

WCHS

IB Language Policy

Language and Learning

We believe that language and literacy is the key to all learning. Since language is taught contextually through building relationships between new information and existing ideas, all teachers are language teachers. Therefore speaking, reading, writing, and listening, both general and specific to the subject area, are taught in every course. We further believe that all students can learn and experience success when acquiring a language and evaluate developing proficiency through a wide variety of formative and summative assessments.

In addition to using language to communicate, we believe that language and literacy promote awareness of one's own language and culture, foster respect for other cultures, prepare students to become productive members of a global society, and allow opportunities for richer interdisciplinary connections. While being able to speak a language indicates deep respect for that culture, the study of language provides a powerful path by which one gains understanding of other ways of being and knowing. Language learning at WCHS refers not only to the learning of a specific language but includes any and all activities that promote cultural competency regarding a second language.

Language Profile

Willow Canyon High School serves the community of Surprise, El Mirage and Waddell. Our community is diverse racially, culturally, economically, and linguistically. While English is the primary language employed by our community, there are numerous additional languages spoken in our community and school. In general and with regards to language our students can be classified as:

- English-only background with no Language B instruction
- English-only background with 2-3 years of Language B proficiency
- Multilingual background with English speaking parents/guardians who since birth have acquired both English and at least one additional language
- Multilingual background with non-English speaking parents/guardians who have acquired English primarily as a result of attending school.
- Monitored Former English Learner (MFEL) with a level of English competency sufficient to no longer require English as a Second Language (ESL) support
- English Language Learner (ELL) with a limited English proficiency (LEP) who is currently receiving ESL support
- Newcomers with no English competency

Language and Learning

With the exception of language acquisition classes where instruction is delivered in the target language, the language of instruction is English. All teachers incorporate IB command terms in the delivery of their content.

Language A: Studies in Language and Literature

Each year, every student takes a course in Language and Literature. At each year, various levels are offered and students, in conjunction with teacher recommendation, choose their level. Language and Literature courses focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and language. Students study works in their literary and cultural contexts, through close study of individual texts and passages, and by considering a range of critical approaches.

The response to the study of text is through oral and written communication which enables students to develop and refine their command of the language. IB Diploma Program candidates take English A: Literature HL during both years of the program.

Language B: Language Acquisition

WCHS requires every student to take a minimum of two years of Language Acquisition. Often, students will complete their first two levels of Spanish as a freshman and sophomore. Students with sufficient proficiency in the second language can choose further language acquisition instruction in that language by taking Diploma Program SL or HL courses. Diploma Program candidates with limited exposure/proficiency in a language alternatively may choose to take a Diploma Program ab initio course.

English as a Second Language and Heritage Learners

Students whose mother tongue is not English are screened by a language proficiency test (ACCESS) developed by WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) Consortium. Based on the results of this screening, students receive additional English as a Second Language (ESL) support. Resources available to these students include tutoring during the school day and after school, language dictionaries, and translated written texts. Heritage Learner classes are offered to Spanish students in order to preserve and develop their mother tongue. Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity and native language while celebrating other countries that share the Spanish language. Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity and native language while celebrating other countries that share the language.

ESL instructors are available on a regular basis to support English language development from a variety of perspective including but not limited to:

- English language skill assessment and consultation for appropriate course placement in coordination with the Student Services.
- Professional development facilitation to strengthen instructional strategies used by teachers in differentiating instruction for English Language Learner students.
- Curriculum support and development to engage English Language Learner students.

Language Support

Willow Canyon High School understands the importance of students preserving and enriching their mother tongue language. Through language and cultural heritage clubs, which are available to all students, students are encouraged to continue to use their mother-tongue language skills. This allows them to embrace their personal identity, highlight their cultural heritage, and increase their overall ability to learn. The participation of English only students in these clubs provides them with enriching experiences in mother-tongue languages, second languages or additional languages, with the aim of increasing cultural and international-mindedness.

Students are provided with resources such as peer-tutoring for those who are Spanish speakers and non-Spanish speakers. Language classrooms are equipped with language dictionaries and computer labs are equipped with language programs. All teachers collaborate with our English Language Learner, ELL, teachers to ensure that instructional strategies are appropriate and facilitate learning.

Willow Canyon High School uses a variety of strategies to engage our families who speak languages other than English in their homes. Some of these strategies are:

- Use of our World Language teachers, support staff and student leaders as translators. This is particularly so with our Spanish-speaking families. We tap into the expertise of the learners in our community – staff and students alike – to help us communicate with our families about upcoming school events, important academic opportunities for students and concerns about student progress in school.
- Translation of school documents and phone messages into Spanish.
- Translation services at school events including Open Houses, Parent/Guardian/Teacher Conferences and more.

