

Baltimore International Academy West



LANGUAGE POLICY

Home of Rising Diplomats and Global Leaders

BALTIMORE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Language Policy

Philosophy

At Baltimore International Academy West, we understand that all teachers are language instructors and all students are language learners. We recognize that language is the primary means of communication for our students and that it is key to teaching and learning. As a full language immersion school (elementary_ and partial language immersion school (middle school) we have developed our philosophy, our vision and our mission with “language” at their core. We consider language not only as a means of written and verbal communication, but as an opportunity for our students to interact with the diverse cultural communities in Baltimore and the world. We will:

- Use language across the curriculum to promote a culturally and linguistically diverse education
- Use languages (Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, French) other than our students’ “mother tongue” as our medium of instruction
- Link the Baltimore City Public School system with the lively and culturally diverse communities in Baltimore through our language immersion programs
- Enhance and reinforce the international aspect of language immersion as a public school in Maryland that offers a choice of five language immersion programs combined in one school (currently offering 3 languages, with a goal of adding 2 additional languages as the school grows)
- Ensure that students will learn language by the “doing” of languages; talking, listening, reading and writing. Students will learn through language as they discuss and reflect on what it is they are learning. Students will

learn about language as they explore how language functions and the conventions that support communications in all subject areas

- Ensure that students have a full understanding of the mechanics and usage of English (their mother tongue) by providing them instruction in English Language Arts from grades two through eight and English as a Second Language for those students whose mother tongue is not English
- Offer our middle school students the opportunity to learn an additional language, beginning when they reach the sixth grade; this language is taught in the traditional manner versus the immersion technique. French and Spanish immersion students will be instructed in Chinese and Russian and Chinese immersion students are instructed in French. This second language will be offered to the current elementary students when they reach middle school. Current middle school students are in partial immersion and will focus on mastering the one “foreign language” they are learning.

Language Practices

We are committed to providing a learning community that promotes, supports, and is composed of language diversity. We develop our students in a multi-lingual environment that fosters confident communicators through inquiry-based instruction.

Elementary Grades:

- The Primary language of instruction is the students’ target language, Spanish, Chinese, French for Kindergarten to 2nd grades and is used for all the students’ core subjects (Math, Social Studies, Language Arts, Science). This process will continue as we add a new grade each year and will add additional target languages as we can. The target goal is to have Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian and French Immersion Programs.

Middle School:

- The current Middle School students experience a partial immersion program, learning their Individuals and Societies and their Language

Acquisition classes fully immersed in Spanish, and all other subjects in English. This will continue until the students who began in full immersion classes in Kindergarten enter the Middle School grades. At that time, all subjects, except the Resource classes (Art, Music, Design, Physical Education) will be in their target languages.

- The Secondary language for our students is English; students receive instruction in English in English Language Arts in grades two through eight; all students receive instruction through English in Art, Music, Technology, and Physical Education

All Grades:

- All teachers consider language development in their planning and assessing
- The school library incorporates books in English and is building its target languages collection for the students' use
- The students conduct internet research using English and target language websites
- Students use only target language books in the classroom, both fictional and informational text
- Teachers create opportunities for students to apply language to communicate in different settings, promoting English and the Target languages for speaking, listening, writing, reading, presenting and research
- Students and parents are provided with additional resources to assist them with skills in their target languages
- Students who need additional help in English or their target language receive differentiated instruction in the classrooms, tutoring after school and, for those who need it, Special Education services
- Teachers plan effective, relevant, and significant engagement to improve proficiency in all forms of language
- Students receive parallel language arts instruction in the target language arts and English language arts

Target Language Assessments

Teachers assess the students' language skills and proficiency in their Target languages; they assess and record the students' expression using a range of assessment strategies and tools. Teachers:

- Assess the students' progress with language across the curriculum as students speak, write, read, listen and present
- Process (note taking, drafting, editing, etc.) as well as product are assessed
- Use weekly dictation/write, spelling, reading comprehension/multiple choice, reading fluency, matching and narrative assessments; in addition, they use students' writing, written assessments, journals, reflections, classroom discussions, and presentations to assess their progress
- Assess students' development in the mechanics of the language; grammar, vocabulary, sentence structures, and fluency in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension
- Assess the students' abilities to use the language for self-expression, researching a topic, making sound judgments, supporting their opinions, differentiating between credible and noncredible sources

The library will continue to increase its collection in the target languages in both fiction and nonfiction texts to support students' academic research and development in reading in their target languages.

Students will participate and compete in local and national language proficiency competitions. They also are assessed using language proficiency programs.

English Language Assessments

BIA West students receive instruction in English language arts in grades two through eight. This is necessary because the majority of the students' mother tongue is English, and it is important that they are skilled in understanding and

using the mechanics of the language. BIA students are also required to participate in State and District mandated standardized tests. Teachers use many of the same assessment strategies to evaluate student progress in English language arts as they use in the target language arts. Teachers:

- Assess the students' progress with the English language as students speak, write, read, listen. and present
- Assess students through their journals, stories, poems, essays, written tests and all other writing assignments
- Assess students' abilities in the mechanics of language in reading writing and speaking; they evaluate grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling, main ideas, reading fluency and comprehension

English as a Second Language

BIA West adheres to the school District's policy that all students whose mother tongue is not English, or whose family speaks a different language than English at home, must be provided the opportunity of services in an *English as a Second Language* (ESL) program. These students are given an assessment to see if they have enough understanding of English to perform in an English speaking class. If the students' scores indicate that they need additional help, they receive instruction weekly based on their level of language acquisition as detailed in their assessments. Students will gain the English language skills that are necessary to achieve their full potential. The English Language Learner (ELL) teacher and classroom teacher will discuss individual student progress regularly to ensure consistent instruction and transference of knowledge.

This policy will be reviewed annually during the BIA Inc. Summer Academy stakeholders, to include Board of Directors, Schools' Administrators, Grade Team Coordinators and Parent Teacher Organization officers. Updates will be made based on changes in Federal, State, District School legislation or changes in schools' climate, processes, or procedures..