

## **Gulf High School Language Policy**

### **Language of Instruction**

The language of instruction at Gulf High School is English. Teachers in all subject areas, except Group 2 World Languages, instruct in the English language. Our students, by the established academic standards of the State of Florida, are required to complete successfully four full years of English Language Arts instruction as well as meeting proficiency on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in Reading, administered in the tenth grade. Professional development for all staff at the site and district level supports curriculum and instruction in English language development.

### **World Languages (Language B)**

The GHS IB Program requires that all students engage in the instruction of that language. The World Languages currently offered are Spanish and French.

Middle schools whose students are zoned to attend Gulf High School all offer Spanish as an elective for their students. This practice facilitates students' ability to gain foundational learning and acquisition of the second language.

In order to be prepared for IB examinations, students will reach a minimum of four years of study in the PIB program and Diploma Programme, with a recommendation of five years of instruction in a World Language.

Gulf High School offers Ab Initio Standard Level examinations on an "as-needed" basis. Ab Initio Standard Level examinations shall be reserved for students who, based on their circumstances, were unable to engage in World Language instruction beginning no later than their ninth-grade year.

### **Language Development Support**

All teachers in the GHS International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme are language teachers. Reading and writing skills, generally and specific to the subject area, are developed in each IB course through a wide variety of formative and summative assessments. This is a school-wide initiative and one that is required of all teachers regardless of subject area. Approximately 85% of our IB Diploma Programme students primarily speak English in their homes.

However, students in Pasco County Public Schools speak over 80 languages in their homes. Approximately 5 percent of the district's student population qualifies as English Language Learners. The ELL designation was formally known as ESOL or English as a Second Language.

The GHS Language Profile for 2017 and 2018 was as follows:

- 29 of the 35 senior IB Diploma Programme students speak English as their first language in their homes. 43 of the 49 juniors speak English as their first language.
- 1 senior student speaks Hungarian. 1 each speaks Spanish, Russian, Turkish, Polish, and Vietnamese as the first language in their homes.
- Two of the junior students speak Vietnamese as their first language.
- 1 junior student speaks Russian, 1 Malayalam, 1 Chinese and 1 Spanish. All of these are the primary languages in their respective homes.

All of the above students speak English fluently, but many of the students who speak English as their first language also speak another language in the home. In many cases, the Foreign Language course they are presently enrolled in at Gulf High School is the third or fourth language they speak. The Gulf High School IB Diploma staff recognizes the importance of our students successfully employing a variety of language paradigms as they engage in their education. In addition to strengthening their Standard Academic English skills, students must learn and effectively utilize the language of the International Baccalaureate Standards, Practices and Assessment Descriptors. Students who perform well in these areas are eligible for induction into the French and Spanish National Honor Societies here at Gulf High School.

For the majority of our students, this involves knowing when and how to shift between various languages including heritage languages, non-standard English dialects, and disciplinary literacies within and among their many academic classes.

All students benefit from the assistance of language development found in their academic courses as aided by their content instructors. Language development support will be found in every classroom. Formative assessments are to be designed not only around assessing the acquisition of content knowledge and skills but also around engaging students in regular use of Standard Academic English as well as the language of the content and the IB descriptors relevant to the discipline studied. The instruction, reflection and assessment of content knowledge and skills lead to summative assessments that are regularly reviewed with alignment to the language of instruction and the language of the IB standards, practices and assessment descriptors.

To further support our diverse student population in engaging and achieving in the Gulf High School International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, we offer a wide variety of supports available to our students and families. These supports are available to all Pasco County students who demonstrate a need for them.

Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-Curricular Support for Students:

- Gulf High School offers English as a Second Language and English Language Learner (ELL) services for students who qualify. Courses serve students with a wide range of English language skills and build their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency for greater success in mainstream academic courses. All services for prospective, current, and former ELLs shall be conducted in accordance with the District School Board of Pasco County English Language Learner Plan, as approved by the Florida Department of Education and in keeping with applicable state and federal laws.
- ESOL/ELL instructors avail themselves to our staff 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; Professional development facilitation to strengthen instructional strategies used by mainstream teachers in differentiating instruction for our English Language Learners; Curriculum support and development to engage our English Language Learners.

- All teachers commit to provide regular before or after school tutorial sessions whereby students are able to get one-to-one or small group support in meeting the course expectations for academics and for language. The math, English and Foreign Language teachers have developed a rotating schedule for each academic quarter.
- We provide literacy classes within the student day to provide support to struggling readers and writers. These classes strengthen students' English language skills to support increased success in challenging coursework, standardized assessments such as required graduation examinations and post-secondary studies. Many of our teachers who assist ELL students receive extra certification in reading strategies in order to help with comprehension barriers that may exist due to the limited knowledge of the English language.
- As appropriate, individual students may have language goals included in their Individual Education Plans. If this is the case, teachers are informed of and make modifications to meet these language goals. These modifications are required by law, once an IEP is developed.
- Our Language B instructors use a variety of strategies known to increase language acquisition including the incorporation of cultural competencies and understandings in the language of study, opportunities for language immersion experiences both through local language/culture programs as well as travel abroad options, and working in partnership with community schools and local organizations to highlight the studied language and culture within the wider community.

Two of our Language B instructors take Education First tours to France and Spain on a yearly basis. Students are required to complete educational requirements for the tours that go beyond the typical site-seeing agenda. Students are encouraged to interact with the population using the native tongue. They are also required to order from menus and read maps and subway information in the language of that country.

#### Language Support for Our Families:

Gulf 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:

- Employing a Bilingual ESOL Instructional Assistant (ESOL IA) who works specifically with our ELLs.
- Use of our World Language teachers, instructional assistant, or other staff.
- Spanish and other language support assists various members of the school communicate with families about events, classes, academic opportunities, and progress in school.
- Translation of school documents into other languages. Many of our school and district documents are translated into Spanish, using the office of the District Language Interpreter.
- Interpreter services at school events including Open Houses, Parent/Teacher Conferences, etc.