Language Policy

Philosophy

The Boerum Hill School for International Studies is committed to linguistic diversity reflective of our local community and the larger world. We believe that all teachers are language teachers. We promote multilingualism in all of our students—by honoring a student’s mother-tongue and providing instruction in at least one additional language. To those ends, we encounter and use language in authentic contexts that prepare our students to apply their developing skills in our community and the larger world. Students work towards academic literacy in at least one additional language beyond their mother-tongue(s), while continuing to strengthen the language(s) they speak at home.

Services Offered

Language Acquisition: English as a New Language (ENL)
For students who are identified as English-Language Learners (ELLs), the school offers an ENL program that combines stand-alone ENL instruction and integrated ENL and content area instruction. Students are programmed to receive ENL instruction based on their assessed levels of English proficiency. As mandated by Commissioner’s Regulations, Part 154, students in grades 9-12 at the “Entering” level of proficiency receive at least 540 minutes of ENL instruction per week; students at the “Emerging” level receive 360 minutes per week; students at the “Transitioning” level receive 360 minutes per week; students at the “Expanding” level receive 180 minutes per week. In addition, students who have achieved “Commanding” proficiency, will receive 180 minutes per week of integrated ENL instruction for up to two years. These hours of contact are met through any one or a combination of the following instructional models: Integrated classrooms will have a certified ENL instructor and an instructor certified in English Language Arts (ELA) or another content area. Stand-alone ENL classrooms will contain only an ENL instructor. The language of instruction in these classes is English. As laid out by the International Baccalaureate program, students in the first phase of English language acquisition are allowed to submit work in the four language modalities (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in their home language.

French Dual Language Program
At The Boerum Hill School for International Studies, our Dual Language Program (DLP) is used to foster bi-literate, multi-cultural and multi-lingual citizens who can navigate the world around them through multi-faceted perspectives.
In the 2018-19 school year, BHS will grow its DLP into the 9th through 11th grades, and is proud to announce the launch of our Spanish as a foreign language program in addition to our already established French DLP. Students with native or near native proficiency in French will continue their DLP education in a specially designed French theater literature course, while beginning their study of a third language in Spanish. Those students never having studied language previously, will have the option to choose between the Spanish I or French I class. Finally, those students with some linguistic proficiency in French will move into our newly developed French 2 class.

At the middle school level, in addition to language acquisition class offered in beginner, intermediate, and advanced proficiency, French DLP will take the form of a separate class called Projet Français. Two days a week, students will meet in heterogeneous groupings for an immersive French experience which builds upon content studied in their core subjects. The class will be project-based and students will be producing extensions of core subject summative tasks (final unit projects) in the target language at their level of proficiency. This low-stakes but rigorous environment, offers the opportunity to expand student knowledge of core content and competency in their language experience through a lens of equity. All students regardless of age, ethnicity, and skill level will have the opportunity to be exposed to hands-on French in context.

**Language Acquisition: Languages Other Than English (LOTE)**

In grades 6-12 at the Boerum Hill School for International Studies, a continuum of French language instruction is offered as a LOTE course, as outlined in the section above. Students must pursue the same language of study throughout their time in the MYP (grades 6-10), and will continue to study that language in years 1 and 2 of the DP. Students proficient in both French and English will add Spanish as a third language of study. Students who are not or are no longer identified as ELLs are required to take a LOTE course to satisfy their Language Acquisition requirement for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program and Diploma Program. At the end of these language-learning continua, students are given the opportunity to sit for the LOTE Regents Exam of their choice, as a part of their graduation portfolio. [See: Testing & Assessment]

**Language & Literature**

Students at The Boerum Hill School for International Studies are enrolled in grade-appropriate courses of English Language Arts (ELA). ELLs may receive these courses in conjunction with their ENL services. In these classes students continue to
expand their academic vocabularies in English, and to grow their fluency in reading and writing across multiple genres of text. Students enrolled in Language & Literature classes also deepen their skills of critical thinking and analysis in age-appropriate contexts. L&L teachers, as well as all other subject teachers, are encouraged to foster the development of students' mother-tongues through the inclusion of texts in multiple languages, through the pairing of language buddies, and through tasks that allow for students to write, speak in, and/or translate from and into their mother-tongues.

**Placement**

When students enroll for the first time in any school in the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE), including the Boerum Hill School for International Studies, parents are asked to fill out the Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS), and a brief interview may be conducted with a licensed ENL pedagogue. If, based on the results of the survey and the interview, a student is deemed eligible, s/he will sit for the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). Based on the results of this exam, a student will be identified on one of the following levels of proficiency: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, or Commanding (i.e. entitled to but not in need of ENL services). The results of this test will therefore determine how the student will be programmed for ENL courses, if they are deemed necessary.

If a student comes to the Boerum Hill School for International Studies from another school within the NYC DOE, then s/he will continue to receive the language services (ENL and/or ELA) to which s/he is entitled based on their most recent assessment data.

**Testing & Assessment**

**Placement Testing**

Newly admitted students to the NYC DOE who are identified as possible ELLs are given the NYSITELL within ten days of admission. This test establishes the level of students’ language needs, and will determine the number of units of language instruction for which a student will be programmed.

**Annual Testing: Language & Literature – ELA**

In grades 6 through 8, students at the Boerum Hill School for International Studies are assessed annually in ELA, using the grade-appropriate New York State ELA testing instrument. This test measures their levels of mastery of the Common Core Literacy
Standards. The tests are scored on a scale of 1 through 4. A level-1 score means that the student is performing well below grade level. A level-2 score means that the student is partially proficient in grade-level standards. A level-3 score means that the student is performing at grade level. A level-4 score means that the student is performing above grade-level standards. A score of 2 or 1 may jeopardize a student’s eligibility for promotion to the next grade.

Beginning in grade 9, students are eligible to take the New York State Common Core-Aligned ELA Regents Exam. This test, scored out of 100%, is a necessary exam for graduation from high school, and cannot be taken in any other language.

All students, grades six through twelve, take the Degrees of Reading Power assessment two to three times each school year to track their English reading comprehension levels. Students in grades six to eight who are significantly below grade level on the Degrees of Reading Power assessment take additional reading assessments to pinpoint their specific areas of struggle.

All students, grades six through twelve, also take baseline assessments created in house to track their English language reading and writing skills over time and to help teachers better support the development of students’ English language reading and writing skills.

**Annual Testing: Language Acquisition**

**New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)**

ELLs at the Boerum Hill School for International Studies are tested for their level of English language proficiency in the spring of every year. This test covers the four language modalities (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Each of these sections is scored individually and then compounded into a final score. A student’s score on this exam translates into his or her level: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding or Commanding. This level determines the student’s programming for the following year. A score of Commanding indicates that the students is no longer required to sit for the NYSESLAT, although s/he is entitled to two more years of supplemental ENL instruction.

**LOTE Comprehensive Exam**

Students in grades 9-12, enrolled in a LOTE class, are eligible to take the NYC DOE Comprehensive LOTE Exam in French or Spanish. This test, scored out of 100%, fulfills the LOTE requirement needed to earn a Regents or local diploma. Students must earn
a minimum of two course credits in LOTE. To fulfill the LOTE requirement for an Advanced Regents Diploma, students must earn six credits in LOTE and pass the corresponding LOTE exam. This exam is aligned to “Checkpoint B” of New York City LOTE teaching standards.

**Second Language Proficiency (SLP)**
Students in grade 8, who have received 216 hours of LOTE instruction between kindergarten and 8th grade are eligible to take this test covering the four language modalities of French, Italian, Latin or Spanish. This exam is aligned to “Checkpoint A” of New York City LOTE teaching standards.

**Support**

**Students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs)**
Students with IEPs receive instructional and assessment accommodations based on the goals and parameters set by the School Intervention Team (SIT) and IEP case manager.

**Newly-Arrived ELLs**
Newcomers to the United States are not obligated to take any ELA state exams in grades 6 through 8. And in grades 9 through 12, they are only required to take the NYSITELL and the NYSESLAT for the first year of their enrollment, as well as any required subject-area Regents for that year.

**Former ELLs**
Students who receive a proficiency level of “Commanding” on the NYSESLAT are entitled to receive an additional 90 minutes per week of integrated ENL instruction for up to two years.

**Ongoing Development and Promotion of the Mother Tongue**
Our French Dual Language program supports the ongoing development of French language skills in our Francophone students. Many of our English Language Learners’ mother tongue is Arabic. We have staff that speaks Arabic. The Arab American Family Support Center (near our school), provides additional support and tutoring to our students who are Arabic speakers. In addition, many of the members of our staff are multilingual and serve as resources for our diverse student population.
Built into the culture of the school is the idea of students supporting students. Our multilingual students are the best support for our beginning students, and provide an atmosphere that values each student’s mother tongue and culture.

In our Diploma Program we offer French Language & Literature as a self-study.

**Language Profile of our Students**

As of 2018, approximately 30% of our students were officially registered with the NYC DOE as speaking a language other than English at home. Of that 30%, about 36% speak French, 32% speak Spanish, 18% speak Arabic, 3% speak Haitian Creole, and 11% speak other languages, including: Afrikaans, Bengali, Cantonese, Czech, German, Gurma, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, and Swedish.

**Note on Policy Review Process**

This Language Policy—like our Academic Honesty Policy, Assessment Policy, and Inclusion Policy—was created through a careful review process, and undergoes annual revision. It is a working document, meaning that we keep it up to date with the needs of the student population and in line with national and local legislation. Vincent Hyland, our Language Acquisition Department Facilitator, drafted this policy in November 2014 in accordance with the IB policy guidelines (as presented in *MYP: From principles into practice September 2014-January 2015*), and in addition to annual updates, it was revised by Vincent Hyland and Rebecca Crawford, the DP Coordinator designate, in March 2016 in accordance with IB policy guidelines (as presented in *The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* and *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*), and again by Sarah Brooks in June 2018. The policy is reviewed annually by the Cabinet, administration, students, and other stakeholders. Each year, including in summer of 2018, the policy is updated and approved, with any final edits, by the school administration and then made available to the entire school community. Annually, it is evaluated for its effectiveness and to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date.