



# SENECA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

*An IB World School*

## SENECA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

### Philosophy

Our philosophy is that all teachers are language teachers. Language is the driving force that connects all of the IB disciplines. Effective language learning is a natural precursor to global understanding and awareness. The MCPS Staff Development Teacher, Resource Teachers (department chairs), and the Leadership Team (ILT) ensure all staff receive professional development related to language, teaching, and learning. Our goal is for all students to achieve proficiency in English, the language of instruction, as well as in at least one additional world language, either French or Spanish. We support students who are emergent multi language learners. All students upon enrollment will be presented with potential pathways to access IB Programs.

### Language Profile

English Language Development (ELD) is offered for students who speak a primary language (language A) in addition to English. Potential emergent multilingual students (EML) are evaluated both orally and in writing to determine placement for courses, including ELD classes. Students placed in ELD classes move fluidly through the classes based on their rate of progress, not the number of years in the program. ELD classes are taught in math and social studies as well as specifically in English language, with support from both a content area instructor and an ELD teacher. As students' progress through the ELD continuum, they are increasingly placed in language of instruction (LOI) classes until they transition to a full LOI schedule. EML students receive classroom and testing accommodations to help them as language learners; bilingual dictionaries and extended testing and assignment time are the most common ones. Professional development is provided for staff to learn instructional strategies to use in assisting EML students in their classes.

Additionally, many of our students list a language other than English as their first language, often speaking a heritage language at home. Because of our location adjacent to Washington, DC, many of these students maintain studies in their home language and culture outside of the normal school day.

We also welcome and accommodate students who matriculate to Seneca Valley High School from the language immersion programs at nearby elementary and middle schools.

### Language A Instruction

English is the primary language of instruction (LOI) at Seneca Valley High School. In all of the IB Programs, in addition to English language instruction, reading and writing is supported across the content areas, as the responsibility of all teachers is to improve students' ability to communicate both orally and in writing. In the Diploma and Career Program, English A1: Literature is offered as an HL (higher level) course and English A1: Literature and Language is offered as both an SL (standard level) and an HL (higher level) course.

### Additional Language Acquisition

The goal of the Montgomery County Public Schools' world language program is to educate students in a language and culture in order to make them knowledgeable and active members of a global society. Students learn to use world languages for meaningful communication in both spoken and written form. The world language program emphasizes language as it is used in real-life situations that



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students are most likely to encounter. Through world language study, students develop sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic heritage of other groups, understand their influence on U.S. culture, and become prepared to participate in a society characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity.

Students often complete one or more years of a second language, Spanish or French, before entering Seneca Valley High School in Grade 9. At Seneca Valley High School, we offer French and Spanish classes for all grade levels. Students are assessed to determine their placement in advanced Language B classes. Placements are then reviewed by the students and parents.

Native speakers of Spanish have uniquely designed curricula for three levels of Spanish for Spanish Speakers which focus on giving these students the written component of their native language instruction since the majority of them have often been exposed to the language in its spoken form.

Students are also given the opportunity to complete the Avant 4S Stamp Test which measures language proficiency on a scale of 1-9. The scale is matched to the ACTFL scale of proficiency. Students who achieve an intermediate /high level in all four modalities (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) earn the Seal of Biliteracy. Students who receive an IB score of 5 on an HL Language B exam or a score of 6 on an IB Language B SL exam are also awarded the Seal of Biliteracy.

CP students complete their fifty hours of language development using an online platform called Duo Lingo. Students select a language they have never studied before. They document their language study both on Duo Lingo and through the completion of a Language Development Portfolio.

### **Mother Tongue Support**

Seneca Valley High School supports and respects the mother tongue and culture of all students. Culture is celebrated through many avenues: International Night, Spanish Honor Society, French Honor Society, and Latin Dance Team, to name a few examples. Our Media Center subscribes to foreign language publications and continues to expand its collection by adding foreign language reading materials. Additionally, Seneca Valley High School and Montgomery County Public Schools make parent communications and promotional materials available in many native languages.

This policy will be implemented in the following manner:

- a. It will be posted on the school IB web page so that stakeholders may view it at any time
- b. The policy will be made available to all IB students through their TOK or PPS class.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed and revised each school year by the school leadership team in consultation with members of the World Language and ELD staff; student and parent voice will be used in this process.

### **Policy Distribution**

- Posted on school website
- Reviewed with students and families during course selection

\*Please note: Seneca Valley High School is a candidate school for the Middle Years Program (MYP). SVHS is pursuing authorization as an IB World School for MYP. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that SVHS believes is important for our students. Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme, or the Career-related Programme (CP). We are already an authorized school for the IB Diploma and IB Career-related Programs. Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)