

What a school language policy might contain¹

This document, written for the American school context (State of New Jersey), is intended to support critical reflection on the idea of a "language policy at whole school level"

	Nano: students	Micro: class	Meso: staff	Meso: school
	<i>Learning</i>	<i>Teaching and training</i>	<i>Collaborating and coordinating</i>	<i>Piloting, monitoring and designing</i>
Communication Knowledge, skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using first language skills in learning further languages Using spoken abilities for developing skills in reading and writing Fostering language awareness and Critical language awareness Fostering critical literacy and critical oracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting first-language maintenance and development in the school and encouraging bilingualism Using minority languages as a transitional medium of instruction Showing strong support for the mastery of the majority language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing staff proficiency in language matters (literacy, language maintenance, transitional language students, etc.) Fostering the cultural awareness of staff and students by knowing the different cultures represented in school Fostering staffs awareness of language varieties represented in the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing about the languages represented among its student body Knowing the languages skills, experiences and interests among the staff
Attitudes, school climate, community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a non-threatening environment for language learning Informing, encouraging and helping parents to maintain and develop their home languages Drawing on the resources of parents and community members to support the minority languages in the school Helping students to be more confident in expressing themselves in all languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding grouping methods for students that disadvantage minority groups and reinforce stereotypes Providing support or training for all teachers in their role in second language education Giving value to the life experiences of culturally different students Recognizing that student's ability to use language effectively as an important impact on their confidence as learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the use of impersonal or bureaucratic language in informal communication Personalizing messages to the students Introducing symbols in school that express collaboration rather than competition Sending out messages from school that are more inclusive and inviting Creating a more comfortable environment for interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing parents about the language policy, promoting policy through parental involvement Giving parents a role to supplement what teachers can offer in language and learning, extending into the home language matters designed by the school, involving parents in assisting their student's learning, especially their reading, writing and oral work Reflecting diversity in the character of the school

¹ This grid is a tool to develop a whole school project in language matters. Further information and details in David Corson – "Language policy in Schools – A Resource for Teachers and Administrators", LEA Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey 1999

Projects, mobility, partnership, networks, cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting students' bilingualism and promoting an interest in their language among all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring all modes of communication across the curriculum : fostering reading, writing and oral language across the curriculum and fostering media literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominating a second language coordinator and building an across-the-curriculum language support team and tool Encouraging staff, students and community to work together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing a school based research and monitoring the school's language policy Taking into account and valuing language diversity in the long term through the language policy and practice of the whole school
Expertise, structures, curriculums, methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing minority language skills in the curriculum Organizing a collaborative system to provide an efficient help to second language students and monitoring their progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping teachers adapt their teaching methods to the language profiles of the students: majority and minority language learning, language varieties, dialect speakers, use of different languages, multilingualism, etc. Helping subject-teachers focus on learning process (including language process) as well as on subject content Setting up professional support for the development of a language policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominating a language policy coordinator and defining his/her role and responsibilities Helping staff realize that language development is everyone's responsibility Making the staff knowledgeable about the role of language in learning Easing collaboration between teachers through language matters, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering linguistic skills in curricula and taking the student preferences in language work into account in planning Developing facilities and resources central to language learning activities and valuing more the work of (second) language (maintenance) teachers