

Language Policy

Philosophy

We recognize the following:

- Teachers are the experts of the academic language in their content area therefore all teachers are language teachers.
- Learning is dependent on language. A lack of English proficiency does not mean a lack of content knowledge or thought.
- Communication is central to learning.
- IB coursework demands various types of communication in all subjects.
- Respecting mother tongue languages while fostering the acquisition of a second language is vital to developing global citizens.
- Students, parents, and faculty will work together in partnership to promote language acquisition.

Language Profile

The following are descriptions of our school:

- 274 students are currently identified as ELL (English Language Learners).
- All faculty at the school are required to participate in professional development focused on teaching and learning as it relates to ESL students. For students identified as ELL, we are required to make accommodations/modifications as deemed appropriate by our school district.
- Our primary language of instruction is English for all subjects except those in group 2.

Second Language Acquisition

Freshmen entering our high school are at one of three stages in second language acquisition:

- The student has completed and earned a credit for level 1 of a second language (French, German, or Spanish) through their middle school
- The student has studied a second language but not enough to test out of level 1 of the language
- The student has had no studies in a second language

Students who enter our high school with a credit in French, German, or Spanish will continue progressing in that language unless parents and students request to begin anew with another second language.

Students who do not enter with a credit are allowed to choose, with their parents' guidance, which of the three languages they wish to study. We do not limit or cap the number of students taking each language, so students have freedom to choose.

Mother Tongue Support

Our school district website is enabled with google translate so that the website can be viewed in over 70 languages. The district also provides policies and documents for parents in multiple languages at either the request of parents or the school that is working with parents.

We have an active and supportive ESL department in our district. The district office supports families directly and through the local schools. Our school has a dedicated ESL teacher who not only helps with English language acquisition but works with the district to provide appropriate support (documents in their mother tongue or a translator) for families. The district has many translators on staff who are able to work with families at the central office, over the phone, or at the local school. The school system makes parent communication and informational documents available in multiple languages.

Professional Development

At the start of each school year, our faculty attends professional development specific to teaching ESL students, the relevant statistics on ESL students in our district and our school, as well as the laws which protect ESL students.