Smoky Hill High School ■ 16100 E. Smoky Hill Rd. ■ Aurora, CO 80015
Cherry Creek School District

Smoky Hill High School International Baccalaureate Language Policy

Last updated: January 2026; Review: January 2027

International Baccalaureate Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Smoky Hill High School Vision, Mission, and Values Statement

Our Vision

To ensure that each member of our community is equipped intellectually, socially, and emotionally to pursue their pathway of purpose.

Our Mission

To provide ALL students with an equitable and inclusive learning environment that cultivates the necessary knowledge, skills, habits of mind, and societal competence to thrive and contribute to a dynamic 21st-century world.

Our Core Values

Accountability, Equity, Growth Mindset, High Expectations, Relationships, Respect

Overview and Rationale

The International Baccalaureate MYP & DP at Smoky Hill High School serves as a powerful framework to fulfill the school's mission to “educate and inspire students to thrive.” The IB's rigorous curriculum, focusing on global concepts and challenging programs, ensures students receive the quality education that Smoky Hill values. By promoting inquiry, critical thinking, and a comprehensive approach to knowledge, the program elevates student learning contributing to the goal of students becoming knowledgeable and active lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and beyond.

Language Philosophy

Language is the fundamental vehicle for learning, thinking, and communicating, serving as a critical catalyst for cognitive growth, emotional awareness, and the formation of cultural identity. We believe that language instruction is essential for developing the personal and intercultural awareness necessary to foster mutually beneficial relationships and fulfill the IB Mission. Consequently, we are committed to providing differentiated instruction that supports our diverse student population in mastering academic language while actively advocating for the maintenance of the mother tongue and the acquisition of additional languages. By modeling the use of our linguistic repertoire to explore new content, we ensure that every learner’s unique identity and values are respected, empowering them to engage in the critical thinking and civic involvement required to navigate a complex, globalized world.

Language Profile

The Cherry Creek School District, celebrating over 75 years of excellence, is in the southeast metro-Denver area. Our district boundaries include the cities of Aurora, Centennial, Littleton, Englewood, the incorporated communities of Greenwood Village and Glendale and a large unincorporated area of Arapahoe County. The student population is approximately 120,700 students since opening in 1974.

The Smoky Hill High School ethnic profile from the 2025-2026 school year shows a student population of 35% White, 17% Black or African American, 9% Asian, 33% Hispanic, >1% American Indian, 9% Multi-racial, 1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Of these students, 13% are Multilingual Learners (ML). And while the majority of our population speaks English proficiently, it is not necessarily the first language spoken at home.

The Cherry Creek School District educates students who speak over 140 languages other than English. There are over 30 different languages spoken in the homes of Smoky Hill High School students. These languages include Akan, Amharic, Arabic, Bemba, Burmese, Bwamu, Chinese, Chuukese, Dari, Farsi, French, Ganda, Hindi, Indonesian, Karen, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Oromo, Pa'o, Pashto, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tajiki, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese. Within our school, the English Language Acquisition Specialists and teachers support close to 200 students who are identified as Limited English Proficient or Fluent English Proficient.

Support of Mother Tongue

To meet the needs of all students and their parents, we have a department of Multilingual Learner specialists to provide access to content learning and English language development. English Language Acquisition supports, whether specific accommodations or otherwise, are in place to address the needs of students who are not yet fully proficient in grade-level academic English. As of the 2025-2026 school year, a team-teaching model is employed to accommodate language needs while increasing proficiency in English. Included in this model are the following:

- Co-taught English 9, 10, 11, & 12
- Co-taught American Government, Economics, Global Studies, US History
- Co-taught Algebra 1, 2
- Advisory 9, 10, 11, & 12
- Newcomer English Language Support 1 & 2

Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the Multilingual Learner model will be changing to dedicated English Language Development courses. The chart below indicates these courses and the students who would benefit from them.

Course Name	**Newcomer**	**English Language Development 1**	**English Language Development 2**
Course Description	Newcomer / SLIFE course is designed to develop beginning English language proficiency of new to country students who have experienced interrupted formal education in their home countries. Students will grow English proficiency across the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing using content-specific academic language.	English Language Development 1 (ELD1) is designed to develop and grow the English language proficiency of multilingual learners across the four language domains of listening, speaking,reading, and writing, using content-specific academic language.	English Language Development 2 (ELD2) is designed to grow the English language proficiency of multilingual learners across the four language domains of listening, speaking,reading, and writing, using content-specific academic language.
Students	Students eligible for this course fall into the entering range of 1.0 - 1.9 and through an intake process that has demonstrated gaps in their academic skills.	Students eligible for this course fall into the range of 1.0 - 2.5 on a current WIDA Screener or ACCESS test, including newcomers.	Students eligible for this course fall into the range of 2.0 - 3.9 on a current WIDA Screener or ACCESS test. Additional formal and informal assessment data may also be considered as a factor for placement.

Strategies to Support Teachers

As the IB recognizes that all teachers are language teachers, our staff is supported through the ML department and professional development to implement the following practices:

- Utilizing a variety of methods, resources, and multiliteracies to meet the diverse linguistic needs of all learners
- Actively helping students bridge new information with their existing linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- Identify and explicitly teach the specialized vocabulary necessary for students to access the curriculum
- Modeling proficient literacy behaviors and providing explicit opportunities for speaking, reading, and writing across all disciplines
- Utilizing district translation services to ensure equitable access to curriculum and school communication
- Encouraging the use of a student's native language as a cognitive tool to further their understanding of the language of instruction
- Integrating listening, verbal, and written practice in English, second languages, and mother tongues to highlight cultural context and real-world application
- Developing curriculum aligned with Colorado State Standards to ensure a continuous framework of language skill development across the continuum
- Adhering to the principle that language development is a collective responsibility involving all stakeholders
- Maintaining open communication with families and providing resources to support home-based language development

Strategies to Support Students

All students at our school are viewed as language learners. We provide comprehensive Multilingual Learner (ML) support across the curriculum, ensuring students are empowered as they engage in the following areas:

Literacy and Communication

- Students are supported as they speak, read, and write in the language of instruction across all subject groups.
- Students engage with a rich variety of literature from diverse cultures, broadening their global perspective and linguistic empathy.
- Students are encouraged to express themselves culturally and use their non-English expertise to further expand the thinking of the cohort.

Inquiry and Critical Thinking

- Support is provided as students develop and pursue their own lines of inquiry, using language as a tool for independent discovery.
- Students are taught to navigate complex information through research and to use language for deep reflection on their learning process.
- Language support is integrated into all fields of inquiry to help students expand their conceptual thinking and academic vocabulary.

Identity and Cultural Integration

- Students are actively encouraged to incorporate their unique cultural backgrounds and personal histories into all areas of learning.
- Language support is designed to be inclusive, ensuring that a student's linguistic profile is seen as an asset to the classroom community.

Seal of Biliteracy

In order to recognize the importance of students learning multiple languages, the district has adopted the state recognition for the Seal of Biliteracy. This recognition goes to any graduating senior who has attained proficiency in English Language Arts and one or more World Languages; this becomes part of the student's permanent academic record. This is a further statement of accomplishment beyond a high school diploma that supports a student's preparedness for college/career and for engagement as a global citizen.

Smoky Hill High School believes that language is both a resource, a right, and an asset. Students who pursue the Seal of Biliteracy, whether they are students who are native English

speakers learning another language or students who learned a different primary language and developed English proficiency, find themselves better equipped to enter the world and show an empathy for others.

IB-Specific Language Course Offerings

English (Language A):

- IB MYP English 9 & IB MYP English 10
- IB English Literature 11 & 12

Spanish (Language A):

- Spanish for Native Speakers
- Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture
- Advanced Placement Spanish Literature and Culture

Japanese (Language A):

- AP Japanese Language and Culture

French (Language B):

- IB MYP French 1 & 2
- IB French 3 & 4
- IB French ab initio 1 & 2

Spanish (Language B):

- IB MYP Spanish 1 & 2
- IB Spanish 3 & 4
- IB Spanish ab initio 1 & 2

Japanese (Language B):

- Japanese 1 Honors
- Japanese 2 Honors
- Japanese 3 Honors
- Japanese 4 Honors
- Japanese 5 Honors

Final Considerations

In order to establish goals and to maintain the current language philosophy, a committee will review and revise this policy annually. This committee will consist of IB students, IB parents, the World Language Coordinator, the Multilingual Language Coordinator, the IB coordinator, IB staff, and the principal. Smoky Hill High School will review and revise the language policy annually because of the changing needs of our population and to ensure that it continues to be central to our IB mission. The reviewed, revised version of the policy will remain housed on our website. Our hope is that a transparent language policy will encourage more students to engage in an IB education.

Related Resources

Cherry Creek School District Language Supports and Services
Cherry Creek School District Seal of Biliteracy
Smoky Hill High School IB Assessment Policy
Smoky Hill High School IB Inclusion Policy
Smoky Hill High School Student Handbook
Smoky Hill School Profile