26th May 2014; Language policy steering committee review (Updated 30.8.15)

Start philosophy statement GAA:

At GAA students learn language, learn about language and learn through language. The school community demonstrates an understanding of, and commitment to, the IB Programmes and American standards. The values of the Programs as indicated in the curriculum documents have an explicit impact on the decision making and functioning of the school. Students acquire the ability to think critically and communicate effectively in a complex, global society. Language teaching and learning is a participatory, dynamic, life-long process that permeates all learning. The school as a community of learners is committed to a collaborative approach to curriculum development. Goals; an appreciation of all forms of language both aesthetically and functionally. The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. We intend to develop students' use of language, appreciation of language, awareness of the nature of language, of the many influences on language, and of the variety in and between languages and dialects. Language is seen as involving learning language itself, learning about language and learning through language and it is the major connecting element across the curriculum.

Language does not operate in isolation but in the context of human communication. It is bound up with cultural identity and ways of viewing the world. Learning a language is part of forming our own identities exploring thoughts and having an impact on the thoughts and identifies of others. It is, therefore, key to our personal cognitive and cultural development. Mother tongue language development is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability and that acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international understanding.

1) *Conditions and practices which need to be in the place for successful language teaching and learning at GAA:*

1a) Resources, systems, support:

Resources:

- GAA's library, classroom and media resources support language learning through all subjects
- Home – school connection is supported with appropriate resources to encourage language development (i.e. home reading, IT programs, Reading Eggs, parent training, book clubs, literacy month, etc.)
- Various visual aids required for specific vocabulary teaching and learning
- Special programs (ELL, learning support, Arabic, etc.) have appropriate resources
- Adequate resources for every classroom as an independent entity
- Mother-tongue resources
- Host country resources; language, maps and culture

- Additional language (s)

Systems (for students):
- GAA is developing systems to guide and counsel students through the programs

Systems (for teachers): in process:
- ⬤ Guidelines for implementation (including goals and use of common language)
- ⬤ Formalized checklists, written documentation, "How to" file in development
- Referral system
- School-wide language curriculum
- Policy of best ELL practice

Support (for students):
- GAA is developing support systems to guide, counsel and advocate for students through their language developments
- ELL/ Learning support starts in grade 1
- Early intervention programs; start with earliest learners for LS support
- (Robust) mother tongue programs are considered

Support (for teachers):
- PD – ongoing, regular and explicit to language teaching and learning
- New teacher training
- ELL training for all teachers

1b) Written curriculum (planning):

How we plan: We
- plan collaboratively, share classroom experiences and involve new teachers (valuing prior knowledge)
- ⬤ establish essential agreements on professional participation
- ⬤ ensure GAA's language program is horizontally and vertically aligned - involving the whole school community
- ⬤ demonstrate a commitment to transdisciplinary (multi-disciplinary) learning.
- align (IB) scope and sequences to Common Core State Standards/Project AERO Outcomes and use these as a guide to planning.

What we plan: We
- incorporate differentiation for student's learning needs and styles during collaborative planning and reflection.
- promote students' awareness of individual, local, national and world issues in the written curriculum
- connect intrinsically the three major language strands: Oral language, visual language, written language
- plan integral language assessments (taking into account the needs of the children)
- design a spiraled curriculum

- present a multitude of opportunities for students to gain an exposure to a variety of languages
- include explicit objectives
- prepare to include additional world languages

When we plan: We
- plan frequently as per schedule; horizontally & vertically
- collaborate regularly with support services to ensure a strong ELL and support program connection
- monitor and review language documents as part of the cyclic review of program

1c) Taught curriculum (approaches to teaching and learning):

Teaching and learning
- addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than mother tongue.
- commits to a constructivist/ inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning that promotes the development of critical-thinking skills.
- supports the diversity of students and how they can apply language through transdisciplinary skills such as: social skills, communication skills, thinking skills, research skills, and self- management skills.
- promotes development of communication skills in a balanced language program; listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and non-verbal communication
- recognizes that every teacher is a language teacher. Every subject has its own language: Language of Math, of Science, of Literacy, of Social Studies, Social/instructional, etc.
- compliments and enriches a student's own cultural and linguistic identity and background.
- shows respect for the different ways the students express themselves, including mother tongue development
- uses a wide range of teaching and assessment tools and strategies

ELL and LS support:

- The primary purpose of the support is to provide direct instruction of English vocabulary, basic oral language, introduction to reading and writing.
- ELL students who are at stage 3 or 4 are considered to have adequate English skills for participation in the classroom program for all instruction and will benefit from ELL in-class support. This information is communicated to parents.
- The ELL student's future is shaped by the classroom and ELL teachers working together as a team. We believe that responsibility for English language acquisition at GAA is shared between the classroom teacher and the ELL specialists.
- Differentiating language instruction and assessment for students at different phases of language acquisition and through ELL support
- Transition from Elementary to Middle School – All students who are enrolled in an ELL program at the end of fifth grade will be given the grade six ELL Entry Assessment. This assessment is administered by a Middle School ELL teacher. How well the student does on

this assessment, as well as the number of available spaces, will be considered prior to acceptance into the Middle School Program.

ELL & LS assessments:
- MAPs (Measurement of Academic Progress)
- Dibels (fluency, wpm, retell)
- DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)
- End of the year EDM assessment i.e. (if in grade 2 as ELL student provide Grade 1 EDM end of year assessment
- If a student has been in the ELL program for two years and is still not successfully meeting the language criteria a Learning Support meeting is required to consider complicating factors (e.g. suspected learning disability, language impairment and potential withdrawal from GAA.
- If no progress being made in term 1 & 2 teacher to request psych ed. Evaluation.
- Possible recommendation for speech-language and/or occupational therapy
- Push in or pull-out support possible depending on student's abilities and teacher professional judgment

1d) Assessed curriculum:

We
- ascertain students prior knowledge – structured inquiry – social acts (small groups, large groups)
- engage students in reflecting on how, what and why they are learning
- offer a variety of assessment tools and strategies focusing on communication skills; speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and body language
- include a variety of assessment tools and strategies offering greater and lesser support
- provide school wide daily opportunities for independent writing and reading
- assess various world languages
- are supported by detailed information in an assessment policy

2) *Language across the program continuum fosters the values of diversity, international-mindedness and intercultural awareness:*

We
- understand and appreciate own cultures and histories, open to perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities
- communicate in more than one language in different modes of communication
- make connections, use authentic context, apply transfer
- show willingness to explore and share ideas and practices from many different cultures and countries (creative professionalism)

- place an importance on: language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages
- highlight world celebrations through language
- recognize and understand multilingual challenges of the students; accommodating celebrations
- display multiple languages visibly … signs/books/conversations in the hallway
- involve risk-taking (by teachers as well as students)
- use language as a vehicle to facilitate learning through inquiry
- (need to decide school-wide about immersion in English or allowing multiple languages to be spoken on campus)

3) *The development of an effective language policy focuses the attention of the whole school community on this most fundamental dimension of the curriculum and school life:*

GAA's community
- strives to be: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective
- supports home/school literacy connection (parent engagement/education)
- promotes quality interaction of students and teachers around the school
- utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the program.
- demonstrates an understanding of, and commitment to, the programs.
- encourages GEMS 3-a-Day initiative
- communicates regularly with parents through weekly newsletters and multiple formats
- celebrates language throughout the school community during special events, assemblies, community sharing, productions, etc.

Glossary:
IB bilingual glossary English - Arabic

References:
- GAA's CIS Section B Vertical Language report
- GAA Faculty binder
- IB Guidelines for developing a language policy
- IB Learner profile booklet
- IB Programme standards and practices
- IB Learning in a language other than the mother tongue
- IB Towards a continuum of international education
- IB Making the PYP Happen
- Language policies developed by various IB schools In our region