



ANAHUACALMECAC

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY

An International Baccalaureate World School



4736 Huntington Drive South, Los Angeles CA 90032 • (323) 352-3148 •
Email: info@dignidad.org • www.AIUPWorldSchool.org
Semillas Community Schools

*"Somos Semillas, Somos Tenaces.
We are seeds. We are Relentless."*

Totlajtoltlamachilistle: LANGUAGE AT ANAHUACALMECAC Schoolwide Policy 2017

Mission

Anahuacalmecac is dedicated to student academic excellence, Native wisdom, an appreciation of the cultural and intellectual heritage of Indigenous Peoples and the promotion of positive social awareness. We consciously strive to provide students effective and comprehensive pedagogy through a globally inclusive curriculum within a positive, supportive learning environment involving students, teachers, parents and staff.

The State of California recognizes high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing one or more languages in addition to English. Students who demonstrate such proficiency can be awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB), per [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 815](#)  (Brownley, Chapter 618, Statutes of 2011), which became effective January 1, 2012, and was amended in 2017 per [AB 1142](#). The purposes of the SSB include (but are not limited to) encouraging pupils to study languages; providing employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills; strengthening intergroup relationships; affirming the value of diversity; and honoring the multiple cultures and languages of a community.

Process

The language policies are revised every three years. The latest review happened in 2016. Parents, teachers, and administrators were involved in this process. This review process concluded that a modified dual language program would continue for grades transitional kinder through fifth in Spanish and English and accounted for the importance of addressing the needed resources and staffing to continue Nahuatl language instruction. Language policies are implemented, revised and communicated to the general community through ongoing reviews of these policies over time and the promotion of these policies within the community through parent and community meetings. Parent focus groups help educators at our school remain connected to parent educational language priorities as well as highlight areas of needed advocacy where these priorities are not supported by state educational policy or law. At its core, the language policy development process reflects the community's commitment to its language survival.



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The development of the Language policies of AIUP has been a multi-year, community-wide practice that has included both elders and scholars, parents and principals, teachers and students. Our policies on language are responsive to the situation we find ourselves, and aim to impact the future we aspire to regenerate as Indigenous Peoples for the coming generations. These policies have been developed with attention and participation of Nahuatl language experts and teachers in Mexico as well as in our own schools. Importantly, this body of work is intended to further the access to mother tongue and heritage language as well as languages newer to this continent. The AIUP Language policies are approved by Council of Trustees, adopted by the Community Assembly and set into action by the teachers and learners in our school community.

Philosophy and Overview

Foundations

As an Indigenous community-based organization and as a traditional society of Aztec Dancers, Semillas has become an active participant of the North American Indigenous Peoples' Preparatory Caucus process of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues of the United Nations as a reflection of its aim to advance the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our students have engaged in a variety of international fora advancing the voice and vision of our youth invoking, promoting and defending the rights of all indigenous peoples while learning about their own responsibilities to Mother Earth, community, humanity and all of our natural relations. Recognizing that our Council of Trustees and our schools' community of families and students have adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Semillas aims to further all of the rights outlined in the Declaration with particular attention to the rights of Indigenous parents, and children.

We invoke these rights by including them here:

- **Article 3**

- Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

- **Article 4**

- Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as



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well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

· **Article 13**

· Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

· States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

· **Article 14**

· Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

· Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

· States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

Teaching and Learning in More Than One Language

A commitment to maternal language enrichment and international language fluency is a historic driver of the Semillas design of international education. The United Nations has promoted the observance of an International Mother Language Day in February every year since 2000 to honor the world's many languages and to remember the struggles of those who speak languages other than a country's dominant language. "Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue." In 2011, the IB released a research-based position paper on language education called the, "Language and learning in IB Programs". Among other things, the IB asserts that, "IB programs offer a variety of opportunities for the development of multilingualism, recognizing that:

- multilingual classrooms are increasingly the norm
- the language profiles of IB students are diverse



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- sometimes one language may be more dominant than another in the same individual.

The IB embraces this valuable potential and the need for guidelines for schools on the best practices.”

Language Enrichment: *Developing a New Design to meet a unique need*

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Anahuacalmecac’s language policies and program support multilingualism beginning from and encouraging maternal language retention and enrichment. Multilingualism does not replace the idea of bilingualism, which has been an IB focus in the past, but rather incorporates it into a more complex conceptualization of how individual language profiles are constructed. This means the narrow polarity of monolingualism versus bilingualism disappears in a continuum that identifies language domains. The continuum underpins and reflects all language learning in the IB programs, including possible variations in the development of various domains in different languages.

The Maternal Language Enrichment school wide methodology to be implemented by Anahuacalmecac will logically have unique elements guiding its implementation. First and foremost among these unique qualities will be the linguistic character, history and needs of community we are serving. According to Los Angeles Unified School District school profiles published on their website, most schools in the East Los Angeles area serve above 70% Spanish language speakers (EL’s). Moreover, based on our informed judgment and experience we believe that the majority of the 30-40% English language speakers (EO’s) have family members, often their own parents, who speak Spanish as a primary language as well. In addition, a significant number of Mexican families in Los Angeles also speak a



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native language as a maternal language, others as a second language and yet others as their only language. The presence of this linguistic diversity will add depth and strength to the Maternal Language Enrichment process at Anahuacalmecac.

Anahuacalmecac embraces this linguistic diversity in several ways. Our adaptation of the dual immersion model of Maternal Language Immersion will continue to include English-speaking students at different levels of fluency from grades TK-5. We expect Chicano (Mexican families with more than one generation of residency in the U.S.) families will bring a powerful purpose of our school to the forefront of our work: the reclamation of forgotten culture and language. The Dual Language Enrichment methodologies are based upon a 90/10 model of language instruction whereby Spanish language speakers (EL's) and English language speakers (EO's) are integrated in the same classroom with the goal of academic excellence and bilingual fluency for both language groups. This model is based on the research of successful bilingual education programs that have shown high rates of academic success in both English and Spanish. A theoretical base for the program stems from the theories delineated in the California State Department of Education publication entitled: *Bilingual Immersion Education: A program for the Year 2000 and Beyond* (1990).

The goals of this school wide methodology are:

- To develop high levels of communicative and academic second language proficiency
- To maintain and develop primary language skills
- To develop average to superior progress in all curricular areas
- To develop an understanding, positive attitudes and acceptance of oneself, as well as the diversity of languages and cultures represented in the community

After the fifth grade, students are required to continue their study of Spanish in addition to English. Students are also encouraged to

Semillas also includes the formal instruction of Nahuatl-Mexicano, the most spoken native language in East L.A. and North America as an additional enrichment language. Mandarin language instruction may also be offered for enrichment purposes with the goal of furthering our students' preparation for global citizenry. Nahuatl language and culture will enrich our students' education from kinder through twelfth for all levels of language development. In sum, the unique elements of our instructional program provide for a flexible approach to a diverse community and a plethora of educational needs. At 1.4 million speakers, Nahuatl is the most widely spoken indigenous language of the more than 60 indigenous languages in Mexico today. These languages are not only "an integral part



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of national cultural and linguistic heritage" of Mexico but also a significant contribution to humanity's cultural inheritance.

The Nahuatl linguistic and cultural paradigm represents a direct link to the customs, history, and way of thinking of one of the Americas' most influential cultures, the Toltec and Aztec diaspora. However, **there is now a danger that, in as little as a few generations, Nahuatl could disappear as a functional language as Spanish and English become the primary means of communication for the Azteca people.**

This is not merely a switch to a new vocabulary or grammatical system. is **a profound loss to the world's cultural diversity and ways of knowing.** As Wade Davis point out, each language is "a flash of the human spirit, the vehicle through which the soul of each particular culture comes into the material world." In this context, assimilation is not addition, but rather subtraction that impoverishes everyone.

Consistent with international best practices, Anahuacalmecac recognizes multilingualism is:

- "a fact that best describes (as opposed to prescribes) the reality of "a new linguistic dispensation"
- a right (supported by, for example, declarations from UNESCO on mother-tongue entitlement and government legislations for global language/lingua franca education)
- for the IB, a resource and an opportunity for engendering the ideals of international-mindedness and intercultural awareness." (IB: Language and learning in IB programmes)

Nahuatl plays a critical role in the development of critical thinking and global inclusiveness for our students. With opportunity for both Nahuatl immersion and Nahuatl language enrichment, students at Anahuacalmecac can continue to think and live holistically.

"Reflection and critical thinking in all learning is necessary for the development of international-mindedness and intercultural awareness. Investigating possible interpretations of any situation and consequent available choices is part of being interculturally aware. With this awareness learners are able to become decentered from



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any unilateral, culturally based assumptions and continually question the borders of their identity.

In taking a different perspective, language learners of any age or disposition can be brought to a greater critical awareness of themselves and others and thereby become more adequately educated for an international world."

The shift in the way languages are viewed in the global paradigm presents new opportunities for the AnahuacalmeCAC to increase access for its students to an increasing variety of opportunities.

School and Community Language Profile

As the ONLY indigenous peoples autonomous school in the metropolis with the second largest population of indigenous peoples in the U.S., we understand that our role and existence is both an anomaly and a blessing. Our CALMECAC has become a center of cultural revitalization within the vast and complex realities of indigenous peoples in Los Angeles and throughout our continent.

In Los Angeles, indigenous peoples are both invisible and ubiquitous. To begin with the US Census has only recently begun recording the demographic presence of indigenous peoples from Latin America in the U.S. noting in the 2010 national census Mexican American Indians were reportedly found to be the fourth largest "tribal grouping" in the country. The Latin American Indians tribal grouping ranks as the third largest demographic group at over 200,000 people counted through self-identification.

We know however, that due to the economic, political and extralegal pressures of domination through colonization against indigenous peoples of Latin America in the United States today, these numbers are vastly under counted.

We know these acts of extralegal extrapolitical violence by nation-states have generated massive movements of indigenous peoples to urban centers like Los Angeles and New York - creating communities in which language learning and language survivance is subject to the assimilationist policies and pedagogies of the dominant public schooling systems. We know also that economic insecurity among indigenous families under threat of deportation in the US exacerbates pressures to assimilate and disappear. To this day,



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California law requires English-only instruction throughout the state adding legal privilege to discrimination against all indigenous language culture bearers, speakers and learners.

In Los Angeles, over 224 languages are spoken today of which dozens are indigenous languages including Nahuatl-Mexicano, our language, which is represented by dozens of regional varieties spoken today throughout Aztlan, Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Over a million indigenous children attend Los Angeles public schools of which the vast majority are indigenous persons.

Student Fluency Profile Students Grades 6 to 10:

"English Only":	60%
"English Learner":	20%
"Redesignated Fluent English Proficient":	20%

Languages Offered in the Middle Years Programme

A History

The Anahuacalmecac school community has inherited Nahuatl as a primary maternal language and Spanish as a secondary heritage language. Parents of Anahuacalmecac students have reaffirmed the importance of teaching and learning Nahuatl in school through various means, most notably, through plebiscites conducted annually. Warford concludes that, "Narrative Language Pedagogy, with its emphasis on language learning as an authentic conversation, is a natural application of a social view of language instruction. Though the model may not repair centuries of linguistic colonization, it may serve to open spaces for deeper levels of linguistic and cultural proficiency that give equal weight to non-Western ways of speaking and knowing, one classroom at a time." To address this social psycho-linguistic loss, Anahuacalmecac begins with the practice of identifying the epistemology of our lessons, our lines of inquiry and our assessments in Nahuatl.

In addition to Nahuatl, Spanish is also spoken as a maternal/home language by over fifty percent of our students program-wide. Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world by some estimates due to its heritage as a language of empire across the world. In Latin America Spanish is the official language of the vast majority of nation states in the continent. In Mexico and Central America, the homelands of the majority of our students, Spanish reflects a unique cultural adaptation to and inclusion of various indigenous



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languages, particularly Nahuatl, in its modern expression. As such, every effort is made by Anahuacalmecac to reflect the particular forms of Spanish native to the North American linguistic lexicon. Additionally, Spanish has been spoken continually in the Los Angeles basin since at least 1771 when the San Gabriel Mission was founded as a part of the invasion of these lands by the Spanish Empire.

As a newcomer to the Los Angeles basin, English has imposed itself as the language of American empire and the lexicon of power. As a result the majority of our students speak English fluently and suffer from the negative impact of English as a subtractive language in that as they become more fluent, their maternal language becomes increasingly difficult to sustain and enrich. This context of subtractive language survival or extinction is a product of the over decade long English-only legal policies in the State of California. Resistance to these laws gave impetus to the establishment and continuity of Anahuacalmecac. Abolishment of language discrimination and in the case of Indigenous languages, language extinction continues to compel our community and our families to defend and practice our educational mission.

Language and Cultural Learning

Language Arts includes the use of language to learn about language, the language of other disciplines, and literature. It is a pivotal subject matter as it informs all other subject areas.

All students in kinder through fifth, of all language development levels, will receive instruction in the four components of language arts: speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

For students grades sixth through twelfth, language learning will take place in three main modalities: Learning about language, learning through the language and learning to become fluent in the target language.

Students will be introduced to the process of writing and engaged in the brainstorming, drafting, editing and finalizing stage.

Students will receive primary instruction in English, Spanish, language and culture. Instruction will be offered at the appropriate level given our English, Spanish dual language model and students needs. Our aim is to effectively make all students academically proficient in both languages. At the same time, students will have the opportunity to study additional languages including Nahuatl.



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Every student will strive towards the mastery of the content standards based upon the curriculum standards as approved and mandated for California Public Schools.

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Additionally, a Nahuatl immersion class was created at the PYP level. The materials and resources to support the creation of the trilingual class have been collaboratively elaborated with the support of teachers and administrators. Concurrently, materials and resources are provided to teachers to support the dual language program (Spanish and English) in consultation with teachers. Support for the students' mother tongue is integrated throughout the school day. Instruction time in students' mother tongue varies from grade level to grade level according to our dual language program, which starts at 90% Spanish-10% English at the Kindergarten level. The resources and materials are provided by the administration to ensure dual language program fidelity.

Support for Mother Tongues

It is clear that the inclusion of maternal, heritage, state-mandated or otherwise imposed languages in the educational experiences of our students must be done with attention to and towards the exposure of the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery upon indigenous children today and the languages they speak or are prevented from speaking by the policies, pedagogies, curricula and personnel of public schooling in its concluding report.

To Indigenous Peoples, maternal language is fundamental to a complete and just education. As Mark Warford, Ph.D. writes in his report to the Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium, "Language is a living thing; it is the very core of our cultural identity. Sensing its power, colonizers have systematically sought to control or even eradicate it among those they colonize, often with great success. Psycholinguistic pedagogies, rooted in Western Rationalist thought, have served as a tool in this process by abstracting and decontextualizing the way we view language teaching and learning to the point that its inherently cultural nature has been minimized, if not excised. The teaching of indigenous languages, as is the case with the teaching of all languages, cannot and should not ever be divorced from its vibrant cultural heritage." Warford speaks to the importance of Indigenous language survival, a central tenet to the mission of Anahuacalmecac, and a focus of our educational mission.



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In order to support student's mother tongues, provisions will be made to give students the option to complete their work and to be assessed in their own language during the school day. Additionally, we offer cultural programming, presentations and cultural events targeting the mother tongue language and/or culture.

Strategies to Support Students

Our school is committed to promoting the continuity and regeneration of ancestry-based fluency and literacy particularly for English Learners and heritage language speakers. Maintenance and development of academic fluency of Nahuatl and Spanish as a maternal language particularly for English Learners and heritage language speakers will be prioritized. Rigorous academic programming and high expectation require high supports for historically educationally disadvantaged students. As such our school will provide education and support through the following measures:

- Modeled upon dual immersion high quality multilingual cognitive theory
- K-12 access and continuum of multilingual learning lead by certified language expert teachers
- Guided by school language policy and IB framework and policies on multilingualism
 - Language development Intervention through blended School-based programming
 - Math Intervention through blended School-based programming through Escalante Programs (Grade 6-12)
 - Counseling and socio-emotional guidance: Student Success Team Referrals, Individualized Education/ 504 Plans, Socio-Emotional Support
 - Peer support, collaborative learning, heterogenous and homogenous small group learning
 - After school intervention with teachers
- Transitional Kindergarten for earlier Dual Language Access
- Engagement of elders and language experts
- Inclusion of culturally-based support programs such as meditation, performing arts and maternal language
- Partnerships with indigenous community organizations
- Participation in community based cultural events
- Partnerships with institutions of higher education
- Partnerships with other community resources, elders and elected officials
- Designed to target both cultural and academic achievement including Common Core State Standards and UC A-G requirements



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Strategies to Support Teachers

Teachers must also reflect and be prepared to execute the pedagogical mission of the school. This includes addressing the community based needs of a culturally relevant school culture welcoming of parents, extended family members and teachers and a culturally responsive curriculum. It is a requirement that teachers are certified in host country (English) and language spoken at home by most students (Spanish). Teachers are provided with training and resources in the target languages in order to facilitate their contribution to the language development of students. Teachers work in teams to establish collaborative planning models and can support one another in the delivery of instruction in a multi-language academic setting. Teachers are included in the continual development of the language policy through time provided for reflection and discussion during in-service at the beginning of every school year.

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