

Language Policy

School Profile

Atlantic Community High School located in Palm Beach County, Florida is a four-year college preparatory high school for grades 9-12. In 2022, Atlantic celebrates its 30th graduating class, making it the oldest IB Programme in Palm Beach County. The Atlantic student body represents 45 different countries and 43 home languages. However, given the geographical context of the school, the predominant languages spoken in the school community are Haitian Creole and Spanish. Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the school's student body is enrolled in one of our three Programmes (MYP, DP, and CP). The IB learner profile is regarded as the hallmark for the implicit curriculum of Atlantic Community High School.

Ninth and tenth grade students are enrolled in IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) core courses designed to provide foundational knowledge and skills for all students in preparation for accelerated curricula and the Diploma Programme. As part of the IB Continuum, Atlantic ninth and tenth grade teachers engage in articulation meetings with teachers at Carver Middle School, our partner school, to align the curriculum of the MYP and DP programs. We also consult with community elementary schools (Morikami Park and Forest Park Elementary) to ensure vertical alignment in the South Region of Palm Beach County.

We recognize that enrolled students speak mother tongue languages other than English, however, the Atlantic IB Diploma curriculum requires completion in English A: Literature SL or HL for all diploma candidates, and we offer Language Acquisition in Spanish B and French B. Candidates that demonstrate high fluency in Language Acquisition receive Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Spanish Language or French Language, and Spanish Literature during their matriculation. These students are poised to take Spanish B HL, French B HL, or Spanish A: Language and Literature SL/HL for the Bilingual Diploma. We also have the capacity to offer AICE French and/or Spanish courses should the need arise in the future.

Purpose of the School Language Policy

According to IB Standards and Practices (2020), IB schools must implement a school language policy that communicates the expectations of the IB Programme. Schools must communicate the philosophy, purpose, and goals for language teaching and learning to school stakeholders and to outline common efforts toward language acquisition. The Atlantic language policy also invites changes in the current language learning programs, as deemed necessary for student success. In keeping with IB expectations, the school community should understand that this language policy is designed to: (Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, 2008)

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.
3. Support the development and maintenance 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.
6. Encourage professional development for language acquisition faculty, administrators, and staff required to implement the tenets of the school language policy.
7. Provide opportunities for increased parental involvement in language development.

Language Policy Development

The English Language department, World Language department, and school administration contributed to the development of the IB language development process, and communicated their goals to teachers, parents, and community stakeholders. The English Language Department developed a seamless Group 1 English A: Literature curriculum for ninth and tenth grades inviting curricular ideas from Cambridge Education and College Board during the early years, College Board English Language and finalizing with IB English SL or HL during eleventh and twelfth grades. Students are provided opportunities to analyze poetry and prose from authors around the world, discuss ideas in a global context, and develop their writing skills through several genres. Through vertical and horizontal collaboration, teachers identify students' abilities to participate in theme development, literary device usages, and critical thinking. In addition, a school-wide monitoring system of academic performance is utilized to identify and offer support to struggling students in the school.

The language policy is communicated to the school community through the school website, School Advisory Council meetings, open house events, IB teacher articulation meetings, and the faculty handbook. The language policy undergoes review every two years following input from department head/school administration meetings.

School Language Philosophy

At Atlantic Community High School, it is understood that language is a primary means of communicating and is crucial to lifelong learning. To be successful, students must be able to use language effectively, appropriately, accurately, and confidently. Moreover, students must be able to express themselves in both oral and written form, and in a variety of contexts and purposes. We recognize that through language, students develop critical thinking skills and social skills, and are provided with the building blocks of language necessary for acquiring knowledge related to all areas of the IB Middle Year, Diploma, and Career Programme curricular frameworks. Therefore, the acquisition of language is viewed as a life-long process and every teacher at Atlantic Community High School is a language teacher. We teach language through context and integrate new information to existing structures and knowledge.

Students in the 21st century must learn to adapt to their ever-changing environments. Therefore, the objective of Atlantic Community High School is to assist all students in becoming productive citizens in a global society. We recognize that students must become both culturally and linguistically proficient in at least one additional language. However, we are mindful that additional language learning refers not only to the acquisition of the forms and structures of the additional language, but also includes the importance of cultural understanding and sensitivity, and fosters international understanding.

Atlantic teachers should use the language policy to:

1. Design a curriculum that supports the development of interpersonal communicative skills and literacy in all students.
2. Understand the teacher's role in implementing appropriate teaching practices that facilitate learner participation and engagement.
3. Demonstrate effective teaching practices that utilize constructivist approaches in activating prior knowledge and constructing personal meaning during instruction.
4. Foster meaningful interactions within the school community and to provide a richness of school culture with intercultural awareness.
5. Build and reinforce students' sense of identity.

Language Practices

English is the school language of instruction. In addition, structured studies in English A: Literature are enriched with studies in Cambridge (AICE) English courses as well as Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and AP English Literature. All Atlantic diploma candidates take the Group 1 English A: Literature Standard or Higher Level exam in grades 11-12.

English Language Proficiency

1. English will be acquired with proficiency through Group 1 classroom instruction analyzing a variety of texts, such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and prose.
2. Students utilize the internet and web tools to facilitate research for all internal and external assessments and follow the MLA referencing protocols for citations.
3. English teachers and IB Counselors are expected to identify students with a semester grade of "F" and notify the MYP, DP, and CP Coordinators 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. district-wide data software (EDW), course-based exams, mock AICE, AP, and IB exams) to provide remediation in skills and to support students in preparation for 11th grade and 12th grade English studies.
4. English teachers communicate clearly with parents regarding student accomplishments and needs as they progress through language development.

Language Acquisition Learning

Group 1: Language A

In order to promote holistic learning within the context of the IB Programmes (MYP, DP, and CP), the stakeholders at Atlantic Community High School recognize the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language throughout the implementation of the program. English is the primary language of instruction of the school since students must meet English language requirements provided by the state standards. The development of Language A is critical as it allows students to make connections within and across subject areas, facilitated by the Areas of Exploration. For assessment purposes, the IB DP Language A: Language and Literature Course criteria is used along with the Palm Beach County Public Schools (PBCPS) grading policy. Language A courses support both the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) and the IB MYP and DP Language A objectives.

Group 2: Language B

The mastery of essential language skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing – is a vital part of a student’s overall development as an IB student. The importance of students becoming culturally and linguistically proficient in an additional language (Language B) is recognized, and all students receive instruction in Spanish or French. In realizing that not every student will reach the same level of language proficiency at the same time, a continuum of Language B courses is offered that meet the developing needs of all learners in order for all students to achieve their personal best. The choice of level (Standard or Higher) depends upon the student’s preference, level of proficiency, teacher recommendation, and the student’s overall program of study. For assessment purposes, the IB DP Language B criteria are used along with the Palm Beach County School District (PBCSD) grading policy. Language B courses support both the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS) and the IB MYP and DP Language B objectives.

French and Spanish native speaking students with high proficiency in Spanish or French will take up to four years of language acquisition courses as well. These students are placed in AP Spanish Language or AP French Language in grade 10 or 11, and SL French or Spanish in grade 11 or 12.

We recognize that some students have a degree of proficiency and/or an interest in pursuing language studies in a language other than English, Spanish, or French, often to maintain the student’s native language proficiency. In this case, students are encouraged to enroll in independent studies or online coursework.

CP candidates are required to complete a language development portfolio of experiences in a 2-year period devoting 50 hours or more to this effort. Candidates will develop oral, visual, and

written linguistic abilities in a target language that they may need to communicate in their chosen career pathway.

The following reading practices will be implemented in Language A and B:

- reading will take place in all subject areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate;
- a variety of practices will be used when planning for instruction, which includes, but is not limited to: guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organizers, and use of leveled reading material;
- students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure, and read aloud expressively;
- students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, plays, novels, short stories, newspapers/magazines, informational text, and a variety of media to include, but not limited to blogs, visual demonstrations, etc.;
- teachers will promote and incorporate supplemental reading incentive and support programs, such as Reading Plus, IXL, Khan Academy, etc.;
- vocabulary-building techniques such as word study, word walls, word of the day, use of idioms, and literary elements such as figurative language will be utilized across the curriculum, whenever appropriate.

The following writing practices will be implemented in Language A and B:

- students' natural desire to communicate through writing will be fostered by giving real purpose to their writing, and by exposing them to varied, challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities;
- ensure consistency of the stages of the writing process (planning, outlining, drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing), as age appropriate throughout the grade levels;
- students will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through a variety of genres, including but not limited to journaling and essays; students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop, and use language specific to different subject areas;
- development of writing will be supported by providing constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults;
- teachers will provide instruction in and model the correct usage of written and oral language conventions, including spelling, grammar, structure, and rules of punctuation;
- literary elements (i.e., foreshadow, symbolism, metaphor and simile, etc.) will be reviewed in order to teach good writing skills that allow for more interesting reading.

Intensive Reading

An intensive reading course is offered to students identified as needing focused and intensive reading instruction, in addition to the regularly scheduled Language A class. These classes are designed to increase the student's specific reading needs – decoding skills, fluency, and/or comprehension of text – in order to achieve higher levels of success. Students who are placed in

this course are those who score at Level 1 or 2 on the Florida Standard Assessment English Language Arts Exam (FSA ELA).

Oral Language Support

- Teachers will model correct language usage in conversation, while being sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and primary languages.
- Students will be provided ample opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, books on tape, listening activities, etc. All grade 10 students take MYP Speech in order to develop and refine oral language and presentation skills.
- Teachers will plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language, and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

World language teachers support the school's reading, writing, and oral language practices as well as the IB learner profile. Students receive instruction using an interactive immersion approach to additional language learning. Emphasis on grammatical structures, verbal and writing skills, and vocabulary development help students develop the tools they need to become effective, multilingual communicators. International understanding, cultural awareness and historical knowledge are enhanced through the study of the customs, traditions, and everyday life in Spanish and French speaking countries throughout the world.

Primary Language Support

The primary language of the majority of the students at Atlantic Community High School is English, which is also the language of instruction at the school. However, within our student population there are many multilingual students, including those whose home language is a language other than English. Included in our multilingual, multicultural staff are speakers of several languages, who are often called upon to assist when translators are needed for parent conferences.

Support Services

The school has several formal and informal support services available, including:

- **Response to Intervention:** Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings can be called whenever a student is in need of additional support or early intervention in order to be successful in school. The RTI team members include administrators, MYP, DP, and CP Coordinator, special education teachers, general education teachers, reading coach, student services personnel and the student's parents.
- **Special Education:** Students with special education needs receive services from a special education teacher or specialist. The special education teacher or specialist uses strategies that promote the mastery of essential language skills in an effort to maximize the potential of each student.

• **Media Specialist:** The Media Specialist works closely with teachers, students, parents and the school administration to ensure that any curricular and support materials that are necessary for the development of language are available. Additionally, the Media Specialist is able to obtain print and non-print material for teachers, students and parents through interlibrary loan. These materials include over 175,000 items in French and Spanish as well as books on tape and large-print documents for the visually impaired.

• **Reading Coach:** The Reading Coach works with classroom teachers and students to improve reading, writing and language skills. The coach's responsibilities include participation in team meetings, sharing information about district and state initiatives, supporting teachers with instructional strategies and assessments, providing supplemental resources for struggling readers, assisting with the reporting and analysis of data to meet the needs of diverse learners, training teachers and students on the use of computer-based programs and working with students in small groups in their classrooms and in the Media Center.

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 teacher. 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 Diploma Programme.
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 remains 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

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 IB 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 Approaches to Teaching and Learning practices.

Head of World Language Department and MYP, DP, and CP Coordinators

1. Inform all staff of IB procedures and assessment practices.
2. Oversee the implementation of the language program.
3. Ensure that appropriate textbooks, resources, and facilities are available.
4. Ensure that parents are informed of their student's progress in language acquisition and development.
5. Organize meetings for vertical and horizontal planning with language teachers.

Teacher

Current instructional practices related to language teaching and learning include:

1. Maintaining vertical and horizontal teams in the English and World Language departments to ensure smooth transitions of student skill acquisition between instructional levels, plan instructional strategies, identify instructional resources for language teaching, and address the goals and objectives of Approaches to Teaching and Learning.
2. Assigning meaningful and varied assignments to students that encourage proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening language skills.
3. Providing timely written and verbal descriptive feedback to students on assignments and assessments.
4. Communicating with parents, students, and the IB Diploma Coordinator regularly regarding student academic progress.

5. Focusing on the assessment of student learning outcomes in language proficiency more so than covering subject content in textbooks.

The following are optional activities:

1. Spanish and French teachers tutor their students and language honor students tutor the general population of language students after school.
2. Student celebrations and festivals allow students to learn and participate in other cultural traditions through food, song, dance, and instrumentation.
3. Weekend or summer enrichment activities that include language teachers and students on cultural immersion field trips.

The Assessment Policy is an ever evolving document that was most recently reviewed on February 2, 2022 by the IB Coordinators, IB Counselors, and members of the IB Student Body. This policy will be reviewed once a semester by the aforementioned committee.