



Inclusion Policy

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Introduction

What is Inclusion?

“Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusion is an organizational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire. Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community”.

(Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes, p. 1).

“Inclusive education *is* about providing opportunities *with* supports for *all* students to have access to, and contribute to, an education rich in content and experience with their peers”. (Moore, 2016, pg. 17)

We believe that all students in Addison Central School District (ACSD) have the right to participate fully in the International Baccalaureate Primary Years, Middle Years, and Diploma Programs. We strive to ensure that students with differing abilities are included in academic and non-academic environments to the fullest extent possible; that all students experience academic success as well as a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and increased independence. We are committed to helping each student develop the attributes of the IB Learner Profile and be empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as citizens of a global community.

Inclusion Policy Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Communicate to all stakeholders in our IB district (board members, administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents and community members) the programmatic expectations for creating and maintaining inclusive educational environments for all learners as required by the IB.
- Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining our vision, goals and practices in the context of the PYP, MYP and DP.
- Establish clear responsibilities of all stakeholders
- Outline the system of supports, accommodations and modifications that are available to students, families and schools (teachers and staff).

Inclusion Policy Goals

The goals of this policy are to:

- Ensure that the differing needs of all students are identified early, supported through a range of intervention services and supports, and monitored or assessed regularly to determine progress.
- Ensure all students have access to the IB programs and receive equal opportunities to participate and engage in high quality learning experiences.
- Adhere to all federal, state and local laws regarding Special Education, Section 504 and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), including but not limited to:
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
- Ensure students' accommodations, modifications, supports and services offered in accordance with IEPs, 504 and EST plans are aligned with PYP, MYP and DP.
- Clarify the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Comply with IB policies.

Philosophy

The ACSD Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programs support the inclusion of all students through the IB framework and philosophy which aims “to increase access to the curriculum and engagement in learning for all students.” We understand that by identifying and removing barriers to learning and participation, learning communities become more inclusive (*Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes, p.1*). Thus, all teachers in ACSD will utilize a variety of teaching and assessment tools to determine individual student abilities, needs and learning goals. Teachers will ensure students have access to content, and that learning is assessed through differentiated formative and summative assessments with an appropriate level of complexity and challenge. Students who have special education needs and/or differing abilities will be supported through a team of individuals, working directly with the student that are highly trained to provide appropriate accommodations, modifications and supports in the academic and social curricula.

ACSD administrators, teachers and staff value the diversity of all learners and recognize that students are more successful when encouraged to construct their own meaning based on their individual readiness, interests and learning styles. We strive to differentiate instruction with individual students, small groups and within a whole class, and are committed to modifying instruction as needed for students in accordance with our multi-tiered system of supports, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Continuum of Services

Programs serving children with learning, behavior, speech, English language acquisition, and other related service needs are available in all ACSD schools. The continuum of supports and services offered through each school's Educational Support System ranges from general education classroom settings to small group/individual supports within the classroom, to services provided in a resource room, separate classroom, or separate facility.

Universal Design / Differentiated Instruction

Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles for curriculum development and instruction that aims to provide all students an equal opportunity to learn and can be used at any grade level or subject area. These principles include using multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement.

Differentiation is the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed upon learning goals; it means tailoring instruction as well as varying content, process, products and the learning environment to meet individual needs (Tomlinson).

Educational Support Teams

Educational Support Teams (EST), are specifically designed to support students who are having difficulty, either academically or behaviorally, within the regular education program. They are intended to address what is challenging for a student early on, and help determine what he/she might need to be more successful. The EST is a multidisciplinary team that comes together to help design supports, accommodations, interventions, and/or strategies to assist a student toward making progress in the general education classroom. For English language learners, Language Acquisition Plans are often incorporated into Educational Support Plans.

Section 504 of the ADA

Students with a 504 Plan are those identified as in need of accommodations, modifications, supports and/or services under Section 504 due to a disability. A team consisting of school staff (including, but not limited to the teacher, counselor, nurse, and head of school) and parents determines the necessary supports and accommodations for a student whose mental or physical impairment will or may impact his/her access to the general education program. The 504 Plan is intended to provide the supports necessary for a student to maintain full access to the programs and services available in the regular education program.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Within Vermont, a student may be considered to be eligible for special education when it has been determined that a student has met the criteria for one of the thirteen disability categories. In addition, the student's team must find that the disability has an adverse effect on the student's ability to learn and thus, the student requires specialized instruction that is above and beyond the educational supports offered in the school.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to establish procedures to ensure that, "to the maximum extent appropriate," students with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers. When a student is determined eligible for special education (disability, adverse effect and need), an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed indicating the area of disability, goals, accommodations, modifications and supports.

Roles and Responsibilities

Building Principal:

- Once a student is enrolled in the school, it is the responsibility of the building principal(s) to ensure the student's learning needs are met, including suitable arrangements for teaching and assessment.
- The principal will ensure learning experiences for students reflect a variety of appropriate teaching and learning strategies, and that there is a range of resources available to support inquiry, engagement and an appropriate degree of challenge for all students
- Together with the technology department, the principal will ensure a variety of assistive technology is made available, including a computer and relevant software. Assistive technology being used for a student's learning and assessment (ie. speech recognition and reading software) are managed systematically and at least one member of the staff is trained in the appropriate use of the technology and/or software.
- Accommodations for access to assessment tasks will be developed collaboratively with the student's team including the building principal and in accordance with the guidelines of the IB. The student's team together with the building principal are responsible for making arrangements for approving and appointing a scribe, reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator as needed on assessments and/or to meet the requirements of Exhibition.

IB Coordinator:

- The IB coordinator will work collaboratively with the school leadership, faculty and staff to support students with differing needs.
- The IB coordinator will support with assessment accommodations as needed and within the guidelines set by the IB.
- The IB coordinator will maintain discretion and confidence when providing support for student teams.

Faculty and Staff:

- Teachers and staff will comply with all federal and local laws regarding students with differing needs.
- Teachers and staff will identify struggling learners and refer such learners to the Educational Support Team.
- Teachers and staff will follow their students' EST Plans, 504 Plans and IEPs, specifically as they outline the supports and accommodations provided to the individual student.
- Teachers and staff will attend Educational Support, 504 or IEP meetings if and when invited or as required by statute.
- If a scribe, reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator is required, this shall be noted in the student's plan and the assigned teacher or staff person will practice with the student in advance of an assessment/examination or performance task.
- Teachers and staff will maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing supports and services.
- Case managers will maintain and update student EST Plans, 504 Plans and IEPs on a regular basis or as prescribed by law.

Parents/Guardians:

- Parents/Guardians will communicate to the school team pertinent information and documentation regarding their child's needs.
- Parents/Guardians will communicate to the school team regarding any changes in their child's learning needs.
- Parents/Guardians will work with their child's team to identify needed supports and services from the school in a proactive manner including assessment accommodation information as required by the IB.

Students:

- Students will, to the greatest extent possible, be reflective and proactive in asking for assistance from the school staff, administration, and IB coordinator.
- Students will take an active role in communicating individual learning needs and accommodations delineated within IEPs, 504 accommodation plans and Educational Support Team plans, including being proactive in requesting inclusive assessment arrangements as needed.

Assessments

ACSD believes that assessment plays an important role in the ongoing teaching and learning process. As such, "assessment should be diverse and relevant to each learner, allowing for differentiated assessments with different entry and exit points." Assessment conditions must be as inclusive and supportive as possible. All students deserve opportunities to demonstrate their learning and level of attainment of knowledge and understanding (*Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate Programmes: Special Educational Needs Within the International Baccalaureate Programs*).

Within the PYP, assessments developed across the seven elementary schools will align with the philosophy and objectives of the program and will be designed to assess both the process of inquiry as well as the product(s) of inquiry.

Within the MYP, we recognize that some assessment conditions may put students at a disadvantage. We will work to create assessment situations that support students' learning styles and ensure fair and appropriate demonstration of knowledge and skills.

Similarly, the Diploma Program understands that candidates with learning support needs and assessment access requirements "must be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible." Within the guidelines for assessment outlined by IB, students will be ensured assessment conditions and procedures that allow for fair and appropriate demonstration of knowledge and skills.

Accommodations, modifications, supports and services for students with an IEP, 504, EST within the PYP, MYP or DP may include, but are not limited to:

- Additional time on assignments and assessments
- Specialized testing environment or rest periods
- Modification of classwork and assignments
- Modified timelines on assignments
- Alternate or preferential seating
- Scribe
- Read aloud
- Visual aids
- Communication device
- Assistive technology and software (ie Speech-to-text, Text-to-speech), access to word processing.
- Noise buffers (headphones)
- Colored overlay
- Sound amplification device
- Interpreter for hearing impaired

We acknowledge that while some inclusive arrangements are permitted at the discretion of the head of school, IB coordinators, and/or school staff and do not require prior approval from the IB, other inclusive arrangements must have prior authorization from the IB. The student's case manager is responsible for communicating arrangements to the building principal, parents/guardians, IB Program Coordinators, and staff members who must be made aware of such adjustments. The IB coordinators are responsible for requesting inclusive assessment arrangements through the IB as required by the program.

Professional Development for IB Instructional Staff

Addison Central School District believes that high quality first instruction from a highly qualified teacher is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. To that end, ACSD is committed to supporting ongoing professional development for instructional staff. Teachers are actively encouraged to attend workshops through IB as well as other agencies and organizations. In addition, all staff are required to complete annual training on FERPA and confidentiality expectations, practices and procedures.

Resources for Students and Parents

Elementary Schools

Every elementary school has at least one full or part-time (depending upon the size of the school) principal, school nurse, librarian, guidance counselor, special educator, and speech and language pathologist. In addition, a range of specialized services are available to support students emotionally, behaviorally, socially and academically. Additional staff may include paraprofessionals to support with academic and behavior needs, reading interventionists, math interventionists, home-to-school coordinators, school-based clinicians and/or outreach clinicians.

Middle School

MUMS has a full time principal, a dean of students (responsible for discipline, EST, and 504), two full time guidance counselors, 4 full time special educators/case managers, a part-time speech and language pathologist, and a behavior program. In addition, MUMS currently offers two general education intervention courses (Math and Reading) and many community resources are made available at the school.

High School

Middlebury Union High School has a full time principal and assistant principal, three full time guidance counselors (responsible for case managing EST plans), a 504 coordinator, eight special educators who case manage and provide direct instruction in multiple areas, a resource room and a learning lab staffed with paraprofessionals to provide academic support, and a speech and language pathologist. MUHS has been working to increase their systems of supports within the main building to ensure all students have access to supports and services.

In addition to the above resources and specialized staff, each school has access to district-wide staff including special education coordinators (one for the seven elementary schools and a second shared between the middle and high school), English language learner (ELL) teachers, school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and a behavior specialist. ACSD has a centralized special education evaluation team consisting of a special educator, a school psychologist, and a speech and language pathologist which conducts the special education evaluations for the district. ACSD also has a district behavior specialist to address and support teams with student behavior concerns.

Policy Review

The Addison Central School District Inclusion Policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, the Director of Teaching and Learning, IB coordinators, and representatives from regular and special education staff at the start of each academic year.

Appendices

Appendix A: Principles of Assessment as they pertain to inclusionary practices for the PYP, MYP and DP.

The ACSD IB Coordinator and Case Manager will work together with the parents/guardians, students, and other IB staff members to gather and submit all pertinent supporting documentation and educational evidence in order to show the requested arrangement(s) is indicative of an IB student's usual and reasonable accommodations under a current and valid IEP or 504 plan. An IB student who experiences adverse circumstances must contact the IB coordinator or head of school to seek information regarding his or her specific situation.

For the PYP, all inclusive assessment arrangements are based on the following principles:

- The summative assessment is directly linked to the central idea of the unit of study.
- There are multiple assessment strategies and tools in order to allow for individual differences.
- The criteria for success in each unit of study are clearly identified for both students and teachers
- The assessment allows the teacher to give feedback to the students and parents

For the MYP, ACSD does not intend to use external assessments except for the Personal Project, therefore the assessment arrangements authorized by IB do not need to be referenced in this policy.

For the DP, all inclusive assessment arrangements that may be authorized by the IB are based on the following principles:

- The IB must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates, regardless of whether or not they have learning support requirements.
- Inclusive assessment arrangements, including reasonable adjustments, are pre-examination measures for a candidate to access the assessment. They cannot be requested retrospectively either for oral or written examinations.
- The arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component.
- When inclusive assessment arrangements are necessary for a candidate during the course of his or her study of the Diploma Program or practice examinations, the school may provide the arrangements. If the arrangements are required for assessment, prior authorization from the IB Global Centre may be necessary. Similarly, if a Diploma Program candidate has difficulties meeting the requirements for creativity, activity, service (CAS), IB Answers must be consulted.
- Schools are advised to plan inclusive assessment arrangements for their candidates based on the IB criteria and teachers' observations of the candidate in the classroom during class work and tests.
- The inclusive assessment arrangements requested for a candidate must be his or her usual way of working during his or her course of study. Only in very exceptional and unusual cases, will the IB authorize a request for inclusive assessment arrangements that are not the usual way of working and that have been put in place to support the candidate only in the last six months of study or thereafter, just prior to the examinations.
- The IB aims to authorize inclusive assessment arrangements that are compatible with those normally available to the candidate concerned. However, authorization will only be given for arrangements that are consistent with the policy and practice of the IB. It should not be assumed that the IB will necessarily agree to the arrangements requested by a school. Coordinators are required to provide information on the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom.
- Each request for inclusive assessment arrangements will be judged on its own merit. Previous authorization of arrangements will not influence the decision on whether to authorize the arrangements that have been requested by the coordinator.
- The IB treats all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB personnel and members of the final award committee, who will be instructed to treat such information as confidential.
- If it can be demonstrated that a candidate's lack of proficiency in his or her response language(s) arises from an identified learning support requirement, inclusive assessment arrangements may be authorized.

- A school must not inform an examiner of a candidate's challenges (such as autism, writing difficulties and so on) or adverse circumstance.
- In the case of internally assessed work, teachers must not make any adjustments when marking a candidate's work.
- The IB will consider inclusive assessment arrangements other than those already approved by the IB provided those arrangements could be made available to all candidates with similar requirements.
- At the discretion of the IB, a candidate with learning support requirements may be allowed more than the three examination sessions allotted DP candidates.
- Written examinations must be supervised according to the regulations governing the conduct of Diploma Programme examinations.
- Any issues that arise from the nature of the inclusive assessment arrangements, or any unforeseen difficulties encountered by the candidate during the examinations, should be reported to IB Answers as soon as possible.

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