**W. P. Davidson High School**

**School Code 3330**

**Language Policy**

**Philosophy**

We recognize the following:

* Teachers are the experts of the academic language in their content area (rephrase).
* Learning is dependent on language. A lack of English proficiency does not mean a lack of content knowledge or thought.
* Communication is central to learning.
* IB coursework demands various types of communication in all subjects.
* Respecting mother tongue languages while fostering the acquisition of a second language is vital to developing global citizens.
* Students, parents, and faculty will work together in partnership to promote language acquisition.

**Language Profile**

The following are descriptors of our school:

* 268 students are currently identified as ESL (English as a Second Language). That is about 17% of the school population.
* Of that 268, 64 are identified as LEP (Limited English Proficiency) and receive support and classroom modifications for their English language acquisition. The rest of the 204 tested as too proficient in English to qualify for services.
* Of that 204, 2 are enrolled in the IB DP this year. Neither of the 2 qualify for English language acquisition services. They have been speaking English from a young age and still speak their mother tongue at home.
* All faculty at the school are required to participate in professional development focused on teaching and learning as it relates to ESL students. For students identified as LEP, we are required to make accommodations/modifications as deemed appropriate by our school district.
* Our primary language of instruction is English for all subjects except those in group 2.
* We have not yet had an applicant for the IB DP request and/or need a group 1 language other than English. However, we have had increased development of international industries in our area and we anticipate an increase in international students who may need/choose to study and test in their mother tongue. We look forward to the opportunity to offer a school-supported self-taught option for group 1.

**Second Language Acquisition**

Freshmen entering our high school are at one of three stages in second language acquisition:

* The student has completed and earned a credit for level 1 of a second language (French, German, or Spanish) through their middle school
* The student has had studied a second language but not enough to test out of level 1 of the language
* The student has had no studies in a second language

Students who apply and enter the preparatory curriculum for the IB DP are required to complete level 3 of a second language by the end of their sophomore year. Those who do not come in with a credit from middle school are scheduled to take two levels of their second language, consecutively, in the freshman year. Those courses are on a block schedule and so it is fairly easy for this extra language course to be taken in the first year of high school (one course in the fall and the other in the spring).

We currently offer French, German, and Spanish B SL. Our aim is that IB DP students sit for exams in their second language during Year 1 of the DP.

We do make provisions for students who transfer to our school or, for some other reason, did not have the opportunity to participate in the preparatory curriculum and therefore do not have three levels of a second language complete by the end of the sophomore year. We are prepared to offer ab initio as necessary or allow the student to test in Year 2.

Students who enter our high school with a credit in French, German, or Spanish will continue progressing in that language unless parents and students request to begin anew with another second language. Students who do not enter with a credit are allowed to choose, with their parents’ guidance, which of the three languages they wish to study. We do not limit or cap the number of students taking each language so students truly have freedom to choose (we do limit the number of students in each section of the language). We currently offer Latin 1 and 2 and do not have any immediate plans to offer Latin as an IB group 2 option.

Our students have access to extra-curricular experience in their chosen second language. All three of the Language B courses offered have clubs and/or honor societies for students to join. Through these clubs, students have access to the local adult associations supporting the language (e.g., l’Alliance Française) and engage with native speakers by working at our local international festival. Additionally, students have the opportunity to travel to countries where their second language is spoken. There is at least one faculty-sponsored trip abroad each year.

**Mother Tongue Support**

Our school district website is enabled with google translate so that the website can be viewed in over 70 languages. The district also provides policies and documents for parents in multiple languages at either the request of parents or the school working with parents.

We have an active and supportive ESL department in our district. The district office supports families directly and through the local schools. Our school has a dedicated ESL teacher who not only helps with English language acquisition but works with the district to provide appropriate support (documents in their mother tongue or a translator) for families. The district has quite a few translators on staff who are able to work with families at the central office, over the phone, or at the local school. The school system makes parent communication and informational documents available in multiple languages such as Spanish and Vietnamese.

**Professional Development**

In 2018, our school district implemented a district-wide literacy/numeracy plan. The entire faculty, in interdisciplinary groups, attended professional development where strategies for teaching literacy/numeracy across the disciplines were presented, analyzed, and practiced. These strategies include reviewing data on student academic performance, identifying priorities and setting clear performance goals, making decisions regarding instruction, maximizing resources to support school goals, designing implementation strategies, and assessing progress. Those workshops solidified the concept that all teachers are language teachers.

Each year, our faculty has the opportunity to attend professional development specific to teaching ESL students. Each year, our ESL teacher has facilitated a school-wide workshop where she presented the relevant statistics on ESL students in our district and our school, as well as the laws which protect ESL students. At the workshops, the teachers have collaboratively analyzed literature on the subject of teaching ESL students and shared their own best practices.

**The Language Policy as a Working Document**

The DP Coordinator will review the language policy each year to determine if revisions are needed. When they are, the coordinator will form a group of faculty to review and revise the policy. We anticipate the policy will need revision every other year.

The policy will be available to all faculty, parents, and students via the school website. We encourage feedback, commendations, and recommendations from all of those stakeholders.