

Toomer Elementary School Language Policy



Purpose

Toomer Elementary's language policy is designed to provide guidance for implementation of language instruction and cultural understanding for our students. The Language policy serves as a guiding framework for students, staff, and the greater community. This policy has been developed with input from various school stakeholders in order to incorporate diverse voices and perspectives. This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis to align with school, district, state, and International Baccalaureate philosophy.

Our Epistemological Foundation

At Toomer Elementary School, we believe that language is a window into cultural diversity and should be respected and celebrated whenever possible. To exhibit respect towards the mothering tongues of our students, we affirm and uplift culturally and linguistically diverse students and encourage them to embrace and utilize their native language. Students are provided the opportunity to share their language with peers and internalize the beauty of language and deeper understanding throughout the school day. Our approach to language engenders the belief that language should permeate every aspect of education. Moreover, our ways to celebrate language are through providing foreign language opportunities to our students and appreciating and accepting ebonics and other vernacular that have historically been condemned and considered inferior. We will leverage our platform to disrupt whitewashed practices and policies that minimize our students and their families' experiences and cultures.

Furthermore, we understand the impact of exploring and appreciating different aspects of diverse cultures and languages. With an emphasis on listening, speaking, reading, and writing, we hope to provide students the chance to explore, inquire, and analyze cultures that differ from their families and communities. Therefore Toomer introduces a second language to students as early as Kindergarten. At Toomer, we offer Mandarin to our students as an opportunity to introduce them to the language, calligraphy, and most importantly Chinese culture. Moreover multiculturalism is leveraged to provide students a balanced and inquisitive lens into our greater society. Through our language integration and level of acceptance and curiosity, we attempt to

empower students who speak a different language to share their experiences and expose our students to a myriad of cultural experiences.

We view language from a lens of equity. This means honoring the language profiles all students bring to the table each and every day. We understand that each student arrives at our school with their own unique knowledge and experiences that build and support the community here. This includes their language; our goal at Toomer is to honor and celebrate their personal language profile while integrating these skills into the teaching and learning that happens around language in the classroom.

Identification of Language Needs

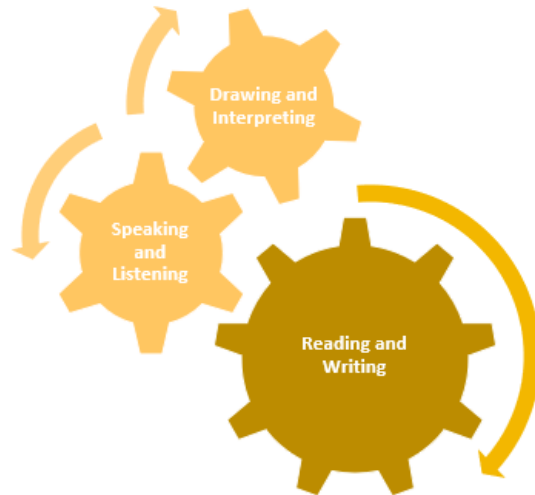
If a child is identified as culturally and linguistically diverse and may need additional support, students will be offered support either through the MTSS process and/or through the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department. The objective of the Atlanta Public School ESOL program is to educate the whole English Learner student by scaffolding language-focused activities to make language as comprehensible as possible. The district level ESOL department offers professional learning for staff and meeting with teachers if necessary.

At Toomer Elementary instructions approaches occur in both ESOL and general education classes. When families register for school at Toomer, they identify whether or not English is the primary language spoken in the home. If this language is not English, these families are given the opportunity to receive language services. This includes translated documents, a translator attending parent/teacher conferences, etc. Supportive instruction includes pull-out services that develop the competencies of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. These skills are addressed through small-group instruction that focuses on phonics instruction, vocabulary review, and comprehension skills in order to enhance students acquisition of the targeted language.

Language Practices

All teachers are responsible for the teaching and learning of language; language instruction does not operate in a silo. On the contrary, we believe language instruction can be viewed as a set of gears working in tandem to cultivate new learning and understanding. These gears include reading, writing, listening, drawing, interpreting, and speaking skills. These are all vital

skills necessary for effective communication and to become productive members of our greater society. We understand that students need several opportunities to grapple with various components of language in order to fully embody the skills necessary to be successful in the classroom and our world.



We primarily utilize the following materials and activities to support English language development at Toomer:

Materials	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● FUNdations● Lexia Core 5● Fountas and Pinnell Curriculum<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Leveled readers○ Leveled Literacy Interventions● Atlanta Public School’s Units of Study● Lucy Calkins Writing Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Explicit phonics instruction● Interactive Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, and Independent Reading● Writing Workshops● Accelerated Reader & Tablet 2 Read

World Language

We support not only the learning of another language, but the culture behind that language. Since Mandarin is our second language being taught at Toomer, we seek to explore the Chinese

culture in a variety of ways, including reading, writing, speaking, and hands-on cultural experiences.

As our chosen language, Mandarin should be integrated into the classroom as much as possible. This includes the labeling of items and materials in Mandarin, the days of the week, and other easily identifiable objects being labeled.

Providing the education surrounding the context of the language and not just the language itself is vital. In alignment with IB pedagogy, context is crucial and necessary in order for true learning and understanding to occur. This builds tolerance and an acceptance and appreciation of those that may look different than us.

Support Staff & Services

Toomer Elementary understands that similar to our students, our staff encompass diverse backgrounds and experiences. We recognize that we must leverage our staff's expertise to implement and sustain practices that advance our student's critical thinking skills. We aim to meet student's need with support of the following programs:

