

U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [X] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Jeanne Rickard Burkhalter

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools - Elementary

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 315 McFarland Blvd East

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Tuscaloosa State AL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 35404-3838

County Tuscaloosa County State School Code Number* 0050

Telephone 205-759-3655 Fax 205-759-3658

Web site/URL http://tmse.tuscaloosacityschools.com/pages/tmse E-mail jburkhal@tusc.k12.al.us

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Paul McKendrick E-mail: Pmckendr@tusc.k12.al.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Tuscaloosa City Tel. 205-759-3700

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Lee Garrison
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 22 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	20	35	55
2	22	34	56
3	24	32	56
4	27	33	60
5	31	28	59
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	124	162	286

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 48 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 48 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 5%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	301
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.047
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0%
0 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 7
 Specify non-English languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, German, Spanish, Gujarati and Bengali
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%
 Total number students who qualify: 0

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

TMSE students come from all over our district. Each year our percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced meals changes. During our first year we had 46% of our students receiving free or reduced meal. Last year the percentage was closer to 35%

9. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
7 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

- 0Autism 0Orthopedic Impairment
0Deafness 0Other Health Impaired
0Deaf-Blindness 0Specific Learning Disability
0Emotional Disturbance 7Speech or Language Impairment
0Hearing Impairment 0Traumatic Brain Injury
0Mental Retardation 0Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0Multiple Disabilities 0Developmentally Delayed

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	15
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	0%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes_ No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

PART III – SUMMARY

Tuscaloosa Magnet School Elementary (TMSE) is best represented as a cross-stitch picture in which students appear as brightly colored threads woven together on a simple cloth. Teachers have a vision of the picture they are creating, although when you flip to the backside of the cloth, it is a mass of knots and tangled threads. Our mission is to embrace each student and seek to understand how they complement the picture and help them find their part in the overall design. Some days our bright and energetic students are weaving through the classroom, engaged and excited about their learning and encouraging each other. On other days, we are tying knots and untangling threads as we reflect on ways to motivate and challenge our students.

Seven years ago the Tuscaloosa City Board of Education laid the foundation for TMSE, a system-wide academic magnet school. Teams of teachers, parents, and administrators visited a variety of schools to determine what is working in education today. Now in our fifth school year, students from all over the district apply to TMSE. Entry requirements specify students perform on or near grade level in reading and math. Teacher screeners and standardized tests in the upper and lower grades are used to determine eligibility including 7% of each city school. This provides us with wonderful diversity in race, social economic level, and gender. TMSE serves 280 students in first through fifth grade with over 40% qualifying for free or reduced lunches. Student population is 51% African American, 45% Caucasian, 2% Asian and 2% Hispanic.

Acknowledging the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our students, TMSE is built upon a foundation of promoting student learning through the fabric of school-wide enrichment. This fosters the unique giftedness of each child by providing enrichment experiences for every student regardless of their intellectual level. Our enrichment is a unique, student-centered program that stimulates learning and expands student interests. For example, every Tuesday afternoon our school transforms into a creative marketplace known as U of A Partnership that includes partners from the community, the University of Alabama, and parents. Students select one class each semester, including choices such as dance, geology, violin, yoga, robotics, French, knitting, medieval times, chess, drama, soccer, journalism, guitar, and recorder. The students transfer these common experiences into a catalyst for reading, writing, and research.

Other enrichment experiences unique to TMSE include weekly learning opportunities for students in grades one through five. Music, art, foreign language, library, physical education, and gifted enrichment are infused into our daily curriculum. Field trips and demonstrations deepen students' understanding of subject matter curricula. After school programs are taught by our teachers for students who choose to participate. In addition to these weekly offerings, occasional events such as PTA themed nights, fun runs, festivals, and Exhibition complete our whole child approach to learning.

In March 2013, TMSE completed the authorization process for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP). IB authorization involved collaboration, training, creation of IB planners, and meetings with the IB review board, all with the intent to improve student learning. The PYP is a transdisciplinary program of inquiry in which all disciplines are connected to a single central idea that is conceptually based. Each unit of inquiry is based on the Alabama and Common Core Standards and is enhanced with a rich, global perspective. Under the umbrella of IB, the five foundational components in our program are technology, project based learning, foreign language, integrated arts, and service learning. In January 2014, TMSE received the CLAS Banner award. In order to receive this award, a school must be nominated by the district superintendent for exemplifying an outstanding educational program. The Council for Leaders of Alabama Schools selects 10 schools to highlight yearly.

Just as cross-stitching requires a skilled eye and intensive labor, so has been the journey of TMSE. Through the expertise of our principal and a highly dedicated staff, our school has transformed from a blank canvas into an intricate, beautiful product. Although some of our days are spent tying knots and untangling threads, we know that the end result will be a masterpiece – our children.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Students at Tuscaloosa Magnet School Elementary grades 3rd, 4th and 5th have taken the Alabama Reading and Math Test, known as the ARMT test for the past four years. This test has been given statewide to students in grades 3rd through 8th in Alabama each spring since the inception of the school. The ARMT assesses students' mastery of state content standards in reading and mathematics and provides reports of individual and group performance. The ARMT also supplies details about relative strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups and provides data to study changes in performances over time.

The ARMT is a criterion-referenced test. It consists of selected items from the Stanford Achievement Test (Stanford 10) which matches the Alabama state content standards in reading and mathematics. Additional test items were developed so that all content standards were fully covered. It is this combination of Stanford 10 items and newly developed items that make up the ARMT. The ARMT has a 100% alignment to the Alabama state content standards in reading and mathematics. Performance on the ARMT test is reported in the following achievement levels:

- Level I – Does not meet academic content standards
- Level II – Partially meets academic content standards
- Level III – Meets academic content standards (proficient or grade-level performance)
- Level IV – Exceeds academic content standards

The state considers students with ARMT scores at Level III and Level IV as being proficient or on grade level. As a school, our goal is for the majority of our students to be at a Level IV which signifies that they are scoring above grade level.

In the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, the ARMT tests remained unchanged and provide a side by side comparison. However, beginning in spring 2013 the content of the ARMT test changed. The new test was called the ARMT Plus test and students were tested on content related to the new Common Core standards. Teachers in the system had not yet begun to teach relative to common core standards, so scores on the 2013 ARMT Plus test dipped slightly, compared to previous years. The ARMT Plus test is no longer in use. This year beginning in spring 2014, students will be assessed using the ACT Aspire test, a computer-based, longitudinal assessment system that portrays growth and progress from elementary grades through high school.

About 85.7% of all third grade students exceeded the ARMT standards and 14.3% met the standards. There was no significant difference in scores based on the students' ethnicity. However, the students on free lunch scored slightly lower than students on paid lunch. In fourth grade, taking all students into account, 85.7% of fourth grade students exceeded the ARMT standards and 14.3% met the standards. In the fourth grade there was no difference between the scores of students on free lunch and students who paid for their lunch. There was also no significant difference in scores based on the students' ethnicity. In the fifth grade, taking all students in to account, about 68% of 5th grade students exceeded the ARMT standards and 30% met the standards. The students on free or reduced lunch performed slightly lower than students on paid lunch and there was no significant difference in students' scores based on students' ethnicity. Last year's 5th grade students' scores were overall slightly lower due to the change in testing and introduction of the ARMT Plus test. Overall students in grades 3, 4, and 5 at Tuscaloosa Magnet School Elementary are performing very well with close to 100% of the students exceeding or meeting the standards.

One way we are seeking to close the achievement gap between students receiving free and reduced lunch and students who pay for their lunch is by implementing curriculum compacting for students in grades third, fourth and fifth. Teachers administer pretests aligned with common core standards and adapt instruction to meet individual learning needs of students and adjusted to common core standards. By evaluating students' prior knowledge teachers will be able to focus instruction to meet students' individual needs and learning goals.

Another part of this strategy is to educate teachers about the new requirements of Common Core, Alabama Plan 2020, and ACT Aspire. We are in the process of comparing the new requirements with the old ones of the ARMT. We are also examining our IB unit plans, lesson plans, assessments, and other assignments to find out how they can be modified to fit the new requirements of Common Core and the end of the year assessment ACT Aspire.

We are focused on providing a support network for those students that need additional assistance. Counselors, specialists, and support staff are all part of the collaborative effort of intervention and encouragement we provide students. In addition, we keep portfolios to help students set their own personal academic goals. Teachers use these as personal interest inventories for students to adapt and grow as they progress through their years at school. Students are encouraged to make their families and their community experiences a part of their personal learning portfolio, and teachers provide families with opportunities to contribute to classroom learning by sharing their particular family dynamics or cultural differences and perspectives with the students' classes and teachers.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Our school implements a variety of methods for analyzing student data to effectively maximize student performance. At the school-wide level, we meet before the students arrive to review the previous year's standardized testing scores and anecdotal notes from teachers. In this way, a classroom teacher has prior knowledge of the students in his or her classroom and can prepare and differentiate accordingly. Another useful school-wide assessment is the utilization of student portfolios. By keeping student and teacher selected pieces from each unit of study, teachers are able to authentically understand a student's strengths and opportunities to grow.

Assessments and their implications vary from the primary grades to the upper grades. First and second grade assess at the beginning of the year in all the major disciplines. Examples of these include: DRA, DIBELS, Words Their Way, and Classworks. The information gained from each assessment is valuable in planning instruction. Teachers are able to place children in small groups for individualized, differentiated instruction throughout the year. These groups are fluid—meaning that students are never “stuck” in the same place for the duration of the school year, but are able to move to new groups as needed based on demonstration of mastery.

In the upper grades, pre-assessment is crucial to maintaining an engaging, developmentally-appropriate learning environment. With the help of the Gifted Education Specialist, teachers in the upper grades use formative and summative assessments to horizontally (across the grade's curriculum) and vertically (depth of knowledge) challenge our students' academic understanding. For example, based on the system-wide reading screener, Classworks, high-performing students are able to participate in a lunchtime book group while students performing on-grade-level are able to have texts selected specifically for their needs.

All grades pre-assess at the beginning of the year before teaching math concepts as well as throughout the year. Teachers use this data in particular to implement Curriculum Compacting—a practice that allows for individualized instruction. Information about student data is shared with stakeholders through local media via our school system. At the school and classroom level, however, the most effective means of communication is conferences—both student-led and teacher-directed. In essence, we use data from all types of assessments to best serve our students as an individual, meeting them where they are on the academic continuum and striving to place the emphasis on the child, not the skills.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Visitors are a regular part of our daily life at TMSE—so much that our students never miss a beat when we have two or thirty visitors crammed into a classroom. Our district specialists, as well as other school districts observe classroom instructional methods and implement our best practices into their schools and classrooms. The University of Alabama School of Education sends many students to our class rooms to examine our project-based learning methods incorporated across the curriculum.

Having completed IB PYP authorization sets us apart from school districts in our area. Recently fifteen administrators and teachers engaged in the IB PYP authorization process spent time with us observing, asking questions and engaging with teachers. There is a network among IB schools for supporting each other through this very tedious process.

The faculty at TMSE contributes to teaching and learning in a variety of ways. Four teachers serve as Clinical Master teachers for the University of Alabama. These teachers are solely responsible for supervising university students in their final internship. Two teachers are certified trainers with The Alabama, Math, Science and Technology Initiative. This very successful program instructs teachers in hands-on learning practices for science and math. Two teachers offer classes through The University of Alabama to education students on technology integration in the classroom.

Our physical education teachers have taken gym class to a whole new level. Both teachers have been so successful in teaching the Health Related Fitness curriculum model that they train other schools in their research-based practices. Additionally, one of our PE teachers partners with The University of Alabama to instruct college students on proper implementation of the Health Related Fitness curriculum. This same teacher began a statewide initiative called PUSH (Positively, Uplifting School Health). Schools across Alabama participate in this program designed to encourage a healthy, active lifestyle among employees. She has also just returned from Washington, D.C. where she lobbied Congress to mandate physical education into the core curriculum like math and reading.

The Faculty at TMSE pushes beyond our classroom walls to share what we have learned from our experiences. We continue to grow as learners ourselves and as we model this for our students, we know they will share with others all they have learned.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

From the beginning, we had an understanding that our school's success depended on relationships. Our rapport with students is primary, but creating and sustaining an inclusive environment for families and community stakeholders is essential. Our school provides incredibly enriching learning opportunities that exceed what is required by state and national standards for our students. A natural extension of this is providing families and the community with the same experiences.

Familial involvement in student learning is crucial to students' academic careers. Annually, we provide families with the tools needed to support their child at home through Math Night, Reading Night, and PTA-Sponsored Science Night. These experiences help families understand the unique ways in which we instruct through student-guided, hands-on participation. In this way, students demonstrate understanding by becoming a "teacher." "Bring Your Parent to Work Day" also offers families an opportunity to appreciate and participate in their child's day at school.

Nurturing a relationship with the Tuscaloosa community has also contributed to student success. We take advantage of the close proximity to The University of Alabama in many ways. Professors frequently offer their unique and varied knowledge to the students through guest lectures, leading activities in classrooms based on units of study, and providing teachers with resources to enhance their instruction. Our school also piloted and implemented a unique learning experience called UA Partnerships. Weekly, the students attend classes led by instructors from UA in areas of their interest including: Anthropology, Violin, Guitar, Yoga, Drama, Geology, Journalism, Robotics, Medieval Studies, Foreign Languages and Cultures, and more. Another way that community involvement leads to student success is through our partnership with The Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility. Through this program, our students in grades 2-5 are afforded the chance to learn the game of Chess, which helps students to think strategically, inventively, and critically.

Our students play an integral role in family and community engagement. Fifth graders – with community mentors - host Exhibition as a service-learning event that synthesizes all knowledge and experiences gained through their time at TMSE. The Student Council links students to the community through fundraisers and

participation in local events. Teachers, too, ensure families are connected with their child's classrooms through regular newsletters, websites, and social media.

Family and community partnerships afford students necessary opportunities to become vital members of a global society. Experiencing success beyond academics is fundamental in our philosophy of educating the whole child.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The foundational framework for our curriculum is the International Baccalaureate practices and standards for the Primary Years Programme. Additionally, we utilize the standards adopted by the Alabama State Department of Education, which were rewritten this school year and implement the College and Career Readiness Standards.

Primarily, the goals of the IBO are as follows: to provide a rigorous academic program; to provide a global perspective; to assure high standards common to schools worldwide; to develop individual interests and talents in students; to encourage critical and compassionate thinkers and to promote community citizenship and service.

These goals emerge in the general classroom in numerous ways. Because our status as an academic magnet school calls for rigor in instruction and achievement, we strive to use the guidelines in ways that are innovative, progressive, and transformative to education. We want students to demonstrate an appreciation of the world, to be curious about learning, to make judgments based on reasoned principles, and to be able to defend their judgment.

Another dominant factor in our school's curriculum is the research-based philosophy of project-based instruction. Teachers at TMSE are skilled at building formative and summative projects to not only assess mastery, but also as a means of teaching content. We believe that the IBO's transdisciplinary skills-- including assuming a variety of group roles, research, dialectical thought, synthesis, acquisition of knowledge, and presenting information-- are necessary for life as a global citizen. Projects are utilized on every grade level and in every core subject. They also provide students with real-world experiences to make sense of what they are learning. Finally, projects are an organic means of teaching the technology standards outlined in the ELA portion of the College and Career Readiness Standard.

Reading at the Tuscaloosa Magnet School engages students through texts and novels that are appropriate for their level. This is not done through a scripted program or basal reader, but through an individualized, interest-based approach. Our Book Room is full of exciting books that are checked out by teachers to use in small groups with students. Within the small groups in the primary grades, students work on skills that are proven to be a need through pre-assessment. The books used in small group are often followed by the students creating projects to show their comprehension of the story or characters. In upper grades, the same process is followed for selection of books in small groups. However, the learning experience is conducted by the teacher or students leading literature circles. Non-fiction texts are also included in the Book Room and supplement the units of inquiry in a meaningful, unforced way.

Teachers across grade levels began using Lucy Calkin's Common Core Workshop curriculum to directly focus all students on four key areas in writing. The progression follows students year after year, ultimately preparing them for advance writing in their secondary education. The writing process incorporated into each classroom works in distinct phases. The majority of a teacher's focus is small groups and mini-lessons. The belief with this program is all students, not just those with innate talent, can learn to write well. Spelling is incorporated into all components of writing. Younger grades focus on individualized spelling through a weekly word study. In upper grades, spelling and vocabulary are embedded across the curriculum. Direct grammar instruction begins in first grade and becomes more transparent as the student progress through each grade. As student advance as writers, teachers address grammar as it occurs in each subject.

At TMSE, math instruction is rooted in the mathematical practice standards from the NCTM, the Investigation Program-Common Core Edition. We encourage a foundational understanding of number sense, base ten operations, skilled computation, and abstract thinking, while not focusing on a standard algorithm. The Common Core emphasizes this way of understanding mathematics, and we strive to reinforce it in our classrooms. Manipulatives, a variety of strategies for solving, and technology-enhanced lessons make our math curriculum one that is recognized in our system and state as exemplary.

Science and Social Studies serve as means of integrating all disciplines into our six transdisciplinary themes. The diversity of ethnic backgrounds in our student population enables teachers to authentically present global instruction to our students. Using the state and IBO standards, we usually write our units of inquiry around these two core subjects. Teachers on each grade level are certified in the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative that provides teachers with training and supplies to effectively teach science in their classrooms. A final, critical point of application for Science and Social Studies at TMSE is the idea of inquiry-based learning. This approach encourages students to articulately question the concepts explored in class and to make sense of them through their own research.

2. Reading/English:

At TMSE, we take an individualized approach to reading that engages students using texts and novels appropriate for their level. We opted not to use a commercial, scripted program based on the demographics and assessment data of students entering our school.

Prior to entering our school in first grade, teachers complete pre-assessments on each student to determine their unique reading skills and needs. In subsequent years, teachers analyze previous data to create differentiated instructional plans for each student. In this way, we address all of the Common Core Standards and teach children individually based on their skill set. The goal of this method of instruction is to develop students as independent readers who can apply reading strategies to learning with scaffolding from the teacher.

One unique tool developed by teachers is our Book Room. This room is stocked with varied texts using the leveling system founded by Fountas and Pinnell. Using these resources, teachers choose books based on students' individual reading needs. Progress is monitored by visually displaying each child's name on a learning continuum and moving their name as they progress. Teachers continually assess mastery by compiling running records using guided reading text.

If you walk into a TMSE classroom, you will not see each teacher on the same page of a basal reader. You might, however, observe a mini-lesson to focus students on a reading strategy before they practice the skill on their own by writing or in small groups with discussion. You may also see students giving oral presentations or engaging in Literature Circles using meaningful texts or novels related to the unit of study. You will witness teachers leading small group instruction or providing one-on-one instruction to ensure that each student has mastered the skills necessary to become an independent reader. Lastly, you will observe students exploring non-fiction texts and making connections between the various disciplines and their units of inquiry.

For students above grade level, our school offers a variety of support. In the upper grades, students are assessed using a universal screener, and using that data, a school specialist leads a lunch time "Book Bunch" focusing on complex books of interest to high level readers. The classroom teachers select texts appropriate for each child's zone of proximal development and utilize technological resources, such as Edmodo, to guide further differentiation. Regardless of the starting point, our reading instruction leads students to the next level.

3. Mathematics:

One unique aspect of our math instruction is that it is not bound to a 60-minute block of time each day. Instead math is integrated with science, social studies, or any other subject where there is a natural fit. In an effort to make sure that students have a firm understanding of mathematical standards, teachers at TMSE implement a variety of research-based practices that deepen the mathematical comprehension of our students. Using an inquiry-based approach centered on the Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), teachers encourage students to construct viable arguments and defend their mathematical reasoning. Although students must attend to precision when solving problems, emphasis is placed on the process in which the answer is found and the defense of reasoning to achieve the answer.

When the foundational understanding is mastered, students are introduced to traditional algorithms of numerical operation.

In a practical sense, math instruction follows this routine: pre-assessment, analysis, and implementation. At the beginning of each math unit, teachers administer a pre-assessment. Using this data, an instructional plan is developed for each student, based on skills mastered, skills to be reinforced, and skills to be taught. Students are placed in groups based on the pre-assessment data—curriculum compacting, general instruction, or remediation. Compacting allows students who have mastered the pre-assessment concepts to move at a quicker pace and deepen understanding of content through an alternate learning plan. For students receiving general instruction, a typical day could showcase third graders spread out on the floor measuring the area and perimeter of real-world objects, fourth grade students using shapes to add fractions with unlike denominators, or first graders using dominoes to create number sense. Teachers facilitate these activities through higher-order questioning and noticing and correcting misconceptions. Students needing remediation experience one-on-one time with their teacher and technology-based reinforcement as needed.

Our methods of instruction have had a positive effect on our students and become an integral part of our academic program. Because of this, other schools in our system observe our classrooms regularly and our students' math scores are currently the sixth highest in the state. Most importantly, however, our students are developing the skills necessary to become critical, analytical, and enthusiastic math students.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

No discussion of curriculum at TMSE would be complete without including our physical education department. All students in our school receive 40 minutes of physical activity daily. Our program focuses on developing the entire body including the physical, mental, social, and emotional aspects and stressing the importance of the IB learner profile.

The focus of our PE program is on two different areas of physical education. First, Health Related Fitness focuses on improving the child's health, fitness, self-esteem, and overall enjoyment of physical activity. Twice a week, students participate in cardio activities such as running track, Zumba, and aerobics. For the remainder of the week, students in grades 1-3 focus primarily on learning the basic skills involved in most sports and games. The model incorporates skills and activities such as kicking, throwing, catching, locomotor movements, dance, and gymnastics. In grades 4-5, we use the Sport Education curriculum model to introduce the students to four new sports in which they have little experience. This model integrates all aspects of the sports, including the actual game, positions that are involved within the sport (coach, captains, equity officers, etc.), as well as a nine week season that includes team practices and a tournament playoff. The emphasis in sports education is always sportsmanship. We also stress the importance of intra- and inter-team relationships and problem solving that is effective and respectful to peers.

In addition, we encourage students' involvement in physical activity outside of school. We hold three different fun runs for the students (Kick-off Classic, Jingle Bell Run, and Shamrock Shuffle) where the students dress festively and take part in a race course around the campus. Faculty and parents are invited to participate with our students. Taking it further, students across grade levels take part in the Birmingham Mercedes Kids Marathon, promoting lifelong physical activity. Our newest additions – a rock climbing wall, slack line, and several other nontraditional activities encourage exploration beyond the school gymnasium.

Physical education plays an integral component of the overall educational experience at TMSE. Research supports a correlation between increased physical activity and higher academic performance among children.

5. Instructional Methods:

At TMSE we provide differentiated instruction with the diversity of our students in mind. We approach every learner as an individual. In doing so, we are careful to assess content understanding prior to

instruction. From these pre-assessments, we ascertain students' individual needs and develop instruction to cover the content necessary for mastery or for enrichment.

In cases where children demonstrate mastery prior to instruction, we utilize curriculum compacting to increase the depth and complexity of the core content and concepts. Students select from a menu of activities that will expand the content or allow them to move through material at an accelerated pace. For example, one group of third grade students is studying algebraic equations. This is content well above grade level because students demonstrated mastery of third grade multiplication and division.

By pre-assessing students' content knowledge, we are able to provide individualized and small group instruction for students working toward mastery. Knowing students' learning gaps and using small group instruction for specific content areas allows students to progress at a pace that is right for them. Through ongoing, formative assessments, teachers review students' individual progress and reteach concepts as needed.

For students with special learning needs and accommodations, we meet as a team including parents, teachers, administrator and the student, each nine weeks to review the action plan to make sure that students' unique needs are being addressed. Some of the strategies we have implemented include individualized tutoring (during and after school), testing accommodations, increased time for assignments, and use of school computer for writing assignments.

The creation of individualized learning plans allows for increased depth of understanding. Technology is part of that framework, and we encourage students to use technology both as a form of expression and as a method of instructional delivery. This includes directing them to online learning resources such as TenMarks. Since we do not use traditional textbooks much of student reading, researching, and writing is completed using online resources. All teachers incorporate online resources including Edmodo to direct student learning. All teachers also utilize classroom Promethean Boards and related technology daily to increase student learning and engagement.

Lastly, providing students with weekly instruction through the lens of art, music and science is closing achievement gaps between socially and economically diverse groups. Our collaborative schoolwide enrichment model has expanded our students' vision of their abilities. Cooperative learning groups and project based learning strategies have connected our students to real-world applications of knowledge.

6. Professional Development:

At TMSE, teachers are as active in the learning process as the students. Our school is a model for job-embedded professional development that is authentic, ongoing, and directly impacts student learning. Each week, teachers meet collaboratively on these topics: IB planners, visible thinking, technology integration, project based instruction, writing, assessment, and differentiation. In addition, teachers engage across disciplines with specialists to fully integrate instruction of the arts in every subject. At TMSE you will see music instruction taking place in Spanish class or see a geometry lesson in art. As a result of this integrated approach to teaching, student learning is seamless, moving fluidly between disciplines and subject areas. Our students participate in authentic learning and make real-world connections that are not possible when subjects are taught in isolation.

Each year, we choose a specific goal to improve student learning. One year it was technology, and we adjusted class size to free up a teacher unit, allowing one teacher to train students and teachers in new programs, such as Edmodo, Prezi and Glogster. Other years it was creating our IB units of inquiry. This year, we are seeking to improve students' writing skills and are piloting schoolwide implementation of the Lucy Caulkins writing program.

Individually teachers are pursuing personal professional development at their own expense. Out of our faculty of 21, there are currently eight National Board Certified Teachers. There are three more teachers engaged in the application process. The support system for developing teacher efficacy at TMSE is evident.

The culture created by this approach to teaching and learning helps foster the ultimate goal in all schools: to create lifelong learners in all students. Because teachers at TMSE exemplify this trait openly, it is easy to understand why our program is so successful with regards to parent support and involvement, student achievement, and teacher confidence. This is our pattern for success in education. Our teachers push themselves to develop their craft and never settle for the status quo. In fact, the aim is to reach new limits to set higher standards. There is no competition among teachers to outshine each other. Instead, the culture is to build up one another and develop the whole school as one cohesive program. This is only possible in a unique program that supports and encourages professional collaboration, and with it the development of its teachers.

7. School Leadership

Shared ownership leads to shared leadership. Each individual on our staff has a specific purpose and unique ability, and understands we cannot operate alone. Therefore, we function together as a cohesive unit, building on each other's strengths and compensating for each other's weaknesses. Together, we are a purposeful and living reminder of the need we have for one another.

Our principal is responsible for focusing our vision in a unique learning environment. She empowers us with the ability to authentically affect change in our classrooms and gives us guidance-- but also freedom and confidence-- to develop as teachers. Working in tandem with our principal is the International Baccalaureate coordinator. He provides a balance between our Common Core curriculum and the IB Primary Years Programme. By ensuring that teachers are reflective about their practice and initiating discussion to assure continued progress, he enhances student achievement. The school counselor exhibits compassion for students and their families, and she helps us gauge the socio-emotional and academic needs of our students by making connections with our students and their families.

In addition to the aforementioned roles of our school leadership, teachers work together to enrich the lives of every child in their spheres of influence. They do not function independently or competitively but work cohesively with one another to increase student learning. Our enrichment specialist sets programs in place that support students' learning and guides teachers to develop curriculum that increase the depth and complexity of content. She helps students to make real-world connections and engage in authentic learning experiences.

The support staff, too, plays an integral role in school leadership. Our school secretary and her volunteer staff are vital components in keeping our building functional and organized. TMSE's PTA is the window through which the community views our school. They have provided technology, a school playground, and countless hours in our classrooms as they have our students at the heart of their purpose. As a leadership team, we impact every student in academics and in life skills.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: ARMT

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Pearson Harcourt

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	97	100	91	
% Advanced	86	77	84	61	
Number of students tested	56	61	57	64	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	90	100	88	
% Advanced	71	65	75	50	
Number of students tested	18	20	16	32	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	93	100	89	
% Advanced	77	59	80	53	
Number of students tested	26	22	30	38	
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or					

Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	91	
% Advanced	92	91	88	100	
Number of students tested	25	32	26	23	
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math
All Students Tested/Grade: 4
Publisher:

Test: ARMT
Edition/Publication Year: 2011

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	98	91	95	95	
% Advanced	82	58	66	66	
Number of students tested	55	55	61	58	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	89	92	93	
% Advanced	64	44	52	57	
Number of students tested	14	18	25	28	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	90	94	94	
% Advanced	70	43	53	52	
Number of students tested	20	30	34	33	
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	92	95	96	
% Advanced	91	75	82	83	
Number of students tested	32	24	22	24	
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: ARMT

All Students Tested/Grade: 5

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher:

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	98	97	
% Advanced	69	83	77	70	
Number of students tested	59	60	65	64	
Percent of total students tested	98	98	100	100	
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	96	96	
% Advanced	43	76	71	50	
Number of students tested	21	21	28	26	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	97	96	
% Advanced	61	78	69	48	
Number of students tested	31	32	36	27	
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	100	
% Advanced	81	88	86	100	
Number of students tested	26	24	29	32	
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 3
Publisher: Pearson/Harcourt

Test: ARMT
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	98	100	100	94	
% Advanced	88	79	79	77	
Number of students tested	56	61	57	64	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	100	100	91	
% Advanced	71	70	70	69	
Number of students tested	18	20	16	32	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	100	100	92	
% Advanced	77	59	60	68	
Number of students tested	26	27	30	38	
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	96	
% Advanced	96	94	94	87	
Number of students tested	25	32	26	23	
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 4
Publisher:

Test: ARMT
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	98	
% Advanced	93	91	80	91	
Number of students tested	55	55	61	58	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	96	
% Advanced	79	83	68	86	
Number of students tested	14	18	25	28	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	97	
% Advanced	80	90	74	85	
Number of students tested	20	30	34	33	
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	100	
% Advanced	100	92	91	100	
Number of students tested	32	24	22	24	
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 5
Publisher:

Test: ARMT
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	98	
% Advanced	93	80	91	84	
Number of students tested	60	61	65	64	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	96	
% Advanced	90	62	79	73	
Number of students tested	21	21	28	26	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	100	
% Advanced	94	69	86	74	
Number of students tested	31	32	36	27	
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	97	
% Advanced	93	92	97	94	
Number of students tested	27	25	29	32	
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: