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# LANGUAGE POLICY

**Herbert A. Ammons Middle School  
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program**



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## School Profile

Herbert A. Ammons Middle School offers an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) to approximately 1200 students ranging from grades 6 – 8. Over 100 different elementary schools articulate into this educational institution. Ammons Middle School capitalizes on the culturally diverse population of Miami–Dade County. The school is represented by 30 different countries and a plethora of different languages including Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish and French. Ammons Middle School's multicultural environment and active community of students, teachers, staff, and parents creates more than an education — it creates experiences for a lifetime of success.

Ammons provides a holistic learning experience that promotes global awareness through theme-based learning and interdisciplinary units. The program features eight subject areas including a foreign language (French or Spanish), Technology, Physical Education and the Arts. The goal of the program is to produce responsible global citizens who demonstrate certain character attributes such as, “Thinkers, risk takers, inquirers, and communicators”. This educational institution is truly a well-rounded program that takes pride in educating the whole child. Ammons aims to engage students in developing their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social talents while promoting responsible citizenship in a global society.

## Philosophy

All teachers are language teachers. They provide students with learning opportunities that promote language development and the development of the whole child. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are incorporated throughout the curriculum in order for students to flourish as literate individuals. This offers students ongoing opportunities to apply these skills in real-life situations.

Ammons Middle School recognizes that language study in English and Spanish or French:

- Helps students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- Transmits universal values
- Contributes to the construction of the student's identity
- Prepares the student to exercise their democratic citizenship
- Ensures the development of a knowledgeable society
- Develops inclusion and social cohesion
- Ensures the student's success in a global world in the 21st century

These general goals are also included in the IB mission statement: “The International

Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging program of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

## Admission Requirements

Since entry level into the school is in sixth grade, very few openings are available in seventh grade. Students applying are randomly selected from a list of all eligible applicants. Upon entry into Ammons, students are offered two different language tracks: the Spanish or the French track. At a later date, they must take a placement test. This ensures that the student is accurately placed in the appropriate language proficiency level.

## School Practices

The primary language used at Ammons is English, but we aim for each student to reach the highest level of literacy and proficiency in both Language & Literature (English) and Language Acquisition (Spanish or French). Ammons students participate in a seven period block schedule made up of 85 minute classes. This allows students to take a semester of physical education and technology each year along with annual courses in Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, the Arts and a World Language.

## Language & Literature

MYP students take a Language & Literature class of 85 minutes every other day at a regular, advanced, advanced gifted, SPED (Special Program for Educational Disabilities) or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) based on teacher recommendation and on their score on the state standardized test in reading and writing. Intensive reading classes are provided per district requirements to students who score below proficiency in the state standardized test. The intensive class provides targeted instruction of specific instruction of specific skills including instruction through the Achieve 3000 and Journeys web-based programs to improve reading proficiency and support these students in the Language & Literature curriculum. Overall, teachers incorporate web-based support and resources to support their instruction. These programs include Accelerated Reader, Reading Plus, I-Ready, and BrainPop. Additionally, teachers align the district-mandated objectives with the IB MYP objectives as well as the Florida Standards. They use their professional judgment as well as data collected and analyzed from district-mandated assessments to tailor their instruction to student's needs (Interim Assessments, State Standardized Test, and End of Course exams (EOC's).

## Language Acquisition (French / Spanish)

The MYP Language Acquisition courses allow students to further develop their language skills. Ammons Middle offers French and Spanish. Language Acquisition classes meet on alternate days for 85 minutes per day and teachers follow the district-mandated objectives. Additionally, in Spanish, we offer two tracks depending on the student's proficiency which are native and non-native track. Students who have reached a high level of fluency on the initial placement

test follow an advanced Spanish Language Acquisition (native) strand in the MYP, which leads to an Advanced Placement test in Spanish Language in the eighth grade. Other students follow a standard (non-native) Language Acquisition level in Spanish. Through these courses many students develop their mother tongue at school. They also have access to the language collections available at the school, from other school libraries in the district and from the Miami-Dade Public Library System.

## Media Center

As the information hub of the school, the media center provides students with resources in English, Spanish and French as well as audio-visual resources. The Media Specialist, probably the best resource, is available to assist teachers and students providing language resources, researching, information literacy, and classroom support and extension. District purchased databases provide resources in English, French and Spanish and some, like EBSCO, can be read in any chosen language. A list of recommended databases is provided on the school website media center page to help with research for assignments.

The media center is available to students before, during and after school. Students can work in the media center itself with thirty-two desktop computers. Wi-Fi provides a ubiquitous connection. Furthermore, students are taught the importance of the media center as a fundamental aspect of independent learning and how to use it properly. Students are taught information literacy skills, including instruction on avoiding plagiarism and following the school's Academic Honesty Policy.

## Educational Best Practices

Ammons Middle School recognizes that the study of language is central to all learning. Yet, in order to foster language acquisition the school must strive to provide students with cultural opportunities and effective strategies to foster language learning, along with diverse tools and resources.

Ammons Middle School strives to offer a multitude of opportunities to help students gain exposure to various languages and cultures through real-life experience: art, music, festivals, assemblies, multi-cultural events and clubs, curricular units and field trips. Among the main linguistic cultural opportunities, Ammons Middle School offers on a regular basis:

- The Spanish Club
- The French Circle
- Mardi Gras Celebrations
- My Journey to America
- Field trips related to Spanish and French speaking countries
- Francophone and International-mindedness celebrations

Ammons Middle activities provide opportunities for students to focus on the linguistic and cultural diversity of the community and allow for the practice of languages other than their first language.