
William T. Dwyer High School



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAM

LANGUAGE POLICY

School Profile

William T. Dwyer High School (WTDHS) located in Palm Beach County, Florida is a four-year college preparatory high school for grades 9-12. WTDHS was established in 1991 and currently has six academy programs; Army JROTC, Construction, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Teacher Education, The Academy of Finance and the International Baccalaureate Programme. English is the school language of instruction. In addition, structured studies in English are enriched with mandatory studies in Cambridge International (AICE) AS General Paper, AICE AS English Language, and Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature.

It is recognized that there are students who have mother tongue languages other than English. However, the WTDHS IB curriculum offers Language A1 in English and Language B in Spanish and French.

Currently there are 171, 9th and 10th grade students enrolled in WTDHS Pre-IB courses designed to provide foundational knowledge and skills for students that aspire to matriculate into the IB Program, including introduction to Language B.

School Language Philosophy

The school recognizes and understands the centrality and the importance of language in communicating ideas from the most basic to the staggeringly complex. Because William T. Dwyer High School is located in an area of South Florida in which a large number of speakers of languages other than English live, work, and attend school, we understand the desire and requirement to teach each student regardless of their first language or their current level of fluency in English. In compliance with the M.E.T.A. agreement, we have resources at the district level that enable us to obtain translations of district communications with a reasonable turnaround time and we are willing and able to accommodate our English Language Learners (ELL) and will ensure that accurate communication with all students and their parents remains a top priority throughout the school and this program.

Purpose of the School Language Policy

William T. Dwyer High School developed this language policy to communicate beliefs about language teaching and learning to school stakeholders and to outline common efforts toward second language and multilingualism. The language policy will reflect the interests and support of the school community and invite changes in the current language learning programs, as deemed necessary for student success. The school community should understand that the language policy is designed to:

1. Communicate the role of all teachers as language teachers.
2. Establish school curricular practices that promote student proficiency in at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, in order to promote multilingualism.
3. Support the maintenance and development of the mother tongue language.
4. Promote inclusion and equity of access to the IB Program to all students.
5. Foster appreciation of students' native languages.

School Language Implementation

The Administration, ESOL coordinator, Language facilitators, World Language Department Chair, and IB Coordinator are responsible for communicating and implementing the language policy. The language policy will be placed on the Dwyer High School webpage, under the Programs tab: International Baccalaureate Program: Policies and Practices. The policy will be reviewed every year at the start of the year during pre-school week in order to update and refine practices by the Administration, World Language Department Chair, IB Coordinator and Language Teachers. WTDHS teachers should use the language policy to:

1. Design a curriculum that supports the development of highly proficient, literate and knowledgeable bilingual IB students.
2. Understand the teacher's role in implementing appropriate teaching practices that facilitate learner participation and engagement. Research suggests that to acquire an additional language, other than the mother tongue, can take up to seven years to achieve proficiency.
3. Provide information to the staff regarding the resources available to them and to the students to assist in acquiring English fluency.
4. Demonstrate effective teaching practices that utilize constructivist approaches in activating prior knowledge and constructing personal meaning during instruction.
5. Foster meaningful interactions within the school community and to provide a richness of school culture with intercultural awareness.
6. Provide experiences that support the native and local cultures and traditions.
7. Build and reinforce students' sense of identity.

Admission to Language Learning

World Language Learning

1. Ninth grade students will enroll in the appropriate level placement in the language B program determined by the language department as well as recommendations from their 8th grade language teachers (if applicable)
i.e. level 1, 2, *or* 3.

English Language Proficiency

1. English will be acquired with proficiency through Group 1 classroom instruction.
2. WTDHS Pre-IB students must maintain a semester grade of “D” or above in English I and English II before admission into the IB Program.
 - a. Semester grade of F will place student on academic probation by the IB Coordinator and remanded to English tutorial for the remainder of the school year.
 - b. Student with semester grade of F will be dismissed from the WTDHS Pre-IB Program if the semester grade does not show improvement by the next semester.
 - c. Rule applies to English speaking students and students whose first language is not English.
3. English teachers are expected to identify students with a semester grade below “D” and notify the IB Coordinator immediately.
 - a. Teachers need to identify prerequisite skill deficiencies of students to be addressed in English tutorial sessions.
 - b. Teachers are expected to analyze school-based data i.e. EDW, course-based exams, mock AP and IB exams, to provide remediation in skills and to support students in preparation for IB English Level 3 studies.
4. English teachers communicate clearly with parents regarding student accomplishments and needs as they progress through language development.

Language Practices

Language A

WTDHS will make the Group 1 Language A exam available to these students at the HL in grade 12. The students will complete AICE General Paper AS, AICE English Language AS, AP English Literature and Composition, and IB English HL.

Language B

Language acquisition encourages intercultural awareness and understanding, empathy, and open-mindedness to others. Currently, WTDHS offers Language B in Spanish and in French in the IB curriculum. Preferably, students enter the school with a minimum of one year of second language instruction. Students are expected to take four consecutive years of a second language to reach proficiency by grade 12. These students will take the Group 2 Language B exam at SL or HL in grade 12.

The International Baccalaureate Language Program

International education should:

1. Provide international content while responding to local educational requirements and interests.
2. Encourage diversity and flexibility in pedagogical approaches.
3. Equip students with the skills to learn and to acquire knowledge, individually or collaboratively, and to apply these skills and knowledge across a broad range of areas.
4. View each teacher as a language learner. Practices for language learning should be a collaborative effort that examines planning and implementation of the language curriculum.
5. Include cultural immersion experiences, field trips, and enrichment activities that encourage all students to participate.
6. Include adequate resources for language teaching identified by teachers, department heads, or administration to support the syllabus, goals and objectives of the IB Program.
7. Provide differential paths of instruction based on student ability or need for acceleration while acquiring the language.
8. Include professional development experiences for teachers to foster best language teaching practices – teachers and administrators should attend workshops and conferences to share their experiences with the school in organized presentations.
9. Firmly state that each language teacher remain eager to learn more, update his/her sources and resources to improve instructional practice in their school program.
10. Involve teachers in articulation meetings to collaborate in decision-making school improvement processes.

Roles and Responsibilities

At WTDHS, the entire staff, administration, and IB Coordinator work cooperatively to develop, implement and revise the school language policy. The school language policy will be part of the new teacher orientation process. William T. Dwyer High School will comply with all state, local, and IBO regulations regarding the implementation of the Language Policy.

Support for Students Not Proficient in the Language of Instruction

The goals of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program in Palm Beach County is to assist students in transitioning to English fluency through an emersion model. This heritage language support is implemented in a variety of ways.

In communicating with parents and students who have little to no knowledge of English, school ESOL staff are able to contact the Multicultural Language Line to participate in a 3-way call between the staff, parent, and translator of a variety of languages. These translators are under contract with the county and offer these services on demand, free of charge to our ELL students and parents. Additionally, Dwyer High School also employs a Certified Language Facilitator (CLF) that is able to aid in communication between the school and community stakeholders, including students and parents.

With the school ESOL/ELL programs, there are three stages of transition to full time English language fluency. Below are the three instructional models we use at Dwyer. And attached is the full ESOL manual from the multicultural department. Full explanations of the instructional models are in section 2 of the manual.

Support (Mainstream) Strand (IM code M): The students in this strand generally have a higher level of oral English proficiency. These students have limited literacy skills in English and are in the process of becoming fully proficient in reading and writing skills. All kindergarten ELLs will be placed in this strand.

Sheltered Strand (IM code S): All students (with exception of kindergarten) who have been in the ESOL program less than two years and are classified with Beginning, Low Intermediate, or High Intermediate oral English language proficiency levels may be placed into this strand. Placement in this strand will also be determined by literacy level. Students not recommended for this strand based on their time in the ESOL program or English Language Development Continuum (ELDC) level may be placed in the sheltered strand only by a current ELL committee recommendation. Kindergarten students may not be placed in the sheltered strand.

It is important to note for students at the secondary level, the number of sheltered classes in which a student may be scheduled will be determined by their literacy level and/or an ELL committee. Though a student's ELDC level or length of time in the ESOL program may indicate placement into the support strand, ELLs may receive sheltered classes as appropriate when determined by the ELL committee. Students at this strand will be placed in two courses that are composed of all ESOL students, are allowed to use translation dictionaries, glossaries in their mother tongue, and are given extended time on all assessments.

Collaborative Support Instruction (IM code C): ELLs are provided comprehensible instruction in the mainstream classroom. An ESOL teacher provides small group instruction focusing on academic language development in the mainstream classroom. ESOL funded teacher and classroom teachers plan collaboratively to meet the needs of ELLs.

Students transition from one stage of support to the next as determined by the school ESOL coordinator, Kristin Samartino, through results of teacher response surveys, tests results, and ACCESS testing.

At each stage of the ESOL continuum, instruction and practice in the language and culture of the host country will be taught and reinforced through a variety of methods including the reading, viewing, and discussion of national holidays and observations, learning about national figures of historic, political, or cultural importance. Traditions regarding celebratory events including attire, food, dance, music, art, and other elements common to the local and national zeitgeist.

Current Demand for ESOL Instruction Accommodation

Currently, as of November 2022, this school has 2,199 total students.

- 86 students are considered LY or active ESOL students
- 16 are considered LF – Proficient but still monitored by the ESOL program
- 114 are labelled as LZ – they have completed monitoring and are considered fluent, but follow-up does occur.
- 71 of the current ESOL students are native Spanish speakers, while the remaining 15 speak languages including Arabic, French, Haitian-Creole, Japanese, Kanjobal, Mam, Q'eqchi, Thai, and Ukrainian.

Head of School and Administration

1. Responsible for the professional development training of language teachers.
2. Responsible for providing resources to teachers and students for language development.
3. Communicate the values and expectations of the IBO to teachers, parents, students and community stakeholders.
4. Responsible for providing resources for library and media services.

5. Attract and retain highly qualified and experienced language teachers to support the program.
6. Ensure that the IB learner profile is firmly entrenched in the school culture.
7. Encourage IB teacher articulation meetings to foster an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

IB Language B Instructor and IB Coordinator

1. Informs all the staff of IB procedures and assessment.
2. Oversees the implementation of the language program.
3. Ensures that appropriate textbooks, resources, and facilities are available.
4. Ensures that parents/guardians are informed of their student's progress in language acquisition development.
5. Organizes meetings for vertical and horizontal planning with language teachers.

Teacher Responsibilities

Current instructional practices related to language teaching and learning include:

1. Vertical and horizontal teams in the English and World Language departments to ensure smooth transitions of student skill acquisition between instructional levels; to plan instructional strategies, identify instructional resources for language teaching, and to address the goals and objectives of the IB Programme.
2. Student celebrations and festivals that allow students to learn other cultures through food, song, dance, instrumentation and to participate in the traditions of other cultures.
3. Weekend enrichment activities that include language teachers and students on cultural immersion field trips in and out of the country and students at local immigration offices offering assistance while practicing language skills in real-world situations.
4. Assigning meaningful and varied assignments to students that encourage proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
5. Providing timely written and verbal descriptive feedback to students on assignments and assessments.
6. Communicating with parents, students, and the IB Coordinator regularly regarding student academic progress.
7. Focus on the assessment of student learning outcomes in language proficiency more so than covering subject content in textbooks.

Communication to all Stakeholders

The Language Policy will be placed on the school webpage under the category "International Baccalaureate Policies" and hard copies of these policies will be distributed to all IB teachers and support staff, and to any who request one by writing to the DP coordinator at deanna.schneider@palmbeachschools.org