

ThunderRidge Language Policy

ThunderRidge High School

Douglas County School District

Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Developed 2014, Revised 2017, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024,

Philosophy:

ThunderRidge High School and Ranchview Middle School believe that literacy is a fundamental right for all students. Our educators are dedicated to promoting language development across all disciplines, as we recognize that all teachers are language teachers. The development of language skills—whether in a student's home language or an additional language—is essential to fostering academic achievement, communication, and personal growth.

Definitions:

Language of Instruction (LOI): English

Heritage Language - Languages of Influence (Native/First Language)

Language Acquisition - Second Languages

IB Language Acquisition: The requirement of learning at least one language other than the home language in the context of the IB programme

ELDP- English Language Development Plan

ThunderRidge/RVMS Language Profile:

At the time of the most recent revision of this document, 97% of ThunderRidge students are native speakers of English. Within the other 3% of the student body, 19 heritage languages other than English are also spoken.

Policy Statement:

- English is the Language of Instruction (LOI) at both ThunderRidge High School and Ranchview Middle School, but students are strongly encouraged to learn a second language.
- Both schools offer language acquisition programs and maintain support structures for students whose home language is not English.

- No punitive measures will be taken against students for using their heritage language, and every effort will be made to ensure that their linguistic background is respected and nurtured.
- We ensure that students who are not native English speakers receive the necessary support to achieve academic success in both their spoken and written English.

Language Policy:

ThunderRidge High School IB feeder:

1. Provides opportunities for all learners to acquire a language other than English.
ThunderRidge offers French, Spanish, and American Sign Language.
 - a. French offerings: levels I-IV, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) Standard Level, & IB Higher Level
 - b. Spanish offerings: levels I-IV, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) ab initio, IB Standard Level, & IB Higher Level
 - c. American Sign Language: levels I-V
2. Provides opportunities for all learners to develop cultural understandings of their own and other cultures.
3. Provides opportunities for students to maintain and develop their heritage language.
These opportunities could include:
 - a. Physical resources
 - b. Technology supports (e.g., Distance Learning, access to community-based instruction)
 - c. Direct instruction
4. Provides support for students enrolled with English as not their primary language to develop competence in both spoken and written English in accordance with the school's curricular frameworks for ESL to support their academic progress.
5. Ensures that teachers are making the necessary adjustments to classroom practices to support the language needs of all students.
6. Allows additional language acquisition and heritage language development of all students enrolled. Students will be counseled toward a sustained language experience.

➤ **Language Acquisition Structures for English Language Learners:**

- An ELDP (English Language Development Plan) will be created for each qualifying student.
- Teachers will receive detailed information about students' language backgrounds and needs as language learners.
- Students are placed in ELD classes based on their level of English acquisition.
- Courses offered to support ELD students include:
 - ELD English as needed

- Subject classes taught with an ELD teacher as needed
- At TRHS: ELD Elective Course (this provides supplemental support with coursework from general education classes)
- Reading/Writing Strategies Course may be offered/encouraged as additional support.

➤ **Expectations of Classroom Teachers of English Language Learners:**

- Teachers are expected to collaborate with students, families, and the ELD teacher to understand and meet the needs of language learners.
- Teachers are expected to make the necessary adjustments to classroom practices to support the language needs of all students.
- The Colorado Department of Education requires all Colorado core (English, Math, Science, Social Studies) and K-12 teachers to complete 45 hours of professional development in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Development.
- Heritage language development is supported and encouraged by students taking their native language class to extend their linguistic skills. In addition, students are encouraged to speak their native language at home to keep their language skills. Students are encouraged to translate English words to their heritage language for better comprehension and understanding.
- Teachers will encourage students to make connections between a student's native language and English. Teachers will differentiate assignments based on English language proficiency and translate documents if needed.

➤ **Expectations of ELD Teachers:**

- The ELD teacher will ensure English Language Learners are placed in classes with appropriate support based on the assessment data gathered during the creation of the ELDP.
- The ELD teacher will collaborate with teachers and students to provide additional resources and strategies to assist in meeting the educational needs of the students.
- The ELD teacher will utilize formative assessment data to determine the effectiveness of the strategies.

➤ **Additional Considerations:**

- Teachers are encouraged to identify distinctions between social and academic language proficiency and to recognize that students often master social language before mastering more nuanced academic discourse.
- Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for all learners to develop cultural understandings of their own and other cultures.
- Through International Baccalaureate curricular unit plans in both the Middle Years and

Diploma Programmes at ThunderRidge, international mindedness is developed at the instructional level, and connections are made to the cultures around the world in each subject area.

- Families are encouraged to be actively involved in supporting their children's language development at home and to plan the development of their child's language profile in collaboration with the school. The schools will utilize a variety of resources, such as parent-teacher conferences, school newsletters, and workshops, to involve families in the process.

References:

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO): *Standards and Practices Culture through Policy Implementation (0301)*

Parent –Student Handbook IBO Publication: *Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy*

IBO Publication: *Second-Language Acquisition and Mother-Tongue Development*

IBO Publications: *MYP/DP: From Principles to Practice*