

TESOL International Convention & Expo
21-23 June 2024
Tampa, Florida, USA

Bringing TESOL's Values to Florida

15 May 2023

TESOL International Association (TESOL) is dedicated to advancing English language teaching to multilingual learners worldwide through professional learning, research, standards, and advocacy.

Each year, thousands of English language teaching (ELT) professionals gather for networking, education, and empowerment at our annual International Convention & English Language Expo. In 2024, the TESOL convention will convene in Florida, USA, a state that is internationally renowned for its entertainment and recreation. More recently, Florida is also making headlines in the United States for controversial legislative debates and actions impacting educators, students, and families, which may lead some to wonder: Why will the convention be held there next year; who is providing input and what further information can members expect to receive as the convention approaches; and how are we (the TESOL board of directors, executive director, staff, and me) putting the interests and wellbeing of you – the membership – as well as multilingual learners, their educators, and other TESOL professionals at the forefront of our planning and programming? While other forms of communication will follow in the coming months, I would like to address these initial questions in the following.

Why is TESOL 2024 still convening in Florida?

TESOLers are no strangers to policies that disadvantage or marginalize our learners and profession. We remain resolute in our mission to advance and elevate. Convening in Florida stays true to these values. Our presence will be exponentially more impactful than our absence.

In making the decision to host TESOL 2024 in Tampa, Florida, the TESOL board of directors affirms our commitment to:

- Support our members in Florida, our local affiliate (Sunshine State TESOL), and thousands of multilingual learners of English.
- Encourage ELT professionals to speak up, advocate, and educate, guided by TESOL's mission, values, and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA).
- Amplify voices for academic freedom and culturally/linguistically relevant teaching on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves.
- Demonstrate that our profession is stronger when we are together, united, and present.

Another reason for hosting TESOL 2024 in Tampa is that it is renowned for [embracing diversity](#). It is home to over 3,000 refugees, and its school system serves more than 21,000 English

learners. [Tampa's mayor, Jane Castor, proudly welcomes TESOL](#) to a vibrant city that is committed to inclusivity and safety.

Who is providing input?

Over the past several weeks, TESOL staff members have engaged our community and sought insights from dozens of organizations and constituencies - this information, and continued conversations, will inform our planning and our actions going forward. For example, in the coming months, you will see:

- A position paper on *Discrimination in Education*.
- Invitations to join colleagues to share concerns and work together to move forward.
- State-level legislative campaigns to advocate for multilingual learners of English and the profession.
- Calls for you, the membership, to engage in fundraising and awareness-building efforts to support Florida charities and local businesses that align with TESOL's core values.

How is TESOL putting professionals' interests and well-being at the forefront?

Like Tampa's mayor, Jane Castor, collectively we at TESOL – members of the board of directors, the staff, and I – are putting the well-being of the association's membership, multilingual learners, their educators, and other TESOL professionals at the forefront of our convention planning and programming. TESOL represents a diverse community with diverse opinions. While we may "agree to disagree" on certain topics, all are agreed that the convention serves as – to use Canagarajah's (2004, 2015) term – a "safe house"; a shared social and learning space that we co-construct. Our goal for TESOL 2024 is for you to feel safe to convene and share how you ensure excellence in English language teaching to multilingual learners across contexts, countries, and cultures through respectful dialogue and openness to opinions that may differ, while upholding our values of professionalism, respect, integrity, and lifelong learning, and reflecting our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA).

We invite you to join us in Tampa, Florida, USA, Thursday 21 through Saturday 23 March 2024 to engage in lively, invigorating discussion and in constructive dialogue on topics that concern our profession and multilingual learners.

Sincerely,

Shelley K. Taylor
TESOL President 2023-2024