

**GRAND RAPIDS HIGH SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAM
LANGUAGE POLICY**

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which students will have the opportunity to develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language. Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

The Language of Instruction at Grand Rapids Public Schools is English. All students will develop a fluency in English and all IB subjects other than Group 2 will be taught in English. The school will offer instruction in Languages other than English as Languages A and Languages B as the needs of the students dictate. For students who do not have English as their mother tongue, English as a Second Language (ESL) will be required at a level appropriate to their needs following assessment. There will be no discipline procedures that impact on student use of their mother tongues. The state of Minnesota requires four years of English language instruction and successfully meeting requirements in reading and writing English as determined by the MCA examinations.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OFFERINGS

Grand Rapids High School will provide opportunities for all learners to acquire a language other than English. Students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program will take Spanish or German as Group 2 course offerings. In addition, the Robert J. Elkington Middle School offers Spanish I in the 8th grade. To be prepared for International Baccalaureate examinations, students must reach a minimum of four years of instruction in a World Language for Standard Level examination. Grand Rapids High School will also offer Standard Level Ab Initio examinations on a case by case basis to meet the needs of our learners.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Unlike many International Baccalaureate World Schools, Grand Rapids High School has a relatively homogeneous mother tongue population. In the 2012-2013 school year, 98.7% of the population primarily speak English as their first language. With that being said, the school and the school district take seriously the needs of all learners including English Language Learners (ELL).

To that end, Grand Rapids High School shall provide the following to help ELL meet the goals of the Diploma Program and the graduation requirements of the state of Minnesota:

The school will:

- provide opportunities for all learners to develop cultural understandings of their own and other cultures.**
- provide opportunities for students to maintain and develop their mother tongue. These opportunities could include:**
 - physical resources**
 - timetable adjustments required to permit access**
 - direct instruction**
 - access to the school facilities**
 - technology supports (Distance Learning, access to community based instruction)**
- provide support for students who are enrolled with English as their second language to develop competence in both**

spoken and written English in accordance with the schools curricular frameworks for ESL in order to support their academic progress.

- **budget for the development of curricular resources provided to cater for the range of learners.**
- **informally assess all students currently enrolled and new students admitted. Students and parents will subsequently be informed as to the extent of language supports that will be provided by the school**
- **provide information to parents and students that clearly states the Language Policy and school practices**
- **make sure all teachers provide necessary adjustments to classroom practices to support the language needs of all students**
- **support teachers through professional development in their acquisition of the skills requisite to meet the language needs of all students enrolled**
- **not engage in any practices prejudicial to the second language acquisition and mother tongue development of students enrolled.**
- **not place any additional fees on students for language(s) instruction or supports.**

It shall be the responsibility of the Head of School to:

- **maintain the language profiles of students**
- **make language program recommendations that include budgetary details to the Superintendent.**
- **identify specific supports for students that can include staffing recommendations and any other resources required that the school can practically bring to bear on the students' languages needs.**
- **be involved in the admissions process and be empowered to identify students for whom the school is unable to meet their languages needs.**
- **organize and disseminate communications to parents on the details of this policy**

- **direct the professional supports provided to teachers as required by the implementation of this policy.**
- **direct the review and development of language curriculum as deemed appropriate.**

SCHOOL DISTRICT LANGUAGE POLICIES

Grand Rapids High School and the International Baccalaureate program shall adhere to all school district policies concerning language including, but not limited to, those found in sections 513, 601, 603, 605, 606, 608, 613, 614, and 615. These policies support the goals of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and the achievement of English Language Learners.

References

- Board Policy
- IBO Standards and Practices
- IBO Publication: Towards a continuum of international education
- IBO Publication: IB learner profile booklet
- IBO Publication: IB programme standards and practices
- IBO Publication: Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes
- GRHS IB Assessment Policy