



**Shawnee Mission East High School:**  
**An International Baccalaureate World School**  
**Language Policy**



**Introduction**

As an IB World School, Shawnee Mission East values global mindedness and the development of communication skills for all students. “The mission of the Shawnee Mission English Language Learner (ELL) Program is to serve, advocate for, and assist in the cultural adaptation of English language learners and their families. The ELL staff, educators, parents, and community will work with the students to improve their social, linguistic, academic, and/or vocational skills, so that they may become contributing members of society and the global community.” (Shawnee Mission School District ELL). This policy will outline our philosophy and policies to support the diverse language needs of all students in our school.

At SM East, we believe that language and communication are the foundation of creating global communities. Teachers recognize that proficiency of language is transferable and that it is an integral part of a student's identity. We strive to provide opportunities for students to express their culture, competencies and identities through opportunities within and outside of the classroom. Through these opportunities, we strive to develop awareness for all students of the role of language in a global society.

**Student Language Profile**

Our English language learners come from all corners of the globe – Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. “Sixty-eight percent of students attending our ELL program (learning the English language) are in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, 31 percent are in high school. Pre-kindergarten through second grade students represent 34 percent of the total. Our students speak 81 languages, 77 percent speak Spanish. After Spanish, the most common language they speak is Chinese and Arabic. This year, we have a new record of 3,172 ELL students enrolled in Shawnee Mission” (Shawnee Mission School District ELL). As our district continues to grow our enrollment in the ELL program, all teachers are in effect language teachers.

The IB Coordinator will communicate with students and families where English is not the mother tongue. Students will be supported in learning the English language, alongside a

language acquisition course. Teachers and the school community will provide additional supports for students due to the rigor and academic vocabulary of the IB courses.

### **How does the ELL Program Work in SMSD?**

Students are first assessed using an IEP test in addition to the KELPA (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment). This will help determine correct placement and if additional services are needed. In addition, the ELL instructors may also help determine placement based upon their interactions with the student.

As indicated in the information above, there is a progression of placement in the ELL program at East. In addition, students who are transitioning out of the ELL Center are placed in core classes (math, social studies, and English) that focus on improving their skills in English besides the subject curriculum. We find that this leads to greater academic success for our students who are non-native speakers of English. **Illegal Activities for Schools Serving English Language Learners per the United States Judicial Branch and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR):**

1. School district employees may **NOT** ask a student or family member about their immigration status.
2. Students may **NOT** be forbidden to speak in their native languages while at lunch, recess, during passing periods, on buses, etc. They may be encouraged to speak English in the classroom as this is the setting in which they are learning the language.
3. Students may **NOT** be issued a failing SMSD grade due to language.
4. Non-English speaking students may **NOT** sit in classrooms and do nothing.

### **Language at SM East:**

Classes offered at SM East are taught in English. However, proficiency in English is not a requirement for taking IB Courses. All languages are welcome and students needing support in English learning have access to ELL services in building. Assessment and processes for admission to the English Language Learner Program are detailed previously.

Although the majority of the resources housed in our library are written in English (the mother tongue of most of our students), we want to nurture the mother tongue of our students because we realize that not all of our students are native speakers of English.

Students at SM East have the choice of the following world languages and the IB Diploma Program requires students to take a Group 2 Course in Language Acquisition. Those courses are stated below. Additionally, SM East also offers a certificate of bilingual ability in conjunction with the state: the Seal of Biliteracy. While it is a requirement of the IB Diploma

Program, neither the state of Kansas nor Shawnee Mission East require that students take a world language.

| <b>World Languages offered at SM East</b> | <b>Level 1</b> | <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Level 3</b> | <b>Level 4</b> | <b>Level 5</b> | <b>Level 6</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| French                                    | X              | X              | X              | X              | X              | X              |
| Spanish                                   | X              | X              | X              | X              | X              | X              |

**Additional Opportunities to support Language and Culture at SM East:**

Within our school at Shawnee Mission East, students are encouraged to get involved in clubs, organizations and activities. These opportunities provide students with an opportunity to increase cultural awareness and global-mindedness. Clubs and Activities include:

- UNICEF Club
- SHARE Club
- Holiday Club
- Freelancer
- Youth and Government
- Jewish Student Union
- Multicultural Student Union
- Latinos of Tomorrow
- International Club
- Environmental Club

This policy can be found on the Shawnee Mission East International Baccalaureate website. It is also distributed to and approved annually by all SME IB DP teachers and distributed annually to all IB students and parents through the IB School Website.

**IB Policy Review Team (Reviewed 9/12/25)**

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