

# **Hanover County Public Schools International Baccalaureate Language Policy**

## ***Language Profile of the HCPS Community***

An overwhelming majority of our students are native English speakers with an English-only background who, if pursuing the IB diploma, will achieve a higher level proficiency by the end of their senior year. In order to support the acquisition of a second language in accordance with the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate program, HCPS offers Language B courses in French, Spanish, and German (both SL and HL) to foster a greater understanding of the culture, history, and language of the peoples who speak those languages. In addition, HCPS offers classical Latin (SL) for those students who wish to pursue the study of a classical language. There are a few students who participate in an immersion program or speak another language because of family ties or resulting from living in another area. For the few students who do study in an immersion program or speak another language, we actively encourage them to bring their experiences and perspective into classroom activities, CAS, the extended essay, and Theory of Knowledge classroom. For this niche group, Hanover High has contacts with three local universities—Virginia Commonwealth University, Randolph-Macon College, and Reynolds Community College - that can provide these students with opportunities to pursue the study of languages outside of our course offerings. HCPS does have a growing population of English Language Learners (ELL) students and/or parents who do not speak English. HCPS has policies and practices in place to assist these students and their families.

HCPS students, in general, represent one of the following language profiles:

- Three years of a second language study, mother tongue English
- Two years of second language student in two different languages, mother tongue English
- Four years of second language study, mother tongue English.
- Five years of second language study, mother tongue English.
- Six years of second language study, mother tongue English.
- Bilingual students who have spoken English and another language in the home since birth.
- Bilingual students with non-English speaking parents whose mother tongue is a language other than English and whose English acquisition is being reinforced by working with an ELL teacher during the school day.

## **Language A for the Diploma Program**

All students enrolled in the DP take English A: Literature HL as their Group 1 subject requirement. Four years/four credits of English are required to earn a Diploma in the State of Virginia. DP English HL prepares students not only for the IB examination and Internal Assessment requirements, but provides them with the knowledge needed for the SOL End of Course exam taken at the conclusion of the junior year. Since English is the language of instruction in HCPS, and is nearly spoken by all IB Diploma candidates, English Literature HL is the sole Language A option in the district.

## **Language B for the Diploma Program**

Students learn to use world languages for meaningful spoken and written communication. 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. Four world languages- French, German, Latin and Spanish- are offered as part of the HCPS

DP. Language B instructors not only work towards acquisition of a second language, but also seek to make connections to culture, history, film, and experiences through other elements of the DP program.

Students entering each high school have a variety of world language experiences depending on when they begin their language instruction. Students may begin instruction starting in the sixth grade at the middle schools that feed our high schools. As a result, DP students may take as many as six years of their world choice language prior to graduating.

It is the goal of HCPS to provide students with the necessary support to make them successful in the acquisition of a second language while reinforcing their mother tongue.

### ***Language Philosophy***

Language is a major vehicle of inquiry, instruction, and expression. It is fundamental to any educational program. Regardless of discipline, all teachers in the program are language teachers with a responsibility to facilitate communication in both the written and spoken form. Language is taught through context and by building relationships between new information and existing concepts.

Instruction in reading, writing, and oral communication are the central components of language instruction. Classroom educators in all subject areas go beyond these core components to include aspects of language that are particular to each academic field: the acquisition of a second language, the importance of listening as part of effective communication, the development of an awareness of the nuances of verbal and non-verbal communication, and the processes necessary to refine one's style and form in communication. The development of language is inextricably linked to the learner profile's focus on communication, reflection, inquiry, and thinking as well as the open-mindedness that is necessary for the acquisition and appreciation of another language. Language is the critical piece to the communication between teacher and student that establishes a strong working bond between the two to maximize the educational process. In addition, understanding a language is an important first step to the comprehension of one's own history, culture, and background. In order to enhance understanding and appreciation of other languages and cultures, people must first master their own native tongue.

### ***Language Instruction and Support in Subject Areas***

It is an expectation of all courses in HCPS to require students to consume language, write in a language well, and contribute to classes through dialogue and oral presentations. This is especially true for DP courses offered in Groups 3-6. Each DP instructor works to help students improve in each of these areas while also helping the students understand and use the intricacies and nuances of language within each discipline. There are differences in terminology and expectations for communication within each academic discipline, and it is the teachers' role, as experts, to facilitate the learning of these nuances and differences over the spectrum of each course. It is also necessary for teachers to clearly communicate how language and communication will be evaluated, both with formative and summative assessments. A core part of the HCPS "Hanover Promise" is to develop globally-engaged communicators. This cannot be achieved without fostering effective communication practices and use of language. Mastery of language is an integral part of being a globally-engaged communicator. Within each subject area, educators focus on the following:

- teaching that only through clear use and understanding of language can one consume knowledge and content in each course
- differentiating between various points of view and how different perspectives offer both value and potential bias
- understanding how different academic disciplines sort and communicate subject specific information and data

- comprehending themes and arguments within various fields
- clarity in written work
- evaluating the reliability and academic honesty of multiple sources of information
- constructing arguments in such a manner that corresponds to the norms, jargon, and vernacular of multiple academic fields
- understanding that not all audiences are the same and that sometimes one must tailor communication uniquely for different groups
- properly citing sources when research is conducted
- listening to others so that one's response is on point and an answer to the question asked
- participating in discussion in a manner that adds to the existing conversation
- posing thought provoking and enlightening questions
- organizing ideas and thoughts when conducting a formal presentation
- appropriate ways in which one respectfully disagrees with another in a debate or discussion
- incorporating how students can use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology and social media as a tool for academic conversation
- increased focus, pertinent to all disciplines, on digital literacy
- stressing how language evolves over time and is reflected through current world events discussed in IB classrooms.

Some specific examples in non-language based DP courses:

- Group 3: analyzing visual information in DP Economics and describing the real world applications of this content; using excerpts from historical text, scholarly journals, and non-fiction books to understand the mode of communication in the discipline of history and allowing students to write analytical essays to mastery
- Group 4: focusing on clear, concise communication, especially in verbal formats; translating mathematical and scientific information into understandable vernacular
- Group 5: communication through a more symbolic language, but also need to translate these symbols into understandable verbal communication to articulate mathematical concepts
- Group 6: self-reflective portfolios are an integral part of communication in the visual arts as well as peer-peer and teacher-student critiques while staying abreast of changes in global communication and styles related to the arts

### ***Inclusion and Equity***

As language educators we include equitable access to our curriculum for students from all language backgrounds. We are innovative and adaptive to reach the needs of all learners, making accommodations as needed. Students needing a Group 2 Language course who enter the program from another course of study or school system may enroll in *ab initio* language courses. The *ab initio* language course offers two years of language at a slower pace while maintaining the expectations and rigor of the DP program. This approach allows for language acquisition for students with little or no language experience.

English Language Learners (ELLs) are provided individual tutoring and curriculum differentiation in all of our classes. Each school has an ELL teacher who supports learners and teachers. All classes use a variety of methods to assist with language learning including but not limited to visual aids, electronic media, graphic organizers, collaborative learning groups, and demonstrations. When students struggle, it is a priority to bring parents into the process so all parties work together for the best interests of the student. Our school's librarians and counselors work with students in need of extra help with reading (librarians) or improving

social/communicative skills (counselors). When necessary, assignments are adapted to maintain rigor but “level the playing field” for students struggling with language acquisition.

### ***Mother Tongue Support***

While HCPS has few students with a mother tongue language that is not English, this subgroup of our student population is rapidly growing. It is vitally important that our staff and administration support all students’ primary language. We recognize language is an essential element for each ethnic group’s culture, history, and traditions, all of which play a central role in one’s identity. The formulation of identity, while in flux, is a central part of adolescence. Therefore, it is critical that schools support development of each student’s mother tongue language to help foster personal growth and the development of students’ identity. The support and development of mother tongue languages can help make our school community more diverse and the acquisition/growth of multiple languages can help students achieve greater critical thinking and higher level reasoning. Support of mother tongue languages helps strengthen family ties either locally or globally and can create within students the desire to travel abroad. Such ventures support the diffusion of culture and a greater understanding of other cultures through immersion.

HCPS supports mother tongue development with accommodations for ELL students. Our ELL instructors work with teachers on how to allow these students to develop English as a language of instruction without losing their roots in their own language. ELL teachers help students develop their skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and in developing content area language skills. We celebrate our foreign exchange students, integrating presentations of information regarding culture and language into our Language A and B classes each year. Professional development options are also provided in which teachers learn the most effective techniques for helping ELL students in content classrooms.

### ***Policy Review and Communication***

This policy will be revised in accordance with policy changes as designated by IBO. Policies stand for review by DP faculty, administrators, DP coordinators, and curriculum specialists to incorporate changes to DP curricula through IBO’s revision process. The policy is communicated to each DP school community at the beginning of each school year through DP faculty meetings. The policy is also posted on each DP school’s website.

Last date of review: May 2022.