



## Fairfax County Public Schools IB Schools Language Policy

*The Office of PreK-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Office of Language Acquisition collaborated with representatives of our IB schools, including IB coordinators, ESOL teachers, English teachers, and world language teachers, to develop our language policy. This is a working document.*

The essence of human interaction is language and communication. The world that our students will encounter as adults will be vastly different from the one we know today. The rapid development of telecommunications will make the ability to communicate in more than one language a necessity. Therefore, it is important to prepare our students for this multilingual environment by ensuring that they are able to function in at least two languages. During the learning process, they will derive the benefits of developing insight into their own language and culture as they learn to communicate with others.

The primary goals of the language program in Fairfax County Public Schools are to ensure that students:

- Communicate in languages other than English
- Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures
- Connect with other disciplines and acquire information
- Develop insight into the nature of language and culture
- Participate in multicultural communities at home and around the world

These goals include a comprehensive focus for instruction that takes language learners beyond the traditional confines of the classroom. In the world language curriculum, students will not only learn to communicate with native speakers of the language, but they will do so with the cultural knowledge necessary to interact in an appropriate way.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) recognizes the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our students and their families and is committed to providing an appropriate education for each of our students: supporting language acquisition, sustaining the mother tongue, and requiring English language arts instruction. As a district, approximately 17% of our students are supported by ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) services, although that percentage is considerably higher in many of our eight diploma schools (seven of which also offer the MYP) and seven MYP middle schools. In the fall of 2013, FCPS launched its first PYP Program at one elementary school, which will hopefully pave the way for more PYPs in the future. FCPS supports language minority families by providing adult English language

instruction, resources in multiple languages, and translation services. Although the primary cultural home for many of our students is a language other than English, some do not have the linguistic structure; the students can speak, but not read and write fluently in their home language. We offer language instruction to these students with courses in Language A2 when appropriate.

FCPS also supports students with formal language instruction in other languages by offering credit by examination in 18 different languages. Students must demonstrate, both orally and in writing, that they have reached the intermediate range of proficiency as described by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) K-12 Performance Guidelines.

### **Student Achievement Goals**

The IB program supports the Fairfax County Public Schools newly adopted student achievement goals. Two of these goals are directly related to our language philosophy:

- All students will communicate in at least two languages. This goal has two components: native English-speaking students will become competent in communicating in at least one other language in addition to English and English Language Learners (ELLs) of other world languages will become proficient communicators in English.
- Students will understand the interrelationship and interdependence of the countries and cultures of the world.

It is also our goal that all students will take at least one advanced academic course (IB) before graduation; the IB program in FCPS is an open access program. Our focus is on closing the achievement gap for all students, including our under-represented minority populations as well as our English Language Learners.

### **FCPS Language Curriculum**

#### **Language A**

English is the primary Language A instruction in FCPS. Our IB schools have worked diligently to build strong vertical articulation to prepare students to complete their Language A studies successfully. In addition to English language instruction, FCPS supports reading and writing across the curriculum; we believe that it is the responsibility of all teachers to improve our students' ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. In the diploma program, schools have the choice of offering English A1 at both the higher and standard levels. FCPS has

been monitoring the new Group 1 curriculum to insure a smooth transition. We feel strongly that the new Language and Literature courses have the potential of providing increased access to our students, including English Language Learners and students with special needs.

Fairfax County provides additional support in English language acquisition for our English Language Learners (ELLs). The state of Virginia has adopted the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) as its assessment for students' English language proficiency. Students assessed as *entering, beginning, developing, or expanding* receive classroom instruction in English for speakers of other languages. Students may access Transitional English 9 as a bridge to the general English classroom. English teachers also coordinate with ESOL teachers to provide appropriate differentiation in the English Language Arts classroom. FCPS teachers are encouraged to give students the opportunity to reflect and communicate in their mother tongue as a scaffold to understanding. We believe that allowing students to process the content in their native language is effective in building knowledge.

FCPS also supports students in their mother tongue by offering the option of Language A1 self-taught. Individual schools create the most appropriate course of study for their students with the guidance of student services and the IB coordinator.

## **Language B**

The content of the World Languages Program of Studies is organized around seven essential strands of language development and application for students: Person-to-Person Communication; Listening and Reading for Understanding; Oral and Written Presentation; Cultural Perspectives, Practices, and Products; Making Connections through Language; Cultural and Linguistic Comparisons; and Communication across Communities. The two strands for Latin in lieu of the Person-to-Person strand are Reading for Understanding and Using Oral and Written Language for Understanding.

In order to support our student achievement goal that all students will be able to communicate in two languages, FCPS continues to expand its world languages program, especially in elementary school. In our partial immersion program, started in 1989, students learn mathematics, science, and health through the medium of a world language (French, German, Japanese or Spanish). Half the school day is spent learning math, science and health in the target language. Students receive instruction in English for language arts and social studies during the other half of the day. The FCPS program model is based on the highly successful immersion programs that were implemented in many school districts throughout Canada and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. The uniqueness of an immersion program is that the world language is not taught as a subject. Instead, the language becomes the language of instruction for part of the curriculum. Children then acquire the second language through interesting and meaningful activities in the language as they learn the concepts of the various subjects included in the elementary curriculum. Research studies show that learning a second language at an early age has a positive effect on intellectual growth and leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater

sensitivity to language, and improved listening skills. The IB program builds on the partial immersion program by allowing students to continue their study of the language in high school; Spanish immersion students may choose to study Spanish A2. A limited number of students have been able to study French A2. Individual schools adopt their language B choices to meet the needs of their immersion students. For example, if a boundary change brings an influx of students from a partial immersion program in a language not offered at the high school, the language will be introduced to the IB program.

FCPS has also introduced the FLES program (Foreign Language in the Elementary School), beginning with first grade in selected schools. FLES is an approach to language learning that allows students to develop basic communicative skills in a language while reinforcing and enriching content in other disciplines. The FCPS FLES model develops students' language proficiency by providing language instruction that supports the concepts taught in the subject areas at the respective grade level. Generally, programs have 30 minutes of instruction two to three times per week, which is articulated through middle and high school. FCPS FLES model is based on the research that shows that students are not only able to learn, but are also highly engaged in learning content through the target language. In addition, the culture of the target language is integrated into instruction in support of our student achievement goals. FLES is being introduced progressively starting with the lower grades and eventually will become available to K-6, including our middle years sixth graders.

In our MYP middle schools, students choose a world language for instruction beginning in the seventh grade. Most seventh grade students begin their study with a semester of instruction presented in a sustained delivery model over the course of an academic year. Eighth grade students continue their course of study, receiving high school credit for successfully completing a year of instruction at the high school level. Students in the IB diploma program who were not a part of the Middle Years Program are counseled to begin their study of a second language no later than eighth grade. Students who do not have the opportunity to study a second language by ninth grade (i.e., transfer from another school district) may study language at the standard level; students with three or fewer years of a language may study language *ab initio*.

Each school has the option to choose its world languages for instruction. We currently offer language instruction in Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Classical Languages. Our world languages program is fluid, recognizing changes in the global community. FCPS continues to offer European languages and Latin, but we are also including more opportunities to study Japanese, Chinese, and Arabic. In adding or changing a language for study, schools usually survey the community, including parents and students. Changes are also instituted when necessary to allow students to continue their studies from elementary and middle school.

## **INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

### **South Lakes High School and Langston Hughes Middle School**

Reston, Virginia, home of Langston Hughes Middle School and South Lakes High School (SLHS), is a planned community purposefully inclusive of a wide spectrum of socio-economic levels. Our students reflect our community's diversity with students from 85 countries and 66 languages spoken in their families at SLHS and students from 55 countries with 42 languages spoken at home at LHMS. Our young people embrace each other's cultures and cultivate mutual respect and appreciation for each other's differences despite our steadily increasing overall population of 2400 students at SLHS and over 1000 at LHMS. At SLHS, 10% of our students are English Language Learners, 16% receive special education services, and 30% receive free or reduced fees. At LHMS, 13% of our students are English Language Learners, 15% receive special education services, and 35% receive free or reduced fees. We ensure excellent communication with all our students and their families by providing part-time Parent Liaisons who speak Spanish and Arabic and hosting Hispanic Parent Information Nights. Interpreters of other languages are available from the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) resources. Most publications including information about our IB program are available in translation.

As a highly diverse school, SLHS and LHMS take great pride in the rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our students and their families. We acknowledge human commonality, diversity, and multiple perspectives so that our teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs. We seek to provide an education that combines intellectual challenges while supporting language acquisition in English and preserving our students' knowledge of their mother tongue. We encourage all students to learn and experience success in a second language; to that end, we provide a foundation for the lifelong process of language acquisition since all teachers are responsible for language development.

### **AVID**

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is an elective course at both SLHS and LHMS with an application process that provides academic support to middle-achieving students taking a rigorous course load in preparation for applying to college. Many AVID students will be the first in their families to attend a university. AVID offers organizational and study support as well as opportunities to explore college and career options.

### **ELLs**

Our school has a dynamic and supportive program for English Language Learners (ELL). Students enrolled in ELL classes are served by 7 teachers at SLHS and 4 teachers at LHMS. The ELL teachers, English teachers, and a variety of other teachers actively support the IB program and ELL students at SLHS.

**The Language of Instruction** at South Lakes High School and Langston Hughes Middle School is English.

### **Language A**

English is the primary language of instruction at SLHS and LHMS. In the Diploma program, English A1 is offered at the higher level. Across the curriculum all teachers are responsible to improve our students' ability to communicate orally and in writing.

There is no formal recommendation or application for students wishing to enroll in the Middle Years Program or IB English A: Literature HL course. The decision to enroll in IB English A: Literature HL is based on success in 9th and 10th grade and with feedback from the student, teacher, counselor, and parents or guardians. For Course Candidates who prefer not to delve into literary analysis of English A: HL, they also have the option of taking a "Dual-Enrollment" English course for senior year, receiving 6 credits from Northern Virginia Community College.

Students who qualify are offered the option of Language A self-taught. These students may have been schooled in other another language before arriving at SLHS or may have been involved in FCPS immersion programs.

### **Languages Offered**

Our World Languages Program supports the goals of FCPS and IB. We strive to educate students in a non-native language and culture in order to make them knowledgeable and active members of a global society. Our programs develop writing and speaking skills in the second language.

Langston Hughes Middle School and South Lakes High School offer Spanish and French. In addition, South Lakes High School offers German, Latin, and Japanese. Hughes students in year 3 may attend SLHS to take German 1 or Japanese 1. South Lakes High School offers Japanese because some of our students come from Rachel Carson Middle School which has a Japanese immersion program; in addition, Langston Hughes offers a Spanish immersion program. Students choose which language to pursue throughout the MYP and DP program with the goal of attaining proficiency and fluency. Units are designed to blend MYP aims and objectives with the Virginia Standards of Learning. Emphasis is placed on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Formative and summative assessments are used to enhance teaching and evaluate student progress.

At SLHS, we offer Spanish, French, and German through the Higher Level and Japanese and Latin at Standard Level. Most students come to us with level 1 of their language completed. We offer the *ab initio* option in Spanish, French, and German for those students who have not had a language class prior to grade 9. Language students arriving from schools outside FCPS are evaluated for proper placement in the program.

### **English Language Learners (ELLs)**

Using the *Home Language Survey* form that is issued to all students in the school system, English language learners are identified, as well as mother tongue languages. As required by federal and state law, the WIDA –ACCESS Placement Test is administered once a year to each student whose parents have reported on the *Home Language Survey* that their home language is not English. These students receive differentiated instruction that is modified to meet their

needs. Continued monitoring of ELL students occurs until the student scores a 4.8 or higher on the placement test and is successful in the classroom with no assistance.

To understand the academic challenges faced by ELLs and better meet their instructional needs, SLHS provides administrators, teachers, librarians, technical and other school-based staff with annual professional development. Central to this training are effective use of accommodations in teaching/learning content material to ELL students and the role of differentiation in instruction.

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program at LHMS and SLHS makes language central to all learning and teaches language through the content of the subject of instruction. At LHMS and SLHS the role of all teachers, not just language teachers, is to facilitate interpersonal and global communication. Our teachers employ best professional practices and actively collaborate across disciplines to facilitate and enrich the learning experience for our students.

Students and parents are encouraged to continue development of the mother tongue at home where possible. With parents and peers, students can maintain their knowledge of their mother tongue. ELL teachers provide help. At school, we allow and encourage students to process information in their mother tongue but ask for output in English, according to research-based best practices. For MYP and DP, the mother tongue of the students can be supported by placement in one of the foreign language courses offered.

### **Mother Tongue Support and Language and Literature Support**

Students whose mother tongue is not English are screened by a language proficiency test (ACCESS) developed by WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) Consortium. Students receive additional support as determined by the English Language Learners department. Resources available to these students include parent sessions presented in the native language and language dictionaries. Some peer tutoring is offered through Spanish Honors Society for students whose mother tongue is Spanish. Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity and native language while learning to speak and write English.

### **Structure: Beginning ESOL**

The goal of the ESOL program is to promote proficiency in all five areas of language: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and media literacy. Students in the ESOL program at SLHS are grouped by proficiency level rather than by age. At the beginning levels (1, 2) ESOL students receive most instruction in self-contained classes. In addition, students receive instruction in math either by ESOL teachers (in remedial cases) or the Math Department. At LHMS, all ELLs take PE. Beginning students at SLHS may take PE 9 or PE 10 (though it is not required for Level 1 students because of the linguistic challenges of the health curriculum). Schedule permitting, beginning ESOL students may take electives such as art, music, or JROTC. Ninth graders with gaps in home language literacy take the Literacy Essentials course which provides direct remediation in all four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Beginning students also take an ESOL Strategies for Success course as a recommended elective to help them acclimate to the rigors of high school instruction in the United States.

### **Intermediate Level**

At the intermediate level, as ESOL students become more proficient enough to participate in a classroom with standard subject curricula, they are gradually integrated into mainstream academic courses. At this stage in their academic development students are supported by

sheltered classes in Biology and Social Studies. These courses use modified texts, materials, and language appropriate to learners' competencies to prepare students for the Standards of Learning (SOL) exams in these disciplines.

### **Advanced Level**

ESOL Level 4 provides support for learning in the content classes and represents an additional English credit toward graduation for ESOL students in grades 10-12. Although ESOL students receive less support at advanced proficiency levels, the ESOL and content teachers continue to monitor their progress and share strategies to meet individual student needs. SLHS ESOL and content teachers are continually experimenting with strategies and accommodations to enhance learning for the ESOL/ELL population.

### **Additional Electives**

The World Languages department offers a Spanish class for Fluent Speakers, an excellent opportunity for mother tongue literacy support for our Spanish-speaking ESOL students.

Strategies for Success is offered for newcomers to support their transition to schooling in the United States.

FCPS offers interested ELL students the opportunity to earn up to two language credits by examination. Many of our students who are proficient in languages not offered by the school take advantage of this option.

### **Literacy and Remediation**

LHMS and SLHS each employ a reading specialist to work closely with all students needing literacy remediation. LHMS and SLHS provide a dedicated class period for remediation for all students in all content areas to work with teachers throughout the building. LHMS and SLHS participate in the Fairfax County Secondary Literacy Symposium whose focus is on disciplinary literacy and student engagement. To support this initiative, LHMS and SLHS have assembled a cross-content team to attend county-sponsored professional development opportunities and serve as teacher leaders in our building. The team shares literacy practices, investigates student engagement, and, alongside administration, develops long and short-term literacy goals to strategically lead literacy learning in our school.

### **Testing and Assessment**

ESOL students are tested annually using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) proficiency test. In addition, the use of common assessments and SMARTR goals in making data-based instructional decisions is an evolving tool in our promotion of second-language acquisition. With the implementation of the WIDA English language proficiency test, the ESOL program has developed common formative and summative assessments that stress academic language and content vocabulary.

The ESOL Department works together as a Collaborative Learning Team (CLT) to provide common assessments that both mirror the expectations and rubrics of the WIDA exam, as well as preparing students in general for skills needed to succeed in the next level of ESOL.

The ESOL Department also works closely with the Assessment Coach and content departments to provide testing accommodations and strategies for working with ESOL/ELL populations in mainstream classes. By raising teacher awareness of the challenges faced by ELL/ESOL



students and ensuring that eligible students have appropriate testing accommodations, we hope to maximize student success in the classroom, on EOC SOL exams, and also on IB examinations.

### **Inclusiveness and Integration**

The ESOL Program at LHMS and SLHS is a vital part of our profile as an IB World school. The result of efforts outlined above is the inclusion of the ESOL/ELL population in school activities and programs, including honors and IB courses, and the IB MYP. It is our hope that like all FCPS students, our ELL graduates will leave SLHS having acquired both the linguistic ability to communicate effectively as well as the cultural knowledge needed to engage and interact in society as good world citizens.

### **Language B Course Sequence Guidelines**

In order for FCPS students to reach high levels of proficiency and success in IB world language courses, the following guidelines are being provided regarding the Language B course sequence. The goal is for all students to complete a level 3 language course before taking IB 1. It is not recommended for a student to skip a level unless the student demonstrates proficiency in that level.

Many students begin Language B study in middle school resulting in the following high school course sequence options:

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade – level 2 or level 3
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade – level 3 or level 4
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade – IB 1 (taught only at the HL level)
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade – IB 2 (SL or HL)

If a student does not begin Language B until the 9<sup>th</sup> grade the following options are recommended in order for the student to take level 3 in 10<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Online Spanish 2
- Approved non-FCPS online level 2 language course
- Approved two semesters of college level 2 language course (Ex. NVCC)
- Private tutoring for the level 2 language and common assessment score of 80+ to be placed in level 3 in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Note: FCPS has an online tutoring site for French and Spanish that is free of charge.
- Take our 4-year Latin program through IB Latin SL

### **Best Practices**

- Ab initio is a two-year course sequence designed for students that lacked the opportunity to take a Language B prior to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. It is not recommended for students to take two years of one language followed by two years of a second language and then take ab initio since the student had the opportunity to continue with their first language B, but chose not to.
- Students should take both years of the IB World Language sequence – IB 1 and IB 2. It is not recommended for a student to skip IB 1.
- Following IB rules, it is recommended that students take IB 1 in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and IB 2 in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Students that complete a level 3 language in 9<sup>th</sup> grade should be strongly encouraged to take level 4 in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and then pick up the IB DP Language B course sequence in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

- If a student is given permission to take IB SL 1 in grade 10 and IB SL 2 in grade 11 it is recommended that the student/parent sign a document indicating they understand the following:
- If Language B SL 1 and SL 2 are completed by the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, IB HL 2 can be taken in 12<sup>th</sup> grade; for Diploma candidates, HL exams must be taken at the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade; and it is strongly recommended that students have a world language course in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.