**Eleanor Tinsley Elementary School**

**Language Policy**

This document's purpose is to outline the role that language plays at Eleanor Tinsley Elementary School. It aims to define our ideology about language all while articulating our teaching pedagogy and teaching practices. In addition, this policy reflects our Mission Statement:

Eleanor Tinsley Elementary School provides the foundation to empower each scholar to become a life-long learner with the skills needed to thrive in today's global society.

At Eleanor Tinsley, we believe:

* Language is a manifestation of culture and enriches our understanding and tolerance of others that differ from us.
* Diversity in language and literacy is respected and appreciated.
* Language is essential to all learning for the construct of meaning to form.
* Language is not only spoken but is also written and can be non-verbally expressed.
* All campus teachers and staff members are language teachers and learners.
* Literacy must be present in all areas of learning, including math, art, music, technology, science, and physical education.

In agreement with the above beliefs, we use language to develop meaning and discover understanding or truth. We use language to communicate, discover, learn, express our varying beliefs and values. We use language to express ideas, hear different points of view as well as reconsider our own theories. Language is the foundation of culture and it is important to sustain one’s mother tongue not only for cultural preservation but for educational development. Tinsley Elementary honors the various home languages that are present in our community. The main languages spoken in our community are Spanish and English. Both languages are often seen and heard in the classroom setting.

Single subject teachers display anchor charts, PearDeck slides and often discuss academic vocabulary in both languages. Students have an opportunity to socialize with students who speak another language other than their own. Students are also strategically partnered if feasible so that there is a bilingual student present when working in groups.

In the lower grade bilingual classroom setting students receive the majority of their instruction in their mother tongue. The average split is 80/20 with Spanish being the majority. In the transitional classroom the language split is 60/40. As students progress into upper grades you may witness a reverse split of 80/20 with English being the main language and Spanish being used as a support. Though the idea is to exit students from the bilingual construct, we still make it a point to pay homage and allow students to represent their home country and languages on campus with various cultural events and projects. There is an importance to keep the mother tongue while exposing students to a second language as much as possible. Teachers receive ongoing professional development to equip them with strategies that can be used when teaching language arts and ESL. Our commitment is to enhance student ability to communicate clearly and confidently.