

## IDEA College Preparatory Donna International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Language Policy

### Philosophy

At IDEA College Preparatory (ICP) Donna, we believe that being able to communicate in more than one language will open many doors to our students and will foster international mindedness. Therefore, we embrace our students' mother tongue as well as proficiency and literacy in more than one language. We support an international minded education that will better prepare IB candidates for the cultural diversity of their college universities and equip them to better understand the global environment in which they live. Through various language experiences other than candidates mother tongue, we enable our students to understand and make intimate connections with cultures other than their own further encouraging open-minded practices to other people's beliefs and thinking.

#### Our Mission Statement

IDEA College Preparatory Donna is rewriting the story of underprivileged communities by creating a positive learning environment that equips students with the academic, social and leadership skills and international mindedness that are required to succeed in college and our global society.

#### IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

### School Language Profile

Although we do not have a diversity of languages spoken at our school, we do have a great population of Spanish speakers. Most of these students have immigrated from Mexico, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Some of these students struggle with the usage of the English language. We also have several students who are English dominant and may or may not speak a second language.

### Specifications of our Language Program

#### Language of Instruction

- The official language of instruction at ICP Donna is English.
  - Language A: English Literature HL

#### Language Acquisition

- All ICP Donna students are expected to be proficient in a 2<sup>nd</sup> language by the time they graduate from High School.
  - Language B: Spanish HL and SL
  - Language B: AB Initio SL
    - Diploma Candidates who struggle with second language acquisition are offered the option of taking Spanish AB Initio.

#### Enrichment

- Students whose mother tongue is Spanish are offered the opportunity to take a second Language A class in Spanish.
- This also gives them the opportunity to be eligible for the Bilingual IB Diploma.
  - Language A: Spanish Language and Literature HL



## **Enrollment Policy for English Learners**

Students are given a home language survey which helps identify what type of support students need upon entering our school. Students whose mother tongue is Spanish, are evaluated with a language proficiency test to assess their English level, TELPAS.

Our language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) meets before the 17<sup>th</sup> day of school to determine if students are EL. The LPAC will distribute the proficiency levels of all students identified as EL to teachers and ongoing evaluations are done throughout the year to check student progress and to determine if student needs are being met through the program.

## **Evaluation Policy for English Learners**

The LPAC monitors students' progress by examining quarterly grades, writing samples and state mandated assessments. At the end of the academic year, students are evaluated to determine if they will exit the program or continue the program for the following year. Student success on the TELPAS exam will determine the level of language mastery. Our school has adopted several strategies and moments of evaluation for students to practice English language strategies to further improve their mastery.

Once students transition out of the ESL program, support is given to them through the LPAC by monitoring quarterly grades and assessments. If the LPAC determines that students are not meeting academic expectations, students may be re-evaluated for the ESL program.

## **General Language Acquisition Practices**

All teachers at ICP Donna are language teachers. They take personal responsibility to teach and help students develop language proficiency. The following are practices consistently implemented at our school.

Our goal, in working with English Learners (EL), is to promote language acquisition, and master all content skills in the least restrictive environment through a supportive, school-wide climate that utilizes the following strategies & modifications below:

In addition, our school academic strategist meets consistently with teachers to check on our English Learners' progress and needs. We also offer Rosetta Stone (a language acquisition software) to all Language Learners and have hired academic tutors to offer the necessary support so they can acquire the necessary language skills to master state and IB exams.



### **Classroom Strategies**

- Involve students as active participants by offering hands on teaching aids.
- Make classroom activities structured and predictable.
- Focus on communication, not on errors.
- Give students responsibility for their own learning.
- Make learning relevant to the students' experiences.
- Let the students work with peers.
- PowerPoint translation dictation during classroom lectures for live translation for students.
- Practice using bilingual dictionaries during class.

### **Teacher Strategies**

- Use facial expressions, gestures and body language.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use pauses between phrases frequently.
- Use shorter sentences with simple syntax.
- Avoid an excess of idiomatic expressions, uncommon two-word verbs and passive voice.
- Stress high frequency vocabulary, repeat and review.
- Leverage academic word walls.
- Watch for comprehension and be ready to repeat or restate.
- Monitor and adapt language to EL students.
- Learn a few words in the student native language.
- Let them know what you are doing for them.
- Teach most important unit concepts.
- Reduce non-essential details.
- Use visuals, graphic organizers and simple vocabulary.
- Include cooperative learning activities.
- Incorporate assistance for students when reading extensive texts.

### **Mother-Tongue Support**

In addition to offering English (language of instruction) support to our students, we make every effort to offer open communication in our students' mother tongue (Spanish). For example, all communication that goes home or that is required to be completed by the parents of our students is available in both, English and Spanish. School presentations and parent meetings are also offered in both languages. If these presentations are conducted solely in either Language A or B, our non-English speaking parents are provided with a translation mechanism that allows them to have a live translation of what is presented to the entire audience.

At ICP Donna, we embrace the mother tongue and culture of our students. Examples of these initiatives are our annual Global Festival, World Cup Soccer Tournaments, international exchange programmes, among others.



## **Responsibility of ICP Donna Stakeholders**

### **ICP School Staff**

IB DP Teachers have the responsibility to develop the language of instruction while supporting IB candidate's mother tongue. Teachers will prepare lessons that give students the opportunity to practice writing, listening, speaking and hearing skills necessary to dominate a language academically and socially. ICP Donna staff will participate in professional development to support EL students as required. Teachers will use TELPAS results to further apply best practices for students to develop a second language.

### **Students**

It is the responsibility of IDEA College Preparatory DP students to be risk-takers and become bilingual citizens. Students will practice their responses in the language of instruction while relying on their native language to further support thought processes. Students will apply an honest effort on all state-mandated language examinations such as TELPAS that measure their current levels in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students will use resources such as bilingual dictionaries, reading pens and software and platforms to further their comfort with multiple languages. Students will be reflective and seek help when a language barrier arises from teachers, librarians, counsellors and DP coordinator.

### **Parents**

ICP Donna Parents will be active participants in their child's learning. Parents can be aware of their candidate's language mastery by reading the TELPAS report provided by the State of Texas TEA. Parents will be proactive and help develop language at home through various best practices recommended by teachers. Parents will attend scheduled events such as open houses, report card nights and social events organized by ICP Donna. As necessary, parents will be active participants in ARD meetings to plan their child's language profile and development. Parents will attend and schedule conference meetings with DP teachers to further support their child in the IB Programme.

## **Communication of Policy**

The IB policies are communicated with teaching faculty at the beginning of the academic year during professional development and included in data binders each year. Additionally, IB policies are communicated to all scholars during IB Culture Week the first two weeks of the academic year. All IB policies are available to teaching faculty, IB candidates and families at all times on the IDEA Donna IB website under "IB Policies" section.

Revised August 2024  
IB Diploma Programme Teachers 2024-2025