



## I. Philosophy

*“To learn another language is quite simply and profoundly one of the best ways of learning to recognize the world and to see how others and otherness inhabit it. It is an education in difference as a pathway to understanding how to contribute to...global citizenship.”*

*Michael Worton, University College London*

Diocesan Boys' School (DBS) derives its language philosophy from the school's mission and objectives and from existing beliefs about language acquisition and how language is best learned within the educational context of Hong Kong, much of which is aptly summarized in the IB publication “Language and Learning in IB Programmes.” Teaching and learning at DBS is based on the belief that language is a means to affirm cultural identity and to appreciate a diversity of cultures both within Hong Kong and in other cultural contexts. We encourage intercultural awareness, new perspectives, and the belief that through an exploration of language, students will develop a deeper understanding of themselves and ways in which to acquire, appreciate, and think critically about the linguistic skills necessary to be effective global citizens. We believe the awareness and the explicit teaching of language as a developmental tool is not isolated to language subjects in particular, but extends to all curricula, thus all teachers are responsible for language development. The use of diverse teaching methods and practices, including the four dimensions of teaching: 1) activating prior knowledge, 2) scaffolding learning, 3) extending language, and 4) affirming identity, are used to promote not only the discrete language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing, but also interpersonal communicative skills and linguistic and literary analysis and evaluation skills. These are taught across the curriculum so that students may both learn *through* a language as well as *about* a language. The aim is also to empower students to develop a unique cultural identity and to, according to the DBS school mission and objectives, “offer a well balanced education for the development of the whole person.”

## II. School Language Profile

DBS was founded in 1869, making it one of the oldest secondary schools in Hong Kong. The school has a long history of internationalism, which has been reaffirmed through the implementation and authorization of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) as an alternative to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). In line with a key school objective, we aim to help students be creative and dynamic citizens who are successful in rapidly advancing pluralistic societies, both in Hong Kong and overseas. To this end, the school provides students with opportunities to study English, Chinese (Putonghua and Cantonese), and French, in order to build a strong multi-lingual foundation. Proficiency in these



languages is developed from the DBS primary division. Here language learning occurs firstly through the child's mother tongue. For the majority of our students, this is Cantonese. However, a portion of our student body would consider English as their mother-tongue. Due to the unique situation of Hong Kong as China's international city, the school endeavors to encourage intensive development of both English and Chinese from primary through secondary education. The school has traditionally presented itself as an English Medium of Instruction School, however, Cantonese is used effectively to support learning in non-language specific subjects. With the introduction of our Grade 10 "Bridging Year" for students who apply, both internally and externally, and are selected as IBDP candidates, our student body has grown to include non-Chinese speakers. These students are currently catered for through our French department. Current nominal support for Spanish language learners as well as other additional languages will be broadened or added as required to meet the language development needs and interests of our students as their language profiles become increasingly diverse.

### **III. Guiding Principles**

#### **A: Rules and Expectations of Language Use at DBS**

As an English Medium Instruction (EMI) school, English is used in all classrooms by all teachers. However, for some non-language subjects, such as Design Technology, laboratory work in Science subjects, or Physical Education, Cantonese is routinely or systematically used as mother-tongue support for English language learners (ELL), or to clarify instructions and ensure student safety. As DBS has a mixed student population with varying degrees of proficiency in English, Cantonese is also informally used across the curriculum to clarify concepts, particularly in the more challenging subjects, such as Calculus. DBS takes pride in the mother tongue of the school and sees bilingualism and multilingualism as not only a key asset of its students, but also, as prescribed by the IB, as "a fact, a right, and a resource." In this way, school literature, notices, announcements and meetings are often held in both English and Chinese. While some teachers may, individually, have classroom rules restricting the use of a particular language (usually Cantonese) to promote the use of another (usually English), teachers are of the understanding that there are situations and contexts in which the mother tongue must be allowed for the social and developmental well-being of the student. It should also be noted that conventions for both British and American English are taught and made explicit to students, who are at liberty to use either so long as they do so consistently.

#### **B. Admission of Students as IBDP Candidates**

Due to the language-intensive environment of the IBDP, each applicant's language abilities are assessed prior to their entrance into the G10 Bridging Year. Each applicant's written, oral,



and reading ability is assessed in English and either Chinese or French. Only students capable of meeting the challenges of two language courses in the Grade 10 Bridging Year are admitted. In addition, language goals and objectives are developed from this point and discussed with students to ensure that all students make appropriate decisions for language and subject choices in the IBDP. When significant language concerns present themselves, these are discussed in consultation with parents to foresee what additional language support may be needed.

## **C. Staff Development**

DBS has a history of maintaining a high number of multi-lingual staff. Currently, all teachers are fluent English speakers and can communicate in a second language. The school also maintains a high number of teachers who were born in Hong Kong, but educated overseas. These teachers are not only proficient in the English language, but are also able to provide multiple perspectives on different cultures. Ongoing professional development programs specifically aimed at strengthening English as a medium of instruction in non-language specific subjects are provided yearly to ensure the school's ability to consistently reinforce a bilingual learning atmosphere.

In 2006, DBS applied for special funding from the Education Department Bureau (EDB) to provide external language development assistance for teachers. These language programs allow teachers at all levels to improve their English proficiency in particular subject areas. While the funding is tied to the EDB and New Secondary System, the programs has also been very helpful to those teachers who will go on to teach in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

## **D. Teaching Practices**

DBS teachers are encouraged to nurture diverse teaching methods and philosophies, as well as to work towards common understandings of “best practices” in teaching. Work is currently being done to further specify and articulate prescribed teaching practices with the implementation and application of the IBO's Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATTL) framework. Many of the approaches to learning skills (such as research, communication, and social skills) are described in their relationship to language develop in other sections of this document. Of particular importance to approaches to teaching and language are the beliefs that learning and language should be taught in authentic contexts, that the teaching of language should allow for collaboration and social construction of knowledge, and that the diverse learning styles of students apply to the teaching and development of language as well. Some common agreements related to language teaching are listed on the following page.



## E. Common teaching practices:

All teachers endeavour to...

- Provide a balanced program of instruction which includes reading, speaking, listening and writing.
- Activate prior understanding and contextualize background knowledge of students.
- Scaffold learning and new understandings as part of a teaching and learning cycle.
- Deconstruct texts and genres of writing common to different subject areas.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of language patterns.
- Increase the vocabulary and lexical field, encouraging the awareness of collocations.
- Encourage authentic language use.
- Promote school-wide and extra-curricular uses of language.
- Recognize student work through school publications, such as the school paper and literary magazine.
- Practice language-focused peer- and self-assessment strategies.
- Develop a love of language and literature, which will be included in the syllabus at all levels of primary and secondary schooling.
- Develop a life-long habit of reading and language growth.

## IV. Language Support

The school provides remedial language support for students in the form of tutorial and extension work classes that are in addition to regular time-tabled classes. Students with particular language needs are streamed into small class settings and are provided with small-group tutorials outside of class. Extension classes for more able students provide enhanced syllabus and coursework, such as additional literary texts to read with more rigorous writing tasks. Particular to the IB are our Grade 10 Bridging Program “Skills” class. These time-tabled periods meet once a week to provide students with academic writing, research and presentation skills, as well as a writing workshop to expose students to different language registers. Students are taught to recognize and produce “academic writing” and access the specialized vocabulary and terminology of different subject areas. Best practices for academic honesty, include prescribed styles for referencing and citing works (the preferred styles are *MLA* and *APA*), are also explicitly taught in the course.

## V. Language Pathways



## **A: Entry into Programmes**

Entry into DBS language programs (see charts below) is determined through oral and written tests conducted for Grade 6 students. As junior form (or middle grades 7-9) DBS language classes are streamed or banded, subsequent tests and rankings at each year level determine a student's suitability for particular classes. Students are by no means restricted by their language choice at junior level. However, it is recommended that students build on their knowledge in order to attain a higher level of learning.

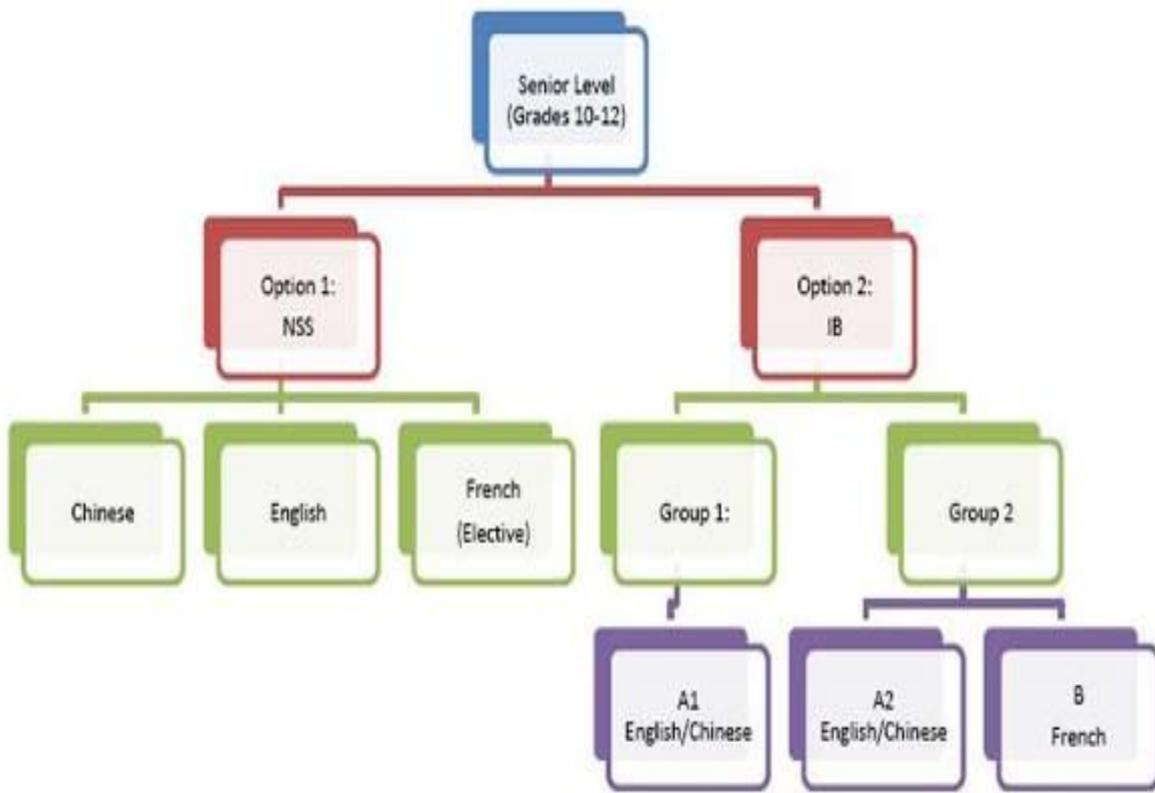
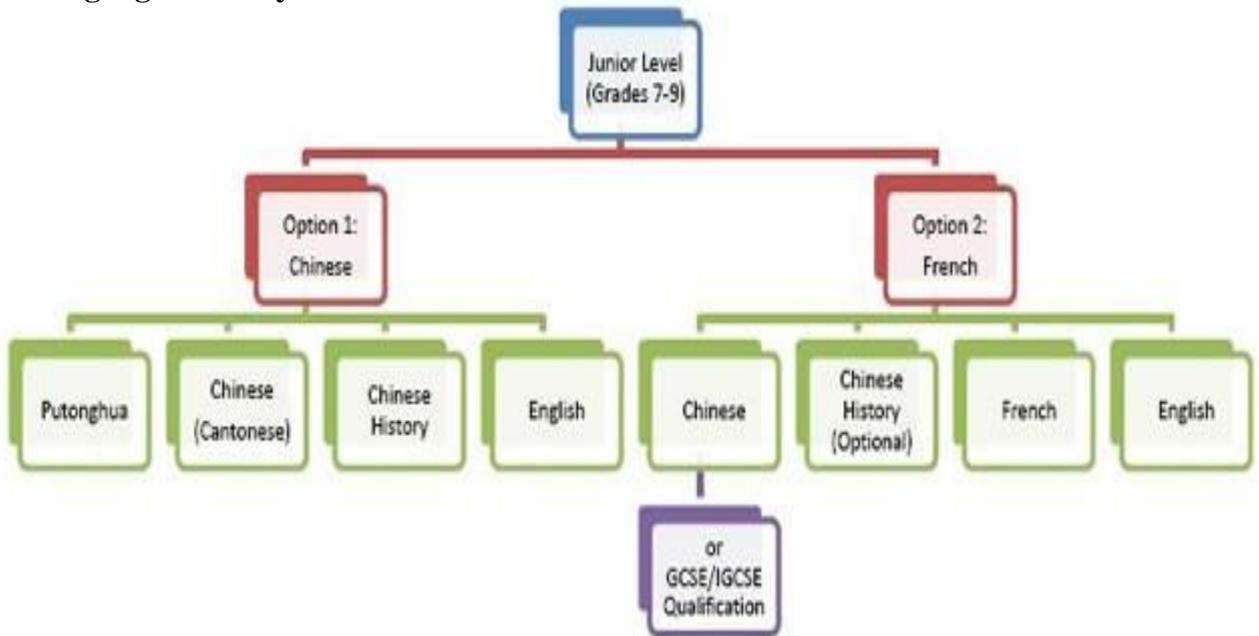
In 2007, DBS foresaw the need for language extension in both Chinese and English language classes; as a result, the "X" stream was created to cater to very able students of English and Chinese respectively. In both courses, the focus is on both language and literature, which is helpful for those boys who will pursue studies in an IB Group 1 or Language A course. The curriculums developed for this stream is shared with all language teachers in the interests of extending students at all levels.

Entry into the DBS Bridging Year Language Programs is based on students' previous results and on written and oral testing. The process of judging whether or not a student is suitable for English A and Chinese A remains a formidable task as it is difficult to judge how each individual will develop linguistically. For those students who are challenged by their lack of proficiency in English or Chinese, it is their keen attitude and willingness to improve that remains the benchmark. All students are made well aware of potential challenges before acceptance into the Bridging Year Language Programs.

Entry into DBS IB Language Programs will be based on students' grades as they are awarded during the Bridging year. At present, we are giving regular feedback to parents on the progress of students in English, Chinese and French. For those students who we predict could struggle to attain Level 4 or below in an IB subject, students are given advice on how to improve before beginning the IB Diploma. We do not deny entry to students; however, we may strongly advise a student to change his language choice.



**B: Language Pathways at DBP**





## **VI. Mother Tongue Support**

For our students who identify Cantonese as their mother-tongue or “strongest” language, a number of support systems are in place to aid in the continued development of their Cantonese, particularly as a language for academic use. Students who choose Chinese as their option at Junior and Secondary levels will continue to study Cantonese as a required language course (along with English), with Putonghua as an elective option. In addition, Chinese History, offered at the Junior Level, is also taught in Cantonese.

A small number of mother-tongue Cantonese speakers who choose the French option at the Junior Level or French B in the IB, will still be provided with opportunities for the development of Cantonese. Many of our bilingual teachers use Cantonese as a support language for courses that are otherwise taught in English. Language tutorials as well as many clubs and societies offered by the school, including the Chinese Culture Club and Chinese Debate team, are also conducted in Cantonese.

Those students who identify English as their mother-tongue are supported through English Medium of Instruction classes. Many of these students now have the additional option of studying the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, which increases the depth and breadth of their English, particularly in English A Literature and English A Language and Literature courses.

## **VII. Grade 10 Bridging Program Curricula**

### **Chinese & English Language & Literature: Junior Forms**

#### **Objectives and Practices**

The DBS junior English curriculum aims to provide a strong foundation in the four communicative skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The junior department encourages a functional and genre-based approach to language acquisition. Students develop their ability to read and write a range of different genres, including letters, descriptive writing, narratives, reports, instructional writing, and essays. Teachers help students by scaffolding the writing process and pre-teaching necessary specialized vocabulary for the given task. In addition, students are exposed to a range of literary genres, including poetry, drama, short stories and novels. Oral presentations are also emphasized through exams, drama, debate, and class discussions.

In addition to two summative examinations, students are formatively assessed throughout the year to examine areas of growth. In addition to formative assessment tasks related to the main syllabus, students are required to write regular compositions and also complete book



reports throughout the year. Students are examined on their oral skills twice a year during examinations after school. Literature is a compulsory component of the syllabus for all classes. This component is assessed through dramatic performance and written examinations. Drama, Debate and Media Studies classes are also compulsory for all students and performances are assessed twice a year. The final exam for junior students is comprised of several sections including: Reading Comprehension, Usage, Listening Tasks and Literature. The junior school is also in the process of developing self-reflection exercises and peer feedback tasks in order to improve student performance. All methods of assessment are reviewed bi-annually.

## **English: Grade 10 Bridging Program**

### **Objectives**

The Bridging English Program is a rigorous course of study that aims to provide a bridge between the local Hong Kong English language curriculum and Group 1 IB English. The Bridging Program will equip students with the critical tools necessary to explore and interpret literature. Closely following requirements for the IB English Curriculum, students will be required to develop higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation through responding to a range of genres including: poetry, prose and drama. Texts studied on the course are drawn from works written originally in English and also those in translation, fulfilling the World Literature component of IB. The selection of texts covers a wide range of topics, including: leadership, truth, power, determinism & free will, loyalty, growing up, courage and social responsibility. The program is not only useful in terms of building reading, writing and oral skills, but also endeavours to foster a lifelong interest in literature.

Summative assessment provides a record and measurement of learning at the end of a unit of work. Requirements on this course are as follows:

- Essays on works studied in depth;
  - Comparative essays based on works studied in translation (World Literature Assignment) Individual Oral Commentaries;
  - Individual Oral Presentations;
  - Commentary on unseen extracts of poetry & prose (Paper 1 Commentary: exam conditions);
  - Comparative essays on at least two works (Paper 2 Essay: exam conditions)
- Formative assessment is undertaken during the year and provides a means of identifying what students need to learn as well as giving students direct and immediate feedback on their work. Initially, students will be fully guided in



essay writing, commentary writing and presentation skills. Formative assessment will include tests, projects, portfolios of written assignments, debates, enactments, formal speeches, reflection exercises and practice examinations. Students will also be encouraged to set goals throughout the year and undertake exercises in peer and self-assessment.

## **Chinese: Grade 10 Bridging Program**

### **Objectives**

By providing a Bridging Chinese course, we believe our students will be able to better handle the highly demanding IB curriculum aimed at native Chinese students. The local curriculum of Hong Kong (especially after the implementation of the NSS) emphasizes the language skills as opposed to literature skills. Students are well equipped with reading, writing, listening and oral skills in Chinese, but they are not ready for the IB Group 1 Chinese curriculum.

The 1-year course in Bridging Chinese is to enhance the proficiency of our students and provide a solid foundation from which to proceed. Besides the 4 language skills mentioned above, literature interpretation tools, Chinese culture, high-order logical thinking and moral education are added, in order to narrow the gap between that which is existing and the Chinese A curriculum. A wide range of genres are covered in units based on arrangement; poetry, prose and drama, especially those written in Classical Chinese. Students in the local junior curriculum do not have enough exposure to the Classical Chinese literature; their reading skills in Classical Chinese are usually poor (due to the grammar difference). We aim at enhancing the reading skills in Classical Chinese for our Bridging Year students so as to remove the barrier and allow them to read the ancient Chinese writings and to understand the cultural background in a deeper sense. We believe that only by understanding the local/native culture can the students gain more from comparing and contrasting the world literatures that are required study at the IB level.

The selection of the 2-years IBDP Chinese A curriculum will cover a wide range of topics, including: feminism, determinism & free will, loyalty, family, courage and social responsibility. The major aim of the course is to strike a balance between language skills acquisition and literature studies, based on the knowledge of the native culture. We do hope that by offering this course our students will be able to enjoy both Chinese and world literature. We will especially emphasize drama and fiction studies, and variety activities such as live performance, movie analyses etc. which can be derived from these texts.



Summative assessment provides a record and measurement of learning at the end of a unit of work. Requirements on this course are as follows:

- General writing practices;
- Book Reports;
- Essays on works studied in depth;
- Comparative essays based on works studied in translation (World Literature Assignment);
- Individual Oral Cultural Commentaries;
- Individual Oral Presentations;
- Commentary on unseen extracts of poetry & prose (Paper 1 Commentary: exam conditions);
- Comparative essays on at least two works (Paper 2 Essay: exam conditions).

Formative assessment is undertaken during the year and provides a means of identifying what students need to learn as well as giving students direct and immediate feedback on their work. Initially, students will be fully guided in essay writing, commentary writing and presentation skills. Formative assessment will include tests, projects, and portfolios of written assignments, debates, enactments, formal speeches, reflection exercises and practice examinations. Students will also be encouraged to set goals throughout the year and undertake exercises in peer and self-assessment.

## **French: Grade 10 Bridging Program**

### **Objectives**

French has a long tradition as the 3rd language in the DBS curriculum for 80 years. Since the establishment of DBSPD in 2005, we now have students who have strong foundations in French despite the EDB requirements, which are the need to accept students with no previous knowledge of French in Grade 7.

The Bridging French Program is designed to enhance students with previous knowledge of French (from DBSPD as well as DBSSD) to reach IB French Language B, perhaps at HL for students coming from DBS SD and SD level, for students with 3 or 4 years of French in DBS Secondary School. New students to the French language can also be accommodated with Bridging French ab Initio to reach a basic knowledge of French. To accommodate the multiple levels for IB French Language B, HL, SD and French Language ab Initio, we utilize a part-time teacher in order to organize the necessary split class.

For HL, the development of a reflection on intercultural knowledge on French language and civilizations is an objective in order that students reach a level is one of the



aims of the "Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment". The Council of Europe reference document for the European Language Portfolio is to help partners to describe the levels of proficiency required by existing standards, tests and examinations in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications. For this purpose the Council of Europe has developed a European Framework with common reference levels. And for IB French Language B HL, we will try to reach the B2 of the European Frame Work which is in other words to be able to "understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation". "Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party". A student of that level will also be able to produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options."

For Students taking Language B SD, they will reach the level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, where students will be able to "understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc." They will be able to "deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. They also can "produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest." They will have the faculty to "describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans".

For students taking French ab Initio, they will reach the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, where they can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). They will also be able to "communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters." They will have the faculty to "describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need."

Depending on the level required, the students will have a series of assessment following the format required by the IB program merged with the requirement by the Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, as follow:

**For Students taking French IB ab Initio:**

- Exercises of basic French



## Diocesan Boys' School Language Policy

---

- Short compositions
- Small projects related to the level

### **For Students taking French IB Language B, HL**

- Exercises "a la carte" related to the weak point they have in French
- A biweekly French Journal with 3 pages entry
- A book-report every semester
- A film report including a discussion with other classmates, enhancing the report.
- Intercultural projects implying various French cultures from Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania
- A fiction and or documentary team project
- One cultural project as team work per semester



**VIII. Ongoing Evaluation of Language Goals**

- Parent feedback and input regarding language options at DBS.
- Standardizing language and referencing conventions.
- Develop standardized rubrics and criteria for assessment at all levels, including the junior school.
- Further investigate language development and teaching methodologies in the DBS Primary Division; increase communication and cooperation between DBS Primary & Secondary divisions, including teacher observations and team teaching.
- Increase communication and cooperation between junior and senior forms.
- DBS Secondary Division is also preparing for a class of Putonghua (as a Medium of Instruction in Chinese classes) students who will enter the senior school in 2011.
- Re-evaluate DBS entry requirements for all Grade 10 Bridging Language Courses and further develop entry requirements into language options in the IB Diploma Program.

~ End ~

*Updated 27 Dec 2014*