

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Leander Independent School District

Leander High School Language Policy

Philosophy:

1. Leander High School recognizes that all language learners progress at different rates. Therefore we see language development as an ongoing process that requires the combined efforts of staff, students, administrators, and parents. All partners within our learning community agree to support the acquisition of the English language to a high standard. Additionally, we recognize the importance of acquiring and maintaining the use of languages other than English.
2. We recognize that all of our teachers are language teachers and we want all students to graduate with the skills necessary to communicate effectively in their post-secondary plans. It is our expectation that all students acquire a sound understanding of the English language and work towards a mastery of said language. We aspire that all students of LHS demonstrate individualized proficiency with both interpretive and production skills.
3. We believe that all students should experience and hopefully acquire effective communication skills in a language other than English. This emphasis on learning a second language facilitates the experience of an international education. Additionally, we believe it's of paramount importance that our students access the culture of the language in which they are learning. Such academic programs create opportunities that allow students to better understand the global society in which they are a part. Finally, it promotes an empathetic and open-minded student body that is equipped to negotiate an interconnected world where languages other than English are essential. This is facilitated in part by exchange programs in which we receive students from countries across the globe who embark on a one year academic experience at Leander High School.
4. We believe that the Leander Language Policy should be available to all the stakeholders: parents, staff, administration and students and that contributions will be considered and implemented as our student body and needs change.

Language Profile:

1. Three languages other than English (LOTE) taught at Leander are offered at the IB level.
 - Spanish SL, HL, Ab initio
 - French SL, HL

Additionally, Leander HS offers American Sign Language (ASL), but this is not offered for IB.

2. Determined by a “Home Language Survey,” our English as Language Learners (ELL) speak a variety of languages which varies year to year such as, but not limited to: Spanish, Chinese, Hebrew, Russian, Thai, Dutch, Amharic (Ethiopian), Arabic, Hungarian, French, German.

3. We have language B (LOTE) learners with varying levels of exposure to a second language and circumstances. We have learners who:

- start their language B in high school (or switch to a new language B in high school) or;
- have completed 1 year of language B in middle school (Spanish only in LISD) or;
- have completed year 1 and year 2 of language B while in middle school (Spanish only in LISD) or;
- have significant language B proficiency from language immersion programs or from long-term language programs
- are English speakers with language B exposure at home

Language Policy: (State, District and IB Guidelines)

1. All students will complete four years of English classes, where critical reading and writing skills are taught. These classes are offered at the on-level, pre-AP, AP, IB, or English as a Second Language (ESOL) level. Students must demonstrate proficiency on the Texas State End-of-Course exam at the completion of English 1 and English 2 in order to graduate with a Texas high school diploma.

2. All students graduating with a Texas high school diploma on the Recommended graduation plan or higher must successfully complete at least two credits of a language other than English. The Distinguished graduation plan requires at least three credits of a language other than English.

3. All International Baccalaureate diploma candidates will complete coursework and exams in at least one language B offered at the school (Spanish, French, or Latin). The spoken languages will be offered at three levels: SL and HL and Ab initio.

4. All students registering at Leander High School complete a “Home Language Survey,” which determines their dominant home language. If a student’s mother tongue is not English, the student is assessed using the Woodcock-Munoz Vocabulary inventory. Those results determine whether students qualify for the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) program or move on to the Iowa Assessment. Students who take the Iowa assessment are then determined to either qualify for LEP assistance or show no need for language support. Any students qualifying for ELL support are placed into English as a Second Language class with an ESL (English Second Language) certified teacher.

In the spring, ELL students are assessed by the annual Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), which consists of multiple-choice tests as well as being assessed holistically based on classroom work and teacher observation.

Once a student achieves an “Advanced High Level” and passes the 9th and 10th grade state STAAR tests, they exit the ELL program and are monitored by the ESL teacher for two years. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee oversees each student annually in the ELL program and works with students, parents, teachers, and counselors for the right course placement for that student.

5. If a student whose mother tongue is not English, scores high enough on TELPAS, he/she may proceed to the English level placement commensurate with their grade level. These students are provided support, as needed, by the ESL teachers. This support may be in the form of practical assistance such as dictionaries, or help for teachers such as shared documents on ELL strategies and resources.

Opportunities for Language Diversity and Growth:

1. English as a second language learners are a vital asset to our school community. Although these students are required to pass certain English requirements in the state of Texas, we encourage the use of students’ native languages in informal settings and believe the cultural-linguistic diversity that these students bring to our school aids in our wider goal of language development for the entire student body.

2. All students at Leander High school regardless of residency status or linguistic aptitude are permitted to complete an IB DP Statement of Intent, and upon successful completion of advanced courses freshman and sophomore years, take courses within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

3. Acknowledging the diversity of learning needs, we implement a variety of approaches to teaching and learning so that all our students may find success in English or other languages they study while at Leander High School.

In preparation for language courses at the high school level:

LISD has two PYP elementary schools that feed into the middle schools that ultimately feed into Leander High School. The PYP students explore Spanish in addition to English studies every week on a regular basis. Additionally, LISD has several dual-language elementary campuses where Spanish and English are taught together to emphasize the importance of both languages. Elementaries at the district level that are not PYPs or dual-language campuses also provide volunteer-led exposure to Spanish language and culture. At all LISD schools, different languages are represented, discussed, and celebrated. Teachers actively foster respect for and interest in other languages building on the languages of their students. The development of students’ mother tongues is encouraged through parental involvement.

In middle school, students continue their language enrichment in 6th and 7th grades and through opportunities to receive high school credit for level 1 in 8th grade. Currently, students may take Spanish in middle school with a live teacher; however, any language that a student has access to for level 1 in high school is made available to middle school students via online courses. In addition, we currently offer a Language Exploratory Camp to Middle School students in the summer. Although state requirements suggest all students should take 2 years of language B, the Leander community strongly encourages students to take at least a 3rd year of this language. 4.

The school will promote identity support and inclusiveness with school clubs such as: French, Latin, Spanish Honor Society, Cultural Roots, and American Sign Language (for students) and Culture Responsiveness (for faculty and staff).

5. Class time at Leander High School averages 98 minutes per session in which all teachers are expected to plan for student opportunities for embedded intervention and enrichment. Additionally, all teachers establish tutoring times before and/or after school. These times are publicized at Back-To-School night and are available on the school's website and teachers' individual web pages.

6. Teachers of all disciplines support language development by participating in submitting TELPAS writing samples and encouraging students to maintain journals. Many LISD teachers earn ESL certification.

7. ELL teachers and instructional coaches provide key online documents with ELL teaching strategies, which are accessible to all teachers across all disciplines, and our ELL teacher acts as an inclusion teacher providing integral support in English language classes for ELLs.

8. The library will maintain books written in languages other than English. (Currently Spanish and French books are available.) Also, some of our research databases translate into multiple languages.

This policy will be reviewed yearly by a committee of the IB Coordinator, Head of School, ESL teacher, language B teachers. It will be made public via the school's website.

Policy developed by:

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Approved by:

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References

Language Policy, Vandegrift High School, Christa Thompson-Martin, Head of School, Sherilyn Green, IB DP Coordinator, and Mimi Nazarene, ELL teacher

Language Policy, Anderson High School, Jill Spencer, IB Coordinator

Guidelines for developing a school language policy, IBO 2008

IB Language Policy of Rufus King International School

Latest review: October 5th, 2021