



**I.E. Weldon Secondary School
IB World School 1438**

LANGUAGE POLICY **2015-2016**

The study of language provides a powerful means by which one gains understanding of other cultures and that begin able to speak a language indicates a deep respect for that culture.

- *Language Policy, The Dwight School*

Language Policy Aims

Language study, whether in the mother tongue or in an additional language, is central to learning. Society places a very high value of communication; in an era of growing global interaction and cultural exchange the study of language is of paramount importance. Schools offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme need to have a clear vision of the roles and values of language education within the Board, the school and within the IB programme. Language education needs to be a central tenet in both the school and board mission statements and in all aspects of educational design and practice.

The Trillium Lakelands District School Board and I.E. Weldon Secondary School share a common vision: *We believe that all students can learn in a safe environment that nurtures, challenges and enables individuals to achieve their full potential. Students will develop skills that allow them to function effectively as responsible citizens in a global and technological society. Moreover, it is our goal to instil in our students a taste for learning and a curiosity about the world that will last a lifetime.*

To that end, our Language Policy strives to:

- Encourage the development of language proficiency in both the language of instruction (English), in an acquired language (French or German) and in a student's mother tongue.
- Nurture a deep respect for cultural diversity through language education.
- Ensure that language education acknowledges and cultivates in students an appreciation of myriad ways of knowing and their impact on the construction of knowledge and understanding.
- Inspire in students a personal commitment to life-long learning utilizing language learning skills.

- Cultivate in our students critical and creative thinking skills suited to active citizenship in a multilingual, global community.

Policy Design and Revision

This Language Policy is a working document that has been developed by stakeholders representing all subject groupings, including ToK and CAS, and school administration¹. Each year staff will review the existing language policy to determine how well the policy in practice has fulfilled IB expectations and principles outlined in IB policy documents: *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*, *Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy* and *Diploma Programme: From principles into practice*. The focus of committee discussions will centre on gathering evidence of language philosophy application throughout the programme, identifying new opportunities for language learning, identifying and rectifying language instruction inconsistencies in programme practice, determining professional development needs and opportunities and shaping language learning strategy. Based on the findings of the committee policy adjustments will be crafted to better meet the needs of our students and the aims of our language programme. Each year, the Language Policy will be updated and uploaded to our school website for communication to the school community.

Guiding Pedagogy

At I.E. Weldon, all teachers are language teachers who play a role in developing essential communication skills including listening, speaking, reading, writing and interpreting information across all subject areas. Weldon's literacy program is rigorous in its inter-disciplinary approach and focuses on a variety of text forms, genres and characteristics. Literacy coaches train instructors in strategies to support the moderation assessment of student work using common rubrics to create subject specific examples for use in content area classrooms. These include extensive use of data driven reading and writing assessments with emphasis on comprehension and critical literacy. The data gathered enables teachers and administrators to identify student strengths and areas of need. The data also assists in developing strategies and approaches to instruction to best respond to individual student needs. This information creates for teachers a framework from which to develop differentiated instructional practices.

When data, formal psychometric assessments and anecdotal evidence identify students with specific communication deficiencies, the Special Education program at Weldon takes an active role in both literacy based intervention initiatives and broader student success strategies. Assistive technology and Individual Education Plans play a large role in developing specific student program modifications and accommodations to ensure success in all grades, at all levels and in all subjects.

Language Profile

Approximately 95% of our student population speaks English as their mother tongue. 3% of our students identify French as their first language and the remaining 2% identify other languages

¹ For a complete list of Language Committee Members, please refer to Appendix A.

including Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Russian, Hebrew and Ukrainian. 100% of our teaching and administrative staff are English speakers and 12% are fluent in a second language including: French, Spanish, Japanese, Italian, German, Russian, Dutch and Cantonese. Despite the monocultural demographics of our school, we believe it is important to support the growth of multiculturalism and multilingualism as a way of developing international mindedness amongst our students and growing the cognitive capacity of our students as critical thinkers. To this end, we offer a variety of language learning opportunities to our students. Offering multiple second language learning options also serves to support the maintenance of the mother tongue for non-English first language speakers.

Support for the Development and Maintenance of the Mother Tongue for all Learners

I.E. Weldon provides instruction in both official languages English and French. The majority of our students attend classes conducted in English but it is a requirement that all students earn a minimum of one French language credit to be eligible for the Ontario OSSD. That being said, we offer a range of French language instruction to serve the needs of individual students and their families.

- ***French Immersion Programme:*** The French Immersion Programme is designed for children from non-French speaking families. Its aims are to develop and refine students' ability to communicate in French; to expand students' knowledge of the language through the study of francophone literature and culture. The standard entry point into French immersion is in senior kindergarten (approximately age 5). There are no entrance requirements. Students who successfully complete 10 credits at the secondary level will be granted a French Immersion certificate in addition to graduating with an OSSD.
- ***Core French:*** The Core French Programme is part of the regular curriculum for all students in our school board from grades 4 to 8. The Ontario Secondary School Diploma requires the successful completion of one compulsory French credit. The aims of the core French programme are to provide fundamental communication skills in French and to develop, in students, an understanding of the nature of the French language and its culture.
- ***Language Instruction in IB:*** In the IB Programme at Weldon, all classes are conducted in English-Language A. English is the language "to which [students] has been exposed from an early age or for an extended period." Students taking the full Diploma must continue studying a second language. There are a number of ways this can be accomplished at Weldon:

IB Language A2 at the higher or standard level: for students who are bilingual and proficient in reading and writing in another language, and for whom Language B study would present no challenge. Special arrangements may be made for exchange students, which may include self-taught. To date, we have had one student elect to pursue this option by studying Mandarin, self-taught.

IB Language B at the higher or standard level: for students with one or more years experience with the language. Student learn to communicate effectively in number of situations, from everyday exchanges to literary texts over a period of two years. Most Weldon students pursue French, although our students have also

studied German in the past. We are developing a plan to integrate Spanish into our course offerings in the next two years.

IB Language *ab initio* at the standard level: for a beginner who has little or no experience with the language of study. Students gain a basic level of communication on everyday exchanges and prescribed situations. While we have the possibility of offering this option in a variety of languages, no student has chosen to pursue this opportunity.

- ***Language Admissions Policy***²: IB students are not excluded from programme participation on the basis of language acquisition. During the registration process, it is made clear to families that the principle language of instruction is English and that a second language is required. For the majority of our programme applicants, this is not a determining factor. In our programme history we have only had two English as a Second Language speakers register for the Diploma/Diploma Courses. For these students, we conducted an assessment of their oral and written English to develop an accelerated language learning plan and to design an appropriate programme of study to suit student language and post-secondary learning goals.

Support for Non-English First Language Learners

I.E. Weldon is pleased to offer non-English first language learners a variety of support services to improve their language proficiency.

- ***English as a Second Language***: Students who speak a language other than English at home or who immigrate to our area from non-English speaking countries may have a limited understanding of Standard English. These students are usually proficient users of their own mother tongues but require assistance to learn English or to learn in English. I.E. Weldon employs an ESL teacher to work with students, one on one, to develop capacity in English and to manage cultural, colloquial and idiomatic discord that may affect learning in their academic subjects. The ESL teacher works with classroom teachers to identify, develop and implement various language acquisition strategies to assist with student learning.
- ***English Literacy Development***: Students who have had limited access to schooling and have significant gaps in their education may require additional language support. These students may come from countries in which English is not spoken or in which Standard English is the official language, but other varieties of English are in common use. Unlike ESL students, ELD students have not had opportunities to develop age-appropriate literacy skills in either English or in their first language. These students are withdrawn from their classes, according to a pre-arranged schedule, to work with both our ESL teacher and our Student Success instructor to develop and support language learning

² For a detailed description of our Programme Admissions Policy, please refer to the IB Student Handbook.

strategies. The ESL and Student Success teachers also meet with subject teachers to develop and implement subject specific language acquisition plans to facilitate learning.

- ***Special Education Programming***³: Our special education teaching team also plays a key role in supporting English language learning for ESL and ELD students. For students with English language deficiencies, the Head of Special Education develops an Individual Education Plan which serves as a legally binding document listing appropriate accommodations and modifications to be made to a student's learning plan. This plan considers the level of language proficiency for each student, the student's programme of study and long term academic goals. If deemed appropriate, the IEP provides students access to school procured assistive technology devices, including lap tops, translation programmes and Speak to Text software. The IEP may also provide for modified testing environments, access to technology during tests and examinations and time extensions in testing situations.
- ***Professional Development Opportunities***: Our school board provides ESL training for all teachers interested in developing language learning strategies for non-English speakers. This training is not required but it is free to all board employees and is offered twice each school year.

³ For more information, please see our Special Education Needs policy document.



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LANGUAGE POLICY: Appendix A
2015-2016

Language Committee Members

Erin Matthew	IB Coordinator, Committee Chair
Kevin Ray	Vice Principal
Stephanie Campbell	Department Head of Modern Languages
Danielle Lazzarin	Department Head of English
Kyle Timms	ToK Coordinator
James Simmons	EE Coordinator
Samantha Quackenbush	CAS Coordinator
Angela Jones	Department Head of Special Education
Kaila Kouzemenko	Teacher of English as a Second Language
Sheri Van Kessel	Department Head of Mathematics
Mairi Bew	Department Head and Canada and World Studies
Russell Briere	Department Head of Science
Wally Koekebakker	Department Head of Performing Arts
Paul Marshall	Department Head of Visual Arts
Greer Pedoe	Literacy Coach and Instructional Lead
Kenlynne Duke	Department Head of Student Services