



## LAMAR ACADEMY LANGUAGE POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

The school's focus is on preparing world citizens who are responsible and self-confident and who are imbued with a sense of service to others. Language plays an important role in supporting the school's mission statement. In supporting language acquisition, the development of effective communicators promotes understanding and interaction. English is the language of instruction at Lamar Academy, and the aim is that students will work successfully within the English language. Even so, we also encourage students to grow and develop proficiency in other languages.

At Lamar Academy our philosophy about language is:

- language is a major means of communicating, fundamental to learning, and is developed across the curriculum; therefore, all teachers are teachers of language.
- the acquisition of language is a dynamic, life-long process that permeates all learning and is a key factor in intellectual growth and promotes the development of personal and international understanding.
- an effective teaching practice arises from a constructivist approach to learning, providing students opportunities to build on prior knowledge and construct personal meaning.
- the school community is a resource to foster language learning. The acceptance of an additional language enriches personal growth, enhances first language development, and promotes internationalism. The development of mother tongue proficiency is crucial for maintaining cultural identity.

At Lamar Academy the faculty will follow these language practices:

- create a risk-free environment to foster a variety of means of communication. Teachers will encourage students to demonstrate open dialogue in all interactions to understand the world through different lenses in specific disciplines and across disciplines. Teachers will model language through everyday use and teach vocabulary, procedural terms, and writing conventions within and across each discipline.
- curriculum will be designed to give students the opportunity for personal choice and time for exploring multiple systems of communication in all subject areas. There will be opportunities to use language, including the mother tongue, for making personal connections and exploring conflict and compelling issues. Teachers will plan effective, relevant, and significant engagements to improve proficiency in all forms of language.
- opportunities will be given for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will learn about language as they discuss and reflect on what they have learned.

### ADMISSION TO LAMAR ACADEMY

Interested students must complete an application for the International Baccalaureate Programme at Lamar Academy (DP and MYP). Part of the Diploma Programme application assesses writing skills through responses crafted based on provided prompts. Since the language of instruction is in English, it is important to gauge existing writing abilities of in-coming students. The Language A teachers grade the writing samples and then mark the sample with a grade of 0-5. Students with a minimal grade of 2 are considered to have good basic skills. The writing sample is not the only factor in the application determining entrance into the program and cannot, on its own, keep a student from entering the IB Programme at Lamar Academy. This writing portion does, however, help inform teachers of instructional needs for students.

Another portion of the application examines the scores earned on the state mandated tests in the areas of language and mathematics. At minimum, it is expected that in-coming students pass the state exams in all of the tested areas. The state exam scores are not the only factor in the application determining entrance into the program and cannot, solely, keep a student from entering the IB Programme at Lamar Academy (DP and MYP).

## CURRENT LANGUAGE COURSES

### Language A: Studies in Language and Literature

English is taught as Language A at all grade levels, 9-12, at Lamar Academy. In the Language A courses, development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are promoted.

For Diploma students, Language A: Literature is taught solely as a Higher Level option in compliance with the state requirements for 4 years of English instruction.

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade (MYP)	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade (MYP)	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade (DP)	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (DP)
English I	English II	English III	English IV
			<b>Language A: Literature Higher Level</b>

### Language B: Language Acquisition

*To learn another language is quite simply and profoundly one of the best ways of learning to recognise the world and to see how others and otherness inhabit it. It is an education in difference as a pathway to understanding how to contribute to [...] global citizenship. (Worton, quoted in Reisz 2010: 39 – in Language and Learning in IB Programmes, 2011)*

The McAllen school district offers a Dual Language Program beginning in the Primary Years Programme, with the goal of promoting a foundation of bilingualism and biliteracy beginning with grades 1-5. Instruction in Language Acquisition is a common thread that connects all IB programmes (PYP, MYP, DP) across the district.

At Lamar Academy, Spanish and French are taught at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels at all grade levels, 9-12. Students at Lamar Academy are required to take a Language B course every year. Diploma students may choose to take Language B as an *ab initio*, Standard Level, or Higher Level course.

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade (MYP)	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade (MYP)	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade (DP)	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (DP)
Spanish I or II	Spanish II or III	Spanish III or IV	Spanish IV or V
French I or II	French II or III	French III or IV	French IV or V
<b>Language B (Spanish or French) <i>ab initio</i></b> <b>Language B (Spanish or French) Standard Level</b> <b>Language B (Spanish or French) Higher Level</b>			

Since “the [school] district may offer courses designated for grades 9–12 in earlier grade levels,” students may begin the Language B courses at different starting points based on any credits earned at the middle school level.

## PROPOSED COURSE

Beginning in 2018-2019, Lamar Academy will offer Language A: Language and Literature in Spanish SL. Based on our large Spanish-speaking bilingual student population, recommendations from IBO at the previous 5-year review, and the focus on Dual Language Learning in the school district, efforts at helping students achieve a Bilingual Diploma have made this offering a reality. Students interested in taking this course must be in the Diploma Programme, and must have taken Spanish I and II before entry into this course. Students may take this course as a Group 2 or Group 6 subject.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum for English, French and Spanish is in the Diploma Programme’s Scope and Sequence documents and the Middle Years Programme’s Language A and Language B documents, as well as the state of Texas standards, known as the Texas essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for each subject and grade level, 9-12. Thus, the school carefully takes care of meeting the aims and objectives of both the state system and the international system within the school. There are course guides for each language course, English I-IV, French I-V, and Spanish I-V, which include suggested content, resources, links with Global Contexts, and activities used for assessment. These course outlines are intended to ensure continuity and development of language courses offered by the school.

## ACCEPTABLE CONVENTIONS

To ensure a standardized convention for citing and acknowledging sources and original authorship, the following conventions are taught at Lamar Academy:

- Modern Language Association (MLA) format
- American Psychological Association (APA) format

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) is available to help students practice acceptable citation formats for MLA and APA styles: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

## Spelling Protocols

The following are acceptable spelling protocols for the languages taught at Lamar Academy.

ENGLISH	SPANISH	FRENCH
British and American English spelling conventions	Castilian and Latin American spelling conventions	European and Canadian French spelling conventions

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment in language, like all other subject areas within the school, is carried out in accordance with the school's assessment policy guidelines. These guidelines follow the general principles of the Diploma and Middle Years Programmes as well as the McAllen Independent School District's policies.

## ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Since English is the language of instruction at Lamar Academy, competency in this language is the key to student success in other subject areas. English classes have an obvious role to play in teaching and reinforcing language skills needed in other subjects; however, all teachers have a responsibility to develop students' language skills. All teachers are encouraged to provide feedback in English on the content of written work, and to provide missing vocabulary where possible.

Teachers should encourage students to speak English in class (except Spanish and French classes). When mother-tongue support is needed, teachers will provide direct assistance or assist through the identification of another student, faculty member, or community member who is more linguistically competent in the mother tongue of the student in need.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The McAllen Independent School District has provided training, called the **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model** (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004), to classroom teachers to assist English Language Learners. It was developed to provide teachers with a well articulated, practical model of sheltered instruction. The intent of the model is to facilitate high quality instruction for English Language Learners in content area teaching. The SIOP Model includes teacher preparation, instructional indicators such as comprehensible input and the building of background knowledge. It comprises strategies for classroom organization and delivery of instruction. SIOP aims to create a

learning environment where English Language Learners can be successful and gain greater fluency in the language of instruction, English.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) DEPARTMENT PROGRAM MODEL**

McAllen ISD follows an early-transition bilingual program model, in which students are instructed in their native language while acquiring the required English skills to be successful in a regular classroom.

Students who are part of the bilingual program are classified as beginners, intermediate, or advanced, according to the results of English language assessments administered during the identification process. Each category receives native language instruction and English as follows:

- *Beginners*: Students in this category receive 75% of instruction in their native language, while 25% is done in English with ESL strategies.
- *Intermediate*: Students in this category receive 50% of instruction in their native language, while 50% is done in English with ESL strategies.
- *Advanced*: Students in this category receive 25% of instruction in their native language, while 75% is done in English with ESL strategies.

In the transitional model students are first instructed in pre-reading, early reading, and social skills in their native language, while acquiring English through sheltered instruction in P.E., music, and art. Once they move on to the second stage of transition, they start to receive early reading skills in English through ELL methodology, while continuing to receive reading, language arts, and content area skills in their native language. After this level, students receive both reading and content in English through sheltered instruction, without moving away from language arts in their native language. At the final stage of transition, students receive reading, language arts, and content in English, while maintaining their native language through content enrichment.

In the transitional bilingual education classroom teachers organize their language arts block in the following way:

- English: Read aloud/oral language, word study, writing, reader response, guided reading, structured writing, and self-selected literature.
- Native language: Independent reading, guided reading, and self-selected literature.

Content areas, like math, science, and social studies are developed in the students' native language with ELL reinforcement until the students are ready to receive more instruction in their second language.

## **TEXAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (TELPAS)**

TELPAS is an assessment program for English language learners (ELLs). The Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and TELPAS work together to help ELL students make steady progress in learning English that is grade-appropriate, and helps students learn English simultaneously with their academic subjects. The program assesses English language proficiency across the domains of listening,

speaking, reading and writing, and reports progress across the levels of beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. Through the employment of formative assessments, holistically rated assessments, online assessments and a Spring summative assessment, progress can be monitored and measured in ELL students from grades K-12. This system is designed to measure progress of ELL students with various starting points in their English knowledge, sociocultural experiences, and educational backgrounds.

## **MOTHER TONGUE**

### **Identification of English Language Learners:**

Within the first four weeks of the first day of school, the language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) shall determine and report to the School Board the number of Limited English Proficiency students on each campus and shall classify each student according to the language in which the student possesses primary proficiency. The Board shall report that information to TEA before November 1 each year. *Education Code 29.053(b)*

Student records will reflect the designation as an English Language Learner, which can then inform teacher practices or support.

### **Communications:**

Given that the community of McAllen is dominantly bilingual in Spanish; communications (mailings, information pamphlets, informational power points, etc.) to parents relating to the IB Programme are presented in both English and Spanish, whenever possible. The Head of School, the IB Coordinator, the IB Counselor, and many members of the faculty and support staff are bilingual and are available to communicate with our English and Spanish-speaking parents and community members. This ability is important in making parents feel comfortable in communicating with the school and in ensuring confidence that their needs are understood and addressed.

With the growing diversity of the Rio Grande Valley region, of which McAllen is a part, more and more of our students have a mother tongue other than Spanish. As a result, it is important to develop ways to help support the variety of mother tongues. Although, Lamar Academy is limited in its ability to support mother tongues other than those taught through Language A and Language B at the school, we are prepared to help support mother tongue development in the following ways:

- Match students with other students who share the mother tongue, perhaps as a mentor or tutor
- Help identify community resources, including individuals or organizations, that can offer mother tongue support or enrichment
- Support students who want to start a school club or organization exploring or teaching a mother tongue
- Help identify and secure school materials in the mother tongue that can supplement learning and development
- Create opportunities for students to express the mother tongue through

- The school Literary Magazine (Indelible Ink) and Poetry Night: students submit original prose and poetry and then read their pieces at a community event
- Talent Show performances: students perform music or theatrical pieces of their choosing
- The Arts (visual and performance): students choose to perform or create an art piece of their choosing within guidelines
- Personal Project, MYP Service, CAS: students choose to create a product, choose a focus for advocacy, and communicate with others

## **REVIEW OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY**

The Language Policy is reviewed annually at the beginning of the year by the Lamar Academy staff and administration. Amendments to the policy will be considered especially based on IB policy changes, school district policy changes, changes in the school community, or changes in community needs.

### **References:**

Educator Guide TELPAS Grades K-12 (2017)  
McAllen ISD Basic Required Instruction Policy (2012)  
Special Programs: Bilingual Education Policy (2012)  
Language and learning in IB Programmes (2011)  
Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2008)