

West High School IB Language Policy

Language Philosophy

The mission of West High School is to create a professional learning community dedicated to academic excellence. We provide and support rigorous academic, cultural, college, and career-readiness experiences for every student. We challenge, empower, and inspire students to become contributing global citizens and life-long learners.

West High School is a diverse school of 2800 students, with English as the central language, and English Language Learners speaking over 50 different languages. It is our philosophy to ensure that the value of the learner diversity is not lost, by providing coursework in English for all students, as well as offering a variety of opportunities for study of other languages. We strive to provide equal access to the curriculum at West High School for all learners, in an appropriate way. We recognize that the teaching and learning environment is dependent upon high standards of conditions of practices in and out of the classroom.

Language development for all students is a school value and priority. At West High School, we believe that language is the gateway for exploring and sustaining cultural identity and intercultural understanding, as well as promoting the growth of the individual student's knowledge, wisdom, character, and confidence, as stated in our mission.

We recognize that systems and practices must be in place to advocate for all students to access language development. West High School believes that language is central to learning and literacy, and thus is closely related to the success of all students as they work with curriculum. All teachers, regardless of their subject area, are responsible for providing students with the vocabulary and language skills necessary to be successful in their content area as well as developing comprehensive communication skills.

Language Profile

Language Profile for Language A

The mother tongue language (Language A) at West High School is English. West High School serves students in grades 7-12. When discussing the whole school, all grades are considered. Grades 7-8 are not considered part of the high school and are not held to the requirements of high school graduation. When discussing the high school, only grades 9-12 are considered.

1. English is promoted as the language of instruction at West High School. Students are required to take a full year course in English Language Arts instruction each year. English is the only course that demands four years of instruction for graduation from the high school. West High School offers 19 different English courses for students to choose from during 7th-12th grades at varying degrees of rigor. There are multiple options for Language Arts coursework including the following:
 - a. Language Arts 9, 10, 11, 12
 - b. Honors Language Arts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
 - c. Concurrent English (dual-credit through Salt Lake Community College)
 - d. Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition
 - e. IB English A Literature HL
 - f. English Electives including: Creative Writing, Journalism, Debate, Reading
 - g. English Language Development courses for English Language Learners

2. The development and maintenance of English for all learners is supported by regular assessment of student learning. Students complete a variety of school, district, and state mandated summative exams to demonstrate their proficiency in English. These include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Essays
 - b. Literature content and comprehension exams
 - c. Presentations
 - d. WIDA for English Language Learners given twice annually to evaluate learning of English
 - e. English Language SAGE (Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence) designed by the Utah State Board of Education for all students in all grades
 - f. Practice Advanced Placement English exams, evaluated by outside graders
 - g. Advanced Placement English exams
 - h. IB Language A: English exams

Student results are reviewed and utilized for proper Language Arts course placement annually.

3. West High School recognizes that language is central to all learning and therefore all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication.
 - a. Teachers are accountable for teaching the vocabulary of their respective curriculums. Whether the content is based in math, science, art, or a specific career field, the teacher is the provider of the common language for facilitating learning in that subject.
 - b. Teachers are expected to have students reading and writing across all curricula.

4. West High School recognizes that administrators, teachers, librarians, and other school staff require professional development in the field of language learning and teaching.
 - a. Annual professional development is provided by looking at the data of West High School in regards to English performance on several measures of statewide and national testing. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) at West High School incorporates literacy as the first component for school success.
 - b. All school employees are required, within three years of hire, to complete six university courses leading to an endorsement in the teaching of English as a Second Language. English speakers of all levels are found in every class, as appropriate at West High School. A focus on language scaffolding is emphasized. On-going professional development is provided for all staff.
 - c. Teachers of IB courses receive training through the appropriate IB sponsored workshops. West High School appreciates and highlights the IB philosophy of learning the curriculum from the perspective of a professional in that field. Students must build upon their language skills as they communicate effectively in the various subject areas.

5. At West High School all students have equal access to IB courses regardless of their English language background. As related in the West High School IB Admissions policy, prior student coursework is considered as part of acceptance. We encourage students to build upon their English language skills during the summer months if deemed necessary by both current and future English teachers based on writing samples and previous work. West High School offers a Language B English option to non-native English speakers. With implementation of the IB Career Program, West High School has been able to further serve a more diverse population of learners, with an increased focus on language development.

6. West High School has many practices and resources in place to involve parents in the planning of their student's language profile and development.
 - a. All students have an annual Career and College Readiness (CCR) Conference with their guidance counselor, where student progress in current courses is evaluated and planning for future courses is achieved. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings. Translators are available to facilitate communication between families and school staff when necessary. Parent Teacher Student Conferences are held three times annually. Parents are encouraged and invited to make an appointment with their student's teacher or counselor at any time during the school year.

- b. The English Language Learner Coordinator holds meetings and events specifically for English Language Learners and their parents. The distribution of the results of the WIDA tests requires a parent signature for placement in the English Language Development Courses. Translators are available for use in this process.
 - c. Each student at West High School who qualifies for English Language Development courses is required to have an Individualized Language Plan, delineating their current English skills, language goals, and a plan for progress. These Language Plans are developed collaboratively with the English Language Learning Coordinator, English Language Development teachers, traditional classroom teachers, parents, and students.
 - d. Students who are accepted into the IB Diploma Program are placed into the appropriate English language class based on a placement examination and teacher recommendations. Please see section 9B of this document for further information.
7. West High School is very rich in diversity of language and culture. Students come from over 30 different countries with approximately 50 different mother-tongue languages spoken. Of the 2800 student population, 1524 students report that another language is spoken at home. Overwhelmingly, English is the language of instruction and communication used in the school. However, district level translation services exist to develop documents and communication in the most frequently spoken languages other than English.
- a. West High School currently has 494 students enrolled in English Language Development courses. The primary purpose of these courses is to develop high level academic language. This includes vocabulary, grammar, academic writing skills using informational and literary texts, and a strong focus on oral academic language. The classes are designed to provide ELL students with the comprehension and fluency necessary to succeed in their core classes.
 - b. West High School's IB Diploma community is also very rich in its language diversity. Diploma students come from various backgrounds, with many reporting that they speak a language other than English at home. As such, we offer five IB Language B courses, including Spanish, French, German, Arabic, and Mandarin Chinese.
 - c. In 2017, West High School submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to offer American Sign Language as a School-Based-Syllabus, a proposal that is being considered by the Senior Staff of IB for the opportunity to offer a Sign Language course in the broader IBO curriculum.

- d. In addition, West High School strongly encourages and supports students with Self-Taught languages. With the exception of the Language B course, all instruction takes place in English.
8. It is the policy of the Salt Lake City School District Board of Education, the governing body for West High School, to comply with federal regulations and state rules while proactively providing instruction and individual accommodations for linguistically diverse students.
 - a. The Utah State Board of Education requires four years of English study for high school graduation, meeting the critical language needs of all students in the United States. www.schools.utah.gov Students are assessed annually with a Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) in English, as described in the IB Assessment Policy.
 - b. English Language Learners are served by meeting the instructional policies outlined by the federal requirements and the Utah State Board of Education. The Salt Lake City School District has provided these guidelines in the following document, entitled the Alternative Language Services Master Plan and Manual for Implementation.
<https://www.slcschools.org/departments/school-leadership-and-performance/alternative-language-services/>
 - c. The Office of Civil Rights and the American with Disabilities Act are considered when implementing such practices, as outlined in the IB Special Needs Policy.
 - d. All IB students are served under the policies outlined by the IB World Organization.
9. As part of the admissions process, previous English assessment results coupled with success in prior coursework is taken into consideration for placement for all students at West High School.
 - a. English Language Learners are assessed twice annually using the WIDA assessment to determine English language acquisition progress, throughout all years of their education in Utah. This information is used for placement in coursework at West High School and continues to be used throughout subsequent years at the school.
 - b. IB Diploma students are asked, as part of the admissions process, as outlined in the IB Admission Policy, to provide a teacher recommendation for placement from their current English teacher. In addition, all IB applicants are required to take a timed writing assessment that is evaluated independently by two different West High School English teachers. Both the recommendation and assessment are used to determine appropriate placement

in Language Arts courses. Neither affects student admission to the IB Diploma program. For more information on the admission process, please refer to the IB Admissions Policy.

Language Profile for Language B

In the state of Utah, there is no second language course requirement for high school graduation. West High School strongly encourages students, knowing that university admissions require a minimum of two years of study of the same world language, to take a West High School world language course. We provide five different languages to encourage students to fulfill this expectation, and are hopeful to add American Sign Language to those offerings. English Language Learners are required, as are all students, to take four years of English language instruction, as outlined in the Language Profile for Language A.

The development and maintenance of the mother-tongue language is a priority for West High School. Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic courses have all developed out of the need to serve the growing number of students enrolled at West High School for whom these are their first languages. New immigrants and refugees are encouraged to enroll in these courses as a support for the development of English.

IB students are required as per the IB Diploma Programme requirements to study a Language B. West High School offers world languages based on student interest. Currently, students have a choice of five world languages to pursue including, Arabic, French, German, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish. West High School offers a full range of courses in each of these subjects, and up to nine different levels in some language to meet different student needs. We currently offer the following IB course options.

1. Arabic B SL, Arabic ab initio
2. French B SL and HL, French ab initio
3. German B SL and HL, German ab initio
4. Chinese B SL and HL, Mandarin ab initio
5. Spanish B SL and HL, Spanish ab initio

Initial placement in West High School world language courses is determined by previous experience with or coursework in the language of interest. Students select the level for their Language B exam based on their interest in that language and the number of courses taken in preparation for the IB exam.

IB students who are native speakers of languages other than those offered in courses are encouraged upon starting their IB Diploma program in 11th grade, to select a self-taught language

course of study. Each year, we have approximately five students pursuing this option. We have experience requesting IB special-request language when appropriate for students and have been authorized to pursue that option. We recently have admitted students into the IB Diploma program who will be taking a Language B course in English and a Language A course in their mother tongue because of their recent immigration status and limited experience with English.

IB Career Program students will complete the 50 hour Language Development course centered on the vocabulary, conversational skills, reading, and writing skills necessary for success in their chosen career field. Career Pathway teachers will work in combination with World Language teachers to support the students in the development of their Language Portfolios. Professional development and collaboration time are necessary for all West High School teachers to maintain their skills as strong language teachers.

Current Considerations

West High School will continue to monitor the interest in particular languages and adjust offerings as necessary. To this end, West High School recently submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to offer American Sign Language as a school-based syllabus. This EOI has been met with positive

West High School is studying the potential for offering IB English A: Language and Literature, particularly with the predicted increased enrollment of English Language Learners in IB coursework through the IB Career Program. Currently five English teachers are engaged in an on-line IB Professional Development Workshop to move forward in this investigation.

West High School has implemented the Language Portfolio as part of the IBCP Language Development course, allowing students to better monitor their own language acquisition progress.

Future Considerations

West High School will explore options for on-line language instruction at the beginning levels of language development in order to expand the variety of languages available to smaller groups of students.

West High School will offer English as a Language B subject to English Language Learners as requested.

Plans to Maintain the West High School IB Language Policy as a Working Document

Review Process

The IB Language Policy, as a working document, will be reviewed by the IB teachers and IB Steering Committee each March, as course requests are completed. New course requests are handled through the School Improvement Council (SIC) and School Community Council (SCC) each October. The reviewing of this document in March will allow ample time for new proposals in languages to be completed during September. The IB Steering Committee and school counselors will address necessary adjustments to the Language Policy each September in preparation for these deadlines. Surveys will be taken at this time in preparation for the upcoming year's offerings. The SIC will approve any new courses for language in their October meeting annually. The SCC will approve any new courses for language in their November meeting annually.

The English Language Learning Coordinator will provide updates and changes to the law for English Language Learners, Office of Civil Rights Requirements, Utah Board of Education, and Salt Lake City School District Policy. Changes in services and testing will be implemented with appropriate timelines.

The IB Steering Committee is responsible for proposing any new direction for coursework within the IB program; however, individual teachers may also propose the introduction of new language. The English as a Second Language teaching department is accountable to changes made within federal and state policy regarding English Language Learners. They too will bring proposals to the School Improvement Council (SIC) and School Community Council (SCC) as changes become mandated.

The SCC will undergo a study regarding the potential for blended coursework. Teachers would monitor students utilizing an on-line language learning program that is self-paced. Current conversations see this as a potentially viable learning opportunity for students studying languages in particular. Discussions are held monthly regarding the potential for this adaptation of instruction.

Influence of Other IB Policies

The IB Admission Policy will be evaluated for effectiveness with regards to placement in both English Language Arts courses and World Language courses. The IB Special Education Needs/Inclusive Education Policy is a document based on the federal requirements for the

service of English Language Learners and Special Education students served either with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan. West High School will continue to monitor changes to these laws and make adaptations to both the IB Special Education Needs/Inclusive Education Policy and IB Language Policy as appropriate. The IB Assessment Policy incorporates formative and summative assessment results for the placement of students in language courses, as well as assessing for future directions of the course instruction.

Communicating the Policy

The IB Language Policy will be distributed amongst relevant groups within West High School including, but not limited to the following:

- West High School Faculty and Administration
- West High School Families
- IB Community Members
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Parents
- IB Steering Committee
- School Improvement Council (SIC)
- School Community Council (SCC)

The IB Language Policy will be posted on the West High School website. Announcements will be made through IB meetings and through the IB Steering Committee and SCC agendas regarding dates for revision. The IB Steering Committee will solicit new information by survey and focus groups from the Language Arts Department and the English as a Second Language Department of West High School for additional information prior to making alterations to the IB Language Policy.