

# Westchester Academy for International Studies

## Language Policy

## Table of Contents

I.	MISSION: PURPOSE AND AIMS .....	3
II.	LANGUAGE PROFILE AND ADMISSIONS POLICIES .....	4
III.	LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW.....	5
IV.	LANGUAGE A AND MOTHER TONGUE PROGRAMS .....	6
V.	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROGRAM .....	7
VI.	LANGUAGE B AND OTHER LANGUAGES .....	7
VII.	SUPPORT SERVICES .....	8
VIII.	PARENTS AND COMMUNITY .....	9
IX.	COMMUNICATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY TO THE WAIS COMMUNITY.....	9
X.	REVIEW PROCESS .....	10
XI.	REFERENCES .....	10
XII.	GLOSSARY .....	11
XIII.	APPENDICES	
	a. Appendix A .....	12
	b. Appendix B .....	13
	c. Appendix C.....	14
	d. Appendix D .....	15

# I. MISSION: PURPOSE AND AIMS

## A. MISSION

The mission of Westchester Academy for International Studies is to provide a challenging and varied curriculum in which all students can succeed. The curriculum will develop an international awareness (consciousness), including a focus on international relations and international problem solving, to create a love of learning and emphasize good citizenship.

The WAIS mission statement is the foundation for our language policy. As language forms the basis for all learning, this policy is critical for helping the school to achieve its mission. The language policy aspires to fulfill each aspect of the mission statement as follows:

### **A challenging and varied curriculum in which all students can succeed**

The curriculum at WAIS is inspired by curiosity, enriched by clubs and activities. Students are challenged through a variety of teaching methods, which acknowledge their different learning styles. All courses on campus are offered at advanced level, promoting a culture of college readiness and success.

### **A curriculum that develops an international awareness**

Studies at WAIS have an International theme, which integrates the global studies of business, languages, culture, government, fine arts and technologies into a solid core curriculum that emphasizes Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

### **To create a love of learning and emphasize good citizenship**

WAIS offers smaller personalized classes with a family-like atmosphere. The students have opportunities to interact with other students and faculty members with a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

### **Assume responsibility**

The language policy supports the shared responsibility of all teachers, students and parents for all students' language development. All teachers and students are encouraged to assume the responsibility to be language learners.

## B. PURPOSE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

This language policy is a working document developed by staff and administration from each school program (MYP, DP). The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the program designed to help our students attain these goals.

This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at WAIS, which permeates the entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment. Our policy is a statement of

agreement – one to which the staff and the WAIS community are asked to commit to so our school will achieve its mission.

### C. BELIEFS AND AIMS

We aim to nurture an appreciation of the richness and diversity of language. Language does much more than promote cognitive growth; it is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability. The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the mother tongue enrich personal growth and help facilitate international understanding. As language, by its very nature, is integrated into all areas of the curriculum, every teacher within the school is considered a language teacher.

At WAIS, we aim to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least two languages. Language development in more than one language enriches personal growth, provides cognitive advantages and is essential to the development of international mindedness. We strive to address the particular challenges of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue by providing an integrated, well-implemented English as a Second Language (ESL) program at all school sections. We endeavor to integrate students' cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the curriculum.

## II. LANGUAGE PROFILE AND ADMISSIONS POLICIES

### A. WAIS LANGUAGE PROFILE

Approximately 60% of our student body speaks more than one language. They have over 30 different mother tongues and come from approximately 40 different countries. Our administrative and teaching staff represents 13 different countries, speak one or more of 18 languages, and celebrate 31 different cultures.

### B. ADMISSIONS POLICIES

WAIS is open to all 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who meet SBISD eligibility requirements and are in-district residents. Grade point average is not a qualifying criterion; however, admitted students commit to being successful in advanced coursework. Signed commitment of academic and behavioral expectations and parental support are required. Transportation is provided within the district.

Applicants are required to complete a Home Language Survey that indicates their proficiency in their mother tongue, English and other languages when entering SBISD. Students who transfer to WAIS from within the district already have a Home Language Survey in their personal record. In the Middle and Upper Schools, any application for a student who indicates that English is not their mother tongue will be reviewed by the ESL department as part of the admissions policy.

Admissions will notify the ESL department of all ESL student applicants. An ESL Department Review form, LPAC, will be placed in the initial application of each candidate in Grades 6 – 12 for review by the ESL Coordinator. ESL staff will have the

opportunity to review the submitted portfolio evidence of English language acquisition. The LPAC assesses for literacy and/or interview new students individually before placement in the program.

### III. LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW

#### A. PEDAGOGY

At WAIS, we recognize that all teachers are also language teachers who have the responsibility to facilitate language acquisition and promote communication skills through their grade level and content area classes. The pedagogical attributes of the MYP and DP as well as guiding documents are outlined in the table in Appendix A.

#### B. ASSESSMENT

While language acquisition follows distinct stages, students' rate of acquisition varies greatly from individual to individual. Therefore, language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), regularly differentiating through scaffolding or extension as required by the district ELPS. Formative and summative assessments in the classroom provide information on language growth. Language teachers regularly standardize students' work to ensure a fair application of assessment criteria. Standardized tests and external examinations in the Middle and Upper schools also provide evidence of language acquisition levels.

Students who are identified as requiring additional support in English to access the curriculum will be placed in the appropriate English language acquisition program and assessed regularly to monitor progress. A student may be exited from the ESL program when the student can participate fully in the regular educational program and has met the TELPAS and district requirements. When evaluating a student's possible exit, an LPAC team consisting of the ESL teacher, a classroom teacher, and a leadership team member, and a parent representative will use information from several sources including district guidelines to make the determination to exit the student from the program. Parents will be informed about the decision before the transfer takes place. After the student exits from the ESL program, the ESL teachers at the student's level will closely monitor the student's academic progress for two years.

Specific procedures for exiting students from the ESL program and monitoring their progress are outlined in Appendix B.

#### C. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As it is an expectation for all teachers to be language teachers, on-going training focused on integrated language instruction will be offered throughout the year. The school is committed to providing embedded professional development for language learning across the curriculum. The ESL Coordinator ensures that staff receives on-going professional development opportunities and monitors that strategies are successfully implemented.

All English Language Arts teachers are ESL certified. ESL teachers plan with the classroom or subject teachers and ensure that they receive the necessary support and professional development for integrating these strategies on a regular basis. ESL teachers provide ideas for developing, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of all students through the subject area.

All teachers at WAIS are required to complete the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System training on an annual basis. TELPAS ratings reflect the ability of students to understand and use English during content area instruction. Therefore, teachers who have ELLs in content area classes are integral to the assessment. The training offers professional development for teachers and promotes increased instructional support for students. TELPAS training helps teachers understand and use the PLD component of the ELPS. Training more rather than fewer teachers also helps WAIS ensure that they can effectively meet TELPAS rating needs in the spring of the year should there be unforeseen changes in student schedules or teaching assignments.

Other professional development opportunities that focus on differentiated instruction are included, but are not limited to: curriculum review and assessment moderation, staff meetings, and off-site workshops and conferences.

#### IV. LANGUAGE AND MOTHER TONGUE PROGRAMMES

All students are required to study a language A in the MYP and DP, which in some cases is the continued study of the students' mother tongue. The language of instruction at WAIS is English, which is the language of the host country. English courses at WAIS are academically rigorous; it equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can also be used in an interdisciplinary manner across all other subject groups. The district scope and sequence along with the TEKS have been aligned with the MYP Language A Aims and Objectives in The MYP Language A Subject Guide.

WAIS offers Spanish, German, and English as language A (Literature Programs AP and IB levels) in grades 11 and 12. WAIS believes that developing a child's mother tongue can accelerate the rate of English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem, and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

##### A. ENGLISH

In each level of the school, students study English language and literature. When students begin the IBMYP or IBDP programs, they study English as their language A.

##### B. SPANISH

Native Spanish speakers receive language instruction in their mother tongue beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Native Spanish speakers in the IBMYP and IBDP programs study Spanish at

the language A level. Other students who have reached native language proficiency in Spanish may also study Spanish at the language A level in the IBDP.

### C. GERMAN

Native German speakers receive language instruction in their mother tongue at the Upper School level. Native German speakers study German at the language A level in the IBDP program in order to obtain a Bilingual IB Diploma.

### D. OTHER MOTHER TONGUES

Mother tongue development opportunities are offered for students on a regular basis from Grade 6 through to Grade 12. The school will review the language needs of the students on an annual basis. When numbers are sufficient, the school will seek to employ a mother tongue teacher in partnership with the community. The mother tongue programs are outlined in the table in Appendix C.

## V. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROGRAMME

### A. ESL SUPPORT CLASSES

English language learners who are unable to fully access the academic curriculum delivered in English receive specialized instruction in English language acquisition from qualified staff on a regular basis. English as Second Language strategies are used in all classes by all staff. In the IBMYP and IBDP, students receive additional individualized or small group English and academic support scheduled as appropriate.

### B. IN-CLASS SUPPORT

ELL students may also receive support in their grade level and subject areas classes from qualified staff. In the IBMYP and IBDP, ESL staff provide in-class support for humanities, science and mathematics classes whenever possible.

The English as a Second Language program service model at WAIS is consistent across the programs and described in detail in Appendix E.

## VI. LANGUAGE B AND OTHER LANGUAGES

Studying a second language is a requirement for all students in Grades 6 to 8. French, Spanish, German and Italian are offered as languages B in Grades 6 to 10, and as IB Diploma language B Higher Level and Standard Level in Grades 11 and 12. For ESL students, their mother tongue may count as a third language.

### A. FRENCH, ITALIAN, GERMAN AND SPANISH

While a student's previous knowledge or exposure to the target language is ascertained through assessments, French, Italian, German and Spanish classes consist of mixed ability levels and teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the various

language acquisition levels in each class and are expected to cater to the needs of beginners. Students entering French, Italian, German or Spanish classes as beginners will be assessed with appropriate criteria for reporting purposes. Mother tongue French, Italian, German and Spanish speaking students may study their mother tongue or study another language.

## B. AB INITIO

In the IBDP, students may study French, Italian, German or Spanish at the beginning level if they don't have an exposure to the language previously. WAIS also admits English language learners at the ab initio level from Grade 11 to 12 if a mother tongue is not supported via the current language offerings.

# VII. SUPPORT SERVICES

## A. LANGUAGE AND LEARNING AND THE LIBRARY AND MEDIA CENTERS

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed;
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate information and sources critically.

The role of the WAIS library is to promote and facilitate information literacy across all curricula and to all members of the WAIS Community. The library has databases that contain professional material, scholarly articles, newspapers and magazines in many languages. Sessions are offered to the WAIS community on information literacy, MLA and APA formatting for source citations, and research skills. Sessions may be requested with the school librarians.

## B. LEARNING SUPPORT

When a student has been identified with additional learning needs including language difficulties or gifted and talented abilities, intervention and support are provided through the Student Teacher Assistance Team (STAT), 504, Special Education, or the Gifted and Talented Program, in line with the referral process. These departments work with teachers to help them meet the needs of students identified with special language learning needs. The classroom support may be formalized through an Individual Education Plan and may involve short and long term interventions. If the identified student speaks another language other than English their primary language, the ESL department works closely with the Learning Support departments and other teachers to provide the best service for the individual child. Students that have a grade point average of 90 or more can apply to be part of the following Honor societies: French, Italian, German or Spanish.

(See the Special Needs Policy for more information on identification procedures and service model.)

## VIII. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

### A. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are an integral part of our community of learners and provide tremendous support for language learning at WAIS. The school uses multiple methods to communicate to parents the critical importance of maintaining academic proficiency in the mother tongue. Parents are involved as mother tongue teachers, buying resources for the library and providing resources for the mother tongue programs. The Parent Teacher Association has also organized mother tongue language support groups with a contact person for many of the mother tongues represented at WAIS. Parents often volunteer in the classroom to provide support for all students. Other parents translate documents and interpret during meetings.

WAIS plans to offer workshops for parents each year.

### B. LANGUAGE PROVISION FOR THE WAIS COMMUNITY

Spanish classes for staff are offered at WAIS once a week. Staff may also use professional development SBISD funds to take a Spanish course.

English lessons are also offered for employees working within the school including cafeteria and cleaning services personnel.

Rosetta Stone is a language learning software program that is available to WAIS staff. Mandarin, Arabic, Vietnamese and Spanish were the languages supported by SBISD.

### C. PUBLISHED MATERIALS

Students, parents and staff members at WAIS originate from different countries and educational systems. To maintain consistency in published materials, American English spelling will be used for our formal written documentation. However, teachers and students may use their native country's spelling and punctuation for all other work provided it is employed consistently throughout the document.

## IX. COMMUNICATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY TO THE WAIS COMMUNITY

The language policy will be introduced to the WAIS community through multiple pathways including staff meetings, PTA meetings, grade level meetings and Director's News and Notes. The policy will also be featured on the WAIS intranet. New staff will be familiarized with the document during orientation.

## X. REVIEW PROCESS

The language policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan.

The Leadership team will review the implementation of the policy in classrooms and throughout the school on a regular basis as part of the appraisal process.

## XI. REFERENCES

*Guidelines for Developing a School Policy*. International Baccalaureate Organization, April 2008

*Language and Learning in IB Programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization, Sept. 2011

*Texas Education Agency* [TELPAS Resources]. (2012, March 22). Retrieved May 25, 2012, from <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>

*Westchester Academy for International Studies* [School Profile]. (2011). Retrieved May 25, 2012, from <http://wais.springbranchisd.com>

## Glossary

APA = American Psychological Association

ELL = English Language Learner

ELPS = English Language Proficiency Standards

ESL = English as a Second Language

IB = International Baccalaureate

IBDP = International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

IBMYP = International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program

LPAC = Language Proficiency Assessment Committee

MLA = Modern Language Association

PLD = Proficiency Language Development

PD = Professional Development

PTA = Parent Teacher Association

SBISD = Spring Branch Independent School District

TEA = Texas Education Agency

TEKS = Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

TELPAS = Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

## XII. APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Language Learning Pedagogy

	Language Learning in the IB MYP	Language Learning in the IBDP
Pedagogical attributes of programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes inquiry based authentic language learning</li> <li>• Focuses on the trans-disciplinary nature of language learning</li> <li>• Incorporates the teaching and learning of language into the program of inquiry</li> <li>• Develops the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy</li> <li>• Interrelates the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy</li> <li>• Provides for the teaching of additional languages</li> <li>• Promotes consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages where more than one language of instruction is used.</li> <li>• Provides appropriate feedback to support learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers prior knowledge</li> <li>• Develops language in context in each content area: the student is able to summarize, compare, contrast and analyze different kind of texts from small texts about advertising to entire classic novels.</li> <li>• Promotes collaborative learning</li> <li>• Provides appropriate feedback to support learning</li> <li>• Accommodates diverse learning styles</li> <li>• Values and respects students' ideas</li> <li>• Makes expectations explicit</li> <li>• Embraces a multitude of perspectives</li> <li>• Enables students to understand two judgments about learning are made, and how to provide evidence of their learning</li> <li>• Develops meta-cognition, structured inquiry and critical thinking</li> <li>• Promotes engaging, challenging, rigorous, relevant and significant learning.</li> </ul>
Further guidance and Support	<p>Language scope and sequence document is maintained and reviewed in accordance with the curriculum review cycle.</p> <p>The MYP language A and language B subject guides and <i>MYP: From Principles into Practice</i> Provide further guidance.</p>	<p>Diploma Programme language A Literature, and language A Language and Literature, language B, and language ab initio subject guides , and in the Diploma Programme assessment <i>Principles and Practice</i> document.</p>

## Appendix B: ESL Program Exit and Monitoring Procedures

	IBMYP	IBDP
Exit criteria and evidence examined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBISD District guidelines are followed.</li> <li>• TELPAS scores are evaluated in writing, reading and oral proficiency.</li> <li>• Teacher feedback on student’s acquisition of language.</li> <li>• LPAC Committee will evaluate a variety of criteria prior to recommending that an ESL student exit the program.</li> <li>• Parent approval is obtained in order for student to exit program.</li> <li>• Upon exiting program, students are evaluated for an additional two years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBISD District guidelines are followed.</li> <li>• TELPAS scores are evaluated in writing, reading and oral proficiency.</li> <li>• Teacher feedback on student’s acquisition of language.</li> <li>• LPAC Committee will evaluate a variety of criteria prior to recommending that an ESL student exit the program.</li> <li>• Parent approval is obtained in order for student to exit program.</li> <li>• Upon exiting program, students are evaluated for an additional two years.</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Mother Tongue Programs

	IBMP	IBDP
Mother Tongue Program Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have the opportunity to study 5 of mother tongues supported during the Language class time.</li> <li>• The mother tongue class works in partnership with the parents to provide instruction that is grade appropriate and develops all language skill areas (reading, writing, listening and speaking).</li> <li>• Direct instruction in the mother tongue may happen during or outside of the normal school day. If mother tongue teachers are able to come to school, WAIS will provide classroom space and instructional materials as necessary.</li> <li>• The mother tongue class during the school day will provide facilitated time for students to work on projects in their mother tongue. This class may consist of students with several different mother tongues working on similar projects in their respective mother tongues.</li> <li>• The facilitator of the mixed mother tongue class works in cooperation with the English language A teacher and the mother tongue teachers to ensure that students are assigned appropriate projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents work in cooperation with the school to find a mother tongue teacher for the self taught other tongue language A class.</li> <li>• Students have time during the school day to work on projects and/or receive instruction in their mother tongue.</li> </ul>

## Appendix D: ESL Program

	IBMYP	IBDP
Support for differentiated Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enriching Content Instruction for Secondary ESL students by</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class coaching support</li> <li>• Assessment rubrics designed to enable all students to succeed</li> <li>• ESL assessment option available.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enriching Content Instruction for Secondary ESL students by</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class coaching support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
ESL specialized instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginner ESL students receive English language A instruction during English language.</li> <li>• Beginner ESL students may receive their choice of language B instruction during their language class.</li> <li>• Language B instruction in the mother tongue may be offered at WAIS if the student chooses Spanish, German, Italian or French.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginner ESL students receive English language A instruction during English language.</li> <li>• Beginner ESL students may receive their choice of language B instruction during their language class.</li> <li>• Language B instruction in the mother tongue may be offered at WAIS if the student chooses Spanish, German, Italian or French.</li> </ul>
In-class support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enriching Content Instruction for Secondary ESL students by</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class coaching support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enriching Content Instruction for Secondary ESL students by</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class coaching support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Mother Tongue Instruction	See Appendix D	See Appendix D

Adopted by consensus of the faculty on September 19, 2012.