

Inclusion Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to clarify the Jefferson/Longfellow Middle Years Program (MYP) Inclusion Policy. Our schools are committed to supporting the needs of our various student populations. We value student diversity and respect individual learning differences, working to meet students where they are and helping them grow through scaffolded support. This policy applies to both schools and is to be communicated to, and understood by, all continuing and new teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Philosophy:

In the Jefferson/Longfellow MYP, inclusion is an ongoing process designed to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers in a culture of collaboration, respect, and support. We believe that every student comes to us with unique needs; therefore, our Inclusion Policy celebrates the diversity of our student body. For example, some students may display difficulties or live with conditions that are barriers to learning. Others may come to us with higher than average aptitudes in one or more subjects that require equal, but more rigorous, support. Still others may have learning difficulties due to language barriers.

Regardless of the student's situation, this partnership endeavors to equip ALL students with high quality, rigorous instruction and support services to become internationally minded thinkers while developing the skills necessary to be successful and independent upon entering higher education and the workforce.

Through inclusion, we honor the IB Learner Profile attributes, creating caring, open-minded students who balance the different aspects of their own lives and needs as well as support the needs of our diverse community.

Responsibilities:

Inclusion requires a school-wide culture that supports a rigorous, appropriate education for each student. Here, all teachers differentiate up and down the spectrum, whether the student is a special needs student requiring a bit more help, a Gifted and Talented (GT) student on the rise, or an English Language Learner new to the United States. Through differentiation, we offer teaching practices that build opportunities in which each student can develop, pursue, and achieve their personal learning goals. Itinerant support, remedial classes, English as a Second Language (ESL), and GT classes: all strategies expand student horizons for appropriate inclusion.

Teachers work to ensure equal access to the curriculum for all students. This occurs through assessment, both formal and informal, to determine each student's individual needs. For example, a special needs student has Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) and Individualized Education Programs (IEP) to structure their support. English Language Learners are assessed for placement in appropriate language support classes as outlined in the Language

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Policy. Gifted and Talented students are identified by teachers then assessed for placement in advanced classes designed to challenge them to new heights. Students are continually monitored in class as well as through MAP, STAAR, or other standardized tests to determine growth and progress. By using these tools to understanding student needs, teachers design learning experiences that allow all students to meet their learning objectives.

The Jefferson /Longfellow MYP provide the support students need to set and meet challenging educational goals; students are expected to apply themselves to achieve them.

Gifted and Talented Students:

Once identified in the Jefferson/Longfellow MYP, GT students are placed in the most challenging environment available to them. Since being identified as GT does not mean that students are gifted in all core subjects, they are placed according to ability and availability in core classes. Additionally, gifted students are encouraged to participate in Academic events that provide challenge, such as the UIL Academic Team, Science and History Fairs, Robotics competitions, and other such teams.

To keep abreast of current approaches to GT education, GT Teachers receive annual refresher training applicable to their classes.

Special Education Inclusive Practices:

Our goal is to support students with disabilities in gaining college and career readiness skills, as well as fostering student independence and responsibility for learning through active engagement in grade-level curriculum. A continuum of services designed to meet the needs and learning styles of individual learners is provided. Our inclusion model uses co-teaching, and/or classroom support, intervention, and self-contained units per IEP.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written documents prepared by the Special Education Department for a student with a qualifying disability. The IEP is developed through a collaborative process involving the school, parents, the student (where appropriate), and other relevant personnel or agencies. It refers to the adapted or modified aspects of the educational program, focusing on priority learning needs while setting specific learning goals for a student over a set timeframe all set in the least restrictive environment possible for the student to learn.

Effective IEPs are individualized, child-centered, inclusive, holistic, collaborative, and accessible. When complete, the IEP plan outlines teaching strategies, resources, and supports necessary for the student to achieve those goals.

The special education teacher consults with the general education teacher on the implementation of instructional modifications and the delivery of instructional techniques for the students with disabilities. Teachers collaborate regularly to incorporate differentiation for students' learning needs and styles as well as assign grades. Monitoring teachers track student success.

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The Jefferson/Longfellow MYP values our special needs population. To support them, our practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Special Education and itinerate support teachers receive annual refresher training applicable to their classes.
- All teachers differentiate their lessons to meet student's academic needs.
- Meeting the needs of the Special Education population, the general education teachers and special education teachers collaborate on the regular basis to prepare lesson plans, implement data plans, and create differentiated IB Unit planners to support classroom learning.
- Off-campus trips or on-campus events include all Special Education students.
- Grades for Special Education students are assigned per their IEP and district guidelines.
- Faculty and staff adhere to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- No change is made to a Special Education students' course schedule until reviewed by both the student's general education and special education teachers.
- Special education teachers send a copy of student IEPs and BIPs to all teachers and administrative staff members that work with students at the beginning of the school and/or following an ARD meeting.
- All teachers and/or administrative staff members are required to read the IEPs of all their special education students to be aware and implement all accommodations/modifications listed there as well as in the BIP, if included.

Parent Notification Policy:

The overall special education policy is included in both the Jefferson High School and Longfellow Middle School parent/student handbooks. For individual students, parents are notified of ARD meetings for their students to discuss or update the student's IEP or BIP.

Resources:

International Baccalaureate Organization (May 2014). MYP: From principles into practice. Accessed from www.ibo.org.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act website:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

San Antonio ISD Website, www.saisd.net