing our vision for language education, and in order to make our language education future proof, we sensed the need to review the current situation. To this purpose, the language section created a survey based on the guidelines of the international project *Language Friendly School*. The survey goal was to identify the multilingualism present in school, the language programme perception and the language needs of our [students](#) and [staff](#). The answers to the survey gave us the opportunity to visualise the strengths, weaknesses, chances and threats of our language programme.

## Language survey among the students: SWOT

Students	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25 % of our student population speaks two or more than two languages at home</li> <li>- 60 % is satisfied with the existing language programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- linguistic variety is invisible</li> <li>- 90 % of the students who speak two or more than two languages at home is not interested in sharing those linguistic skills with their peers</li> <li>- 70 % never speaks dialect</li> <li>- in the group interested in learning an additional language, 69 % prefers to do so in a traditional setting (one language, one teacher)</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 44 % is interested in learning a new language in addition to the ones offered in our curriculum</li> <li>- 24 % would like to learn this additional language in a mixed context (different languages and different teachers in the same group at the same time)</li> <li>- 40 % is interested in taking an extra official language exam in addition to the ones offered in our curriculum</li> <li>- 15 % is interested in learning French</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 70% is not interested in dialect diversity in an educational context</li> <li>- 95 % of the bilingual group admits having a higher level of proficiency in the language of instruction in school than in the language(s) spoken at home</li> <li>- a monolingual attitude in a multilingual setting</li> <li>- misconception that foreign language acquisition can only occur in a traditional teacher lead learning environment</li> <li>- lifelong learning skills are not evident</li> </ul>

## Language survey among the staff: SWOT

STAFF	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30 % of the team members speaks two or more languages at home</li> <li>- 80 % is satisfied with the existing language programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 67 % of the team members who speak two or more than two languages at home is not interested in teaching those linguistic skills to our students</li> <li>- 70 % never speaks dialect</li> <li>- linguistic variety is invisible</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 % of the team members who speak two or more than two languages at home would like to share those linguistic skills through elective modules</li> <li>- 30 % speaks dialect</li> <li>- 60% is interested in dialect diversity in an educational context</li> <li>- the current team could guide interested students towards the legally elective final exams of the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, German, Greek, French, Italian, Latin, Russian and Turkish</li> <li>- a vast majority support the idea of integrating Spanish into interdisciplinary modules of the senior years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 87 % of the bilingual group admits having a higher level of proficiency in the language of instruction in school than in the language(s) spoken at home</li> <li>- a monolingual attitude in a multilingual setting</li> </ul>

## Summary of common strengths and weaknesses

### Strengths

1. Both students and team members are satisfied with the school's language programme.
2. Up to a third of the school population (students and team members) has a multilingual background.
3. Elective modules create opportunities for linguistic diversity.

### Weaknesses

1. The majority of multilingual students and team members are not aware of the relevance of their linguistic background.
2. The majority of our students are not aware of the relevance of dialects in an educational setting.
3. The linguistic diversity of our school population (students and team members) is being kept invisible.
4. Students show reluctance to start a self-taught linguistic adventure.

### Opportunities

1. Practically half the students are interested in learning an additional foreign language and a quarter of them show receptiveness to different learning approaches.
2. Practically half the students are interested in taking an additional official final exam for one of the legally electible languages.
3. The teaching staff have the skills and knowledge to offer more languages.

### Threats

1. A monolingual attitude in a multilingual setting with no explicit attention given to home languages and backgrounds.
2. The misconception that foreign language acquisition can only occur in a traditional teacher lead learning environment.
3. Lifelong learning skills are not evident.

The analysis of the current school language situation leads us to the following goals and actions for the coming school year.

# Language Policy Aims

## *to developing learner autonomy in language learning and plurilingualism*

ALASCA aims to support the development of learner autonomy in language learning, using plurilingualism and developing intercultural awareness and competence by enabling them to record their experience of learning and using languages as well as self-evaluate their language learning achievements.

To accomplish this aim a language team has been formed this year, resulting in the language survey and drafting of the following plan of action for 2020/2021:

**ACTION 1:** Developing a vertical articulation of plurilingualism in the school curriculum: language learning pathways.

**ACTION 2:** Professional development of teachers: the European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)

**ACTION 3:** A (visual) implementation of the European Language Portfolio (ELP)

**ACTION 4:** Creating conditions for Individual language learning to enhance plurilingualism

Each action is described on the following pages.

To facilitate these actions time and resources are needed. These will be partly funded from the school budget, and partly funded from the IFO grant from the Ministry of Education.

The time investment is in estimated in hours and then as currency (using €7000 per 0,2 fte) in the table below.

Actions	From school budget	IFO funding requested	Costs
<b>1. Vertical Articulation of language learning</b>	142 hrs	100 hrs	€2110
<b>2. Professional development (EPOSTL)</b>	420 hrs	ECML seminar	€350
<b>3. European Language Portfolio (ELP)</b>	10 hrs	175 hrs	€3690
<b>4. Creating conditions for individual language learning to enhance plurilingualism (3 languages)</b>	120 hrs	135 hrs + €1500	€3850
<b>totals:</b>	692 hrs	410 hrs	<b>€10.000</b>

## **ACTION 1: Developing a vertical articulation “leerlijn” of plurilingualism in the school curriculum**

### A. **Survey** of Languages spoken in the school community.

**Product:** Baseline survey of the languages used by students (and teachers) at home and at school, of the student’s needs or ambitions to learn a new language and the possibility for students and teachers to act as language (peer)tutors. .

**Action by:** Language steering committee

**Time/Costs:** 12 hours (school development budget)

**Deadline:** 31 May 2020

### B. **Curriculum Analysis:** each year’s lesson modules analysed with regards to the kind of language acquisition occurring, the language domains developed, and the language requirements made. We will thus chart the conditions and activities allowing students to learn language, to reinforce the language spoken at home and to learn new languages. The aim is to clarify the role of the modules in the learning of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) as well as the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) over the school years.

**Product:** overview of language requirements and learning conditions/situations that students encounter in the lesson modules over the years (“school language profile”).

**Action by:** year level teams (incl. a language teacher)

**Time/Costs:** 5 year levels x 5 teachers x 4 hours = 100 hours (school development budget) .

**Deadline:** 20 December 2020

### C. Establishing the aimed **language proficiency (CEFR)** for each year level incorporating the individual ambitions to learn a language and the opportunities to learn language as part of the modules.

**Product:** the vertical articulation of (formal and informal) language learning ranging from year 1 to year 6, that includes for each year level:

- Language proficiency level (CEFR)
- Language learning opportunities (formal and informal)
- Usage of plurilingualism during lessons and beyond.
- Characteristic lesson examples / materials ( 3 examples for each year level)
- Clarified conditions and effects for the school curriculum

**Action by:** Language steering committee & year level teams

**Time/Costs:** 100 hours – IFO funding requested

**Deadline:** April 2021

### D. **Implementing** the conditions and consequences of the plurilingualism for the school’s curriculum into the language policy..

**Product:** Vertical articulation of language learning in the Language policy

**Action by:** Language steering committee

**Time/Costs:** (30 hours - school budget)

**Deadline:** June 2021

### **Funding action 1:**

**School Curriculum development:** 142 hours (Actions 1 A, B & D); **IFO:** 100 hours (action 1C).

## **ACTION 2: Professional development of teachers: the European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)**

At ALASCA students train to become teachers and teachers develop to become more professionally equipped: ALASCA is a teacher training school of Esprit. The (student) teachers need to understand the innovative aspects of language teaching, because in every subject and every module learning a language is important. All teachers are considered to be language teachers which is most evident in the modules taught in English (CLIL lessons).

This requires all teachers, and in particular for teachers involved in action 3 to:

- gain understanding of the innovative aspects of language teaching (reflected in EPOSTL), by taking part in professional development by ECML.
- develop and use CLIL skills in their lessons.
- assist in the development of CLIL skills amongst the student teachers.
- understand the commonality between the EPOSTL, the Common European Framework (CEFR) and European Language Portfolio (ELP).

**Action:** The professional development seminar by ECML in Graz or on location at ALASCA for the teaching staff of ALASCA..

**Product:** All (student) teachers are trained in using EPOSTL, and in guiding and supporting the students in using the ELP.

**Action by:** the language steering committee (*via our national governing board member/representative of ECML*)

**Time/Costs:** **20 hours** to organize and prepare; **16 hours** per teacher to attend the seminar (2 days of professional development for **25 teachers**); €350 hosting costs for external experts (estimate)

**Deadline:** January 2021

### **Funding action 2:**

**School budget:** **420 hours** for 25 teachers (as part of school's PDplan);

**IFO:** the ECML seminar + additional hosting costs €350

## **ACTION 3: Implementation of the European Language Portfolio (ELP)**

The school aims to promote and support students' autonomous language learning by providing the students the means to document and self-evaluate their individual language learning experiences, both formal and informal. For this purpose the schools intends to provide students with the European language portfolio (ELP) right from the start of their school career and make this the linking pin in all their language learning.

### **Action plan:**

- A. Teachers become familiar with the digital ELP: acquire digital format and professional development  
Following action 2 five teachers spend 2 hours on this: **10 hours**

**Deadline:** December 2020

- B. Identify the moment of introduction, and regular re-occurring moments during the year that the ELP is put to use and evaluated and develop lesson materials to introduce, support and reinforce the use of the portfolio. 5 teachers 25 hrs each: **125 hours.**

**Deadline:** March 2021

- C. Implement the developed lesson materials with a pilot group of students to find the most convenient way to integrate the use of the ELP in the formal and informal language learning by students, as well as the place the ELP can have in the student-teacher-parent meetings of the term. **30 hours.**

**Deadline:** May 2021

- D. Pilot evaluation to reach guiding principles for integration of ELP into the school culture of language learning in all modules. **20 hours.**

**Deadline:** June 2021

**Final Product:** European Language Portfolio (ELP) integrated into the curriculum

**Action by:** Teachers of year level 1 (during term 2, 3 & 4 of school year 2020/2021)

**Total time/costs of action 3 : 185 hours IFO funding requested**

**Deadline:** June 2021

### **Funding action 3:**

**School budget: 10 hours** Action 3A (professional development)

**IFO: 175 hours** ( Actions 3 B, C & D)



## **ACTION 4: Creating conditions for Individual language learning to enhance plurilingualism**

As a small school the curriculum only offers vwo/havo Dutch, English and Spanish for all students. To broaden the language learning possibilities, the school is looking for ways to enable individual students a language of their choice or the language spoken at home, as long as it is a language for which a final exam (havo / vwo) is offered in the Netherlands. This would allow more attention to be focus on the language spoken at home. This in turn is said to have a positive effect on the students' ability to learn a new language in general. For this pilot we plan to work this out for three additional languages of choice, e.g. German, French and Arabic.

### **Action plan:**

- A. Develop / purchase) language proficiency tests for requested languages.  
**Time/costs:** €200 per language  
**Deadline:** January 2021
  
- B. Create and stock a media center at the school for students to learn a language independently.  
**Action:** Compile an overview of licenses and fees needed for each language; create a page of links to various useful language learning applications,  
**Time/costs:** 30 hours per language  
**Deadline:** June 2021
  
- C. Collect, purchase & create online *lesson materials* and *learning modules* for the different languages to be hosted by the school media center, and create set of guidelines to support various alternative learning routes.  
**Time/costs:** 40 hours & €150 per language  
**Deadline:** June 2021
  
- D. Purchase & create (online) materials to prepare and train students to take formal language examinations  
**Time/costs:** 20 hours & €150 per per language  
**Deadline:** June 2021
  
- E. Attract a flexible team of language (external) experts that can be called upon to support / teach the individual language learning.  
**Time/costs:** 5 hours / language expert  
**Deadline:** June 2021

**Final Products:** Curricula of independent language learning electives (admission, learning support, exams)

**Action by:** language steering committee

**Total time/costs of action 4:** for each independently learned language the costs are estimated at: 95 hours plus €500.

**Deadline:** June 2021

### **Funding action 4 (for three individual languages):**

**School budget:** 120 hours (action 4B)

**IFO:** €1500 & 135 hours for three independently learned languages (Actions 4A, C, D & E)

## Conclusion: toward a Language Policy

As the school is clearly in development so will the language policy be developed further in the course of the coming school year(s). The understanding of the school language profile and the implementation of the four actions described above will be a sustainable basis to learner autonomy in language learning and plurilingualism. In the course of the school year 2020/21 the language steering committee will further develop the school language policy. The following matters will then be addressed:

- Discuss expectations about language uses in and around the school.
- The outcomes from the 4 actions to learner autonomy in language learning and an evaluation of their use to enhance multilingualism at the school
- Increasing the number of language learning opportunities at the school and building further on the outcomes of action 4 (individual language learning): e.g. accommodate the future non-Dutch IBDP students with self-taught options in group 1 in order to maintain home language development.
- Literacy: evaluate and develop the role of the library and external resources such as OBA and the University of Amsterdam in developing literacy skills.
- Further integration of language learning with the learning in the subject groups / modules in the senior years of school within the local opportunities.
- Linking the language policy to other policies and keeping this update and specific Language support: connect this explicitly to the school support profile (Inclusive and SEN policy) and further development of the language support of students entering the IBDP at our school when coming from another school (abroad).
- Connect Language Learning and CAS.
- The review process of the language policy: timing, responsibilities,
- Increasing the presence of more stakeholders in the language steering committee as the school diversifies..
- Communication of the policy

# Annex 1

## Minutes - 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Language steering committee, 7 April 2020

Invited: Pascal Wagenaere, Paul Grijzenhout, Daphne Oosterbaan, Mireille van Heerden, Frans Kranenburg, (in absence of Martijn Meerhoff)

### [Preparation A4](#)

#### 1. Explain step 1: the need for a group of teachers to form a language steering committee.

The language steering committee will be overseeing the procedures needed to develop the language philosophy and policy of the school. They will also communicate with the school community.

At present the committee consists of language (B) teachers.

- We should include a Dutch language teacher (ask in study days of May).
- Other teachers (humanities, arts, sciences) will be invited to participate when the time comes and the need arises. We need to remain be aware of this and not remain a language island in the school.
- For the moment we will remain a small group to allow quick and easy preparation of the policy.

2. Is the current group **clear** on what is needed? ✓

3. Run-through of the **next three steps in the policy development:**

#### Step 2. Write school language philosophy

- o The **team of language teachers is currently writing** documents in preparation of the study days in May. These documents would deal with the philosophy of:...
  - Continuity of language learning from year 1 through to the final examinations in year 5 or 6.
  - language proficiency goals for each year: intermediate and final language learning objectives.
  - Academic integrity in the language learning products
  - A fourth aspect hitherto forgotten
- o After consulting Martijn, **Pascal will write** 3 or 4 paragraphs of the school's philosophy that explains the current choices:
  - To offer English and Spanish as the two foreign languages,
  - To have English taught modules (from year 2 onwards) following an immersion week at the beginning of year 2 (?).
  - To make home-spoken languages visible.
  - To use language proficiency of the teachers.
  - To give the option to students to learn extra languages (self-taught and/or supported by school).

In the past these choices may well have been made with the Liberal Arts and Science perspective in mind and giving students an opening towards the world languages.

- o **Paul writes** a brief text on the school's beliefs of how language learning occurs best, by

...

Learning how to learn a language, to enable students to take individual initiative at learning another language of their choice

developing and practicing the skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and using the target language as language of instruction for language acquisition (and not by than by mare focus on idiom and grammar).

- o Using the above documents, the language philosophy can be clear and confirmed during the Study Days of 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Step 3: to write and review language profile.**

The language profile is the second part to develop. During the Study day we will make an inventory of what is still required to be written (profile) and set deadlines for the next steps (review of profile) that need to made until publication of the language policy:

- A. **comprehensive language profile** of the school:
  - o diversity of language needs → language survey by Pascal (April def week)
  - o legal requirements
  - o current practice of Language Learning: choice of language courses, etc
  - o beliefs about language teaching and learning
  - o connections with admissions, assessment and inclusive education policies
- B. **Evaluate the profile** on mismatch, contradictions and omissions:
  - o Library media resources linked to teaching practice
  - o alternative ways of developing/maintaining mother-tongue languages
  - o alternative ways of second language acquisition
  - o system of keeping a language profile of each learner
  - o processes to identify language learning needs of each learner
  - o monitor the effectiveness of differentiation
  - o language continuum scope and sequence

I believe part of the profile writing and the review may already occur in the study days.

### **Step 4: Writing of the language policy**

Using the language philosophy, language profile and profile review we can complete the process by writing the language policy, including a review process, with links to the other policies (and keeping this update and specific) and planning the communication of the language policy to school community.

#### **4. set deadlines and assign writing tasks**

During the study days in May, the language committee will set deadlines and assign writing tasks

#### **5. the ERK portfolio**

The idea of using an ERK portfolio as a way to create continuity and internationalization into the language policy of the school is discussed. The idea has been lingering, and apparently, due to practical limitations of Magister when the portfolio would be part of assessment, shelved. Still it seems a new opportunity is being created now that we are developing a language policy and the portfolio is generally supported. However the exact implementation of the ERK-portfolio is still to be figured out and should be part of a development process in the year(s) to come.

Frans recently heard about a new grant-scheme to internationalize primary and secondary schools (Internationalisering Funderend Onderwijs) to subsidise the development and implementation of the ERK-portfolio.

The grant proposal can be written starting next week 15<sup>th</sup> April. Frans will check this and write a first draft before May in order to know what information / documents are needed to be added. Most likely the documents that are produced for the Study days.

## 6. Anything else?

## 7. Actions:

- o Language teachers: write documents in preparation of study days (18-20 May)
- o Pascal: language questionnaire
- o Paul: text on school beliefs on language and language learning
- o Frans: checks IFO and writes grant proposal
- o Frans: sends link to IFO to steering committee:

<https://www.dus-i.nl/subsidies/internationalisering-funderend-onderwijs>

<https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2020-17830.html>