

Rocky Mount High School IB Language Policy

Philosophy

We believe that our students and their needs come first. Our school community is inherently multilingual, and we value all the languages our students, families, and staff bring as resources for learning, identity, and intercultural understanding. We aim to develop confident, **multilingual** learners who can communicate effectively in more than one language and engage thoughtfully with diverse cultures.

Language is central to all learning. All teachers are teachers of language, and all members of the school community share responsibility for supporting students' language development across subjects and programs.

Language profile of the school

The main language of instruction is English. Most of our IB students speak English as a first or dominant language; however, a significant number of students speak languages other than English at home. We recognize and value these native or heritage languages and strive to support their continued use and development alongside English.

All IB Diploma Program students study:

- Language A: English Literature (HL)
- Language B: French or Spanish (SL), according to interest, prior learning, and placement guidelines.

Multilingualism and native language development

We affirm the right of every student to develop and maintain their mother tongue. To support this, we:

- Encourage students and families to share their language backgrounds and linguistic goals as part of the admissions and course-selection process.
- Explore mother-tongue Language A options (including self-taught Literature, where feasible) for students whose strongest language is not English, in accordance with IB regulations and available resources.
- Promote the use of students' home languages as tools for thinking, researching, drafting, and collaborative work when appropriate, especially in the early stages of learning complex concepts.
- Provide access, where possible, to reading and reference materials in languages other than English (e.g., library resources, digital platforms, bilingual materials).
- Encourage CAS and other projects that celebrate linguistic diversity, such as language clubs, tutoring younger students in their mother tongue, or sharing literature and cultural traditions.

Language across the curriculum

All teachers are responsible for supporting students' language development in their subject areas. To that end, we commit to:

- Explicitly teaching subject-specific vocabulary, text types, and academic language.
- Using scaffolding strategies (such as modeling, visual supports, graphic organizers, sentence frames, and guided note-taking) to make content accessible to students at different stages of language development.
- Providing structured opportunities for speaking, listening, reading, and writing in every subject.

- Valuing students' full linguistic repertoire, allowing them to plan, discuss, or reflect in their first language when appropriate, while guiding them toward expressing their understanding in the target language of assessment.
- Differentiating tasks and language expectations based on students' English language proficiency and prior schooling, without lowering cognitive challenge.
- Using formative assessment to monitor students' language needs and adjust teaching accordingly.

The IB faculty meets regularly to plan for language support across disciplines, share effective practices, and review how language demands are addressed in units, assessments, and extended learning.

Support for English language learners

Students whose mother tongue is not English and/or who are developing proficiency in English receive additional support so they can access the curriculum and achieve success. This support may include:

- ESL classes or targeted small-group instruction.
- In-class language support through co-teaching, push-in, or pull-out models, as staffing allows.
- Peer tutoring, mentoring, and study groups.
- Bilingual communication and interpretation where possible during key meetings and conferences.
- Differentiated materials (e.g., glossaries, adapted texts, visual supports) to aid comprehension.

Our goal is that all students feel confident and comfortable speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English, while maintaining pride in and continued use of their other languages.

Access, inclusion, and assessment

In line with IB expectations on access and inclusion, we seek to identify and remove language-related barriers to participation and assessment. We:

- Use enrollment information, teacher observations, and assessment data to identify students who may require language support or access arrangements.
- Develop individualized plans for access arrangements (such as extra time, use of bilingual dictionaries, or adapted tasks), in accordance with IB regulations and local guidelines, and review these plans regularly.
- Ensure that access arrangements are based on documented needs, are not automatic or blanket provisions, and are communicated clearly to students and teachers.
- Collaborate with families to understand students' language histories and to plan appropriate support.

Communication with families and community

We strive to communicate clearly and respectfully with all families. To maximize understanding and partnership, we:

- Offer parent–student–teacher conferences with language support where possible (interpreters, bilingual staff, translated written communication).
- Provide key school documents and information in languages commonly spoken in our community, when resources allow.
- Encourage families to maintain and celebrate their home languages and cultures, and to be active partners in their children's language development.

Our district and local education partners provide resources such as ESL instruction, multilingual materials, and community volunteers, which we integrate into our language support where appropriate.

Professional learning

All IB faculty members participate in official IB training and engage in ongoing professional learning related to language, multilingualism, and inclusive education. We:

- Share research-informed practices on language and learning in IB Diploma program.
- Reflect regularly on how our classroom practices promote access, inclusion, and language development for all students.
- Review our units and assessments with attention to language demands and support strategies.

9. Policy review

This language policy is a living document. It is reviewed at least every three years—or sooner if IB requirements or local contexts change—by a representative group including school leadership, IB coordinators, teachers, students, and, where possible, parents. Feedback from this review informs updates to ensure the policy remains meaningful, practical, and aligned with current IB expectations.

Revised March 2026