

Oscar F. Smith High School

IB Diploma Program Language Policy

Overview of the Philosophy of Language Acquisition for Students

The staff and administration of Oscar Smith High School and the City of Chesapeake are fully committed to language development and language acquisition in all of its students. To this end, stakeholders realize that all teachers are, in essence, teachers of language. Every teacher is responsible for enriching the development of language, both mother tongue and second language. Further, we realize that the knowledge and skills that students acquire in their language classes will reinforce and expand their learning in other subject areas, will enable them to interact effectively with others, and will give them increased access to information in a global context.

The graduation requirements for students in the city of Chesapeake require coursework to support a basic oral and written functionality in at least one second language. Students who receive the Advanced Studies Diploma must have passed (with a grade of C or above) at least three consecutive courses of a second language or two years each of two different languages. While it is noted that each student acquires language at his/her own pace and that some may become more fluent than others, the goal is to support each student by differentiating language instruction to meet the needs of all language students.

As an IB World School, the language policy of Oscar Smith High School reinforces the IB philosophy of developing intercultural understanding and respect through the reinforcement of the mother tongue and, as described in the Language B Guide, gives students the opportunity to reach a high degree of competence in a second language while also exploring the culture of that language in depth. The goal is to create lifelong language learners and students who are passionate about acquiring knowledge about other cultures.

Language Profiles

Oscar Smith High School students, in general, represent one of the following language profiles:

- Three years of second language study, mother tongue English Two years of second language study in two different languages, mother tongue English
- Four years of second language study, mother tongue English
- Five years of second language study, mother tongue English
- Six years of second language study, mother tongue English
- Bilingual students who have spoken English and another language in the home since birth
- Bilingual students with non-English speaking parents who have acquired English in school
- LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students whose mother tongue is a language other than English and whose English acquisition is being reinforced by working with an LEP teacher during the school day

It is the goal of Oscar F. Smith High School, and all high schools in Chesapeake, to provide students with the support necessary to make them successful in the acquisition of second language while reinforcing their mother tongue.

IB Program Course Offerings

In the Oscar F. Smith High School IB Diploma Program, the following courses are offered:

Language A: First Language

All students enrolled in the IB Diploma Program at Oscar Smith High School take IB English Literature Higher Level as the Group 1 subject requirement. Four years/four credits of English are required in order to earn the Advanced Studies Diploma in the state of Virginia and IB English Literature Higher Level prepares students not only for the IB examination and Internal Assessment requirements, but provides them with the knowledge needed for the SOL End of Course exam at the conclusion of the junior year. Since English is the language of instruction at Oscar Smith High School and is spoken by all IB Diploma candidates, IB English Literature HL is currently the sole Language A option at Oscar F. Smith High School.

Language B: Second Language

The Oscar F. Smith High School IB Diploma Program currently offers both IB French and IB Spanish at Higher Level and Standard Level. Offering both languages at the Higher Level and Standard Level provides students with more flexibility in designing their IB course schedules and gives students knowledgeable in languages and culture an additional challenge. Prior to beginning IB French/IB Spanish, students are required to complete three prerequisite courses (Spanish 1/French 1, Pre-DP Spanish 2/Pre-DP French 2 and Pre-DP Spanish 3/Pre-DP French 3) and earn a C average in each before being permitted to move on to the next sequential course.

Mother Tongue Support

Oscar F. Smith High School supports language development but also offers support to students whose mother tongue is a language other than English. The school offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced English Language Development (ELD) courses with an EL instructor. These classes target listening, speaking, reading, and writing while integrating background knowledge that supports the EL student in content classes. Individual English language support plans lay out appropriate classroom and testing accommodations designed to support meaningful access to the curriculum. EL placement is based upon scores from the annual federally mandated ACCESS test that measures language proficiency and the educational choices of the student and family. The EL program works within an asset-based approach that educates ELs honoring their primary languages, background knowledge, and experiences.

All IB Program Policies are posted on the Oscar F. Smith High School website in the IB Program tab. They are also shared with students in the IB Program Schoology group and emailed to all parents at the beginning of each school year. IB Policies are revised every 2-3 years by IB stakeholders.