

BFIS Language Policy

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Purpose and Philosophy

Profile

Benjamin Franklin International School (BFIS) in Barcelona offers a distinctive blend of American and international curricula, fostering the development of well-rounded, global learners. While the majority of students complete the International Baccalaureate Program, students can also graduate with the Spanish Bachillerato and the US High School diploma.

We believe that learning should be both challenging and enjoyable. We value the education of the whole child, focusing on a student-centered, inquiry-based approach to learning that fosters problem-solving and critical thinking, respect for students as individuals, an emphasis on teamwork and collaboration, and the importance of a close partnership with parents.

We strive to attain a balanced student enrollment of approximately one-third US, one-third international, and one-third local families to maintain the international character of our school. While the primary language of instruction is English, we embrace the local and home languages represented in our community of families from more than 60 different nationalities. We have over 30 different languages that are represented in our school.

Mission

We are a learning community that fosters students' personal growth and collaborative capacity in a school where they can be creative, fail forward, pursue their aspirations and contribute positively to society. We nurture students so that they are balanced, happy, optimistic and innovative adults who can make a positive impact in their own lives and in the lives of others.

Philosophy

The BFIS language policy is based upon a set of principles that are anchored in language education research and supported by experience.

We believe that:

- All children can be successful language learners. Our role is to nurture and develop citizens of the world who can find success in any place or field they select and who see value in the interconnectedness of language and culture.
- Students acquire language proficiency at different rates and learn in different ways. We recognize that language learning is a lifelong process, and students may need continued language support at different times of their language learning journey.
- All teachers are language teachers.
- All students deserve equal access to the curriculum regardless of their language backgrounds.
- Diverse and differentiated instructional approaches facilitate social and academic language acquisition, both of which are necessary for school and lifelong success.
- It is important to celebrate our students' first languages and cultures. We align with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in

- that “our values, beliefs, and identity are embedded within language” (Farhat, 2018).
- Bilingualism and multiculturalism add incredible value to our community.

Goals and Objectives

The following are specific goals for language teaching and learning and the desired outcomes for students’ language proficiency at BFIS.

- To give all students equal access to the curriculum that reflects the diverse identities of themselves, regardless of their language backgrounds and to differentiate as needed.
- To develop students’ reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to foster creative, independent, and critical thinking, as active global citizens.
- To inspire students to be IB learners who are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective.
- To ensure that all teachers at BFIS are responsible for the cognitive development and collective appreciation of language, culture, and identity.
- To promote and develop students to become bilingual and/or multilingual where possible in English, Spanish, and Catalan.
- To reflect and integrate our students’ rich cultural backgrounds into our teaching materials and resources.
- To foster the development of both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

Multilingual Approach

The languages of instruction are English (the main language of instruction), as well as Spanish and Catalan (which are the official languages of Catalonia). The school also strives to provide opportunities for students to learn other languages during their time at BFIS. All students are required to study in two languages.

Multilingual Language Pathways	
Early Childhood	<p>An English language immersion learning environment where students have separate specialist Spanish multiple days each week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish-Catalan / Spanish-Catalan Language Acquisition
Grades K-10	<p>An English language immersion learning environment where students have separate specialist Spanish and Catalan multiple days each week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language Arts / Language and Literature / English Language Acquisition • Spanish / Spanish Language Acquisition • Catalan / Catalan Language Acquisition
Grades 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English A HL / SL: <i>focuses on the study of the production and reception of texts across cultures and contexts</i> • English B HL: <i>focuses on developing language skills through the study of a wide range of texts, as well as developing intercultural understanding for students still</i>

improving their English skills

- **Spanish A:** *focuses on the in-depth study of Spanish language and literature, and the opportunity to explore how the language develops in specific cultural contexts, the impact it has on the world, and how it influences the identity of the individual and of a group of people. (translated course description)*
- **Spanish B:** *taught completely in Spanish ensuring a more rapid acquisition of vocabulary, the development of listening skills, and greater speaking fluency*
- **Spanish Ab Initio:** *for students who have none / little previous experience with Spanish focusing on the acquisition of language*
- **Self-Taught Language A:** *studying the language and culture of their home language (as per IB Access and Inclusion Policy, 2020)*

Students who are proficient in two A languages take a dual A Language combination; English A, Spanish A, or their first language through the IBDP Group 1 School Supported Self-Taught Language A program.

Some students study one option from Group 1 English A, Spanish A, or and their first language through the School Supported Self-Taught Language A program. In Group 2, they study either the Spanish B or English B Language Acquisition course.

A Bilingual Diploma can be achieved through two routes that are equally valid:

1. *Studying Two Language A choices to satisfy both Groups 1 and 2 and obtaining a minimum of a Level 3.*
2. *Study an A language other than English in Group 1, study English Language B in Group 2 and study and take their Group 3 or Group 4 exams in English.*

Proficiency in an A language is not determined based on how long students have been studying it, but on their assessed acquisition. Generally students obtaining a consistent Level 4, as measured by the IB MYP and DP rubrics, are required to study the language in Group 1 as a Language A course. Students are not placed in Language B where they are ethically considered A users of the language.

Professional Development

BFIS shares the belief that all faculty and staff are language teachers. To equip all teachers to be teachers of language, BFIS provides on-site professional development led by faculty and outsourced professional development. All teachers at BFIS complete an 8 week course through the Centre for Educators of Bilingual Multilingual Learners (<https://educatorsofbmls.com/>) funded by the school to provide teachers with relevant research and strategies to accommodate varying levels of English proficiency in the classroom. We have a [dedicated website](#) that promotes strategies and methodologies that synthesizes best practice for language teaching and learning. Teachers are expected to offer Tier 1 strategies of support to all students throughout their lessons. These strategies may include:

- Scaffolding meaning
- Building on prior knowledge
- Affirming identity
- Extending language
- Teaching for transfer across languages

- Fostering literacy

First Language Support

It's not unusual to find students speaking to their friends and classmates in any number of languages while at BFIS. BFIS promotes home language development in addition to the languages taught in school. Learners are encouraged and assisted, where possible, to maintain the study of their home language through independent study and through the exploration of literature and language acquisition books available in a variety of home languages in the BFIS library. Research has shown that multilingual education leads to improvement in academic achievement through the transfer of first language (L1) and second language (L2) skills (Cummins, 2000). Respecting and developing a student's home language and culture, alongside their L2 or L3, is crucial for achieving academic and professional success in a global society. Additionally, we strive to ensure equal access to the curriculum for all learners, with mindful attention to their language background. Our classroom practices aim to support linguistic diversity and inclusivity within the educational setting, promoting a more equitable and accessible learning environment for all students.

The role of the BFIS library team is to promote and facilitate information literacy across all curricula and to all members of the community. The libraries have databases and Ebook services that contain professional material, scholarly articles, newspapers and magazines in many languages. Librarians also take part in whole-school language professional development initiatives to promote and practice affirming bi/multilingual environments.

We also understand and acknowledge the importance of the school-home connection, specifically in supporting families in understanding their role in continued L1 development.

Parent Engagement

BFIS parents contribute to language learning in many ways, some of which include volunteering in language activities offered by the school, mentoring students, teaching FLEX language classes, supporting literacy initiatives with guest read alouds, Home Language Celebrations, and the BFIS International Fair. Parents can also continue to support by:

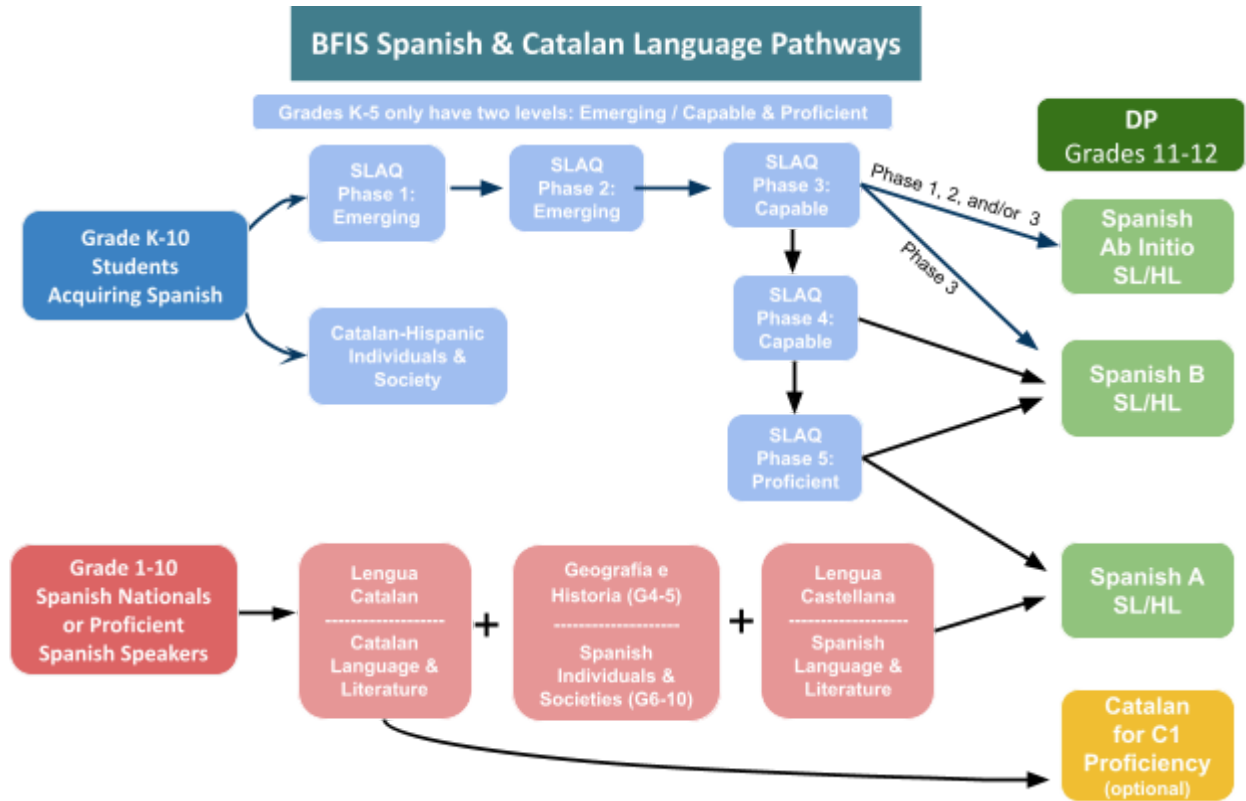
- embracing and encouraging their child to speak their home language(s) / L1s
- taking advantage of language learning experiences offered by the broader community
- promoting reading and the enjoyment of literature in any language
- engaging in school literacy-sponsored events
- support their own child's learning, by serving as role models and demonstrating how they value and appreciate other cultures and languages.

We also provide the following resources to the BFIS Community via the Parent Portal:

- BFIS Podcast
- Talk Tuesdays - BML Resources
- Research articles about L1 maintenance and the power of maintaining this to develop other languages.
- General comprehension questions for reading at home translated into our top 5

languages.

- List of heritage tutors in the area



Spanish and Catalan Courses for Spanish Nationals & Proficient Spanish Speakers	
Grades K-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lengua Castellana (Spanish): <i>Composed of students whose home language is Spanish and students who have acquired the language outside of the home, who met grade-level proficiency in Spanish based on standardized assessment.</i> Lengua Catalana: <i>All students with Spanish nationality are required to take Lengua Catalana. Non-Spanish students who wish to enroll in Lengua Catalana must meet grade level proficiency based on standardized assessment.</i>
Grades 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lengua Castellana (Spanish) / Spanish Language and Literature Lengua Catalana / Catalan Language and Literature Geografia e Historia / Spanish Individuals and Society: <i>Composed of students whose home language is Spanish and students who met grade level proficiency in Spanish based on standardized assessments.</i>

<p>Grades 7-10 Catalan is mandatory for Spanish Nationals and Proficient Spanish Speakers to obtain their ESO (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria) Diploma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish Language and Literature • Catalan Language and Literature • Spanish Individuals and Society
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* For Spanish Language Acquisition (SLAQ) courses, please see the [“Promotion of Host Country’s Languages” section](#).

Inclusion and Equity

English Language Acquisition (ELAQ) Overview

While social language is relatively easy for students to master, it can take an additional 5-7 years for students to attain academic proficiency in English. BFIS follows the inclusion model for BML services. Research shows that this model helps students acquire academic language more efficiently.

The inclusion model teaches English through content areas such as literature, science, social studies, and math in the general education classroom. Teachers collaborate with BML specialists to ensure equal access to the curriculum for BMLs. For students entering higher grades where the language gap between English speakers and BMLs can be quite wide, as well as for some students who enter BFIS with no introduction to English, specialists may work with BMLs in small groups.

Language Placement and Phase Changes

Students in Grades 1 through 12 English Immersion with other first languages may be assessed using L1 speaking and writing samples (Grades 4-10) and the standardized WIDA MODEL assessment to measure proficiency across six levels within the four language domains: Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading as part of the admissions process to determine BML Services. Any student who receives a WIDA score of 1-5.5 are eligible for BML Services.

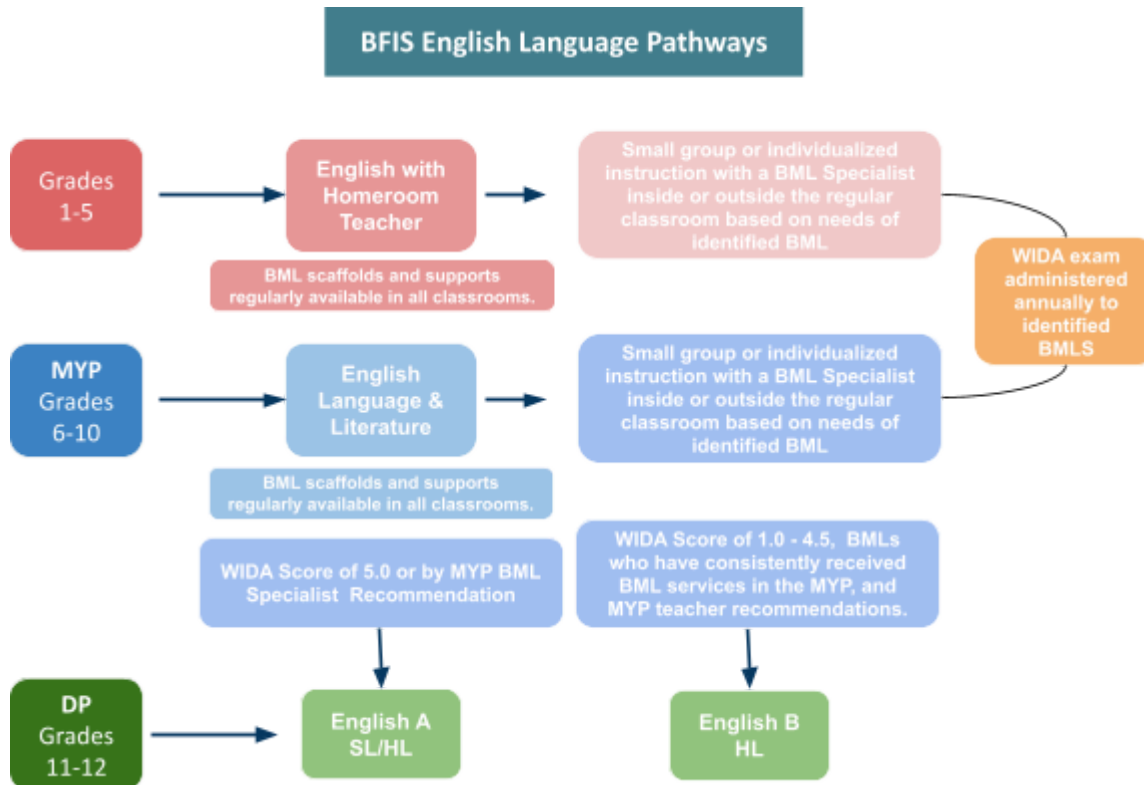
Following admission into BFIS, a BML specialist may administer the WIDA a second time in order to gather more relevant language data for instruction and placements. To ensure individualized BML support, other data points including MAP (Reading, Language Usage), Fountas & Pinnell (2-5), UFLI (K-2), Foundations (3), DIBELS (K-1), teacher learning and observation notes, and schoolwide on-demand writing (Grades 3-10) may be used. To monitor language growth, the WIDA is administered using the following guidelines:

Primary	Secondary
<p>Admissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 1-5 students are WIDA tested for admission to BFIS except for students who have English as their L1 (first language) 	<p>Admissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are WIDA tested for admission except for students who have English as their L1 (first language)

<p>Annual testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery-Pre-K students are not WIDA tested • Kindergarten students are WIDA tested at the end of the year only (May). All kindergarten students will have completed language profiles at the beginning of the year. • All Grade 1- Grade 5 students identified as BMLs are WIDA tested twice a year 	<p>Annual testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All identified BML students (Grade 6-10) are WIDA tested one time mid year. • Any student who is not currently identified as a BML can also take the WIDA test per teacher recommendation
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The school reserves the right to make adjustments to BML student placements as supported by WIDA data that has been triangulated with the other aforementioned data types

- Relevant data will be presented to the BML team and confirmed by the assigned Section leadership team and curriculum coordinators.
- Students and guardians will be informed before any change in students' English support services.



BML Services	
Grades 1-10	<p><i>BML services begin in Grade 1.</i></p> <p><i>A combination of monitoring progress, collaborating with teachers, creating language goals, and direct instruction within all subject areas. Based on the</i></p>

	<i>needs of the child, services may also consist of a small group or individualized instruction inside or outside of the regular classroom.</i>
Grades 11-12	<p><i>Learners in grades 11 and 12 who are still working towards a 5.0 on the WIDA test will be supported by special accommodations (as per IB Access and Inclusion Policy, 2020).</i></p> <p><i>English B is offered to students who are still acquiring English and who have consistently received BML services in the MYP. These students are still able to obtain a Bilingual diploma because they are studying groups 3 and 4 in English and will take all of their final exams in English.</i></p>

Monitoring BML Students

Students who receive a WIDA score of 5.0 or higher may not receive BML services from the BML specialist. BML supports will still be given by classroom teachers to continue to support the development of their academic language. If concerns arise, a teacher will follow up with a BML specialist and will follow the TIP referral process to determine if BML services are required by them once again.

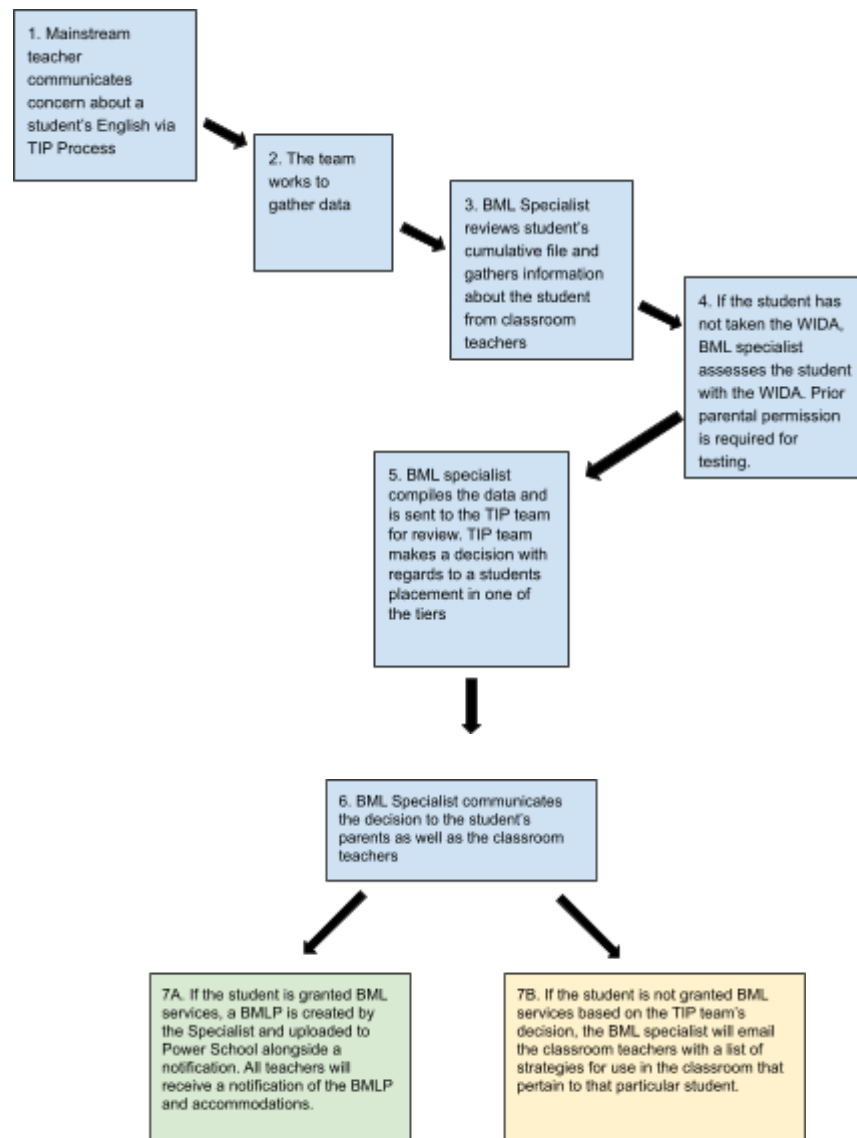
Referral System for BML Services

The referral process is based on information from the TIP team and the BML specialist. The decision regarding the level of BML support is communicated to the parents of a particular student. If a student qualifies for BML services, a BML Plan (BMLP) will be compiled by the BML Specialist, approved by parents, and uploaded to Power School where it can only be viewed by the teachers and the administration team. This BMLP is a live, working document including the following:

- WIDA scores
- Language goals for each of the 4 language domains (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
- Benchmarks for these goals based on WIDA Rubrics and Can-Do Descriptors
- Go-to scaffolds, supports, and accommodations to ensure student success based on the student’s language level

Goals and accommodations will be reviewed two times per year (winter and late spring) and updated as needed with students and parents.

Each identified student is re-assessed on a yearly basis in May/June to measure their English language proficiency level for fall placement. If a student is identified as potentially needing language support during the school year but is currently not receiving BML services, they are re-tested using the WIDA (prior parental permission for the WIDA test is sought via written communication and a report is compiled and presented to the TIP team. The TIP team will review data and make a decision based on the WIDA, classroom assessments, and teacher recommendations.



Roles and Responsibilities of BML Specialists

BML Specialists and classroom teachers co-plan to co-serve our BML students. Co-serving students may/may not include direct services being provided by the BML specialist. It does, however, include teachers collaboratively identifying strategies and resources to implement within the general education classroom, as well as reviewing the effectiveness of these strategies. This also includes the review of data, with analysis of performance and progress of BML students.

BML specialists provide targeted, standards-based English language instruction to BML students. BML specialists will also work closely with classroom teachers to determine students' needs and generate support materials for use in the mainstream classroom. They use the data collected to create goals for students to work on and provide the necessary instruction and/or materials to assist students in achieving these goals.

Promotion of Host Country Language

The languages of instruction are English (the immersion language of instruction), and specialist led Spanish and Catalan (which are the official languages of Catalonia).

Spanish Language Acquisition (SLAQ) Courses	
Grades K-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Spanish Language Acquisition (SLAQ): <i>intended for students acquiring Spanish as an additional language and is organized into leveled classes/groups based on language development.</i>● Hispanic-Catalan Individuals & Society (HCIS): <i>This course is a celebration of local culture and language (Spanish and Catalan) through project-based learning. The languages of instruction will be English, Spanish, and Catalan with a strong component of Spanish to supplement the language development that occurs in SLAQ classes.</i>
Grades 6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Spanish Language Acquisition (SLAQ): <i>4 leveled classes based on language development.</i>● Hispanic-Catalan Individuals & Society (HCIS): <i>This course is a celebration of local culture and language (Spanish and Catalan) through project-based learning. The languages of instruction will be Spanish and Catalan.</i>
Grades 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Spanish Ab Initio: <i>for students who have no previous or little experience with Spanish focusing on the acquisition of language.</i>● Spanish B: <i>taught completely in Spanish ensuring a more rapid acquisition of vocabulary, the development of listening skills, and greater speaking fluency.</i>

Determine Terminology

- **BML:** bilingual multilingual learner
- **BML Specialist:** educator specializing in BML supports
- **BML Services:** scaffolds, supports, and accommodations for students acquiring a language other than their L1
- **Language Acquisition (LAQ) Classes:** sheltered language classes for students acquiring a language other than their L1
- **L1:** first language
- **TIP:** Tiered Intervention Process

Review Process

This policy is a living document. The Teaching and Learning Team will revisit regularly and

update it based on best practices, current research, and experience gained in our classrooms. The committee will ensure that all community members have an opportunity to provide input in the review process. The Committee will also review the implementation of the policy with staff. This policy was last reviewed in October 2024.

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