



315 McFarland Boulevard East Suite M., Tuscaloosa, AL 35404 | Phone: 205-759-3653 | Fax: 205-759-3784

Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle

Inclusion Policy (Last update: September 2023)

Philosophical Basis for an Inclusion Policy

According to the International Baccalaureate, “diversity is a positive resource with regard to what it means to be internationally minded and interculturally aware. Difference and diversity are central in IB World Schools where all students enrolled in IB programmes should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum.” The Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle embraces this philosophy of inclusion that is in accordance with all local, state, and federal policies, procedures, and practices with regard to its Inclusion Policy. While TMS-M is an academic magnet school, we recognize that our students may come to us with barriers that require accommodations and/or support.

Examples of these barriers could include, but are not limited to:

- Additional language (first or best language is not the language of instruction)
- Cultural variations
- Hearing/Vision
- Intellectual exceptionalities
- Movement and coordination/physical
- Medical
- Mental health
- Numeracy
- Processing
- Reading and comprehension
- Social-emotional
- Speech and language
- Writing



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School responsibilities regarding Section 504

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires all schools that receive federal funds to offer 504 Services to students who qualify as having a handicapping condition that affects several areas including seeing, learning, walking and emotional stability. The counselor at Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle is the contact concerning 504 services and the referral and eligibility process for Section 504. All 504 plans are reviewed and updated annually by the counselor, teachers, parents, student, and principal.

School responsibilities regarding the socio-emotional and academic learning needs of all students

Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle seeks to provide all students with full access to, and deep engagement in, the IB MYP curriculum. Because we know that all students acquire knowledge differently and at varying rates, we align our instructional practice with where the students are on the learning continuum. Furthermore, students with barriers may require inclusive access arrangements, adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, or differentiated instruction to ensure that there are no hindrances to their learning in an inquiry and project-based program.

Differentiated instruction operates from the understanding that teachers match their teaching approaches and assessments to the students' needs. This practice considers the four principles of good practice (*Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes, IBO*):

1. Affirming identity and building self-esteem
 - a. whole-school teaming concept based on IB Learner Profile traits
 - b. monthly team meetings, lunches, and competitions
 - c. monthly counseling visits to Advisory and core classes
 - d. lunch discussion groups with school counselor
 - e. special projects initiated by students that may consider issues of identity and self-esteem
 - f. parent nights, hosted by students, showcasing IB curriculum, international heritage, and language literacy
2. Valuing prior knowledge
 - a. teacher assessment of students' prior knowledge



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- b. purposeful teacher planning to connect students' prior knowledge to new material
3. Scaffolding of learning material:
 - a. thinking maps/graphic organizers
 - b. templates
 - c. lab reports and proofs
 - d. projects that work through the design cycle
 - e. collaborative groups that employ student-led comprehension strategies
 - f. daily, formative assessments such as 3-2-1 or exit slips
 - g. rubrics provided before tasks commence
4. Extending learning through:
 - a. assistive technology (embedded in all curricula)
 - b. explicit AtL skills instruction in Advisory, counseling class visits, club days, and FOCUS (RtI or enrichment flex period) classes
 - c. root word study in all curricula
 - d. student choice boards
 - e. cross-curricular learning opportunities
 - f. daily, sustained silent reading time
 - g. library/media visits for technology and information support
 - h. self-directed service learning projects
 - i. mentorships with PYP students (Greenhouse club, Community Projects, service opportunities, book or reading clubs, academic and behavioral mentorships)

**Partnership with parents plays a key role in creating a successful learning experience for all students. The school recognizes that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their children's education.*



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Response to Intervention (RtI; currently, RtI will be transitioning to Multi-tiered Systems of Support or the Problem-solving Team as designated by the TCS special education department)

The RtI program in the Tuscaloosa City Schools provides intervention and educational support to all students not reaching their academic potential at increasing levels of intensity based on their individual needs. Teachers, counselor, parents, student, and principal meet to initiate an identified student's RtI plan. Following the initiation of a plan, teachers meet with the student daily in their individual classes. In addition to daily monitoring, which may include documentation of individualized instruction in the regular class schedule, students in need of intervention will attend a flex period called FOCUS, three times weekly, to receive additional support in their areas of need. The school counselor is also a resource who monitors student academic and personal growth on a daily basis.

- ***Inclusion policy revision takes place regularly, at the beginning of each academic year. It is reviewed and updated by the faculty of Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools - Middle in our whole-school faculty meetings and reflects the input from parent and school district stakeholders. Our policies are available for review on our school website:***

<https://www.tuscaloosacityschools.com/Page/2000>

Inclusion Faculty/Staff leader: Mrs. LaTiffany Richardson-Tabb