

Language Policy May 2018

Table of Contents

- 1. WIS Language Philosophy
 - a. Mission Statement and Core Values
 - b. School Profile
 - c. Language Policy
- 2. Languages in the IB Primary Years Program (Grades PS-5)
 - a. Curriculum Overview
 - b. Language Programs
 - c. Language Support and Enrichment
 - i. Student Support in Languages
 - ii. Teacher Support in Languages
 - iii. Additional Support
- 3. Languages in Grades 6-10
 - a. Curriculum Overview
 - b. Language Programs
 - i. Grades 6-8
 - ii. Grades 9-10
 - c. Language Support and Enrichment
 - i. Student Support in Languages
 - ii. Teacher Support in Languages
 - iii. Additional Support
- 4. Languages in the IB Diploma Program (Grades 11-12)
 - a. Curriculum Overview
 - b. Language Programs

- c. Language Support and Enrichment
 - i. Student Support in Languages
 - ii. Teacher Support in Languages
 - iii. Additional Support
- 5. Appendices
- 6. <u>Bibliography</u>

Section 1: WIS Language Philosophy

a. Mission and Core Values

Washington International School's mission is to be an exemplary learning community—enriched by differences, informed through inquiry, global in reach. Global perspective, one of our core values, is demonstrated by the fact that WIS students learn two or more languages, embrace diverse cultures and viewpoints, and have the ability and confidence to navigate a complex world.

Inherent to the Mission and Core Values of the Washington International School is our commitment to language learning throughout all aspects of our community. Language learning promotes a dynamic framework with which to understand other cultures and perspectives. The WIS language program emphasizes learning languages, learning about languages, and learning through languages, including the perspectives and context that languages inherently hold to better understand and appreciate differences.

WIS students are expected to attain a confident level of oral and written proficiency in more than one language and understand and appreciate the relationship between language and culture. The ability to communicate in more than one language facilitates an individual's movement beyond the first language and home culture, fosters the ability to understand and appreciate the relationship between language and culture, and increases awareness of the world, ultimately enabling student to develop global competence.

Exemplary learning community

Students staff and families all have opportunities to engage in teaching and learning languages. Our learning community exists within and across multiple languages, and students, staff and families all have opportunities to engage in teaching and learning languages.

Enriched by differences

The language program includes the perspectives and context that languages inherently hold to better understand and appreciate differences. At each level of the school, it promotes understanding and respect for other cultures. We endeavour to integrate students' cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the curriculum, and all students' and families' mother tongue languages are valued and celebrated in the school community.

Informed through inquiry

In all languages, students have the opportunity to inquire through transdisciplinary, project-based, and conceptual learning frameworks to construct their understanding and apply it to various contexts.

Global in reach

Language learning at WIS is global in reach and promotes a dynamic framework to navigate a complex, multilingual and multicultural world with confidence.

b. School Language Profile

- Our language programs include language acquisition and immersion in French or Spanish, as well as in English, representing our host country.
- The official languages of teaching and learning are English, Spanish, French, and Mandarin. All official communications are in English. All school languages are regularly represented at school events and on displays around the school.
- All teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating written, oral and interpersonal communication.
- At the school, we have over 40 mother tongue languages and believe in supporting our rich linguistic diversity. For many families, the home language is French or Spanish. For those students whose mother tongue language is not one of our school instructional languages, we invite opportunities to connect their languages to the school experience through Student Led Conferences, parent, student, and visitor presentations. In addition, our after school program and summer camps have offered classes for mother tongue languages that are not one of the three school languages, such as Mandarin and Arabic.
- In the Middle and Upper School divisions, all students admitted are fluent in English due to the rigor of our program.
- Between 60 and 80 percent of our faculty and staff speak more than one language. A
 lot have had professional international or multicultural experiences in the past or have
 had professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching.
- Languages and cultures are celebrated through various celebrations of learning and school events in all divisions.

• Our teachers are native speakers of the target language taught in the classrooms.

c. Language Policy

Our language policy is aligned with our mission statement, core values, and core beliefs about learning, as well as our special needs policy and academic honesty policy. The language policy is regularly revised and includes stakeholders from all divisions. It is widely communicated through our online platforms.

Section 2: Languages in the IB Primary Years Programme (Grades PS-5)

a. Curriculum Overview

The Primary School at WIS provides a strong, challenging curriculum in two languages embracing the principles of the Primary Years Programme (PYP).

The Primary Years Programme is inquiry-based, emphasizing the development of students as global citizens through a focus on attitudes and attributes of a learner. The curriculum is organized around six transdisciplinary themes of global significance to develop transdisciplinary skills, and within each unit of inquiry, central ideas and lines of inquiry are explored so that students develop conceptual understanding in addition to knowledge and skills.

An important aspect of the educational program is the learning of an additional language, as well as the promotion of students' mother tongues. Although the school's common language is English, the other school language tracks of French and Spanish are of equal importance in the students' learning experience. The language programs at the Primary School level are designed to reinforce each other so that skills and concepts taught in one language support those taught in other languages. Students who speak a language other than one of our three languages of instruction benefit from purposeful connections with teachers who also speak their mother tongue. Some examples have included Arabic, Amharic, Korean, Russian, Italian and Greek.

The language scope and sequence from the International Baccalaureate Organization has been adopted for all school languages in the Primary School. Reading, writing and oral expression documents show a developmental progression, and document students' growth through the Primary Years Programme. These are represented on the report card and progress report and reported to parents three times per year. American English is used to teach spelling conventions; international students with other English standardized spelling conventions are supported. Conventional French and Spanish spellings are taught.

Ongoing formative assessment informs instruction, differentiated through small and flexible groups, open-ended tasks, and differentiated learning materials, tasks and teaching methods. The school's Assessment Policy outlines our philosophy and approach to assessing student learning in the languages. A set of formal school assessments, including oral, reading, and writing assessment, are conducted at the beginning and end of each school year. This data is used in various ways to inform ongoing instruction.

For each student who is admitted to our school, we collect information about the child's language profile, including the number of years the language has been spoken and in what settings and the home language(s) or mother tongue. This information is then analysed to further our understanding and support of the learner as he/she develops in our dual language program.

b. Language Programs

Full Immersion Program in Early Childhood (Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten)

Our students become skilled and knowledgeable through differentiated, inquiry-based learning in all core academic subjects. Students in Preschool, Pre-K and Kinder follow a full immersion program in either French or Spanish. At times, students' mother tongue language is used to enhance additional language learning, following best practices for dual language teaching. This may include one of the school's official languages or a student's mother tongue.

To enter the program, experience in French or Spanish is not needed. Many children enter WIS for Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten speaking only English while others are fluent in or have some knowledge of Spanish or French. Still others speak more than two languages. Kindergarten applicants who do not speak French or Spanish at home should have age-appropriate comprehension of and oral expression in English.

<u>Dual Language Program in Grades 1-5</u>

Students in Grades 1-5 spend approximately half of their academic learning time in English and half in French or Spanish. Single Subject teachers teach in French and Spanish when possible, and all language teachers are native speakers of their language of instruction. Library and media resources are in all school languages to support the program and dual language learning.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Grades 1-5

Students with two or fewer years of English language instruction will usually need more intensive small-group language instruction. The EAL program ensures newcomers and others with limited/no acquisition of English skills access to the English language and curriculum. New learners of English may be pulled out of the classroom for targeted instruction with the EAL teacher, and as students become more proficient in the skill areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing, students join the immersion English classroom, receiving differentiated

instruction and EAL support as needed. As English is the language of the host country and the common language of our school, students need less time in individualized instruction with the EAL teacher, and benefit from being in the English immersion classroom from the beginning of the year. Because of the dual-language curriculum, students eligible for EAL must be fluent in Spanish or French.

Spanish/French as an Additional Language (SAL/FAL) in Grades 1-5

French as an Additional Language (FAL) and Spanish as an Additional Language (SAL) are open to applicants to Grades 1 to 5, including those who have no background knowledge or exposure to French or Spanish. SAL/FAL targets beginning speakers who are new to the program in Grades 1-5 but proficient in English academics. As students have varying levels of experience in the language, and are learning in a multi-age classroom, differentiated instruction for FAL and SAL is of utmost importance. Students learn in small groups based on language ability in the skill areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing.

As students gain proficiency in the language, their learning needs are increasingly met in an immersion environment. When assessments demonstrate that students are ready to join the immersion classroom, they are transitioned into that setting. As proficiency in the skill areas increases, students might have consistent 'visits' to the immersion classroom during specific times. When they are ready to fully transition, a formal review process by a member of administration, the Spanish/French language support teacher, the SAL/FAL teacher, and the immersion teacher will be conducted after which they are formally moved into the immersion class. Depending on the student, continued support in the SAL/FAL classroom for specific skills may continue in Grades 1-5.

c. Language Support and Enrichment

i. Student Support in the Languages

The school believes that all students are able to attain their greatest success when they learn in an environment that takes individual needs and learning styles into consideration. The Student Support Team's goal is to ensure that all students are able to achieve their academic potential, that student academic and social-emotional needs are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, and that students are supported through a collaborative network of educational personnel and programs.

The Primary School Student Support Team (SST) consists of the Primary School Principal, the Primary School Associate Principal, the Primary School Assistant Principal, the Learning Specialist, the English, French, and Spanish Instructional Support Teachers, and the Counselor.

The learning needs and special strengths of students are identified through a variety of forms of assessment, including informal teacher observation and checklists, grade-level assessments in reading, writing, spelling and math, standardized tests, and, when appropriate, external professional evaluations. At times, student needs are identified in response to parental concerns. The team collaboratively identifies individual student needs as well as in-class learning support strategies, additional learning support, and other interventions, which are shared with the student's parents. The Student Support Team also monitors learning support provided to individual students through the following support structures:

- Reading Support in English, Grades 1-2: A Reading Recovery-trained teacher provides individual and/or group reading support to first and second graders in pull-out settings and, where and when appropriate, in the classroom.
- Language Support in French and Spanish, Grades 1-5: The primary school employs two more instructional support teachers, one in Spanish and one in French. Both are experienced teachers and native speakers of the language who provide in-class and out-of-class support for individuals and small groups in French and Spanish.
- Learning Specialist: The learning specialist works with teachers and students in all grades to provide strategies to address identified learning needs.
- After-School Support: Students who stay in extended day care after school participate in "homework club" and a small percentage receive after-school tutoring with a teacher.
- After-School Tutoring: At times, a student benefits from additional one-on-one instruction
 in an instructional language outside of the school day. When a teacher believes that a
 student needs this additional support, the teacher refers the case to the Student Support
 Team to approve the tutoring. When possible, current teachers at the school are used as
 tutors, and the class teacher and tutor communicate consistently regarding the student's
 progress.

ii. Teacher Support in the Languages

In accordance to the schoolwide goal of differentiation, all teachers differentiate for all learners according to learner profiles, multiple intelligences, learning differences and variations in level of proficiency. They are supported in doing so by the Primary School Director of Teaching and Learning, the Instructional Support Teachers, and professional development opportunities in the field of languages, both in-house and external.

iii. Additional Support

Auxiliary Programs

WIS makes every effort to enrich and extend language learning after school and through summer programs for both WIS and non-WIS students alike. The after school and summer programs afford students exposure to another language or extension of their language abilities in English, French, Spanish, and Chinese (Mandarin) in an authentic way. Summer programs offer various levels of instruction. The academic focus in the summer program gradually increases after the age of 8. WIS students in Extended Day Care are supervised and can receive academic support from teachers of all three languages of instruction. WIS offers other languages in the after school program when there is a demand and available resources, and is responsive to mother tongue requests for language learning, when this occurs.

Parents as Partners

The ongoing language development of WIS students is the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students. Through ongoing communication, teachers communicate expectations and offer suggestions to reinforce language learning through at-home support. Parents occasionally participate in curricular and extracurricular activities involving languages.

Other Opportunities for Authentic Language Experiences

Authentic resources are available to families in the Primary School library, as well as online resources via our library website and technology support. Community events in all school languages are communicated to families through various means, and assemblies and field trips are planned in all school languages throughout the school year. Mother tongue is supported through Celebrations of Learning, the connection of a wide range of language speakers in our school community, and student-led conferences, where children are encouraged to bring their mother tongue into the school experience.

Section 3: Languages in Grades 6-10

a. Curriculum Overview

The curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs for grades 6-10 have been designed and implemented with the aim of providing opportunities and experiences that reinforce WIS's mission to be an exemplary learning community enriched by differences, informed through inquiry, and global in reach.

The curriculum:

- is a rigorous, visionary, research-based curriculum inspired by academic innovators worldwide
- is student-centered and inquiry-based
- promotes the IB learner profile
- encourages interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning
- encourages students to embrace diverse cultures and viewpoints

• is organized around six key spheres: Information Fluency; Communication; Connections; Diversity; Responsibility; Action

The academic program at WIS provides a framework for language learning for students in grades 6-10. Course planning is based on Teaching for Understanding concepts from Project Zero. Most courses meet five periods in a cycle of ten days, which is about three hours a week. Two elective courses in the Middle School are semester-long: Enrichment and LearnServe. In most cases, students and teachers use the target language to communicate.

Language assessment follows closely the guidelines of the Assessment Policy and is a combination of pre-, formative and summative assessments. All feedback by teachers is given in the target language.

As part of the admissions process, all applicants applying to enter one of our ongoing language programs take a written test in that language and an optional oral test. The tests are designed to ensure that an applicant's skill level is on grade level. The tests are written and evaluated by WIS subject coordinators and include sections on reading comprehension, grammar, writing, as well as oral expression when needed.

b. Language Programs

i. Grades 6-8 (Middle School)

1. Advanced Programs in French or Spanish (Grades 6, 7, 8)

The Advanced programs are for students who are highly proficient in French or Spanish. They also include FAL (French as an Additional Language) or SAL (Spanish as an Additional Language) students who entered the program in Primary School. Classes in Humanities and Language and Literature are taught in French or Spanish. Students can also choose semester-long electives in the target language, such as the Enrichment or the LearnServe courses. All other subjects are taught in English.

2. Transitional French or Spanish (Grade 6)

The Transitional languages courses are for newly admitted or FAL/SAL students who are proficient in French or Spanish but need extra support before entering into the Advanced language program. Students in this program take Humanities in French or Spanish. Students in Transitional can also choose to take Enrichment as an elective to further support their language development.

3. Beginning French or Spanish Program (Grades 6 and 7)

The program is for students who have had no or little experience in the target language. All other subjects, including Humanities, are taught in English.

4. Intermediate French or Spanish Program (Grade 8)

The program requires two to four years of previous French or Spanish instruction, including speaking, reading and writing. This program includes five periods a cycle (about three hours a week) in French or Spanish language and literature. All other subjects, including Humanities, are taught in English.

5. Beginning Chinese Program (Grade 6)

The program is for students who have had no or little experience in the target language. This course is available only as an additional second language option. All other subjects are taught in English.

6. Chinese Program (Grades 7 and 8)

The program requires one to two years of Chinese instruction. This course is available only as an additional second language option.

ii. Grades 9-10 (Upper School)

1. French and Spanish A:

The French and Spanish A programs are for students who are highly proficient in French or Spanish and who have been in a dual language program. All other subjects are taught in English.

2. French and Spanish B:

The program is for students who have had two to four years of previous instruction in the target language.

3. Chinese B:

The program is for students who have had two to four years of previous instruction in the target language. This option can only be taken as a year-long elective course.

4. Spanish C: (Grade 9 students only)

The program is for newly admitted students who have had little or no experience in Spanish. Students go to Spanish B in 10th grade.

c. Language Support and Enrichment

i. Middle School enrichment programs in languages

Students in Grades 6 and 7 Advanced courses have the option of taking an elective Enrichment semester-long course in either French or Spanish. The Enrichment course offers students additional opportunities to further their cultural and linguistic understanding of the target language.

In Grade 8, students can take a LearnServe course in French or Spanish, a semester-long elective on social entrepreneurship.

Throughout Middle School, the Demonstrations of Learning are explored and developed in all languages and all language programs.

ii. Student Support in Languages

Students get additional support in languages through various channels as needed:

- The Student Support Team: The school believes that all students are able to attain their greatest success when they learn in an environment that takes individual needs and learning styles into consideration. The Student Support Team's goal is to ensure that all students are able to achieve their academic potential, that student academic and social-emotional needs are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, and that students are supported through a collaborative network of educational personnel and programs.
- Learning Specialist: The learning specialist works with teachers and students in all grades to provide strategies to address identified learning needs.
- After-School Support: Students in Grades 6 to 8 have the opportunity to get additional support by going to the French or Spanish Lab once a week after school for one hour. The lab is run by Middle School language teachers and provides individualized support to students as needed.
- After-School Tutoring: At times, a student benefits from additional one-on-one instruction
 in the target language outside of the school day. WIS tutors and private tutors are
 available for language support in both the Middle School and Upper School. Tutoring
 can be recommended by parents, teachers or the learning specialist. The language
 teacher and tutor communicate consistently regarding the student's progress.
- Individual meetings with teachers: Students meet with teachers at lunch time or after school as needed.

iii. Teacher Support in Languages

In accordance to the school-wide goal of differentiation, all teachers differentiate for all learners according to learner profiles, multiple intelligences, learning differences and variations in level of proficiency. They are supported in doing so by the Tregaron Director of Teaching and Learning and professional development opportunities in the field of languages, both in-house and external.

iv. Additional Support

Parents as Partners

We view the ongoing language development of WIS students as the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students. With this in mind, teachers communicate expectations and offer additional suggestions (recommendations) such as subject labs (Middle School only), private tutoring, trips, and clubs to reinforce language learning.

After School and Summer Language Camp

WIS makes every effort to enrich and extend language learning throughout the summer for both WIS and non-WIS students alike. The summer program affords students exposure to another language or extension of their language abilities in English, French and Spanish in an authentic way. Summer programs offer various levels of instruction. Additionally, WIS offers other languages in the after school program when there are both a demand and available resources.

Other Opportunities for Authentic Language Experiences

Our commitment to learning through languages includes offering a variety of authentic language experiences for students to explore such as:

- The curricular language trips to France, Peru or Spain for all Grade 8 students. They spend ten days in the country, staying with a host family and engaging in a variety of cultural and linguistic explorations.
- The extra-curricular Upper School Chinese trip for Chinese students, who spend ten days in country and engage in a variety of cultural and linguistic explorations.
- The peri-curricular Peru and Guatemala Upper School trips, which are extensions of the Global Health elective course and offer the opportunity for Spanish speakers to further their understanding of language and culture.
- Middle and Upper School clubs relating to language and culture, such as the French "Ciné-club" in the Middle School, or "Amigos Juntos" in the Upper School.
- In Grade 10, students have the possibility to write their Grade 10 Project reflection statement in French or Spanish.
- Assemblies might feature language-related content, such as celebrations of student work, opportunities for service in various languages and announcements.
- Field trips are organized at all levels to provide opportunities for students to further the language curricula.

Section 4: Languages in the IB Diploma Program (11th and 12th grades)

a. Curriculum Overview

The IB Diploma Program is a challenging university preparatory course for the final two years of high school. A comprehensive and intellectually stimulating course of study, the IB Diploma is

recognized by colleges and universities through the world, often leading to preferential admissions and advanced standing for DP students.

The Diploma Program provides a balanced educational experience with a global perspective, designed for students who learn two or more languages, embrace diverse cultures and viewpoints, and have the ability and confidence to navigate a complex world. Almost all WIS students register for the full DP, earning either an IB Diploma or Certificates at graduation. On average, over 60% of WIS students earn a bilingual IB Diploma.

b. Language Programs

Students select one subject from each of six subject groups. At least three, and not more than four, subjects are taken at Higher Level (HL), and the remainder at Standard Level (SL). Flexibility in choosing Higher Level concentrations allows students to pursue areas of special interest while meeting requirements for university entrance.

i. Group 1 – First Language (Language A)

Each WIS DP student must complete the Language A Literature course in English. Students who have a second language A take the Language and Literature course either in French or Spanish. Over 50 other Language A courses can be offered on a tutorial basis. Students learn oral and written communication skills and develop respect for the literary heritage of the language. All courses provide a broad perspective through a literature in translation component.

ii. Group 2 – Second Modern Language (Language B)

A variety of course options reflect the range of linguistic backgrounds of students enrolled in the DP. Each course focuses on communication between speakers and writers of that language. Language B courses in French, Spanish and Chinese provide second language learning and exposure to other cultures and viewpoints through a communicative approach for students with two to five years of study in that language. Students develop skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing through a wide range of literary and non literary texts. Ab initio courses, available at Standard Level only and on a tutorial basis, are designed for beginners. Students are prepared to use the language appropriately in different settings.

iii. Standardized Testing

In Grades 10 and 11, students have the option to take Advanced Placement tests (AP) in the language(s) of their choosing.

c. Language Support and Enrichment

Student Support in Languages

Students get additional support in languages through various channels as needed:

- The Student Support Team: The school believes that all students are able to attain their greatest success when they learn in an environment that takes individual needs and learning styles into consideration. The Student Support Team's goal is to ensure that all students are able to achieve their academic potential, that student academic and social-emotional needs are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, and that students are supported through a collaborative network of educational personnel and programs.
- Learning Specialist: The learning specialist works with teachers and students in all grades to provide strategies to address identified learning needs.
- After-School Tutoring: At times, a student benefits from additional one-on-one instruction
 in the target language outside of the school day. WIS tutors and private tutors are
 available for language support in both the Middle School and Upper School. Tutoring
 can be recommended by parents, teachers or the learning specialist. The language
 teacher and tutor communicate consistently regarding the student's progress.
- Individual meetings with teachers: Students meet with teachers at lunch time or after school as needed.

Teacher Support in Languages

In accordance to the schoolwide goal of differentiation, all teachers differentiate for all learners according to learner profiles, multiple intelligences, learning differences and variations in level of proficiency. They are supported in doing so by the Tregaron Director of Teaching and Learning and professional development opportunities in the field of languages, both in-house and external.

Parents as Partners

We view the ongoing language development of WIS students as the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students. With this in mind, teachers communicate expectations and offer additional suggestions (recommendations) such as private tutoring, trips, and clubs to reinforce language learning.

Other opportunities for authentic language experiences

Our commitment to learning through languages includes offering a variety of authentic language experiences for students to explore such as:

- The extra-curricular Upper School Chinese trip for Chinese students, who spend ten days in the country and engage in a variety of cultural and linguistic explorations.
- The peri-curricular Peru and Guatemala Upper School trips, which are extensions of the Global Health elective course and offer the opportunity for Spanish speakers to extend their learning of language and culture.
- Upper School clubs relating to language and culture, such as the "Amigos Juntos" club.

- In Grade 11, students have the possibility to take their Extended Essay in all languages taught at WIS (Chinese, French and Spanish) and if so, are sponsored by a language sponsor.
- Assemblies might feature language-related content, such as celebrations of student work, opportunities for service in various languages and announcements.
- Field trips are organized at all levels to provide opportunities for students to further their understanding of the WIS language curricula.
- The CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) Coordinator provides opportunities for students to do service in the target language when available.

Section 5: Appendices

Appendix A: Core Beliefs about Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Appendix B: Primary School Assessment Chart

Appendix C: Language Levels and Progression at WIS

Appendix D: Middle School Demonstrations of Learning (French)
Appendix E: Middle School Demonstrations of Learning (Spanish)

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