

Henry Foss High School
International Baccalaureate
Career-Related Programme(candidate)
Diploma Programme
Middle Years Programme



Special Education Needs / Inclusive Education Policy

Introduction

Our Mission Statement: Henry Foss High School develops every student to be inquiring, knowledgeable, and reflective through intercultural understanding and respect.

Our Vision Statement: Henry Foss High School will graduate every student with an International Baccalaureate (IB) education that prepares them for college, career, and life.

Our Equity and Access Statement: We believe that every student, staff, and community stakeholder should be treated equitably. Our focus is to eliminate disparities among all groups.

Henry Foss High School is an urban public high school in the Tacoma School District in Washington State, USA. Foss High School has been an approved IB Diploma Programme school since 1982. We have a mix of special education, traditional, and identified gifted students in grades 9 through 12. Because of declining enrollment and demographic shifts, our size has decreased over the past 10 years. For the 2020–2021 academic year, we have approximately 7 Diploma Programme candidates and another 7 candidates for the 2021-2022 academic year. We expect that number to grow over the next several years as interest in the program increases as well as the rebuilding of Hunt Middle School, previously and anticipated IB Middle Years Programme school.

To become more equitable in our distribution of students in and out of the Diploma Programme, and to encourage more students to participate in the Diploma Programme, the school made choices to add Middle Years Programme (2020) and apply for candidacy for the Career-Related Programme (2021). The goal is to create an “IB for all” environment at Foss. Aligned with that direction, starting in 2016, all juniors (except for students whose IEP necessitated an alternative course) took at least one Diploma Programme (DP) course in the studies in language and literature.

The Diploma Programme and Middle Years Programme at our school are open access, as will be the Career Programme. Any student who wishes to take on the challenge of advanced coursework may do so, whether for a single class or the full Diploma Programme. We do, however, **require** all students to sit for the May exam session (with appropriate accommodations when necessary) and complete the IB assessment requirements as part of their IB course experience. We make it a point to counsel students about their curricular choices. We do not believe in gatekeeping for college-preparatory coursework. We believe it is important to challenge students as appropriate to their individual needs

and abilities while aligning with their post-secondary goals.

Special Education Context

Students can access special education services in general education and special education settings based on varied levels of need. At Foss, students with significant cognitive and low-incidence disabilities receive instruction through a co-taught program called A.C.C.E.S.S. which focuses on academics, communication, community access skills, employment skills, self-help, and social skills). The blended programs are designed to provide instruction in functional academic, life, and vocational skills. Students may receive instruction in basic arithmetic skills such as counting, and basic reading and writing skills. Other areas of instruction may include time-telling and calendar skills, personal hygiene, food preparation, and community access skills. Students are introduced to learner profile attributes and MYP units, as appropriate. The learning objectives are individualized and align with the student's individualized education program (IEP) goals and objectives. Many of the students in the A.C.C.E.S.S. program take one general education class. Because of the nature of their disabilities, none of these students have taken a Diploma Programme class. Students in the A.C.C.E.S.S. program are highly visible on campus and participate in school activities.

Students less impacted by disabilities access special education services in their least restrictive educational environment. Every student receiving specially designed instruction has an individualized education program (IEP). Each student's IEP includes post-secondary transition plans, location and duration of services for areas in which they are eligible for specially designed instruction and accommodations/modifications that support access to instruction. In the 2020-2021 school year, about 20% of our students were identified with special education needs. There is an emphasis in the Tacoma Public Schools on inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes.

Most students who receive special education services at Foss participate in general education classes for a portion of their day, the number of classes being dependent upon their services as outlined in their IEP. The spectrum of services includes classes focused solely on the development of social emotional/ behavior skills; Learning Resource classes, para educator support in general education classes and general education classes co-taught by a general education teacher and a special education teacher. Most students with IEP's at Foss spend 40% or more of their day in general education classes. A handful of students with an IEP attend only one Learning Resource Center (LRC) class, which equates to greater than 80% of their school day spent in general education classes. Several of students with IEPs have taken Diploma Programme classes. Foss has also added co-taught math and English classes to allow for even more access to general education classes.

In some cases, because of IEP requirements, students cannot fit in certain MYP subject areas. For example, depending on where their needs are, students may or may not take a Language B course partly because they may have a second reading or math course. These exceptions are not the rule but designed to accommodate the needs of each learner.

District, State, and Federal Policies

We are driven first and foremost by the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. Washington has additional codes and policies on how to implement the act. The school district has additional policies to ensure that Tacoma Public Schools is meeting IDEA and Washington State codes. The following paragraph taken from OSPI's website (Office of Superintendent of Public

Instruction) outlines the philosophy and charge of special education with the state:

*“**Special Education** and related services are provided annually to about 130,000 eligible students in the state across 295 school districts. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that children with disabilities and the families of such children have access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA is focused on improving educational results for children with disabilities. RCW 28A.155 provides the statutory basis for special education services in Washington, and WAC 392-172A provides the regulatory basis for both IDEA and RCW 28A.155.”*

Notice of Special Education Procedural Safeguards for Students and Their Families ([Parent and Student Rights-Procedural Safeguards](#)) can be accessed through OSPI in several languages. Student and family rights of IDEA, Federal Regulations, and State rules governing Special Education are described with detail in the document. The following links more fully outline the district and state policies:

Tacoma Public Schools Special Education policy link:

<http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/information/departments/student-services/Pages/default.aspx>

State Special Education policy link: <http://www.k12.wa.us/specialed/>

Special Education Policy and Practice at Foss

A staff member or parent/guardian can refer a student for special education assessment. A student can also self-refer. Any referral for a student at Foss goes to a team of staff (a committee made up of school psychologist, counselors, teachers, administrators, and the school nurse). They review data including student’s files, feedback from teachers and parents, and then recommend interventions. If the student is evaluated and qualifies for special education services in accordance with district, state, and federal policy, an Individual Education Program (IEP) is developed for the student by a team including student, parents/guardians, and teachers input. Teachers are informed of the modifications and accommodations required by the student’s IEP. Staff has the legal and ethical obligation of implementing the modifications and accommodations listed on IEPs.

IEPs are required by federal law to be updated at least once yearly prior to the expiration date. At Foss our special education teachers follow best practice by convening an annual IEP review a week before the due A draft of the IEP document is sent to parents in advance of the meeting to ensure parents can meaningfully participate in the development of the IEP before it is put in to place, to ensure parents can request changes before the IEP is implemented. IEPs can be reviewed as many times as needed in a year. Often, IEPs are reviewed multiple times throughout the school year in response to:

- At parent/guardian, student, and/or school request.
- To ensure continued services are provided based on re-evaluation results.
- When the team believes academic and/or behavioral goals need to be addressed based on student progress.

Other Forms of Support

Foss also offers several other forms of support for all students. They include:

Seminar/Study Skills—offered every other day for 85 minutes, students check in with an advisory teacher and then choose how to use two sessions of 30-minutes each for study. They can get advanced permission to go to another teacher with whom they might be struggling in the subject area. This time can also be used to retake quizzes and tests or get caught up on missing assignments.

Tutoring—offered several days a week after school in the Library, academically strong upper-classmen are available to work with peers who may struggle in a particular class or with a particular assignment.

Individual Afterschool Teacher Support—offered five days per week after school. Foss maintains a list of faculty tutors available to help students at designated times. Teachers take turns providing support in several different subject areas.

Support Classes—offered at times during the regular school day. These are focused on English, or Math/Science, and are provided to students who have not yet passed, or are not on track to pass, the state exams called the SBA (Smarter Balance Assessments). These classes include online courses for credit recovery called Bridge to College and are designed to help gather a portfolio of evidence to qualify a student to pass graduation requirements.

504 Plan—A student may have a 504 plan (so named because it falls under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act). This plan is developed for students with temporary or permanent documented mental and/or physical disabilities that are affecting one or more life activities and do not require specially designed instruction. A 504 plan includes accommodations counselors develop with a team including the student, parents/guardians, and teachers needed in the general education setting to help the student access the learning on a level on par with their peers. Teachers are legally required to provide the accommodations listed on a student's 504 plan. Many students having 504 plans have taken one or more IB classes. A few have been Diploma Programme candidates.

Other Support Staff—Foss has two full-time counselors, a career counselor and a school psychologist available to help students with their social, emotional, and academic needs. The nurse is on campus to assist students with health issues. A physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech/language therapist are available to work with students who qualify for motor, speech, or language services.

Special Education and IB

The staff implements systematic safeguards for all students – such as breaking large projects and essays into smaller pieces with their own due dates, check-ins, and other appropriate pedagogical techniques that help students of all backgrounds and abilities succeed in the program. We do not bar access to Diploma Programme classes but do counsel students about their choices and options. In fact, we would like to see more special education students access the Diploma Programme, as appropriate for everyone.

We understand the accommodations that can be made for all students (such as translating dictionaries for Groups 3-6), others that can be made automatically if a student has documented diagnoses (such as naming the colors on a map for a color-blind student), and still others that require additional accommodations (as documented in the *Access and Inclusion Policy*) is a different process for temporary medical conditions that might interfere with internal or external assessments, for use in sudden or emergency cases. Additional information on this can be found in Articles 19-20 of the *General Regulations: Diploma Programme*. Students and parents/guardians are also supplied this text for reference.

Though teachers may be able to modify grading practices for other classwork according to students' IEPs and 504 plans, for DP internal and external assessments, they are graded according to the IB standard only, without modification. The only exception to this is if a student needs special circumstances for assessment, in which case, the instructional coach/coordinator at Foss is responsible for contacting Cardiff according to the process and timeline outlined in the *Assessment Procedures* and the *Access and Inclusion Policy*. The necessary documentation will be provided in such cases.

We understand that it is our responsibility within the school to adequately inform students of these policies, as well as counsel them about their course and examination choices. We will incur the cost of procuring a reader or scribe, or necessary additional equipment if needed. The guidelines to these features are found in the same document in the handbook.