HARRIET TUBMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AN IB WORLD SCHOOL

Our promise is to provide a nurturing, challenging, and authentic learning environment. We will instill within our students a love of learning by identifying their positive distinctions through academics, the arts, and athletics. We empower students to be responsible, contributing members of an international community through service and action.

Tubman Elementary School International Baccalaureate Primary Years and Middle Years Programme Language Policy

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Section 1: Introduction

Our Mission

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Our Vision

As a result, Tubman students will be lifelong learners who are persistent problem solvers, inquisitive about the world, and have a strong sense of self driven by ongoing reflection. Tubman students will be caring and principled, and possess a foundation of knowledge that equips them to build a more peaceful world.

Language Philosophy

The Tubman vision and mission statement, as well as the IB learner profile attributes, allow students to focus on the qualities of life-long learners who are aware of their language profile and express themselves in more than one language. Multilingualism, or the ability to use more than one language to communicate and navigate the world, is a right and responsibility that is fostered in the students at Tubman. We further believe the learning of language is a shared responsibility within the school community, involving all teachers and staff, students, and parents/guardians. Each member has an important role in supporting active language learning and in the development of an intercultural understanding, both within and across subjects. In an International Baccalaureate programme, the learning of language, about language, and through language is critical in the development of internationally minded students.

Learning of Language:
Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, Tubman students have an opportunity to learn one additional language: Arabic. Our language program is designed to provide all students with the skills and knowledge within the context of a local and global community so they can successfully contribute to and actively participate in the world.

Learning about Language:

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Students explore how language works and become effective communicators who understand their place in a multilingual, global community. Students understand the need to communicate is instinctive and develop an understanding of how to use language in their everyday lives.

Learning through Language:
Students are encouraged to use language as a tool when reading, writing, viewing, presenting, listening, and speaking for a variety of audiences and purposes. Language also serves as a vehicle for the inquiry process where students explore the functional and aesthetic roles it can play in their learning throughout the school day. Teachers support students' learning of language, learning about language, and through language in relevant, engaging, and challenging units of inquiry.

IB Learner Profile Attributes

Tubman students and staff use the IB learner profile attributes to reflect on their growth, their successes, and their needs as learners of an additional language. Through the language and intercultural lens of the IB learner profile attributes, students at Tubman are:

- Thinkers: Students can identify and solve problems in more than one language.
- Risk Takers: Learning an additional language involves taking risks when applying newly learned skills and knowledge within and across subjects.
- Inquirers: Asking questions is an integral part of the language learning process.
- Communicators: Teachers provide students with skills and strategies to help them express themselves, their heritage, and culture at the school.
- Caring: Teachers and students develop an understanding of obstacles faced when acquiring an additional language.Additionally, teachers and students come to understand that cultural norms and traditions may differ, yet are equally valid and valued.
- Knowledgeable: Teachers and students understand that knowledge is transferred from one language to another and therefore, is valued in any form.

School Language Profile (Students and Staff)

The primary academic and instructional language spoken at Tubman Elementary School is English. In alignment with the Common Core State Standards, schoolwide English Language Arts instruction focuses on

the development of literacy, fluency, and comprehension skills necessary for students to effectively communicate for a variety of purposes.

Student Language Profile

The mother tongue of most Tubman students is English. Other languages spoken by students include: Arabic, Bosnian, Chaochow/Teochui (Chinese), Farsi, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Mandarin, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

Staff Language Profile

The languages other than English spoken by Tubman staff include: Arabic, French, Japanese, Greek, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Tagalog.

Language Policy Development

The following key steps were used to develop the language policy:

- Language policy committee established
- Survey of teachers regarding philosophy of teaching language to all students
- Parent language survey to determine the language(s) spoken in the household
- Draft of language policy created
- Feedback of draft from various constituents (leadership team, primary and middle school teachers, reading specialist, language acquisition teachers, bilingual coordinator and governing body)
- Revisions of draft made and policy finalized
- Publication of the language policy to all stakeholders

Annual Review

The IB PYP and MYP teachers and school administration will review this policy annually to make any warranted changes.

Section 2: English Language Learners and Mother Tongue Support

ELL and Bilingual Programming

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Our English Language Learners (ELLs) receive English as a Second Language (ESL) pull out and push in support. If a classroom teacher is endorsed in ESL, support is also provided in a student's homeroom. If there are more than 20 ELL students who speak the same language, we also provide bilingual services to them in their mother tongue. Additionally, many of our staff are bilingual and provide language support throughout the school day. Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue to express their ideas and their learning. For students who are identified as English Language Learners, Tubman teachers plan instruction based on the WIDA Standards and each students' English Language Proficiency level. Additionally, Tubman teachers and staff are exploring how to incorporate translanguaging, or the ability of a student to draw upon multiple languages naturally and flexibly, in the classroom.

We take an additive approach to language and believe students gain language proficiency when provided with the opportunity to use both their mother tongue and their host language. Many Tubman students attend weekend language classes to continue the development of their mother tongue and support is provided in school to ensure students can use their preferred language when communicating with teachers or with their peers. We strive to support and highlight language learning through our annual process fairs, through classroom family visits where culture, tradition, and language are shared with students, as well as through the physical environment. Our school and classroom libraries provide students with texts in their mother tongue, as well as in Arabic, the language program at Tubman.

At Tubman, we support our students and their families whose mother tongue is a language other than English. We encourage families and their children to use and develop their mother tongue at home. We believe that promoting and developing a students' mother tongue can accelerate their rate of English language acquisition, as well as increase their confidence and enhance their international mindset. Therefore, we support the maintenance of students' mother tongue while they acquire an additional language, and when possible, provide parents with the support and resources in their mother tongue.

Section 3: Language Acquisition Program

Instructional Practices for the Provision of Arabic

Students in Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade participate in Arabic programming for 35-70 minutes every five days. Currently, we have two speakers of Arabic on staff. Arabic instruction focuses on all domains of language acquisition: reading, writing, speaking and listening. All four language domains are taught to all phases of learners with a greater focus on listening and speaking in the initial phases, and on reading and

writing in the more advanced phases. Students learn through instructional units of inquiry that are developed according to the Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards, as well as the IB PYP Transdisciplinary Themes and the MYP Global Contexts. These National Standards for Learning Languages focus on communication, cultures, communities, and making connections and comparisons while the IB themes focus on cross-cultural concepts, such as perspective, identity, interconnectedness, form, and function .

Instructional Practices for the Provision of English

In alignment with the Common Core State Standards, we incorporate and ensure a balance of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the English language throughout our Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes.

Reading

We practice a balanced reading approach, which includes comprehension of informational and narrative texts, looking at the vocabulary and parts of speech, exploring language in expository and narrative texts, as well as oral and silent reading fluency in texts.

Writing

We teach students to compose, write and revise expository, narrative and argumentative/persuasive texts on a variety of assigned, as well as self-selected topics. We write for a variety of purposes.

Speaking and Listening

We explicitly teach speaking and listening dialogically, academically, and conversationally. We emphasize active listening and civil discourse as a part of our teaching.

Integration of Language within Subjects

Reading, writing, speaking and listening are utilized in every subject area in the Primary Years and Middle Years programmes. Explicit instruction in how to read primary documents, expository texts, and other required texts, both digital and in print, takes place in every classroom. Students are required to learn and use academic vocabulary in all the disciplines, as well as articulate their ideas and thoughtfully engage in discussions across subject areas. Students are expected to write in the persuasive, expository, and narrative forms in all the

disciplines. Scaffolding and differentiation within these subjects is used to provide all ELs access to the curriculum.

Section 4: Language Supports

At Tubman, it is important we meet the language needs of all our students. In some cases, students may need language support (speaking, listening, reading and/or writing) beyond daily classroom instruction. In this case, Tubman ensures that a variety of school based staff are involved in the process for determining the appropriate language support for a student. These individuals include the Speech/Language Pathologist, the ELL/Bilingual Coordinator, the classroom teachers, the World Language teacher, the Case Manager, and the IB Coordinators.

Language Resources

The learning of language, about language, and through language are supported by a myriad of resources at Tubman School. Students have access to physical resources both in their classroom and in the school library, including books in Spanish, Arabic, and English. The physical environment is also labeled in the Spanish, Arabic, and English so as to promote the recognition of language in its different forms. On staff, we have teachers who speak Arabic, French, Japanese, Mandarin, Greek, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Tagalog. They are available to serve as a language support for students in the classroom, to translate student/parent materials, and upon request, to translate for families during meetings. Students also have access to digital resources throughout the school day. The Chicago Public Schools Libraries and Instructional Technology houses a digital database for students, teachers, and families in multiple languages, and students also have access to books on EPIC in English, Spanish, Chinese, and French. Lastly, teachers are continually exploring ways to integrate students' mother tongue, as well as the additional languages of the school, into the classroom community and daily instruction.

Section 5: Tubman Community Stakeholders

Rights and Responsibilities

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Communication, in its many forms, is integral to the learning experience and development of one's self identity. Therefore, all stakeholders at Tubman School have rights and responsibilities associated with the language learning process, as outlined below:

Students Rights and Responsibilities

- actively participate in their learning
- collaborate with peers and teachers in the learning process
- receive instruction in Arabic and English
- receive additional language supports as determined by a students' IEP, 504, Speech/Language evaluation, or Access scores
- have equal access to resources for the learning of, through, and about language
- receive equitable resources and instruction based on their specific language needs

Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities

- support their child's language acquisition
- understand the language programming at Tubman School
- work with school staff to discuss and determine supports for their child's language learning
- receive materials translated in another language

Teachers/Staff Rights and Responsibilities

- identify students who need additional support in the learning of, through, or about language
- implement supports that provide students with an opportunity to succeed
- integrate in their instruction and classroom the languages of the school, including Arabic
- provide students with an opportunity to communicate in more than one language
- receive ongoing professional development and support to understand, as well as implement the learning of language, the learning through language, and the learning about language

IB Coordinators Rights and Responsibilities

- collaborate with the ELL/Bilingual Coordinator, the Speech/Language Pathologist, the Case Manager, the World Language teachers, and classroom teachers to determine language programming at Tubman School
- ensure teachers and staff understand the learning of language, the learning through language, and the learning about language through professional development
- ensure students have the appropriate physical and virtual resources to support student learning
- annually review and revise the IB PYP/MYP Language Policy based on feedback from all stakeholders

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Administration Rights and Responsibilities

- provide budgetary support for language programming at Tubman School
- collaborate with the ELL/Bilingual Coordinator, the Speech/Language Pathologist, the Case Manager, the World Language teachers, and classroom teachers to determine language programming at Tubman School
- ensure teachers and staff understand the learning of language, the learning through language, and the learning about language through professional development
- ensure students have the appropriate physical and virtual resources to support student learning
- annually review and revise the IB PYP/MYP Language Policy based on feedback from all stakeholders
- access resources and supports at the district level to ensure students, parents, teachers, and staff can confidently implement language programming at the school

Language Professional Development for Staff

All educators at Tubman Elementary School are responsible for supporting the development of student language. Professional development is provided annually to staff by the bilingual coordinator and focuses on supporting all students in their acquisition of the host language, as well as their mother tongue. Previous professional development has focused on the following:

- Determining how ELs are identified
- Assessing and exiting ELs
- Examining teacher misconceptions regarding ELs
- Learning how ELs experience school with and without adequate supports
- Learning the difference between content specific and general academic vocabulary and how to effectively teach both
- Engaging in strategies for providing comprehensible input to ELs
- Scaffolding classwork to make it accessible and meaningful for ELs

Tubman staff also completes a survey regarding their perspectives on cultural and linguistic diversity, which informs future professional development and allows the staff to discuss the instructional practices that best support the language diversity in our school community.

Parental Involvement

Tubman holds a variety of parent events throughout the year, including meetings with the principal and IB Coordinators, as well as classroom presentations and visits. Parents are encouraged to share their cultural

heritage and their family traditions. Parents and students are also surveyed annually to determine their cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds, which is used by teachers to help identify connections between and amongst students in the school community. This information is also used to target our library book purchases and to focus our classroom cultural studies throughout the year.

Communication of Language Policy

The following are ways Tubman will communicate the Language Policy to its community:

- All PYP and MYP teachers will be given the opportunity to review the policy with IBC.
- The IBC will share the policy with the governing body.
- The language policy will be available on the school's website

Section 6: Glossary

Host Language: The host language is the language of the school in which it is located. Tubman's host language is English.

Intercultural: Occurs between or involves two or more cultures.

Language Acquisition: Language acquisition describes the process in which a person learns a language and the communication skills, either in their mother tongue or in a foreign language.

Language Phase: Students are placed in phases, which reflects their level of fluency in a language There are six phases, and these are not dependent on a student's year level.

Language Proficiency: Language proficiency is a measurement of how well an individual has mastered a language. There are four domains to language proficiency: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Mother-Tongue: The language a student uses at home and/or outside of the classroom/school environment. This term includes other terms, such as: first language, home language, native language, and heritage language. This term also includes American Sign Language (ASL).

Multilingualism: The use of more than one language by a speaker.

Translanguaging: Translanguaging is a process in which students draw on known languages, naturally and flexibly, combining their elements to meet communicative and social needs.

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Response to Intervention (RtI): Response to Intervention is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs.

Section 7: Works Cited

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*Reviewed September 17, 2026