**IB Language Policy**

**North Hall High School**

*“The International Baccalaureate is committed to supporting multilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.”*

IB Language Policy Document, February 2014

The primary language of the majority of the North Hall community is English. The response language IB students use in internal or external assessment is English, with the exception of Group 2 language acquisition courses such as Spanish or Chinese, where the response language is that language being learned. Language courses include English, Spanish, and Chinese. While most of our stakeholders (92%+) communicate in English, we recognize the need for translation to occur. Eight-five percent of our population is White or non-Hispanic in origin. \_\_\_\_% of our students are considered low socioeconomically disadvantaged. Many students within this group are also students with disabilities. There is not a large diversity within the North Hall community. However, this provides its own challenges in order to build awareness of the needs, gifts, and differences of others and how we create our own unique community of understanding and respect.

In order to meet the needs of our community, we have gathered professionals to compose a Language Policy Committee. It is comprised of the school’s administration, IB teachers, Counseling office personnel, the IB Coordinator, and the ESOL lead teacher as needed. This team translates materials when needed, supports teachers with a variety of resources, monitors changes in the programme, and insures vertical planning with the middle school. In addition, professional development is developed to inform our community of relevant IB documents and its continuum. For an example of documents used: *Language and learning in IB programmes, Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes, Towards a continuum of international education*, etc. These offerings will be made available during Professional Learning days scheduled within the Hall County school calendar. All school personnel are trained in our WIDA standards for English Language Learning students by our ESOL lead teacher and administration. “WIDA advances academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators” ([www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us)). These are held on a yearly basis for initial, updates, and enrichment training purposes. The understanding of language acquisition is easily overlapped for implementation with all students in all content areas.

It is the belief that each student is capable of growth in all capacities of academic life and should have equal safe access to an education. NHHS’ language policy reflects the research findings that full development of mother tongue skills is essential to students’ intellectual abilities.  We also recognize the multiple benefits of knowing and using a second language.  Nurturing the development of fluency in student’s mother tongue and a modern language is a priority for students whether they are becoming career ready, college-bound, or working toward the Diploma Programme. All students are encouraged to take at least two, if not three, years of a modern language. Hence, there is growing collaboration between the middle and high school to develop both Group 1 and Group 2 programs, and to increase access to second language courses at our feeder middle school. Furthermore, some scheduling flexibility will now allow students to block courses. Given these developments, the number of students having access and choosing to enroll in advanced English and second language courses is rising. For example, many of our sophomores are enrolling in AP Language and Composition and a third year of a modern language. Not only will this increase the success for students in IB English, but also increase the possibility for students to reach IB Spanish B SL and/or IB Chinese B SL. In addition, teachers in middle school, ninth and tenth grade are collaborating with Diploma Programme teachers to understand the curriculum requirements. They are increasing the rigor for those students ready for this challenge in order to prepare them for the programme.

North Hall offers all students the opportunity to cultivate strong critical reading, writing, thinking and communication skills in their native language, even for our Spanish native speakers.  Additionally, students are encouraged to develop active skills in a second language:  Our group 1 offering in English is complemented by Group 2 courses in Spanish and Chinese.