



Language Policy

Leamington District Secondary School

1. School Language Profile

Leamington, Ontario is located within one of the most culturally diverse regions in Canada (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration). According to the 2021 Census, 35% of Leamington residents have a first language other than English or French. English is the language most commonly spoken in our community, followed by German, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, Arabic, Tagalog and Italian (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Our students are a reflection of our culturally diverse community, and we regularly welcome newcomers from all parts of the world. In 2023, approximately 27% of our student population was born outside Canada. Like most Ontario English-language schools, the first language of over 31% of our students is a language other than English or French. Students at our school can communicate in over 28 different languages, with many students demonstrating fluency in three or more languages. Arabic, German and Spanish are the most common first languages spoken by our students born outside of Canada.

The majority of staff members at Leamington District Secondary School were born in Canada, with English as their first language. More than 20% of our staff members also speak French, with a smaller percentage able to communicate in German, Italian, Spanish, Lebanese and Greek.

2. Language Philosophy

Language learning is integral to knowledge acquisition in all subjects. At Leamington District Secondary School, we believe that every teacher is a language teacher. In all subject areas, teachers are dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes engaging and authentic learning to develop students' reading, writing, listening and oral communication skills.

Consistent with the mission of the International Baccalaureate Programme, we foster a culture that promotes global connectedness and intercultural understanding. This is reflected in our programming and our ongoing acquisition of resources published in languages other than English. We support the teaching of Canada's second language, French, at the Applied and Academic level as well as in the Diploma Programme. Our school and community also provide various programs to support the maintenance and continued development of our students' first language.

3. Language of Instruction

English is the primary language of instruction at Leamington District Secondary School. All of our International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme subjects other than French are offered in English. The rigour of the Diploma Programme necessitates that students demonstrate proficiency with respect to reading, writing and oral communication of the English language. Students from countries outside Canada who intend to enroll at Leamington District Secondary School must complete a Vital English test online in their home country before they arrive. If their level of communication in English is sufficient, they will be able to enroll in any of our programs, including the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The IB Programme Coordinator works closely with Grade 8, 9 and ESL teachers to collaboratively facilitate a staggered entry into the Pre-IB and/or Diploma Programmes for our multi-language learners. These students may gradually increase the number of Pre-IB and Diploma courses they take as their English skills progress.

To earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), all students must successfully complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Students usually complete the OSSLT in Grade 10, with approved accommodations provided for English Language Learners and students with learning needs. Teachers in all subject areas deliver lessons to prepare students for the OSSLT. Additional practice sessions are offered to those students who require further support to pass the Literacy Test. If teachers determine that an English Language Learner has not achieved a level of English proficiency sufficient to complete the OSSLT, they may defer the test until the following year to permit additional literacy support. A student who is unsuccessful in their first attempt of the OSSLT may take the Ontario Literacy Course to achieve this requirement for the OSSD.

4. Language Acquisition

Canada's second language, French, is the chosen language of acquisition at Leamington District Secondary School. French language instruction in Ontario is action-oriented and is based on the Common European Framework. Ontario students enter Grade 9 with a minimum of 600 hours of French language instruction at the elementary level. Students in Grades 9 and 10 of LDSS's Pre-IB Program receive an additional 180 hours of French language instruction prior to entering the Diploma Programme in Grade 11. Currently, Leamington District Secondary School offers French B at the Standard Level as an anticipated course in Year 1 of the Diploma Programme.

As our Diploma Programme grows, we intend to add French *ab initio* to support language acquisition for those students without prior French instruction. This approach will be beneficial to some of our English Language Learners who are exempt from French at the elementary level but may be able to develop their knowledge of the English language sufficiently to be capable of completing the Diploma Programme. As a school, we plan to continue to explore opportunities to offer instruction of additional languages. This will be dependent on student interest, teacher training and enrollment.

Attaining a high level of fluency in French is a priority at LDSS. Students who study French for four semesters at LDSS are strongly encouraged to complete the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) test in the month of May in their final year of French language instruction. The DELF diploma is awarded by the French Ministry of Education to confirm the French-language skills of non-French candidates (DELF DALF CIEP).

5. Support for English Language Learners

Newcomers to our community whose first language is not English are referred to the Newcomer Reception Centre. Here, families are connected with resources and supports to assist with settlement. Prior to entry into our school, an Assessor from the Greater Essex County District School Board administers a variety of tests to determine a student's level of proficiency in English and Math. Students who are developing proficiency in English are considered English Language Learners (ELLs). If it is determined that the best placement for the student is in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program, the level of instruction (A through E) is also determined. Advancement through these levels is fluid and ESL teachers provide a variety of supports to allow their students to move into regular classes as soon as they are capable. As English proficiency is developed, students are encouraged to use their first language to scaffold learning. ESL students are provided with additional supports including peer tutoring, dual language dictionaries, translation technology and News in Levels to develop English language proficiency. Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) are available on-site at Leamington District Secondary School to support the educational needs of our newcomer students and their families.

Leamington District Secondary School has an Ambassador Program to welcome newcomers to our school and community. When a new student arrives, an Ambassador who shares their first language is called to the Main Office where they greet the new student in their first language, tour the school and participate in a brief orientation session before arriving at their first class. The Ambassador meets the new student for lunch and helps to develop connections to other students who share their first language. LDSS also has a very active Multicultural Club, which fosters intercultural understanding. Our student parliament constitution has been amended to ensure there is always ESL representation.

6. Support for Retaining First Language

As a culturally diverse community, Leamington has a variety of programs in place to support the maintenance and development of multiple languages. In our community, the South Essex Community Council holds the Newcomer Youth Program three times each week at our local Recreation Centre. Participants in this free program receive help with homework and take part in fitness and social activities with other newcomers to ease the settlement process and to promote networking with young people who share their first language. Our school library has prioritized the acquisition of age-appropriate books written in our most prevalent first languages: Arabic, Spanish and German. Our school board has also purchased the license to Language Nut, a learning program that supports the acquisition and/or maintenance of the following languages: French, Arabic, Spanish, German and Mandarin.

7. Professional Development for Teachers

Teachers at Leamington District Secondary School continue to develop strategies to support language learning, language acquisition, support of our English Language Learners and maintenance of our students' mother tongue. At staff meetings and on professional development days, teachers participate in workshops led by language experts who use their education and experience to share best practices.

8. Review of Language Policy Document

This policy will be reviewed annually by a committee that includes the IB Coordinator, an Administrator, teacher representatives from the English and French Departments, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, IB parents/guardians and students.

This policy document was last reviewed and updated in the month of June, 2023.

Documents consulted in the preparation of this policy:

DELTA DALF CIEP, www.ciep.fr/en/delf-dalf.

DP language courses: overview and placement guidance. Cardiff U.K.: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2021.

Growing Success Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools. Ministry of Education, 2010.

Guidelines for the development of the school's language policy. Cardiff U.K.: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008.

Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy. Cardiff U.K.: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2012.

Language and Learning in IB Programmes. Cardiff U.K.: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014.

Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes. Cardiff U.K.: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008.

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. "Windsor-Essex." *Ontario Immigration - Cities and Towns - Windsor Essex*,
www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/living/OI_HOW_LIVE_WINDSOR.html.

Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.