

## Tuscaloosa Magnet School Language Policy

The Tuscaloosa Magnet School is a program for the first through fifth grades serving primarily English speaking students. We believe that all learning takes place through linguistic means. Therefore; TMSE has created a language program which centers around both native English support and instruction as well as the introduction of Spanish as a second language. Additionally, TMSE has in place a support system for those students and families whose mother tongue is not English.

At TMSE, language is the conduit for learning throughout the curriculum. Students will utilize language to receive and express themselves 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 also be explored in this way. TMSE recognizes math, the fine arts, and technology as valuable, tertiary languages to be respected and promoted as a means of interpretation and expression.

At TMSE, 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-**Visual | Oral | Written**. Students will utilize all three areas and both modes to express the ways in which they understand the world they live in.

### **Visual-**

Visual Arts as they pertain to the language policy will take place primarily through the use of graphic art samples(receptive) In a similar manner, graphic art samples will also show students' understanding of concepts(expressive). New technologies will allow for an expanded role within the classroom and beyond as it pertains to a digital presence. This may take shape in the form of blogs, wikis, web pages, and glogs.

### **Oral-**

Speaking(expressive) and listening(receptive) skills continue to develop through collaboration, discussions, and reports. Being productive members of conversations requires 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 imbedded video and audio.

### **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, first-draft text under a tight deadline 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. (ALCOS2011)

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

- reflection on learning and self
- writing throughout the curriculum
- responding to constructed response prompts/questions
- participate in school-wide enrichment
- use the fine arts to increase vocabulary
- use technology in increase communicative circle
- reflect 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
- integrate language across varied curricula
- help students to identify language structures
- encourage students to reflect on language structures beyond form and audience
- embrace alternate forms for student expression including mother tongue development
- provide a physical space which enriches language development
- support positive attitudes toward improved communication skills and provide opportunities to do so
- provide authentic challenges encouraging students to reach their highest potential
- acknowledge differences in student experiences and skills as well as learning styles
- utilize a variety of assessment strategies

Facilitation of language instruction will take place in the following ways:

- implementation of Units of Inquiry
- teachers as facilitators
- teachers as mentors in the writing/speaking process
- implementation of a writing progression through each grade
- encourage socratic discussions among student groups
- model effective language use
- provide authentic learning experiences with student-created presentations
- provide opportunities for student-centered, student-selected research
- model expression of thoughts and feelings
- actively take part in the acquisition of a second language
- encourage parent involvement
- publish student work
- facilitation of student led conferences

### **Mother tongue support**

At TMSE, nearly all students are native English speakers. Nevertheless, TMSE provides any non native speakers with adequate resources from the district level. The system provides an ELL's teacher when needed. Additionally, our library and media program has allotted resources to provide literature in Spanish and additional languages. Students needing additional support in language will receive differentiated instruction from both the classroom teacher and the reading coach.

### **Spanish Instruction**

TMSE provides weekly instruction in Spanish using the Total Physical Response Storytelling(TPRS) program. Students in grades 1-5 are instructed in Spanish through traditional and creative means. The goal of this program is proficiency in the second language. Cultural awareness and understanding are integral to the instruction practices. The use of second languages 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**

Keeping with the Learner Profile and the PYP, TMSE utilizes a language-specific Learner Profile as it pertains to the students and teachers.

**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 affect language has on others

**Principled**-aware that language is powerful and has a profound affect; must use it responsibly

**Balanced**-express themselves orally, visually, and in written form and 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

