Hilton Head Island Elementary
Inclusion Policy

Philosophy

We believe that all students have unique learning needs to consider in order for all children to meet and/or exceed their academic and nonacademic potential. As Primary Years Programme (PYP) teachers, we support the teaching and learning that provides equity for every student. We support the development of internationally-minded citizens through inclusionary practices so that all students are involved in the PYP. Students with special educational needs, including children with cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, speech/language and physical developmental needs are provided necessary support to allow them to achieve academic success. We meet the needs of the diverse population within our community by using varied teaching styles, individual educational plans, specialized curriculums and research-based strategies. We support the needs of students in the least restrictive environment for student success.

The MTSS Process, The Individualized Education Plan, and The 504 Plan

Practice

HHIE uses Multi-Tiered Systems and Support (MTSS), utilizing inclusive teaching techniques where appropriate. The goal of MTSS is to intervene early when students first show signs of needing assistance academically or socially. Teachers and interventionists design support plans for students

Identification

Teachers use a multi-tiered approach to help differentiate instruction for students who need additional strategies. Using the MTSS model as a starting point, a team meets regularly to help identify children who need additional support in both academics and behavior. The MTSS Child Study team recommends classroom interventions and teachers collect data weekly to determine student progress. Students who do not respond to classroom interventions are referred for small group interventions for academics and/or behavior based on the different tiers listed below.

> Tier 1 Interventions- Quality core classroom instruction that is responsive, standards-based, and data-driven. Using the gradual release of responsibility, teachers determine which students respond to Tier 1 instruction and which ones do not. 80% of students should make sufficient progress through core instruction alone.
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> Tier 2 Interventions- Focused supplemental intervention is provided for students who need an additional layer of support. This may include additional small-group instruction designed to complement the core Tier 1 instruction that all students receive. Frequent progress monitoring determines how students are responding to the interventions. Approximately 15% of students at one time or another may require targeted interventions in addition to the core instruction.

Tier 3 Interventions- At this level, approximately 5% of students receive the most intensive intervention individually or in a small group. Interventions are implemented with fidelity and progress monitoring is maintained weekly.

If progress monitoring data shows students are not responding to their interventions, they will be referred for further evaluation. These evaluations may include cognitive and academic testing. In addition, testing for speech, hearing, vision, attention, behavior and motor skills may be conducted if deemed appropriate by the team.

Students who qualify for special education services receive support based on their needs. There are various ways to meet their needs: inclusion, therapy, homebound, and alternative education placements. Specialized staff provide resources and support services for all children who qualify for special education. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is written for each child that qualifies for special education services. There are 13 areas of eligibility for special education: Specific Learning Disability, Intellectual Disability, Speech/Language Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Autism, Emotional Disability, Visual Impairment, Deaf-Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blindness, Multiple Disabilities, Developmental Delay, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Other Health Impairment. Eligible students receive services based on their identified needs as documented in their Individual Education Plans. The special education staff works closely with the classroom teacher and PYP coordinator so that exceptional learners are involved with the PYP curriculum.

A 504 plan is another way to meet the unique needs of our students. It is HHIE's responsibility to identify, evaluate, and provide appropriate accommodations if a child is determined to be eligible under Section 504. The 504 Team includes the LEA administrator, psychologist, regular education teacher, school counselor, and parents.

Within the classroom, differentiation is seen as a means to shape instruction and the curriculum allowing for the most effective strategies for individualized achievement goals. To maximize student success, teachers use a variety of grouping strategies within the classroom, pre-assessments to guide instruction, formative assessments to monitor and adjust instruction, inquiry-based activities to spark imagination, varied resources (including leveled reading books, enrichment, online programs, curriculum materials for gifted learners, etc.), and modified assessments. Each classroom builds its own support system for all students' growth and needs.

Parents

Parents play a vital role in the education of their children. Support is offered for parents through the RTI process. Parents may refer a child to RTI for academic, behavioral or speech/language concerns. The team, comprised of administration, curriculum coaches, the social worker, bilingual liaisons, school counselors, the behavior management specialist, the school psychologist and school therapists discusses each child who is referred on an individual basis. Interventions are targeted to meet the needs of the child, and parents are notified via letters, phone calls and meetings. Parents are consulted for suggestions and insights to help create targeted interventions. Parents may also be asked to provide interventions at home.

Once a child is placed for special education services, parents may request a meeting at any time. At a minimum, parents meet yearly to review the IEP and needs of a child. In addition, parents and students attend yearly conferences in the fall/spring to share and reflect on student work.

Staff

All members of the faculty are made aware of the many opportunities and services we offer students. All staff members are required to attend a yearly meeting on the RTI process. Teachers are a vital part of the process used in evaluating students for interventions. Interventions are reviewed with classroom teachers, assistants, and specialists so that all stakeholders involved are familiar with the targeted interventions. If students become eligible for special education services, the regular education teacher becomes an integral part of the IEP team in developing appropriate goals and objectives for a student's IEP. Teachers are expected to implement accommodations for instruction and testing in the regular education classroom as well as monitor behavior plans.

Gifted and Talented Students

Practice

Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades 1-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore require an educational program beyond that normally provided by the general school program in order to achieve their potential. (*S.C. Regulation 43-220, Gifted and Talented)*

Programming for Beaufort County's gifted and talented includes a variety of options, including acceleration, enrichment, in-depth work in selected areas of study, and opportunities for community-based and "beyond the classroom" learning through mentorships and summer and weekend programs.

The curriculum for gifted and talented learners is designed to be rigorous due to its level of depth and complexity. Instructional services are delivered in an environment that honors diversity in thinking, fosters inquiry, and produces positive attitudes toward learning. Assessment strategies for gifted and talented students match the instructional approaches.

In addition to differentiated programming, curriculum, and assessment, gifted and talented students have access to guidance and counseling services responsive to their unique needs. These services should address issues especially pertinent to gifted populations such as coping with being different, perfectionism, underachievement, and dealing with uneven abilities.

Parents and Teachers

The Gifted and Talented lead teacher offers support to parents looking for information on the gifted and talented identification process and program. To help our parents understand the many resources available, we offer informational meetings, parent nights, monthly newsletters, student-led conferences, teacher-parent conferences, individual education plan meetings, and quarterly progress reports. Teachers also attend a yearly meeting on the GT identification process, as well as trainings on how to differentiate in the classroom to meet the needs of their high-ability learners

Identification

To be eligible for placement, the South Carolina State Department of Education requires students to meet two out of the three dimensions listed below or to score at the 96th national age percentile composite score on an individual or group aptitude test.

Dimension A: Reasoning Abilities

These students demonstrate high aptitude (93rd national age percentile or above) in one or more of these areas: verbal/linguistic, quantitative/mathematical, non-verbal, and/or a composite of the three.

Dimension B: High Achievement in Reading and/or Mathematical Areas

These students demonstrate high achievement (94th national percentile and above or advanced status) in reading and/or mathematical areas as measured by nationally normed or South Carolina statewide assessment instruments, such as I-Ready and SC Ready.

Dimension C: Intellectual/Academic Performance

These students demonstrate a high degree of interest in and commitment to academic and/or intellectual pursuits or demonstrate characteristics such as curiosity, reflection, and persistence in the face of challenge and creative productive thinking. Characteristics for this dimension are demonstrated through assessments of performance tasks.

Review Of The Exceptional Learners Policy

This policy is posted on the school webpage and located in the staff handbook. Each year, the policy is reviewed by the entire staff and their feedback is submitted to the special education policy committee. The policy is updated when necessary by the Exceptional Learners Policy Committee comprised of the school administrators, IB coordinator, RTI coordinator, GT coordinator, counselors, school psychologists, special education teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, math coach and literacy coach.

Exceptional Learners Policy Committee: Sean O'Hara, Jessica Barnes, Gabriella Bailey, Paula Greab, Dolphine Mullen, Pat Pennington, Kristie Sholly, Kathy Perry, Wen Wu, Jen D'Angelo, Jun Yin,

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