

Language Policy and Procedures

Philosophy

We view the on-going language development of our students as the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents, and students, with an understanding that individual students progress at different rates. We all are responsible for supporting language acquisition and ensuring that all students use the English language responsibly. We teach language through context and relate new information to existing knowledge.

English is the language of instruction at Azusa High School and admissions requirements and assessments are conducted to ensure that the student can access the curriculum delivered in English. To that end, all students in the IB Diploma Program are required to take English A1 Higher Level as their Language A.

Further, we believe that all students should have the opportunity to experience learning a second language, which provides significant experience in international education, enabling students to understand the thinking and culture of others. Through effective communication in another language, students are sensitized to diversity and better able to understand the global world in which they live, preparing them to be active participants in multilingual communities at home and around the world. To that end, we require that all IB Diploma candidates take five courses of a Language B.

Language Profile

IB students at Azusa High School can be identified as one of the following:

- English only background students with no Language B proficiency.
- English only background students with minimal Language B exposure through limited middle school experience.
- Bi-lingual Hispanic and Asian students who have acquired both languages simultaneously since birth.
- Bi-lingual Hispanic and Asian students who are English proficient as a result of attending school, though English is not spoken in their home.

Language B

Every IB Diploma student must take one subject from Group Two, where we offer Language B Standard Level French or both Standard and Higher Level Spanish.

Mother Tongue Support

We acknowledge the importance of a student's Mother Tongue in promoting personal identity and maintaining cultural heritage. Although we have no formal support for the preservation and

development of a person's mother tongue (other than in our Language B program), we offer support in our Language B target languages through after school tutoring sessions on a drop-in basis. We provide culture-specific identity support in after school clubs such as Spanish Club and the French Club. Further support for non-English proficient students is offered by the Azusa Unified School District as follows:

District Policy

Our district uses the acronym ELD (English Language Development) to refer to the program that identifies and serves the linguistic and academic needs of students who enter our schools with limited English proficiency. These students are protected by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They are entitled to equal education regardless of their national origin, English proficiency or immigration status.

Identification

A home language survey **MUST** be administered to ALL students as they register. Based on the information in the survey, a standardized language assessment must be administered to potential English Language Learners (ELL)/immigrant students within ten days of enrollment to determine student needs and provide alternative language services if appropriate. The district uses the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey and reading/reading comprehension section of a norm-referenced test (if necessary) to identify students. Those students who score 25% or below are eligible for ELD services and are placed in the ELD program. Each spring these students will be administered the English Language Development Assessment to re-establish eligibility or determine readiness to exit, as well as to measure progress.

Initial grade placement should be with the same age classmates. Classroom teachers should modify instruction and assignments to meet the academic and language needs of ELL students. Grades should reflect these modifications.

The district acknowledges that having an ELD student in a class can provide an interesting multicultural learning environment in which all benefit. Teachers are reminded that ELD students can and should be referred for Gifted and Talented as well as advanced courses. Language barriers should not prevent them from participating and succeeding in higher level programs.

Goals

The goal of Azusa High School District's ELD Program is to provide equal educational opportunities to students who have a primary or home language other than English and who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or Non-English Proficient (NEP). The primary focus is to provide an English-rich environment so those students will become proficient in English as soon as possible. The district strives to create a learning environment that encourages student pride in their cultural heritage and provides the cognitive and affective support to help students become contributing members of society. This program, beginning in kindergarten and

continuing through high school, will provide these students the opportunity to be successful in academic areas and to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing proficiency in order to be successfully mainstreamed into all classes.

Grades and Grading Systems

Content area teachers should make accommodations in instruction and assignments based on student fluency levels, and assessments should be based on these accommodations. Grades should reflect students' participation, effort, and progress. Teachers are encouraged to confer with ELD teachers about specific students. Decisions such as grade retention or failure in classes should be made in conference with ELD teachers, the building principal, guidance counselor, and other professionals. Whenever possible, students should be promoted along with age-level peers.

Traditional procedures for assigning grades to students may not be appropriate for ELL students. The same methods and criteria applied to their English-speaking age and /or grade peers cannot always be used to assess students who lack English language proficiency. Teachers should be encouraged to maintain high expectations for student learning and should accommodate and adapt lessons and assignments so that ELLs can progress. Likewise, assessments should be modified so that students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The LEA (Local Education Agency) must describe their grading policies and procedures in local ELL plans and should provide training for appropriate personnel so that the policies and procedures are implemented consistently and fairly. The key to appropriate grading of ELLs is appropriate instructional accommodations. Even non-English proficient students can learn content while acquiring English. If content teachers are unsure how to accommodate ELLs , they should seek in service or other training. A student may not be assigned a failing grade in a content area on the basis of lack of English language proficiency.

English Proficiency Levels

1—Beginning: The student demonstrates few literacy functions, performs significantly below grade level, and/or requires extended time at the beginning and intermediate levels.

2—Lower Intermediate: The student comprehends simple material written for informative or social purposes; understands the essential content of short, general public statements, environmental texts and formulaic messages; reads short texts or trade/pattern books independently; and/or guesses the meaning of unfamiliar words through the use of cognates and text context, though may be misled by false cognates.

3—Upper Intermediate: The student understands more complex narrative and descriptive authentic materials and edited texts with a familiar context; uses contextual and visual cues to derive meaning from texts that contain unfamiliar words, expressions and structures; makes informed guesses about meaning from context; and/or reads a broader range of genres.

4—Advanced: The student comprehends the content of most texts of interest to students at his/her grade level and, with support, the majority of grade-level academic content area texts; understands most factual information in non-technical prose; interprets texts more accurately and utilizes more sophisticated cohesive devices; and/or reads excerpts from literature for pleasure.

5—Fully Proficient: The student understands and obtains meaning from a wide range of texts available to native English speakers; reads at the appropriate level extended academic texts that contain multiple perspectives; reads and comprehends complex grammar and rhetorical features, including the meaning of varied text structures; and/or visualizes meaning as intended by the writer.

Communicating with Parents

The school district provides all schools an automatic translating service, Teleinterpret, by phone. Teachers are encouraged to use this program for parent-teacher conferences. If the family does not have an interpreter or translator, it is the responsibility of the student's school staff and/or administration to secure one. Where applicable, teachers are to use translations of routine school-parent communication, such as report cards, health forms, interim reports, field trip permission forms, free lunch eligibility forms, etc. Academic Plan conferences are required for all students who score below basic on PASS (Palmetto Assessment of State Standards). If parents are non-English speaking, they may need an interpreter.

Updated: August 2021. Should be reviewed again in the 23-24 school year.