



SOUTH TEXAS BUSINESS, EDUCATION, AND TECHNOLOGY 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 South Texas BETA, 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 South Texas BETA 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 South Texas BETA 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 and procedural terms 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. Teacher 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.

CURRENT LANGUAGE COURSES

Language A: Language and Literature

English is taught at all grade levels, 9-12, at South Texas BETA. In the English courses, development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are promoted.

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

9 th Grade (PreAP)	10 th Grade (PreAP)	11 th Grade (DP)	12 th Grade (DP)
English I	English II	English III	English IV
Language A: Language & Literature Higher Level			

Language B

At South Texas BETA, Spanish is taught at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels at all grade levels, 9-12. Students at South Texas BETA are required to take a Language B course every year. Diploma students take Language B as a Standard Level course and test in it at the end of their junior year.

9 th Grade (PreAP)	10 th Grade (PreAP)	11 th Grade (DP)	12 th Grade (DP)
Spanish I or II	Spanish II or III	Spanish III or IV	Spanish IV or V
Language B (Spanish SL)			

ACCEPTABLE CONVENTIONS

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

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

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

Spelling Protocols

The following are acceptable spelling protocols for the languages taught at South Texas BETA.

ENGLISH	SPANISH
British and American English spelling conventions	Castilian and Latin American 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 Programme as well as South Texas Independent School District's policies.

ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Since English is the language of instruction at South Texas BETA, 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 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

South Texas Independent School District has provided training to classroom teachers to assist English Language Learners.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) DEPARTMENT PROGRAM MODEL

South Texas BETA's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meets several times a year to identify English language learners and determine best practices to ensure their success. South Texas BETA's LPAC consists of administrators, teachers, and parents.

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 South Texas 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 Counselors, 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 South Texas 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 South Texas BETA 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
 - 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

REVIEW OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

The Language Policy is reviewed annually at the beginning of the year by the South Texas BETA 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.