



TUSCALOOSA
MAGNET SCHOOLS-ELEMENTARY



Language Policy

School Language Philosophy:

The Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools-Elementary is a program for the first through the fifth grade serving English-speaking students. We believe that all learning takes place through linguistic means; therefore, TMS-E has created a language program which centers on both native English support and instruction, as well as the introduction of Spanish as a second language. Additionally, TMS-E has in place a support system for those students and families whose mother tongue is not English.

At TMS-E, language is the conduit for learning throughout the curriculum. Students will utilize language in order to solve problems, explore their environment, influence change in others, and identify their own self-concept. All students will be surrounded by the English language in visual, oral, and written ways. Spanish, our second language, will be explored in this way as well.

In addition, TMS-E recognizes math, the fine arts, and technology as valuable, tertiary languages to be respected and promoted as a means of interpretation and expression.

At TMS-E, we are making a VOW to teach language in a systematic, research-based way exploring both modes (receptive and expressive) in the primary areas of linguistics: **V**isual, **O**ral, and **W**ritten. Students will utilize all three areas and both modes to express the ways that they understand the world in which they live. The Common Core standards for language and technology inform our policy:

Visual- Visual Arts, as they pertain to the language policy, will take place primarily through students' exploration and creation of all visual art media. New technologies will allow for an expanded role within the classroom and beyond as they pertain to a growing digital presence. This may take shape in the form of:

- Google suite of apps, including Google sites, slides, forms, docs/portfolio creation
- Schoology LMS (Learning Management System); the integration of visual products through collaborative and learning tools
- animation and avatar creation online software
- video production;
- other collaborative platforms for visual products

Oral- Speaking (expressive) and listening (receptive) skills continue to develop through collaboration, discussions, and presentations. Being productive members of conversations require that students compare, contrast, analyze, and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains. New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. Digital texts confront students with the potential for continually updated content and dynamically changing combinations of words, graphics, images, hyperlinks, and embedded video and audio. Students will engage in numerous activities involving the approaching of learning related to communication. Speaking and listening skills continue to develop through:

- daily classroom collaborations and discussions (student and teacher-led)
- Literature Circles
- speeches
- debates
- Flipgrid
- TED talk-styled reports
- Exhibition projects & presentations
- morning meetings
- Spanish (weather and story presentations)
- Turn & Talk
- Great Hand Shake
- traditional classroom reports
- AtL skills instruction in weekly enrichment class

Written- For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college- and career-ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality, text-dependent writing(ACAP) and the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and long time frames throughout the year.

Mother tongue support:

Presently, all students at TMS-E are native English speakers. Nevertheless, TMS-E will provide any non-native speakers with adequate resources from the district level when the need arises in the future. The district will provide an ELL teacher and support when needed. Additionally, our library and media program has allotted resources to provide literature in Spanish and additional languages through online resources on Myon and Sora.

We believe that students are best served through opportunities to utilize language in the following ways:

- reflection on learning and self
- writing across the curriculum
- responding to constructed response prompts/questions
- participation in school-wide enrichment
- using the fine arts to increase vocabulary
- using technology to increase communicative circle
- reflecting on language through the use of comparisons to Spanish and languages from alternate cultures

We believe that teachers teach language best through the following methods:

- presenting language in authentic contexts
- integrating language across varied curricula
- helping students to identify language structures
- encouraging students to reflect on language structures beyond form and audience
- embracing alternate forms for student expression including mother tongue development
- providing a physical space which enriches language development
- supporting positive attitudes toward improved communication skills and providing opportunities to do so
- providing authentic challenges that encourage students to reach their highest potential
- acknowledging differences in student experiences, skills, and learning styles
- utilizing a variety of assessment strategies

Facilitation of language instruction will take place by:

- implementing Units of Inquiry and specific Approaches to Learning Skills explicitly taught in the formative and summative tasks of the unit
- considering teachers as facilitators and mentors in the writing/speaking process
- implementing a writing progression through each grade
- encouraging Socratic discussions among student groups
- modeling effective language use
- providing authentic learning experiences with student-created presentations
- providing opportunities for student-centered, student-selected research
- modeling expression of thoughts and feelings
- actively taking part in the acquisition of a second language

- encouraging parent involvement
- publishing student work for real-world contexts
- facilitating student-led conferences
- exchanging ideas in digital platforms

Spanish Instruction:

The Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools - Elementary provides instruction in Spanish for 60 - 80 minutes weekly using the Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) program. Students in grades 1-5 are instructed in Spanish through traditional and creative means with a single-subject teacher. The goal of this program is proficiency in the second language. Cultural awareness and understanding are integral to the instruction practices. Students are encouraged to learn through interaction, not only with the teacher but also with other students and people outside of the classroom. The rationale behind this approach is that students can learn language only by being active participants and risk-takers. The use of a second language is a continuum, not a mastery-laden program. Students will all learn and progress along the continuum, but at varying rates.

Language in the Learner Profile

In alignment with the Learner Profile and the MYP, TMS-M utilizes a language-specific Learner Profile as it pertains to the students and teachers. Students are familiar with the Learner Profile traits in both English and Spanish and use the Spanish words for their team names.

Inquirer: use language to gain new information or knowledge in order to make sense of the world

Thinker: able to express thoughts and ideas clearly, succinctly

Communicator: competent users of oral and written language in variety of situations; listen attentively to details; speak confidently; read and write with fluency and comprehend what is conveyed

Risk Taker: willing to attempt to read, write, and speak in all situations

Knowledgeable: have acquired vocabulary and understanding to discuss literary styles

Caring: show caring in use of language and the effect language has on others

Principled: aware that language is powerful and has a profound effect; must use it responsibly

Balanced: express themselves orally, visually, and in written form; balance listening and speaking when communicating with others

Reflective: reflect on their language usage and development and consciously work toward proficiency

Open-minded: respect the differences and similarities in languages, dialects, and personal communication skills

- *Language Policy revision takes place regularly, at the beginning of each academic year. It is reviewed and updated by the faculty of Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Elementary in our whole-school faculty meetings and reflects the input from parent and school district stakeholders. Our policies are available for review on our school website:*

<https://www.tuscaloosacityschools.com/domain/1095>

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