



TUSCALOOSA
MAGNET SCHOOLS-ELEMENTARY



Language Policy

The mission of the Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools is to motivate students to discover knowledge, create a better world, and serve in a way that respects others.

Vision - TMSE inspires students to be lifelong learners, diverse thinkers, and caring individuals while encouraging international-mindedness through inquiry.

School Language Philosophy

At Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools-Elementary (TMS-E), we believe that language is fundamental to learning, communication, and the development of identity. Language is the primary means through which students construct meaning, express their ideas, build relationships, and engage with the world around them. TMS-E recognizes that every learner brings a unique language profile that contributes to our diverse learning community.

At TMS-E, language is the conduit for learning throughout the curriculum. Students will utilize their developing language and communication skills to identify their own needs and self-concept, explore their environment, learn new skills and knowledge, solve problems, and influence change in their community. English serves as the primary language of instruction, while Spanish is taught as an additional language to expand students' linguistic and cultural understanding.

TMSE is committed to providing research-based approaches such as The Science of Reading for language instruction and development. Through language, students develop agency, deepen their understanding of themselves and others, and become compassionate, internationally minded members of a global community. Teachers collaborate with students and families to support each student learner's language profile, ensuring equitable access and opportunities for success.

Mother Tongue Support

TMS-E serves a diverse community of learners with a variety of language backgrounds and experiences. While English is the primary language of instruction, many students speak additional languages at home and bring valuable linguistic and cultural perspectives/experiences to our learning community. To support the language needs of all learners, including students receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) services or monitoring, TMS-E collaborates with district ESL staff, classroom teachers, interventionists, and families to promote continued language development and academic success.

TMS-E recognizes the importance of maintaining and valuing students' mother tongues as an essential part of identity, culture, and learning. Alternative models for mother tongue support include encouraging families to read, speak, and write in their home language; providing access to multilingual resources through the library and digital platforms. Additional supports include, but are not limited to, translators when communicating via phone call or in-person, Parentsquare translation tool, teacher utilization of Ellevation to monitor student progress, and WIDA.

Legal Requirements

Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools - Elementary complies with both national and state legal requirements in order to fulfill all local requirements.

ESL Plan

In accordance with Section 3116 of Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, ESL students are provided support and services through the TCS district policy, [Comprehensive English Learner District Plan](#).

Language Needs

Approximately 20 languages are represented among our students and families. TMS-E recognizes that every student has language needs and that these needs may vary based on individual strengths, experiences, and learning profiles. A language need is the fundamental support each student requires in order to effectively engage with other individuals, learning, and the world around them. Language needs may include, but are not limited to, acquiring English as an additional language, developing academic language, maintaining and strengthening a mother tongue, supporting literacy development, providing enrichment for advanced learners, and ensuring appropriate accommodations and supports for students with diverse learning needs. Through a collaborative and inclusive approach, TMS-E strives to provide equitable access to language and learning opportunities for all students.

Library & Media Center

The TMS-E Library Media Center provides equitable access to a diverse collection of print and digital resources that promote literacy, inquiry, and lifelong learning. Our library and media program provides access to literature and informational resources in multiple languages through platforms such as, but not limited to, myON and Sora. These resources help students maintain connections to their home languages while developing proficiency in English and strengthening multilingual literacy skills.

Through the library program, students develop reading, research, information literacy, and communication skills. Students learn to locate, evaluate, and ethically use information, create age-appropriate bibliographies, and cite sources as part of the research process. Instruction in digital citizenship empowers students to engage responsibly and safely in digital environments while fostering respectful communication, critical thinking, and responsible participation in a global learning community.

Language Processes & Practices

The Learner	Teaching & Learning	Learning Community & Environment
• Apply inquiry based language • Interpret academic language to promote academic success • Utilize language and communication skills in order to communicate with peers, faculty and staff • Construct written sentences to aid in academic success with attention to precision of grammar and semantics • Utilize vocabulary for academic success with attention to precision of definition and context • Analyze texts using reading comprehension skills for academic success with attention to precision of non-fiction text features and story elements • Apply phonics skills for academic success with attention to precision of decoding, encoding, phoneme-grapheme correspondences and orthographic patterns • Learns an additional language through Spanish instruction • Demonstrates responsible digital citizenship & online communication	• Incorporate, explicitly model, and teach inquiry language • Construct and administer formative and summative assessments that allow for demonstration of understanding/mastery • Professional Development in Language and Learning • Differentiation strategies that allow all learners to demonstrate their knowledge • Display visual supports & graphic organizers • Multiple modes of communication are incorporated across all subject areas and units of inquiry - visual, oral, & written • Language instruction is guided by district curriculum documents, state standards, and scope and sequence documents • Reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and presenting skills are developed through a vertically aligned framework • Celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity	• Partnerships with families support language development and mother tongue maintenance. • Digital citizenship expectations promote respectful and responsible communication. • Shared language scope and sequence promotes consistency & continuity in language development across grade levels & learning experiences • Physical spaces allow for all learners to use visual supports that aid in language development • Flexible learning spaces promote creativity and inquiry • Exposed to industry-specific jargon through weekly partnerships that allow students to learn and interact with community members • Learning community and environment that promotes individual learners to use resources in order to further inquire into topic and subject areas of specific interest

Phonics & Spelling

Phonics instruction will be developmental, research-based, and connected to authentic reading and writing experiences. Students engage in explicit phonics instruction administered by their teacher that allows for learning experiences that emphasize regular phoneme-grapheme correspondences and orthographic patterns. Students are explicitly taught concepts and orthographic patterns with mastery being considered when the students have internalized the concepts and patterns. Internalization is displayed when students are able to decode and encode words correctly throughout their independent activities. Phonics instruction is differentiated to meet individual student needs and supports effective language and communication needs across all areas of learning.

Language Rights & Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
• Students have the right to a safe and respectful environment as it pertains to language and communication • Students have the right to receive support that helps them develop language proficiency and access across curriculum • Teachers have the right to work in a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment. • Teachers have the rights to access professional learning, resources, and collaborative support to meet the language needs of all learners. • Families have the right to receive school communications in a format that supports understanding whenever possible. • Families have the right to have their home language and culture valued as important contributions to the school community. • Parents have the right to advocate for their child's well-being and academic success.	• Students help provide a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for themselves and others by utilizing respectful language and communication, including others, being open-minded and respectful of others, and taking responsibility for their actions and words. • Students have the responsibility to use available resources and seek support when needed to develop their language skills. • Teachers foster a classroom culture built on respect, empathy, and inclusion. By differentiating the curriculum and incorporating diverse resources across the Programme of Inquiry, they ensure equitable access for all learners. Students are empowered to share their experiences and engage thoughtfully with multiple perspectives. • Teachers use scope and sequence documents to ensure continuity, consistency, and growth in language development. • Teachers have the responsibility to model effective communication and foster a language-rich learning environment. • School partners with families to understand and support each student's language profile • Parents are responsible for partnering with the school to develop a support system that meets their child's needs. • All members of the school community, including but not limited to faculty, staff, administration, students, and community members who engage or interact with the school have the responsibility to promote respectful communication.

Language Resources

Assessment	Collaboration	Technology
● Formative assessment and teacher observation of speaking standards that relate to the grade level ● Home language Survey ● Common Formative Assessments (CFA) of different types of writing using a predesigned rubric of expectations ● Feedback is individualized, constructive, and focused on growth of age and grade appropriate grammar and semantics ● Ongoing, diverse, and relevant passages to cultivate interest in research/informative writing as well as opinion related writing ● Plan multiple opportunities for success ● Writing workshop that allows for teacher to pull small groups or individual students to explicitly go through the editing and revising process ● Individual or Small group testing that allows for students to demonstrate knowledge on assessments in conditions that are as fair as possible ○ State Assessments (ACAP, AimswebPlus, i-Ready, P2P), Classroom CFA, District Assessments ● Align standards to assessments ● Collaborative grading of CFAs to eliminate and reduce bias.	● Weekly grade level planning to align state standards and IB themes to student learning experiences ● Vertical planning between grade levels in order to align the POI & learning support teachers (specialists) ● ESL Meetings ● Parent Conferences ● Vertical planning between grade levels and feeder school (MYP Program) to support smooth transitions. ● Planning for differentiated instruction through the PLC process. ● Regular communication with families ensures that supports and strategies extend beyond the classroom ● Community Partnerships ● Magical Mindfest - Partnership between school, community, and parents where culture is celebrated ● Big Brother/Big Sisters	● 1:1 Chromebooks ○ multilingual settings and tools ● Audiobooks ● SORA ● MyOn ○ Live captions of text being read over audio ● Canva ● Schoology ● Google Suite ● PowerSchool ● Assistive Technology ● Microphones in every classroom to assist with hearing impairments ● Teacher microphone and student headsets that allow for translation in real time ● Smartboards ● Tablets ● Alabama Virtual Library

Spanish Instruction

The Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools - Elementary provides Spanish language instruction 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 dedicated, single-subject teacher, whose sole focus is academic growth in the area of the Spanish language. Cultural awareness and understanding are integral to understanding, and students are encouraged to learn through interaction with other students, teachers, digital platforms (Rockalingua), and people outside of the classroom. The rationale for this approach is that students can learn language only by being active participants and risk-takers when building their knowledge. The understanding and correct use of a second language is a lifelong learning experience, not a mastered destination. Students will all learn and progress through their learning and understanding, at varying rates.

Language & the IB Learner Profile

In alignment with the Learner Profiles defined by the IB, TMS-E faculty and staff utilize language specific to the Learner Profiles 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. Our policy is aligned with the IB learner profile attributes, encouraging students to be

- Principled
- Reflective
- Inquirers
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Knowledgeable
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Risk-takers
- Balanced

Review Process & Timeline

Language Policy revision takes place regularly, throughout each academic year. The TMS-E Language Policy reflects the input from faculty, staff, parents, community members, and school district stakeholders. It is reviewed and updated by the faculty, staff and community of Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Elementary. Our policies are available for review on our school website:

Citations:

International Baccalaureate Organization

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