



SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jaime Alicea, Superintendent of Schools

John T. Roberts PreK-8 School

John Devendorf, Principal

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program Language Policy

The Roberts School Mission

To provide the students of Roberts School with a high-quality education that will produce inquiring, knowledgeable, active citizens and leaders from our diverse community while developing lifelong learners, positive relationships and creating a culture of pride, respect, caring, compassion, and social responsibility

Philosophy

At John T. Roberts PK-8, we believe that:

- All students will benefit from a shared commitment to language acquisition in all classes and across all subjects.
- Language is a fundamental means of communication and learning.
- Language is an expression of culture and must be valued.
- Students must develop competency in reading, writing, listening, speaking, design, and technology.
- Language learning promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding.
We believe that every staff member is a language teacher.
- Teachers must strive to recognize the language needs of all students and work to serve these needs within and outside of the classroom.

School Profile

The vast majority of students at John T. Roberts PK-8 were born in the United States and speak American Standard English as their mother tongue. There is a small, but growing population of new English Language learners (ELL). Students originate from over 15 countries including several African nations, Latin American and Asian countries. There are approximately 10 languages spoken. Students are categorized into different language acquisition groups based on their English language proficiency: entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, and commanding. The ELL students are supported by three teachers specializing in English Language acquisition. Students are supported in language, academics and cultural assimilation through designated courses entering and emerging students are also supported through the ELL teacher integrated and stand-alone models. The goal is to achieve proficiency in English language reading, writing, listening, and speaking as rapidly as possible.

Mother Tongue

- Many of our students enter their Language Acquisition (Spanish) class in Phase 1 of the Language Acquisition Continuum. Occasionally, a student enters J.T. Roberts at Phases 2-6 as a native Spanish speaker. When this occurs, we work to individualize the education plan for these students and develop their skills in reading comprehension and/or writing. Many of the mother tongue Spanish speakers come to us with strong verbal skills, but lacking in

grammar, organization, and reading comprehension skills. This affords them the opportunity to grow holistically.

Language and Literature

Students enrolled in John T. Robert's Language and Literature classes will use language to better understand themselves and the world around them. They will explore other ways of thinking, become critical, literate, creative, and lifelong readers, writers, listeners, and speakers.

- Language and Literature will be taught in English. It is the language of instruction for all courses, except those taught in our Language Acquisition Department. All exams are given in English, unless the student has a demonstrated accommodation for another language.
- Students whose native language is not English receive additional services (ELL).
- All students are required to take English Language Arts courses every year of enrollment.
- The Syracuse City School District Language and Literature curriculum is aligned to the NYS standards and the IB MYP written curriculum-required components. The curriculum emphasizes skill development in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in conjunction with intellectual, inquiry-based exploration.
- Students who receive special education services receive support in the classroom as well as by a special education teacher.

Language Acquisition

Through the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, John T. Roberts School Language Acquisition students will communicate effectively in a target language. Language Acquisition instruction supports the MYP concept of International-mindedness and develop the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. The study of language involves the study of and appreciation for other cultures and perspectives. This awareness will allow our students to view the world as a collection of people from different experiences; students will know that citizens of our country have a unique place in the world. Our school motto is: "Together, Our Differences Make Us Great!"

- All students in years 1-3 will be offered Spanish instruction.
- The Language Acquisition lessons, objectives, and standards are aligned to the New York State Standards and the IB MYP objectives and criteria.
- The study of language, culture, and geography begins in with our year 1 students and will be carried into high school with specific language courses offered up to and including Grade 12.

Language skills, although not required beyond one credit for graduation from a NYS school, are fundamental to the appreciation of global citizenship. Further, language study develops perspective and is, in of itself, an employable skill.

Acknowledgments

- Howard Middle School (Marion, GA) Language Policy
- San Antonio Independent School District Longfellow Middle Years Program (MYP) Language Policy
- MYP: From principles into practice. 2014. International Baccalaureate Organization
- Thomas J. Corcoran (Syracuse, NY) Language Policy