



Florence High School: An International Baccalaureate World School

Building Champions of Today and Tomorrow

LANGUAGE POLICY

The purpose of this document is to ensure **all** students are provided the support necessary to perform at their highest level of success as they progress through the IB Diploma Program at Florence High School.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare our students to flourish in an ever changing global society by grounding them in our traditions while integrating technology into learning experiences that promote readiness for college, careers, and a successful life.

The Florence High School language policy is built upon the FHS Mission Statement and the IB Learner Profile. Florence High School teachers believe language forms the basis of all learning and therefore, all FHS teachers are language teachers. Students in all FHS classes are given opportunities to communicate through written assignments as well as opportunities to present oral presentations. Language is the foundation for these communication practices. Being able to speak and write effectively in all classes and also on the IB Diploma Program Core components (CAS, TOK, and EE) is a priority for the FHS Diploma Program.

The Language Profile at Florence High School indicates all of our IB students are fluent English speakers because they speak English more than 50% of the time at home. Many of these students are multilingual speaking languages such as

French Creole, Spanish, and Tagalog. These languages represent students' cultures and heritages. It is an example of the diversity of our school population and brings richness to classroom discussions emphasizing various cultural perspectives.

English is the main language of instruction for all students and teachers at Florence High School with the exception of foreign language classes, currently including French and Spanish. All FHS teachers must complete 60 hours of English as a Second Language as mandated by the Arizona Department of Education. All FHS IB teachers attend IB approved training prior to delivering the IB curriculum and repeat when either the IB curriculum changes or a cycle of five years has occurred, both cases necessitating the new level of IB training.

Admissions

Florence High School is a public high school so proficiency in English is not a requirement for admission. Since Florence High School is located in the southern region of Arizona, many students also speak Spanish. All students who do not speak fluent English are given a language proficiency assessment to determine their level of English proficiency. The information gathered is used to determine additional support services needed.

Students are accepted schools from within our district boundaries; students outside of our boundaries are encouraged to apply for boundary exceptions. Many students who apply for boundary exceptions do so to pursue participation in the FHS IB Diploma Program. Florence High School has availability to accept all students who apply for boundary exceptions with the approval of the FUSD Superintendent and FHS Principal Thad Gates.

Language A:

The importance of teaching and learning English across all FHS disciplines is crucial to student success. Florence High School teaches English as Language A and students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the English language regarding English syntax, grammar, and oral and written communication skills in all IB classes. All students take English Language A courses from grades nine

through twelve and it aligns with the state mandated AzMERIT assessment all students take in Arizona and also satisfies the IB Language A objectives.

Language B:

All FHS students are encouraged to become proficient in a second language. It is paramount for becoming successful in the ever-evolving global world in which we live. A high percentage of students choose to learn Spanish but still some students continue to choose French as their foreign language. Both choices allow students to develop skills necessary to communicate in a second language and also provide a rich exploration into the cultures of the France or Spanish speaking countries.

Students who participate in the IB Diploma Program begin their Language B education in grade nine and are assessed in the spring of junior or senior year. Emphasis is placed on grammatical structures, verbal and written skills, and vocabulary development which help students develop the communication tools necessary to become effective communicators in the foreign language. All Language B teachers attend IB authorized trainings prior to delivering the IB Language B curriculum.

Language Development across the Curriculum

Students are expected to be proficient readers in all FHS classes. Teachers encourage students to develop their language skills and reading comprehension for text and media complexity. Teachers use a variety of reading strategies in their class lessons which provides students opportunities to demonstrate successful reading skills.

Students are encouraged to read outside of the classroom. Reading for pleasure, functional reading, incorporating media as a form of reading, and also enhancing class curriculum are examples of teacher expectations for students. Students are also exposed to a variety of genres including fiction, poetry, plays, textbooks, short stories, novels, newspaper/magazines, media sites and also informational texts.

FHS teachers expect students to develop their written skills through writing in all subject areas. Journaling, writing essays, blogging, and writing lab reports are examples of way in which students can demonstrate understanding of pieces they've read. Students receive feedback from teachers, their peers, and other adults who provide instruction and modeling correct usage of written and oral language.

Opportunities for oral language development occur across disciplines at Florence High School. Students develop oral language skills through oral presentations, debates, speeches, poetry recitations, songs and dramatic readings. Teachers model appropriate language usage in conversations and instructional presentations while maintaining sensitivity to students' language proficiency and cultural background.

All FHS IB Diploma Candidates are actively involved in CAS activities and projects throughout their diploma years. Many projects and activities provide students with opportunities to use the language of their heritage and develop their communication skills in more than one language. Students are encouraged to select CAS activities and projects that have deep personal meaning and many select projects that give back to the countries and cultures that their families represent.

Language Support:

Although the majority of students at Florence High School are proficient English speakers, within the student body are many students who are bilingual or multilingual. These students are given opportunities to use the language of their heritage in different ways. Students are encouraged to use the second language to enhance oral presentations or provide additional cultural perspectives in a debate or speech. Teachers often select literary or media works that represent the cultural backgrounds of students or interests expressed by students regarding a foreign region.

Promotion of other languages:

The IB Diploma Coordinator actively looks for opportunities to expand the Language B offerings. Plans are in place to add Mandarin Chinese to Language B

in the future at Florence High School. Additionally, the FUSD Superintendent is exploring having a Florence K8 school seek authorization for offering the Middle Years Program in the near future. Having students enter FHS from an IB MYP School will only increase the level of success of our strong Language B program.

It is important to recognize not only the culture of Florence, Arizona and the United States of America but also cultures of other countries around the world. All IB teachers acknowledge the unique characteristics of each student and to become life-long learners, students must be encouraged to express their own cultural backgrounds while studying a variety of other cultures from which they will increase a richer manner of communicating their international mindedness.

Resources

Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, IBO, 2008.

Language and Learning in IB Programmes. IBO, 2011.

Programme Evaluation Guide, IBO 2015.

