

McCluer North IB Special Education Needs Policy: Culture, Policy, & Practice

Diploma Program Philosophy and Culture of Inclusion

The McCluer North Special Education Needs Policy is built upon the synthesis of the International Baccalaureate (IB), district, and building level mission statements aiming to provide an inclusive, challenging curriculum to all students. By fusing several ideas together with inclusivity in mind, all North students will develop into inquiring, lifelong learners, with a sense of responsibility to become effective citizens of a diverse, global community. The diversity of North's student body and the range of individual learning differences is not only considered to be a strength, but also can be linked to the key aspect of our mission to continually grow in international mindedness.

In this regard, McCluer North High School values the contribution and input of all students who wish to participate in the IB Programme. We recognize that the inclusion of all students is vital to the fulfillment of the IB mission statement and Learner Profile that aims to develop well "principled" and "balanced" individuals "who act with a sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people," and "who recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live."

Students are welcome to join the Diploma Programme following the consent of a caregiver and the IB DP coordinator who will introduce students to the value and academic demands of the Diploma Programme. Consistent with our culture and policy of inclusion, students with special needs are equally encouraged to pursue their academic goals by joining the Diploma Programme.

Special Needs, Accommodations, and Connection with IB Policy

Some students arrive at school with certain disadvantages that others do not. "Special needs" refers to particular physical, social, emotional, behavioral, or cognitive disabilities that may present barriers to learning which can be addressed in the educational environment by teachers, administrators, and other professionals with the learning community.

The International Baccalaureate defines "inclusion" as "an ongoing process that aims to increase access to curriculum and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers" for learning. We have started to address inclusivity in academics by utilizing Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) resources the last two years. As a result, EOS awarded North the distinction of being in the top 1% of all schools where student populations in the highest level classes match the student demographic population. While this measurement is based more on race and gender, there is a component of inclusion in regards to students with IEPs. EOS tools will help us continue the move toward academic equity for all.

In conjunction with stated IB goals; McCluer North additionally works to ensure inclusion by continuously addressing "barriers to learning" that "may be found in the way schools are organized and resourced, their culture and policies, the approaches to teaching and learning, the physical aspects of buildings and the ways in which individuals within the school community interact on a daily basis."

Once a student with special needs is identified, appropriate arrangements for teaching and assessment are made by a corresponding team of professionals from the Special School (SSD) and Ferguson-Florissant School Districts (FFSD) addressing any particular disadvantages a student might face. Working in a unified effort to serve students, SSD and IB Teachers from FFSD will formulate an Individualized Educational Plan with appropriate accommodations, including inclusive assessment arrangements, for IB students who meet qualifying guidelines.

To also meet the needs of all students, the English and Math will offer after school tutoring for a minimum of 2 days a week during the school year. World Language faculty will also be available in the same capacity for a minimum of 1 day a week during the school year. IB students, regardless of their disadvantaged status, need such additional supports for academic success.

Role and Responsibilities of Stakeholders Involved

Inclusion and the removal of barriers to education at McCluer North is best achieved through a culture and community of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving among all of the stakeholders involved including students, parents and guardians, teachers, the IB coordinator, and other Administrative staff.

Students

All IB students must move towards their individual ownership, responsibility, and accountability with learning. North's IB programme will seek to produce such assessment capable learners. At times, this may require self-advocacy for individual accommodations and special needs.

Parents & Caregiving Guardians

It is the role of parents to be actively involved as interested in their child's educational experience as best as they know how. In particular, IB parents should advocate for their students by communicating specific accommodations to the IB Diploma Programme Coordinator and IB teachers. Parents should communicate desired accommodations related to academic, medical, emotional, or other types of psychological concerns. All written or electronic documents related to these concerns should be submitted to the IB Coordinator. The Coordinator must then submit these particular documents to the IB Organization in order for the student to receive the necessary and allowable accommodations on IB assessments and assignments.

IB and SSD Teachers

Working collaboratively, IB and SSD teachers will collaborate with parents and other professionals involved in the education of students to develop inclusive practices, increase access, participation, and work towards the reduction of barriers to the learning process. In addition, teachers should utilize teaching and learning strategies that aim to treat students as individual learners, value diversity, and promotes an environment based on understanding and respect. These ideas help students to develop the sense of belonging as well as safety and self-worth. SSD personnel will help facilitate communication and provide the documentation needed via IEPs and 504 plans with parents, IB teachers, and the IB coordinator.

FFSD and SSD Administration

Administrators from both districts will oversee teachers involved and promote inclusion for all IB students. They will act in a facilitating role to insure this policy, best academic policies regarding inclusion, and all other legal matters are honorably kept by stakeholders.

IB Diploma Programme Coordinator (DPC)

The DPC will be conduit between all groups mentioned in this policy. They will articulate North's inclusion policy to various audiences through written and oral means. By facilitating communication between all parties involved in the inclusion memorandum, the school's mission and philosophy will be closer to being reached.

The DPC will request from SSD staff a list of IEP and 504 plan students. The coordinator will contact the parents of inclusive students requesting the needed documentation for IB assessments. In turn, the DPC will submit these correct documents to the IBO in order for North IB students to have inclusive assessments and accommodations.

Early each year, and when needed throughout the year, the DPC will check with IB teachers regarding the progress of IB students with special needs. The DPC will communicate with IB teachers the information from IEP's and 504 plans. In addition, the DPC will check with SSD staff periodically for their evaluation of inclusion students well-being. During these check-ins with IB teachers and SSD personnel, the DPC will monitor the academic progress of special needs students by facilitating conversations centered on academic growth and well-being.

The DPC will meet with individual students at least twice the first semester to gain feedback from a teenager's perspective about the IB experience.

Special Needs Policy Review

Like all IB policies, North's inclusion policy needs to be periodically evaluated and updated. Every two years, the DPC will bring the inclusion policy to the IB steering committee and IB faculty for review. Before this takes place, the DPC will ask for input from SSD Area Coordinator, North administrators, and other SSD personnel at North. Any changes to this inclusion policy will be through a consensus model based on best current practices, district procedures, state statutes, federal law and IB policies.

References

- "Ferguson Florissant School District, 2017-2018 Policies and Procedures"
- "Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes," 2016.
http://inclusivepypclassroom.weebly.com/uploads/1/8/4/7/18470104/ib_inclusion_guide.pdf
- "The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development" available online at
https://ibpublishing.ibo.org/server2/rest/app/tsm.xql?doc=g_x_senxx_tsm_1501_1_e&part=1&chapter=1
- "IB Conference of the Americas," Washington D.C. 10-13 July, 2014.
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