

Shepherd ES Special Educational Needs Policy

Statement of Philosophy:

Shepherd Elementary School is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. Our goal is to develop inquisitive, international-minded learners, who think globally and act compassionately. DC Public Schools (DCPS) aspires to be a model district for special education. In alignment with DCPS, Shepherd Elementary School's goal is to provide high quality inclusion and special education services, and to dramatically improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities. DCPS defines **inclusion** as a mindset that drives practical actions that result in students with disabilities spending most, or all, of their day in school or community-based environments with their non-disabled peers. We have a vibrant, dedicated school community, where all stakeholders work collaboratively to ensure that all students meet and exceed our high expectations.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure that all students are provided equal access to the IB curriculum and opportunities for academic rigor grounded in the Common Core Standards
- To promote International-Mindedness in all students and staff and encourage personal reflection using the Learner Profile
- To foster a curriculum that is creative and differentiated to support all our students in reaching their unique needs and potential
- To communicate the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the success of students with IEPs and 504 Plans
- To promote the ideology that Inclusion is the responsibility of *all staff* in the building, including administrators, general and special educators, and related service providers
- To promote responsiveness and flexibility to each student's needs, regardless of disability status

Definitions

Inclusion: DCPS defines **inclusion** as a mindset that drives practical actions that result in students with disabilities spending most, or all, of their day in school or community-based environments with their non-disabled peers.

Common-Core Standards: A shared set of evidence based national standards developed through state led initiatives. Common Core is designed to have fewer, simplified standards. These standards were created by the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers. Officials from 48 states participated in the process to develop the standards over several years.

Differentiation: This approach refers to any modification to instruction or assessment in order to meet individual needs.

Stakeholders: Anyone with a vested interest in the success of that student, such as a parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, administrator, IB coordinator, and/or the students themselves.

Assessment

- All teachers will utilize a variety of informal and formative assessments to determine the individual student needs and abilities and to tailor subsequent instruction
- Whenever possible, teachers will develop summative assessments that are differentiated to provide necessary modification, rigor, and/or student choice
- Students who have special education needs and abilities and who have then been identified as requiring IEPs or 504's will have all their modifications addressed

Support

Classroom support for all students with special education needs and abilities may include curriculum modification, enrichment activities, classroom accommodations, small group instruction, or one-on-one support, depending on IEP, 504 Plan, and/or Health Plan documents. Shepherd supports all students through procedural scaffolding. Examples of procedural scaffolding includes but is not limited to the following:

- One-on-one teaching, coaching, and modeling
- Small-group instruction that pairs new learners with veteran learners
- Using an instructional framework that includes explicit teaching, modeling, and guided and independent practice opportunities with peers (**expectation for independent application**)

Documentation

At Shepherd ES, the special education process starts once a person familiar with the child submits a referral or makes a verbal request for special education services. Examples of who may submit a referral can include parents/guardians, teachers, psychologists, other school staff members, day care center employees, and physicians. After the parent/guardian reviews the referral, the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team meets to discuss the referral and analyze existing data, including any previous assessments. The IEP team includes the parent/guardian, the child (if appropriate), special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, and/or other key members of the school staff. If there is enough data, the IEP team may determine the child is eligible for special education services or they may recommend additional assessments and reconvene for the eligibility determination meeting. If the child is found eligible for special education services as a child with a disability, the IEP team discusses a plan of action and creates an IEP. The IEP is a document that outlines the annual educational goals for the child, as well as the instructional and related services required to meet those goals. The IEP will indicate the appropriate setting in which these services should be delivered.

- Progress of students receiving accommodations will be monitored and documentation of all services provided will also be used to revise IEP's and 504's on an annual basis.

- All teachers receive IB training to promote understanding of the IB philosophy, the school's IB policies, and components of the IB programs
- Shepherd ES makes yearly plans for professional development and will include in that plan time for horizontal and vertical collaboration on curriculum, assessment, student learning and plans for differentiation
- Shepherd Staff will use their common planning time and or other agreed upon meeting times to collaborate regarding individual student progress and strategies for differentiation evaluation

References

Inclusion Practices for Special Needs Students at Fridley Public Schools

<http://www.fridley.k12.mn.us/page.cfm?p=2069>