

# IB Language Policy



## **BEARDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL & WEST HIGH SCHOOL**

International Baccalaureate  
Middle Years Program Partnership  
Career-Related Program  
Diploma Program

revised June 2024

## **Philosophy**

Throughout the Knox County Schools System, our educators, and district leaders place an emphasis on language learning; we consider each instructional leader to be a language teacher no matter their area of expertise. Given that language learning skills are essential to academic growth and success in each subject area, every teacher facilitates language learning through communication. We also recognize that language-learning must continue and be supported in the home to provide as high a level of immersion as possible for each student.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) insists that now, colleges and universities are being more selective than ever before when reviewing the applications of prospective students. In an effort to recruit individuals who could be open-minded and capable future world leaders or and/or those who could positively affect local and global communities, admissions teams are paying very close attention to students with multilingual proficiencies (ACTFL, 2021). The World Language Departments at both Bearden Middle and West High School fully support the mission of IB World Schools, of which language acquisition and proficiency play a major part.

## **Support for Students not Proficient in the Primary Language of Instruction**

Bearden Middle School and West High School support a community of students who represent diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Both schools strive to serve our English Language Learners (ELLs) through a shared mission of increasing each student's individual proficiency in English while honoring their own unique and valuable language history. ELL teachers collaborate with content teachers to provide students in our ELL programs with the greatest possible opportunity to achieve academic success across all content areas.

The mission of our Knox County School ELL program is clear: *“to support and educate all non-native English speakers to become fully proficient in English and to gain an understanding of U.S. cultures so that they can be successful citizens in our dynamic global society.”*

The proficiency level of our ELL students is assessed yearly on the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) to determine proper English-language learning placement (Levels 1-6). To support and improve the scores achieved on the WIDA Access exam, ELL teachers use the WIDA Standards and the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Framework. In addition to following the WIDA framework, ELL educators at BMS and WHS incorporate the IB Approaches to Learning, the Learner Profile, and Global Contexts in their planning, and use them consistently in their instruction. Lessons place a strong emphasis on improving skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing the English language and are built on the WIDA standards.

To better inform our professional community, ELL teachers lead a yearly professional development session for staff. This offering focuses on the WIDA ELD Framework, WIDA standards and intervention strategies used to make academic content more accessible. ELL teachers in both buildings collaborate with content teachers to help ensure that ELL students are supported both in the ELL language classroom and the content classrooms. A district-level ELL instructional coach is available to provide additional support as needed.

All teachers of ELL students, regardless of content, have access to ELlevation, a progress monitoring platform. Teachers are responsible for using the Instructional Accommodations contained in the student's ELlevation profile to provide support for the students in their classes. They can also see the language acquisition goals for each student, and may choose to incorporate some of those language goals into the content classroom. Additionally, classroom teachers assess the progress of ELL students who are on Waiver, or are in their first two years of mandated Transitional monitoring.

### **Mother Tongue Support**

As International Baccalaureate World Schools, we support students, not only in their acquisition of English, but also by encouraging the development of and/or support for their first language.

It is our aim as International Baccalaureate World Schools to develop students' proficiency in English, as well as to nurture and/or grow students' skills in their native or heritage language. At West High School, native, or heritage speakers of Spanish are encouraged to enroll concurrently in a Heritage Spanish class and an English class. We further honor students' multilingual proficiencies by encouraging them to apply for the Tennessee State Seal of Bi-literacy. Once having passed the qualifying exams, students can receive recognition for their advanced skills in multiple languages.

As many families in our communities enjoy proficiency in multiple languages, resources in our Media Centers are cultivated to offer selections written in the heritage or native languages of many of our families. Librarians at both BMS and WHS continue to add authentic text and media resources at varying levels of proficiency to ensure all students have access to relevant literary sources across languages.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

#### **Middle Years Program: Grades 6-8 (BMS) and Grades 9-10 (WHS)**

#### **IB Career-Related and IB Diploma (WHS)**

The true and intentional acquisition of a second language takes time and effort; each language learner will progress differently. Through the MYP Partnership between Bearden Middle School and West High School, students are offered a 5-year language acquisition journey that can foster a comprehensive language-learning experience. The ability to communicate in a variety of modes, in more than one language, is highly valued in our ever expanding global marketplace. The continuation of the study of an additional world language through the 10<sup>th</sup> grade provides a linguistic and academic challenge for students who choose to pursue an international education.

Students are provided the opportunity to increase their language proficiency through several levels of content. Students who decide to pursue the IB Career-Related or IB Diploma Programme at West High School will be encouraged to continue the study of their additional language throughout the entirety of their high school program. Those students who come to West High School from a non-IB middle school will select two full years of the same world language to meet minimum KCS/State of Tennessee graduation requirements. Should they decide to pursue the IB Diploma, those two years will prepare them for IB DP language courses during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Language Acquisition courses offered within the BMS/WHS MYP partnership are French and Spanish. In the first year of the MYP (6<sup>th</sup> grade), students are generally enrolled in a “carousel course”, which focuses on French for one quarter and Spanish for another. This “carousel” gives students an opportunity to learn a bit about target cultures and their languages before they commit to a more in-depth study. At the end of MYP Year I (6<sup>th</sup> grade), students may choose a language to study in the following years of the MYP and through the IB CP or DP program at WHS.

Our Language Acquisition program operates within the curricular and philosophical framework of the IB Middle Years Program, while teaching the [Knox County Schools local World Language standards and objectives](#). We are guided by the fundamental MYP concepts of holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication. Our program encourages students to make links within and across subject groups through Areas of Interaction and Approaches to Learning.

**Table 1: English Language Course Offerings**

Language & Literature: English	Middle Years Program	IB Career-Related / IB Diploma
BMS 6th	Regular or Honors	NA
BMS 7th		
BMS 8th		
WHS 9th	College Prep. (CP) or Honors	
WHS 10th	CP, Honors, AP	
WHS 11th	IB Literature Year 1	*Standard Level or Higher Level
WHS 12th	IB Literature Year 2	*Standard Level or Higher Level

\* Standard Level courses require a minimum of 150 course contact hours. Higher Level courses require a minimum of 240 course contact hours.

**Table 2: World Language Course Offerings**

MYP “Language Acquisition” CP/DP “Language B”	Middle Years Program	IB Career-Related / IB Diploma
6th	French & Spanish Carousel (Both languages taught to all to foster interest)	NA
7th	French or Spanish Exploratory (students choose one language to follow through)	

	MYP)	
8th	<b>French I Honors or Spanish I Honors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High-school credit</li> <li>● GPA-bearing</li> </ul>	
WHS 9th	<b>*American Sign Language, French or Spanish</b>	<b>French or Spanish 2, 2 Honors 3, 3 Honors</b>
WHS 10th	<b>*American Sign Language, French or Spanish</b>	
WHS 11th	<b>IB French or Spanish Year 1</b>	<b>Standard Level or Higher Level</b>
WHS 12th	<b>IB French or Spanish Year 2</b>	<b>Standard Level or Higher Level</b>

\*While we value American Sign Language as useful in the United States, it is [not currently recognized by the International Baccalaureate](#) as one for which there is *global* need. Currently, the IB Language B courses offered at West High School, to fulfill the IB Diploma requirements, are French and Spanish.

### **IB CP Language Expectations:**

The IB Career-Related Program (IB CP) does not require two additional years of the same second language beyond years 4 and 5 of the IB MYP. IB CP students will submit a Language Development Portfolio (LDP) over the final two years of the IB CP. That portfolio is student-centered, student-driven, and therefore, individualized to meet each student’s unique IB CP need. Consultation with the IB Coordinator is crucial to understanding LDP expectations once a student becomes part of the IB CP at West.

### **IB DP Language Expectations:**

IB DP students should complete two additional years of a Language B course, beyond MYP Year 5, to qualify for the IB Diploma. IB DP coursework must take place during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Three levels of IB Language B courses are available. The West High School World Language Department recommends four or more years of the same world language to better position students to:

- ❖ Pass the IB exam
- ❖ Be prepared for collegiate-level coursework
- ❖ Earn college course credit while in high school
- ❖ Qualify for the Volunteer State Seal of Biliteracy

### **Standard Level (SL) and Ab initio:**

Standard Level IB language courses must offer a minimum of 150 contact hours. While SL Language B courses can be offered in one academic year at some IB schools worldwide, IB SL Language B courses at West

High School are always two-year courses. SL courses focus on growing students' proficiency with interpretive skills (listening and reading) while challenging, developing, and encouraging proficiency in productive language skills (speaking and writing). Students who choose to study at the Standard Level should expect to work from the "Novice" toward the "Intermediate" level of proficiency. Please refer to the chart below.

Ab initio French or Spanish may be offered in rare and/or extenuating circumstances in which a student hopes to pursue the IB Diploma with no, or very limited, prior exposure to that second language. Ab initio is a Standard Level, two-year course. IB Coordinator and Teacher approval is required.

**Higher Level (HL):**

Higher Level language courses must offer a minimum of 240 contact hours, always over a two-year period. HL Language B courses are built to further engage and grow students' current "Intermediate" skill levels toward "Advanced" and beyond. Please refer to the chart below.

HL courses also focus on growing students' proficiency across all skills through activities and assessments. However, there is an added expectation of incorporating authentic literary texts into the course curriculum. HL students will read two literary works published in the language of study. IB course assessments will be centered, to some extent, on these literary works.

**Table 1: ACTFL to Common European Framework (CEFR) Equivalencies**

ONE-DIRECTIONAL ALIGNMENT: Receptive Skills – Reading and Listening		ONE-DIRECTIONAL ALIGNMENT: Productive Skills – Speaking and Writing	
Rating on ACTFL Assessment (LPT, RPT or L&Rcat)	Corresponding CEFR Rating	Rating on ACTFL Assessment (OPI, OPIc or WPT)	Corresponding CEFR Rating
Distinguished	C2		
Superior	C1.2	Superior	C2
Advanced High	C1.1	Advanced High	C1
Advanced Mid	B2	Advanced Mid	B2.2
Advanced Low	B1.2	Advanced Low	B2.1
Intermediate High	B1.1	Intermediate High	B1.2
Intermediate Mid	A2	Intermediate Mid	B1.1
Intermediate Low	A1.2	Intermediate Low	A2
Novice High	A1.1	Novice High	A1
Novice Mid	0	Novice Mid	0
Novice Low	0	Novice Low	0
0	0	0	0

**Table 2: Diploma Language Courses (English example) and their CEFR Equivalencies**

CEFR Level	English B		English A: Language and Literature		English A: Literature		English Literature and Performance
	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL
C2							
C1		7	7	7	7	7	
B2+	7	6	6	6	6	6	
B2	6	5	5	5	5	5	5
	5	4					
B1	4	3		4	4	4	
A2	3	2					
A1	2						

**Table 3: CEFR Scale Descriptors**

CEFR global scale descriptors<sup>2</sup>

<b>Proficient user</b>	<b>C2</b>	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	<b>C1</b>	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
<b>Independent user</b>	<b>B2</b>	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	<b>B1</b>	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
<b>Basic user</b>	<b>A2</b>	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	<b>A1</b>	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

[DP language courses to CEFR](#)

Council of Europe – Modern Languages Division, 2001. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. [pdf] Published by: Cambridge University Press. Available at: <[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf)>.