

# Firestone CLC International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme/Akron Public Schools Language Policy

**Mission Statement:** The mission of Akron Public Schools, a pioneer in academic excellence passionately committed to lifelong learning, is to ensure that each student in our diverse population achieves his or her fullest potential in a safe and affirming learning center characterized by an extensive, student-focused collaboration of all segments of the community, with an emphasis on preparing students to live and excel in a global environment

Vision: All students will meet or exceed high curricular standards.

**Statement of Philosophy:** The Akron Public Schools Foreign Language Curriculum is a research-based and standards-based program with high expectations for all students. It is designed to provide opportunities to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency in order to function in a multilingual, multicultural world. It is based on Ohio's Foreign Language Academic Content Standards and therefore shares the philosophy that a foreign language program integrates elements of language systems, communicative functions and cultural knowledge which:

- prepare students to use a language in addition to English to communicate appropriately in a pluralistic American society and with the global community;
- help students understand and appreciate other cultures' worldviews, unique ways of living and behavior patterns, as well as their contributions to humankind;
- equip students to interpret a variety of authentic live, print and technology-based resources to access knowledge related to all content areas;
- help students understand the nature of language systems, including their own, and how language and thought are inextricably linked;
- prepare students to pursue language learning on their own for personal enjoyment and enrichment and to advance career opportunities.

This policy was adopted by Firestone CLC International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme teachers representing all subject groups and will be revised annually. The Language Policy is shared in writing at the start of the school year with students and parents and is posted on the school's website.

## Philosophy

At Firestone Community Learning Center the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program recognizes that language is the key and foundation of all learning. We believe that all teachers are language teachers and we enable all learners to master English language skills in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing appropriate to grade, age and developmental level.

Through language, our students acquire the ability to think and learn, to acquire knowledge and to develop necessary social skills to be productive members in a global society.

## **Language Program Goals**

### **Language and Literature**

Firestone CLC and the IBDP follow the Common Core standards while incorporating the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP) objectives.

### **Foreign Languages**

Provide all students opportunities to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency in other languages in addition to English to prepare students to live and communicate effectively in a pluralistic society.

Instructional Services are designed to:

- Enable all learners in grades K-12 to progress in the curriculum of a target world language following the State's standards in the areas of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.
- Offer instruction in target World Languages: Spanish, French, and Chinese interconnected with the study of other disciplines.
- Provide all learners an instructional program that offers opportunities to enhance cultural, personal, and employment potential.

### **ESL**

Firestone CLC and the IBDP is committed to provide Limited English Proficient Students equal educational opportunities to participate and access the standard curriculum across disciplines, using instruction in English as a second language to ensure academic progress in the curriculum, until such time as a student is documented as English proficient.

Provide tiers of support to all English Language Learners. Tiers of support may include, but not limited to team teaching with ESL and classroom teacher, small group instruction, ESL English Classes at Middle and High School level, ESL Sheltered content classes at the High School.

Provide opportunities to engage families of English Language Learners. Opportunities include Parent Meetings, Interpreter support at Progress Report Pick up, Refugee Liaison.

### **Support for Mother Tongues**

Firestone CLC and the IBDP supports all language learners and their families, including those whose first language, home language, preferred language, native tongue and/or best language is other than English. The vast majority of Firestone students are native speakers. Akron Public Schools provides services including translators to students and their families who are in need of additional resources. Teachers and counselors will respond to the needs of these learners as required. The district maintains a library of books and other materials in a collection consisting of a variety of mother tongues. These are made available to all families.

### **Instructional Services are designed to:**

- Enable all learners to master English language skills in the four communication domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing appropriate to grade, age and developmental level.
- Develop strong academic foundations and self-esteem in all learners integrating the acquired native cultural and linguistic competencies throughout the curriculum.

### **Program Services**

#### Students

- **English as a Second Language**

Curriculum course offering specifically designed for LEP students to facilitate English language development in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students receive differentiated instruction based on their demonstrated level of English language proficiency and grade level.

- **Bilingual Support Services**

Reinforcement of instructional content and skills individualized or in small groups by bilingual licensed paraprofessionals at program sites by itinerant staff. Services are offered during the school day.

- **Sheltered English**

Students integrated with native English speaking peers and ESL certified teachers use curricula and methodologies specifically designed to promote English language skills and teaching content curricula. Bilingual tutors provide support in the native language.

#### Staff

- Professional development opportunities to enhance professional practice, peer collaboration and career goals

#### Parents and Community

- Interpreter and bilingual assistance  
In Akron we choose to celebrate our vast cultural diversity that makes this district unique and gives our children the opportunity to become global thinkers and producers. With current estimates showing that 60-75% of the world is bilingual, we view the ability to speak multiple languages as an asset, not a deficit.
- Definition of ELL (also known as limited English proficient (LEP))

A child who is Limited English Proficient (LEP) is: between the ages of 3 and 21; enrolled in an elementary or secondary school; has a native/home language other than English, whether born in the U.S. or another country; and has such difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding English that the student may be unable to perform well enough in class or on state tests to meet expected state standards for achievement (Source: ODE Proficiency Rules).

## Related Resources

- English as a Second Language (ESL) Program
  - To provide tiers of support to all English Language Learners through best instructional practices, research based interventions, and collaborative problem solving with families, administrators and teachers.
  - Akron's ESL program currently serves nearly 1,000 English Language Learners representing more than 50 languages. Types and frequency of services are provided to students based on student's language level, literacy needs, and teacher recommendations. Services include direct pull-out service, sheltered content classes (9-12), classroom support, and progress monitoring. Secondary ESL students may participate in an ESL English class intended to increase English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

## Initial Identification

- State and federal laws require school districts to screen students who have more than one language in their history. The enrollment forms used by Akron Public Schools include the following two questions:
  - What language is primarily spoken at student's home
  - What language was first spoken at the onset of speech?

If any language is listed other than English, the family fills out a Home Language Survey.(HLS) If a student has a language other than English on their enrollment forms and HLS, we are required, by law, to assess the student's language proficiency.

Akron uses the LAS Placement Tests for this identification process. The assessment determines if the student is fully English proficient, limited English proficient, or non-English proficient. If the student is not fully English proficient, they are considered LEP (Limited English Proficient) by the state, and are eligible for ESL services. Parents of the students decide whether or not their child will participate in the ESL program.

The LAS is administered to students within two weeks of enrollment, and LEP students are placed into the ESL program within thirty days of enrollment if the parent consents to services. During the school year, LAS testing occurs at the in the home building.

### **Grade Placement Decisions for Newly-Enrolled English Language Learners**

Regarding grade placement of newly enrolled English language learners (ELLs), grade decisions are made at the district level based on the district's evaluation of the students' academic records and also taking into account the students' age. The Lau Resource Center does not have any mandates regarding this issue. However, it is recommended that students learning English as new language be placed in a grade as close as possible to their age peers. The reason for this recommendation is that it is important for students to be placed with age peers to meet their socialization needs. The goal should be to place

the student in a grade level that is appropriate for his or her age level, and then provide the additional support needed to address the student's English language acquisition needs.

### **Grade Retention of English Language Learners**

If an ELL student is retained solely on the basis of his/her lack of English proficiency, such retention would be discriminatory (based on *Lau v. Nichols*) because in effect, the ELL student would be retained for not having adequate prior exposure to English. So, to justify the retention of an ELL student, the district would need to give evidence that:

1) the student has been provided with an educationally sound English language support program, and  
2) the student is being retained for reasons other than lack of English proficiency (for example, if the student did not meet grade-level standards due to poor attendance, lack of effort, or poor study habits).  
Here are some questions that need to be answered before deciding to retain an ELL student:

- Does the district have a retention policy that takes into account different factors that may impact students' academic progress?
- Is the reason for retaining the student other than the student's lack of English proficiency?
- Has the student been given meaningful access to the district's academic program through language support strategies based on sound theory and widely accepted good practice?
- Has the student been given academic performance-based assessments that are based on the student's level of English proficiency, and that take into consideration the instructional strategies used to give the student meaningful access to the academic content?
- Is the student making less progress than what would be expected of students with similar language background and academic experiences?

If the answer to all the above questions is "yes," then the district may consider retention as a possible option for helping the student achieve English proficiency and make academic progress. Of course, the district will need to make sure that in whichever grade the student is placed, an appropriate, comprehensive and research-based language support program is provided.

### **English Language Proficiency Levels of LEP Students**

Students learning a new language proceed through different stages or levels of proficiency. Ohio has established five proficiency levels to categorize LEP students at different stages of their English language development:

- Pre-functional;
- Beginning;
- Intermediate;
- Advanced;
- Proficient/Trial-Mainstream.

The following are summary descriptions of each of the proficiency levels:

**Pre-functional:** Students at this level may understand some isolated words (particularly school and social environment vocabulary), some high-frequency social conventions, and simple (single-word or short-phrase) directions, commands and questions. They rely on nonverbal cues such as gestures and facial expressions and require frequent repetition and rephrasing to understand spoken language. In

conversations, they may be able to provide some basic information in response to requests and questions. They can ask one- or two-word questions without regard to structure and intonation.

Regarding reading and pre-reading skills, students at this level may demonstrate an understanding of concepts of print (e.g., front-to-back, top to-bottom, left-to-right) and begin to track print. They may be able to distinguish letters from other symbolic representations. They can imitate the act of reading (e.g., holding a book and turning pages); however, they get meaning mainly through pictures. Students at this level participate in writing activities by drawing pictures. They may be able to copy letters or form them from memory and may be able to copy some words. They can imitate the act of writing (e.g., scribbling); however, their text does not transmit a message. They may attempt to apply some writing conventions but do so inappropriately or do so correctly only when copying.

**Beginning:** As LEP students' oral comprehension increases, they begin to imitate the verbalizations of others by using single words or simple phrases and begin to use English spontaneously. They gradually construct more meaning from the words themselves, but the construction is often incomplete. They are able to generate simple texts that reflect their knowledge level of syntax. These texts may include a significant amount of non-conventional features, such as invented spelling, some grammatical inaccuracies, pictorial representations, surface features and rhetorical patterns of the native language (i.e., ways of structuring text from native culture and language).

**Intermediate:** At this level, students understand more complex speech, but still may require some repetition. They acquire a vocabulary of stock words and phrases covering many daily situations. They use English spontaneously, but may have difficulty expressing all of their thoughts due to a restricted vocabulary and a limited command of language structure. Students at this level speak in simple sentences, which are comprehensible and appropriate, but frequently marked by grammatical errors. They may have some trouble comprehending and producing complex structures and academic language.

Proficiency in reading may vary considerably depending upon the learner's familiarity and prior experience with themes, concepts, genre, characters and so on. They are most successful constructing meaning from texts for which they have background knowledge upon which to build. They are able to generate more complex texts, a wider variety of texts and more coherent texts than beginners. Texts still have considerable numbers of non-conventional features

**Advanced:** At this level, students' language skills are adequate for most day-to-day communication needs. Occasional structural and lexical errors occur. Students may have difficulty understanding and using some idioms, figures of speech and words with multiple meanings. They communicate in English in new or unfamiliar settings, but have occasional difficulty with complex structures and abstract academic concepts.

Students at this level may read with considerable fluency and are able to locate and identify the specific facts within the text. However, they may not understand texts in which the concepts are presented in a de-contextualized manner, the sentence structure is complex or the vocabulary is abstract. They can read independently, but may have occasional comprehension problems. They produce texts independently for personal and academic purposes. Structures, vocabulary and overall organization approximate the writing of native speakers of English. However, errors may persist in one or more of these domains.

*Source of the above proficiency level descriptions of Beginning –Advanced: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Inc., 1997, pp. 20-21.*

**Proficient/Trial-mainstream:** At this final stage, students usually can participate in academic topical conversations without difficulty. In most cases, they can follow complex and multi-level directions without assistance and they can understand oral information provided via electronic audio and video media. Students at this level usually speak English fluently in social and grade-level academic settings and they control age-appropriate syntax and vocabulary in their speech.

Generally, students read and understand factual information in non-technical prose as well as discussions on concrete topics related to special events. They comprehend standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, correspondence reports and technical materials. At this level, they can write short papers and clearly express statements of position, points of view and arguments. In their writing, they usually show control of varied sentence structures, spelling and vocabulary, expressing well-developed thoughts.

During this transition stage, the students' progress is carefully monitored and additional support is provided on an as-needed basis.

## **Criteria for Exiting LEP Program**

To be exited from LEP programs in Ohio, students need to demonstrate the ability to understand, speak, read and write the English language at a level in which they are able to:

1. Achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is in English;
2. Meaningfully participate in academic assessments in English; and
3. Participate fully in society in the United States.

A student has attained the required level of English proficiency to be exited from a district's LEP program when the student:

Obtains a composite score of 5 on the Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA); **or**

Obtains a composite score of 4 on the OTELA, subsequently completes a trial period of mainstream instruction and obtains a composite score of 4 or above on the OTELA during the trial period of mainstream instruction.

### **Special Conditions**

- Students will not be exited from the LEP program before Grade 3.
- Students who obtain a composite score of 4 or 5 on the OTELA in Grade 2 and obtain a composite score of 4 or above on the OTELA during the completion of a trial period of mainstream instruction in Grade 3 shall be exited from the program.
- Transition Year – LEP students who obtain a composite score of 4 or 5 on the OTELA in 2008-2009 will be exited from the program if they obtain a composite score of 4 or 5 on the OTELA in 2009-2010.

## English Proficiency Levels – Descriptions

|                                   | Listening                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Speaking                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Reading                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Writing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level I<br/>Pre-functional</b> | <p>Has zero to very limited ability in understanding spoken English</p> <p>Relies on non-verbal cues such as gestures and facial expressions, and requires frequent repetition/rephrasing to understand spoken language</p> <p>May understand some isolated words, some social conventions, and simple directions, commands and questions</p> | <p>Has zero to very limited ability in speaking English</p> <p>May say or repeat common phrases, words and formulaic language</p> <p>May be able to provide some basic information in response to requests and questions</p> <p>Can ask one or two-word questions without regard to structure and intonation</p>                      | <p>Has zero to very limited ability in reading English</p> <p>May demonstrate some basic concepts of print (front-to-back, top to-bottom, left-to-right)</p> <p>May distinguish letters from other symbolic representations</p> <p>May follow one-step directions depicted graphically</p>                      | <p>Has zero to very limited ability in writing English</p> <p>Can participate in writing activities by drawing pictures</p> <p>May be able to copy letters or form them from memory</p> <p>May be able to copy some words</p> <p>May attempt to apply some writing conventions, but often does so inappropriately</p>                  |
| <b>Level II<br/>Beginning</b>     | <p>Understands simple, short statements and questions on a well-known topic within a familiar context</p> <p>Can follow simple multi-step directions</p> <p>Can identify the main idea and some details of short conversations or simple orally-delivered text on a familiar topic</p> <p>May still need repetition and rephrasing</p>        | <p>Predominantly uses formulaic patterns and memorized phrases</p> <p>Uses language that is often marked by the lack of tense, number, and agreement</p> <p>Uses school-social vocabulary that is limited to key words and has little or no academic vocabulary</p> <p>Responds to questions usually with one or two-word answers</p> | <p>Begins to identify the names of both upper and lower case letters of the alphabet</p> <p>Can identify where words begin and end</p> <p>Can follow multi-step directions depicted graphically</p> <p>During read aloud, gets meaning primarily from pictures and the teacher's tone of voice and gestures</p> | <p>Produces writing that is marked by the lack of tense, number, and agreement</p> <p>Makes frequent errors in mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization</p> <p>Writes most effectively when supported by a visual, a shared experience, or scaffolding</p> <p>Can begin to revise or edit own writing with teacher support</p> |
| <b>Level III<br/>Intermediate</b> | <p>Shows understanding simple questions and statements on familiar topics</p> <p>Often requires restatements in graphic terms or at a lower rate</p> <p>Can follow many simple directions</p> <p>Shows appropriate responses when read or told a story (example – laughs at humor)</p> <p>Has difficulty</p>                                  | <p>Can communicate ideas and feelings in English, but with some difficulty</p> <p>Speaks coherently, but with hesitations and with grammatical and syntactic errors</p> <p>Can retell a simple story, but detail may be lacking</p> <p>Can respond appropriately to many questions, but with errors in grammar and</p>                | <p>Reads simple printed material within a familiar context</p> <p>Understands short discourse on familiar topics.</p> <p>Has a small repertoire of high frequency words</p> <p>Partially uses details to extract meaning</p> <p>Partially perceives the feeling and tone in a poem or story</p>                 | <p>Composes short paragraphs that are mostly intelligible</p> <p>Begins to edit for sentence-level structure, spelling and mechanics and revises for content, organization and vocabulary, usually with the support of the teacher</p> <p>Writes with less dependency on visual supports, shared experiences, and scaffolding</p>      |



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|                              | comprehending academic-related                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | vocabulary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Has some weaknesses in predicting from details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Level IV<br/>Advanced</b> | <p>Understands conversations in most school/social settings</p> <p>Understands main ideas and significant relevant details of extended discussions or presentations on familiar and relevant academic topics</p> <p>May ask for clarification on oral information related to academic content</p> <p>Understands multiple meanings of words and can use context clues to understand messages</p> | <p>Speaks in coherent, fluent sentences, but with occasional errors in vocabulary and syntax</p> <p>Has little difficulty communicating personal ideas and feeling in English</p> <p>Can respond appropriately to many questions in classroom settings, but makes some errors in more complex grammatical structures</p> <p>Can often use language to connect, tell and expand on a topic; and can begin to use it to reason</p> | <p>Can read familiar text with little teacher or visual support; still needs those supports when reading to comprehend unfamiliar text</p> <p>Has oral fluency and uses self-monitoring and self-correction strategies when necessary</p> <p>Can identify main idea of many reading passages</p> <p>Able to identify most specific facts within a text</p> <p>May have some difficulty using details to make predictions</p> | <p>Writes simple social correspondence with some errors in spelling and punctuation</p> <p>May have some difficulty in producing complex sentences</p> <p>Produces writing that generally addresses given topic</p> <p>Produces writing that is generally intelligible but lacking grade-level quality</p> <p>Produces writing that generally expresses complete thoughts</p> |

### Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA)

State and Federal law require an annual assessment of K-12 limited English proficient students to measure their English language proficiency. The Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition is the assessment used for testing English language proficiency for Ohio LEP students in Grades K-12. As OTELA is a progress test instrument, it cannot be used to screen newly identified LEP students. Districts must use screening assessments for that purpose.

The OTELA will show progress in English language proficiency that students are making from academic year to academic year. OTELA results are used to determine whether a district is meeting its annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Each school district, based on the number of students and their previous OTELA scores, must annually reach a progress target and an attainment target for English language proficiency.

For more information on OTELA, visit the ODE website at [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov), keyword search: *OTELA*

### Yearly Assessment of English Language Proficiency

- State and federal law requires an annual assessment of LEP students' English language proficiency. Ohio uses the OTELA test (Ohio Test of English Language Proficiency).
- Students are assessed each spring in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are given a score in each area, as well as a total composite score. The scores are used to determine whether or not our students are making adequate progress in English language acquisition. They are also used to make service decisions for our LEP students.

- Once a student attains a composite score of five, they are no longer considered to be LEP and are exited from the ESL program. If a student attains a composite score of four, they are considered to be proficient enough in English to no longer need ESL services. These students enter into proficient-trial-mainstream status (PTM) for the following school year. During this year, they must show evidence of academic success, and they must take the OTELA and receive another composite score of four or five. Once they are able to do this, they will be exited from the program and are no longer considered to be LEP.

### **English Language Proficiency Standards**

- Ohio's *English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students* support the development of academic language proficiency and the achievement of academic content standards. The standards reflect the four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In Lakota, the ELP standards are integrated with state academic content standards in English Language Arts.

### **Graduation Requirements**

- LEP students are held to the same standards as non-LEP students when it comes to graduation requirements. In order to receive a diploma, all students must meet minimum standards on the state Ohio Graduation Test (OGT). Some LEP students are eligible for accommodations on the assessment, which may include a native language translator, extended time, and use of a dictionary. OGT testing begins in grade ten. Students have five opportunities to take the assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.