Washburn High School/An IB World School

Washburn High School Language Inclusion Policy

PHILOSOPHY

We share and practice the mission of Minneapolis Public Schools Department of World Languages to prepare "...all students to be multilingual, culturally competent, respectful and responsible citizens of an interconnected, more peaceful world." Washburn High School recognizes that language is central to learning and believes all teachers are teachers of language.

LANGUAGE PROFILE

Students at Washburn speak 25 different languages including Somali, Spanish, English, Hmong, Amharic, Oromo, and French. While the largest number of students and families are English speakers, 13% of families speak Spanish at home, and more than 7% speak Somali at home. Because of the array of languages, there are:

- Mother tongue English students with limited Language Acquisition.
- Students with advanced skills in both English and mother tongue.
- Bilingual students whose parents do not speak English.
- Students with limited English language skills.

While the language of instruction at Washburn is identified as English with the exception of our Language Acquisition courses offered in Spanish, French, Arabic, and ASL; students whose primary form of communication is another language are supported in their learning.

These methods include, but are not limited to:

1. Somali and Spanish bilingual assistant educators attending classes.

2. Somali and Spanish interpreters contracted to facilitate communication between teachers and parents at conferences.

3. IB Diploma candidates whose mother tongue is not offered as Language B will test in their 3rd or 4th languages. These students' diverse language needs are met by seeking out access to additional Language B learning during the summer months.

4. Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses have been offered and continue to be offered at Washburn.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

The language of instruction at Washburn High School is English, with that, Washburn strives to create a learning environment where all students can achieve their personal best. Spanish, French, and Arabic classes are offered as standard and DP classes, each with six different levels of study, and American Sign Language is offered as a standard class, with four levels of study. Students are encouraged to study the same language throughout the first two years at Washburn in order to continue their study of language at the Standard or High Level in the IB Diploma Programme (DP). Many students arrive at Washburn with

two or more years of Language Acquisition study, including students from Spanish Immersion schools. Students are generally encouraged to continue with the language they began learning in their middle school program. The goal of Language Acquisition classes, as with English Language and Literature instruction, is for all students to achieve proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. By studying the language of a people, you become aware of the similarities and differences between cultures, and through this, respect and appreciate others. In addition, language development fosters an awareness of how language is used in everyday life and in your chosen career area, while it promotes the skills for lifelong learning.

MOTHER TONGUE

Students who speak a home language other than English at home are highly encouraged to continue the development of their mother tongue through participation in upper level language classes if offered, extracurricular cultural clubs, working with bilingual staff, as well as through the opportunity to earn a proficiency certificate. Bilingual students in the State of Minnesota can earn a “language proficiency certificate” or a “bilingual seal” on their high school diploma by demonstrating certain levels on standardized proficiency tests of their mother tongues. Local universities will then award these students college credit.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

The ELL program provides students with support to achieve academic English proficiency commensurate with their English-speaking peers. Subject area teachers recognize the importance of building key vocabulary, skills, and concepts necessary for successful completion of DP courses. Teachers receive ongoing professional development to differentiate and provide scaffolds to promote ELL student success in all content area courses. ELL students receive language support and instruction in a variety of configurations. Students are placed in direct English Language Development (ELD) instruction and general education classes based on their WIDA level and number of years in the United States. Students with WIDA levels 1-4 receive direct ELD instruction in academic English. Students with WIDA levels over 4 but lower than 5.5 receive indirect support in core content classes on a number and needs basis. Students may also apply for the AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) program, taught by a licensed ESL instructor. Students who score above a 5.5 combined WIDA level in literacy (reading & writing) are no longer provided with direct or indirect services, but their progress is monitored. Families of EL students have the option to waive ELL services. Students exercising this option do not receive direct ELD instruction but are monitored through a waiver review process annually.

EXTRACURRICULAR AND INTERDISCIPLINARY SUPPORTS

Students are supported in their Language Acquisition development through various extracurricular opportunities and interdisciplinary connections. Arts programming in the schools connects to the cultural backgrounds of students and the languages they are studying. Some IB history courses focus on the cultures studied in Language Acquisition classes as well. Language Acquisition classes at Washburn High School strive to create a learning environment where all students can achieve their personal best.

accompanying clubs that meet after school to enrich the linguistic and cultural experience, and students have formed clubs based on their own cultural background and mother tongue. Various tutoring opportunities are provided after school as well.

LANGUAGE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The school language policy for IB DP programme at Washburn is available to all staff, students, and families on the Washburn IB website. The policy will be reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis