

Desert Mountain High School IB Diploma Program Inclusion Policy

Mission Statement: Desert Mountain High School provides diverse educational opportunities that foster academic, social and emotional growth inspiring students to create their future in a global community.

Vision Statement: Desert Mountain High School will provide an environment in which all students may explore and develop their interests and talents in order to reach their highest potential.

Rationale: To ensure that **all** students are provided the necessary support to allow them to achieve academic success and reach their fullest potential as they progress through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Desert Mountain High School.

Background: The Scottsdale Unified School District (a public school district) has been authorized by IB to offer the Diploma Program at Desert Mountain High School as a student self-selected program as a school within a school.

Legal Requirements:

In the Scottsdale Unified School District Code of Conduct, the community is informed about rights specific to students. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a United States federal law that sets guidelines for schools to ensure all students receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

1. All children identified as qualifying for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), shall receive special education commensurate with their abilities and needs.
2. All children identified as qualifying for gifted services shall receive education commensurate with their abilities and needs.
3. Any student qualified according to conditions described under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 will receive accommodations prescribed by the 504 Team at his or her school.
4. An alternative education program may be available for those students who are unable to profit from the regular school curriculum and environment, or who are in need of discipline greater than short-term suspension, but short of expulsion.

Scottsdale Unified School District and Desert Mountain High School are bound to follow The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 commonly referred to, as "§ 504," which is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

An eligible student under § 504 is a student who (a) has (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing,

eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

Dual Eligibility: Many students will be eligible for educational service under both § 504 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students who are eligible under the IDEA have many specific rights that are not available to students who are eligible solely under § 504. A Parents Rights Brochure is available through the Scottsdale Unified School District's Special Education Department and sets out the rights assured by the IDEA. It is the purpose of this Notice form to set out the rights assured by § 504 to those disabled students who do not qualify under the IDEA.

Rights and Responsibilities:

SUSD offers a full continuum of placements for those students who are eligible for special education services and supports. The district programs do not reflect what special education services or placements will be offered to any individual student but are specialized instructional program types available to support the needs of a variety of eligible students within the district. Special Education Program Placement decisions are made by the individual education program (IEP) team comprised of both school staff and parents. SUSD is required to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students who are eligible for special education services. What constitutes a free and appropriate education is based upon the needs of the student and what the student requires to make progress in light of their individual circumstances. The IEP team must legally consider the least restrictive environment (LRE) in which the student will receive services. Special education in SUSD is not a specific location or classroom. The amount of time that a student spends outside of a general education classroom receiving services and supports is determined by the individual needs of the student as outlined in the IEP not by the location of services. They are individually tailored to the needs of each exceptional student. At Desert Mountain High School, the following programs are offered:

1. **Academic Learning Center-** A cross categorical instructional program. Programming focuses on individual strengths and needs of identified students. Students have primary difficulty with all academic skills and minimal deficits in behavior, social skills, and communication skills. Instruction provided to improve student's success in academic, interpersonal, and daily living skills.
2. **Life Skills Center-** An instructional program. Programming focuses on individual strengths and needs of identified students. The purpose of the program is to provide appropriate support to enable the students to function as independently as possible throughout their school years and transition to adult life.
3. **Social Communication Academic-** A cross categorical instructional program. Programming focuses on individual strengths and needs of identified students. This program is based upon a structured teaching model, a highly organized and visual approach. It incorporates daily integrated language development, integrated sensory stimulation, academic skill development and social skill development.
4. **Students Using Comprehensive Coping Educational Strategies (SUCCESS)-** A cross categorical instructional program. Programming focuses

on individual strengths and needs of identified students. Students with social and emotional needs benefit from a highly structured, supportive learning environment. Based on each student's individualized educational plan (IEP) this environment supports academic, behavioral and social interventions. Students may spend a majority of the day in the classroom, or only receive periodic monitoring by staff, based upon student needs and progression through the program. The social skills aspect of the curriculum as well as the instructional approaches are designed to enhance self-esteem, develop pro-social skills, and develop more effective social and emotional problem-solving and conflict resolution skills within the educational setting.

5. **Learning Resource Center-** A cross-categorical program for eligible students. Services are provided on each campus throughout the district. Students in the LRC program are able to make progress in the regular education classroom with the help of Special Education services. The purpose of the LRC program is to provide additional support in specially designed instruction to enable the learner's success.

Goals/Vision:

Special education services are individualized to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities and are provided in the least restrictive environment. Specialized education may include individual or small group instruction, curriculum and/or teaching modification and other related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, adapted physical education, vision services, hearing services, transportation and assistive technology. These services and programs are in accordance with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is specifically tailored to the exceptional needs of each student.

The goals/vision of Special Education are to help students become independent learners, to teach learning strategies to prepare them to be successful in their general education classes, and to prepare them for post-secondary experiences. These goals will be achieved through a partnership between student, home, and school. Credit is given for courses whether as an elective or as a class required for graduation.

Student Support – Desert Mountain High School has had students with 504s and IEPs successfully earn their IB Diploma. Upon entry into the Diploma Program, students are advised of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement and academic success. At the beginning of each academic year, teachers are also advised as to which students in their classes have IEPs and 504s, and the teachers are given a copy of those documents to ensure that they know what accommodations have been put in place to help those students be successful. In addition to employing teaching strategies that include differentiation for students with special needs, students are also supported through special arrangements if necessary. Each student with an IEP also has a case manager who helps with student success according to individual IEP goals and communicates with the content area teachers to stay aware of the student's progress in each class. The DP Coordinator communicates with parents of students

with IEPs and 504s before/at the beginning of the anticipated year to make sure the family has the necessary documentation available should they want to request accommodations for the upcoming testing session. The Diploma Program Coordinator will continue to submit to IB the appropriate accommodations form, along with necessary documentation, requesting assessment modifications when needed.

Spaces at DMHS are handicap accessible and the student's counselors are available for students who need to discuss any issues that come up or want to create a college plan for their future. Scottsdale Unified School District also uses Google resources, such as Google Classroom, so students can also access their work electronically. All teachers are available for extra help during their help hours and can also provide additional resources when the student requests it.

Review Process:

Teachers and administrators are responsible for implementing the Inclusion Policy. However, as needed, teachers, administrators, students and parents can come together to evaluate and review the policy. Their responsibility will be to make sure the policy is up to date with the best practices in the teaching field and to make sure that the Inclusion Policy is relevant and fair for all students. In regards to the DP program, the DP coordinator will discuss with new teachers in the program how our DP program implements this Inclusion Policy. Also, veteran teachers in the different subject areas will assist new teachers and explain how this policy applies to their specific field. As with all IB policies, it is posted on the DMHS IB page for anyone to see. This policy was reviewed by all IB DP teachers along with representatives of the IB Parents' Association during the 2023-24 school year. After changes were made, it was then sent to Katrina Gonnerman, Department Chair of Self-Contained Classrooms and ALC teacher at Desert Mountain, who then reviewed it, to make sure it was in compliance with state mandates.