Roton Middle School Inclusion Philosophy

IB Inclusion Committee:
Ed Singleton, BMHS Principal/Head of School
Luz Palmero, IB MYP Coordinator

- Sped representation: Corrine VanHise
- Dean of Students: Ricquel Pratt
- Language representation: Maria Jara
- Parent representation: Kara Bonitatibus, Co-Chair of RMS SGC

Purpose

The purpose of the Roton Middle School Inclusion Philosophy is to create an equitable, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where all students, regardless of their background or learning needs, feel valued and empowered. The philosophy aims to foster a sense of belonging, promoting diversity, equity, and respect while ensuring that every student has access to the resources and opportunities necessary for their academic, social, and emotional growth. By embracing diverse perspectives and promoting intercultural understanding, the school strives to develop compassionate, knowledgeable, and open-minded learners who are prepared to contribute positively to a global society.

Statement of Philosophy for Inclusion and Diversity

At Roton Middle School, we are dedicated to fostering a community of inquirers who understand and celebrate the rich diversity within our school while recognizing our shared values. As we strive to fulfill our mission of creating a better world through education, we emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our programs and classes are designed to cultivate

knowledgeable and open-minded students, intentionally promoting awareness of global cultures.

We offer a range of interventions and enrichment courses that empower our learners to become thoughtful thinkers and effective communicators. The Roton IB-MYP is committed to addressing the diverse needs of our community, as we challenge ourselves to become a more inclusive and accepting organization that stands against racism, prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization. We encourage our students to be principled and caring, ensuring that they feel valued and included. By embracing learner variability, we create an environment where risk-takers can thrive, fostering balanced individuals who are reflective about their learning and capable of making positive changes in the world.

The Norwalk Board of Education Equity Statement

The Norwalk Board of Education firmly believes in the potential of all students to learn and succeed. We support equity, diversity and inclusion as fundamental values of our school district to ensure access for ALL scholars.

We stand united in respecting people of all backgrounds and identities, welcoming all races, socio-economic statuses, genders, gender identities or expressions, sexual orientations, religions, nationalities, citizenship statuses and disabilities. Our schools are safe and welcoming environments for all. We are dedicated to fostering authentic relationships with all members of our school community, including culturally diverse families, and will communicate with clarity and respect.

To prepare our students to succeed in a multicultural, global society, we support our schools in teaching the contributions and viewpoints of all people, using culturally relevant curricula.

Race/ethnicity, language or socio-economic status will not be barriers to accessing academic, social-emotional and extra-curricular opportunities. The Board believes that a high quality school district provides equitable opportunities, policies, facilities and experiences that produce meaningful outcomes for ALL scholars.

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy and the Norwalk Public Schools Equity Statement

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy aligns closely with the Norwalk Public Schools Equity Statement, emphasizing a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Both advocate for creating safe, welcoming environments where all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status, have equal access to academic, social, and extra-curricular opportunities. At Roton, this is achieved by promoting global awareness, respecting diverse

identities, and offering targeted interventions to meet the varied needs of students. Together, both philosophies aim to foster a community where every learner feels valued, included, and empowered to succeed.

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy and the IB MYP Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy aligns closely with the IB MYP Mission Statement by fostering a community that develops inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who understand and celebrate diversity. The school's emphasis on global awareness and respect for different cultures supports the IB goal of creating a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding. Roton encourages students to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners, with a focus on addressing issues like racism, prejudice, and marginalization. By promoting respect for others' differences and encouraging students to value diverse perspectives, Roton mirrors the IB mission of helping students recognize that other people, with their differences, can also be right, preparing them to contribute positively to a global society.

Roton Middle School Philosophy and the IB Access and Inclusion philosophy

*The IB **Access and inclusion philosophy** aims to establish standards and best practices in access and inclusion in IB World Schools so that all students can fully participate in their IB education. All schools are expected to draw upon the principles and practice of provision of access arrangements from this philosophy to formulate their internal school inclusion philosophy and practice for learning, teaching and assessment.*

Roton Middle School's philosophy aligns closely with the International Baccalaureate's Access and Inclusion philosophy by ensuring that all students, regardless of their individual needs, have access to equitable educational opportunities. The school's commitment to inclusivity is reflected in its tailored interventions and enrichment courses that support diverse learning needs, ensuring that every student can succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. By fostering an environment that celebrates diversity and works against discrimination, Roton creates a supportive space where all learners can fully participate in the curriculum. This inclusive approach mirrors the IB's philosophy of providing fair opportunities and accommodations to ensure that every student, including those with learning differences, is empowered to engage fully and thrive within the school community.

Roles & Responsibilities

IB Coordinators

- Along with the Special Education Case Manager, apply to IBO for student accommodations for IB assessments *when necessary*
- Maintain documentation and authorization from parents/guardians to submit requests for inclusive arrangements or accommodations.
- Provide examination accommodations for IB assessments when approved by IBO

Teachers

- Maintain accurate records of students' progress
- Provide accommodations per IEP or 504 Plan
- Maintain student confidentiality
- Collaborate with sped staff/related service providers
- Differentiate instruction

Parents

- Provide all relevant documentation and updates from Medical providers for IEP and/or 504 review meetings.
- Communicate

Students

- Proactive in self-advocacy
- Follow all NPS and IB policies

The IB Programs at RMS adheres to all federal and Connecticut legislation: ●
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Background Federal Requirements

Three existing federal statutes address the rights of students with disabilities to receive a free

and appropriate public education (FAPE); Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). FAPE is a civil right rooted in the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution, which includes equal protection and due process clauses. State and federal laws must be followed and the appropriate accommodations must be made. The federal government guarantees each preschool and school--aged child an education in the least restrictive environment. We must provide this education to all students with special needs between the ages of 3 and 21 years. This was written into federal law as PL 94--142, passed in 1975. Since then the law has been modified and refined by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA 2004). The IDEA act requires that public schools create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student who is found to be eligible under both the federal and state eligibility/disability standards. The IEP is the cornerstone of a student's educational program. The IEP specifies the services to be provided and how often, describes the student's present levels of performance and how the student's disabilities affect academic performance, and specifies accommodations and modifications to be provided for the student. (Public Law 108--466 – 108th Congress).

Section 504 Plans

At Roton Middle School we work collaboratively with the families to ensure that all students Section 504 ensures that the child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations to ensure appropriate and effective instruction.

Eligibility of Services Special Education Program Description

The Specialized Learning and Student Services Department oversees Special Education and related services in Norwalk. Special Education services are delivered to students with disabilities from ages 3-22 in the least restrictive environment and in accordance with Federal and State laws.

The Specialized Learning and Student Services Department of the Norwalk Public Schools recognizes that parents/guardians are integral participants in the development of their child's educational programming. It is important that the schools and parents work together in order for all of our students to benefit from their school experience.

The referral of your child to determine the need for Special Education instruction and related services may be a new experience that poses many questions for you. We encourage you to call any member of our department who will be ready to answer questions, provide information and listen to your concerns.

Identification Process

Scientific Research Based Interventions(SRBI) Through SRBI instruction and intervention, we are able to address and appropriately assist our students' growth academically, behaviorally, and socially. SRBI is a three-tiered model that is utilized to give strategies and interventions to students according to their individualized data collected over a variety of assessments. The purpose of the interventions is to promote success within our students. Tier I is general instruction provided to all students. Tier II provides additional support for students who need assistance within a content area. Tier III is individualized interventions to address student needs. Gifted and Talented Program The term gifted and talented is utilized by the Connecticut Department of Education, and refers to students who give evidence through data of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to promote effective development and appropriate rigorous and growth. At Roton Middle School we encourage and challenge students to work at their full potential through explorations, cycle of inquiry, action, reflection, and presentation. Individual Educational Plans (IEP) The IEP is the cornerstone of a student's educational program. The IEP specifies the services to be provided and how often, describes the student's present levels of performance and how the student's disabilities affect academic performance, and specifies accommodations and modifications to be provided for the student. Section 504 Plans At Roton Middle School we work collaboratively with the families to ensure that all students Section 504 ensures that the child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations to ensure appropriate and effective instruction. Multilingual Learners (MLL).

Supports – Continuum of Services

NPS Wellness philosophy

Norwalk Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting physical, social, and emotional wellness, including good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. The district supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of children. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The Family Center

The mission of the Family Center is to welcome all families to the Norwalk Public Schools community in a nurturing and professional manner. Our goal is to provide all NPS families with a seamless registration process at the Family Center that provides them with the resources and quality information they will need to navigate the educational system. We aim to empower the families of the Norwalk Public School community to self-advocate and ensure their children's academic and social needs are being met.

Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Department

The PPS Department at Roton Middle School provides comprehensive support to address students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. Comprising of school counselors, social workers, a school psychologist and speech pathologist, the team collaborates with educators, families, and community partners to foster student well-being, promote equity, and ensure access to necessary resources for success in school and beyond.

School Counseling Department

Mission Statement

The mission of the Counseling Department at Roton Middle School is to ensure that all students acquire the educational, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills necessary for success in all areas of their lives.

The Role of the Middle School Counselor

At Roton Middle School the school counselor establishes and maintains a relationship with students and parents for the duration of their time at middle school. The counselor works with ALL children through individual and group counseling as well as through classroom lessons. The counselor may also serve as a consultant and a coordinator for home-school-community communication.

What Does the Counselor Do?

- Individual Counseling
- Group Counseling
- In-class Counseling Lessons
- Coordinates the Mentor Program
- Academic scheduling

- Presentations on alternative high school programs
- Conduct parent workshops
- Liaison for teachers and parents
- Monitor students' academic progress
- Community service referrals
- Consultation with support staff

School Social Workers

The Middle School Social Workers at Roton Middle School supports students' social, emotional, and mental health needs. They provide individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, and support for families. They collaborate with teachers, administrators, and community resources to create a safe and inclusive school environment, fostering students' overall well-being and academic success.

School Psychologist

The School Psychologist at Roton Middle School supports students' mental health and academic development by conducting assessments, providing counseling, and offering interventions for emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and the PPS team to develop individualized support plans, fostering a positive school environment where students can thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. Currently, the School Psychologist at RMS also is the compliance coordinator for our school.

Speech Pathologist

The Speech Pathologist at Roton Middle School provides assessment and therapy services to students with speech, language, and communication challenges. They work closely with educators and families to develop individualized plans that support students' communication skills, enhancing their academic performance and social interactions. Through targeted interventions, the Speech Pathologist helps students improve speech clarity, language comprehension, and expressive language abilities.

Community Partnerships

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA) is the first historically African American sorority, founded in 1908, dedicated to scholarship, service, and sisterhood. Through its initiatives, AKA uplifts communities by addressing issues such as education, health, and social justice.

As part of its commitment to service, AKA launched the Childhood Hunger Initiative Power Pack (CHIPP) Program, which provides nutritious meals and snacks to food-insecure children, particularly on weekends and holidays when school meals are unavailable. This initiative ensures that children receive the sustenance they need to thrive academically and physically.

Additionally, the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) empowers young leaders by offering hands-on leadership development, career exploration, and community service opportunities. Through YLI, high school students gain essential skills to become confident, socially responsible, and civically engaged leaders.

Roton Middle School is grateful to have sponsorship from the Omicrion Upsilon Omega Chapter, located in Lower Fairfield County, CT.

Mid-Fairfield Community Care Center Partnership: Individual and Group based Services; The Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center (MFCCC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing mental health services and support to children and families in the Norwalk, Westport, Wilton, Weston, and New Canaan communities.

CBITS Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) - Roton Middle School
CBITS is an evidence-based, 10-week group intervention designed for middle school students to address symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and behavioral challenges. Implemented in the school setting, the program aims to improve students' emotional well-being, academic performance, attendance, and peer and family relationships, while enhancing coping skills and overall functioning.

Filling in the Blanks Filling in the Blanks fights childhood hunger by providing children in need with meals on the weekends. The program fills in the weekend blank by providing nutritious weekend meals to children. Removing the obstacle of food insecurity for kids year round. Each weekend a child is provided a weekend meal bag, containing 4 meals to bridge the weekend gap when school provided breakfast and lunches are not available

Latinx Integrated Care (LINC) Program The Latinx Integrated Care (LINC) Program offers confidential, trauma-informed clinical and care coordination services to recently arrived Spanish-speaking immigrants enrolled in Norwalk Public Schools. With a team of bilingual, bicultural clinicians and coordinators, the program supports immigrant families in navigating challenges and promoting their overall well-being. Services include individual and family therapy, as well as care coordination to connect families with community resources and ongoing support. Eligibility is limited to students who entered the U.S. on or after May 2019.

LGBTQIIA+ Group An affirming group for LGBTQIA+ youth and allies. LGBTQIQ+ group uses the Safe Zone Curriculum and provides a welcoming space for group participants to be their authentic selves, ask questions, share resources, discuss events and build community.

Advanced Learning: Programs for Acceleration, Challenge and Enrichment

Gifted and Talented Program

The term gifted and talented is utilized by the Connecticut Department of Education, and refers to students who give evidence through data of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to promote effective development and appropriate rigorous and growth. At Roton Middle School we encourage and challenge students to work at their full potential through explorations, cycle of inquiry, action, reflection, and presentation.

Accelerated Math Courses

Grade 6

In the advanced 6th grade math, students follow the Illustrative Mathematics Curriculum. In the first half of the year, students learn about area, ratios, rates and percentages as well as multiplication and division of fractions and decimals. In addition, students also learn about proportional relationships as well as percent increase and decrease which is introduced in grade 7.

Grade 7

Illustrative Math is a problem-based curriculum that makes rigorous middle school math accessible for all students. Everything is sequenced for students as they tackle challenging, real-life problems. There is time set aside for student discourse, where pairs share their strategies and work toward an answer which makes sense. In Pre-Algebra students will focus on scale drawings, inequalities, and expressions and equations and slope. Students will also grapple with

using the Pythagorean Theorem, functions, volume, scientific notation and irrational numbers, which is taught in the second half of the year.

Grade 8
Students will use the Kendall Hunt Illustrative Mathematics program. Topics include: one and two variable statistics, functions, and more specifically exponential and quadratic functions, as well as linear equations, inequalities, system of equations and quadratics equations.

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy and the IB Learner Profile

1. **Inquirer**: Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy encourages students to ask questions and seek knowledge, fostering a curious and inquisitive mindset while valuing diverse perspectives.
2. **Knowledgeable**: The school's inclusive approach ensures that all students gain in-depth understanding of global cultures, histories, and ideas, promoting intellectual growth and curiosity.
3. **Thinker**: Roton provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills, tackling complex problems and embracing creative solutions with respect for diverse viewpoints.
4. **Communicator**: The school emphasizes the importance of effective communication, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, can express themselves confidently and respectfully in various contexts.
5. **Principled**: Roton Middle School fosters a sense of fairness and justice by actively promoting inclusion, standing against discrimination, and encouraging students to act with integrity and respect for others.
6. **Caring**: The school's philosophy prioritizes empathy and compassion, creating an environment where students feel valued and supported, and are encouraged to show respect for the needs and feelings of others.
7. **Risk-Taker**: Roton empowers students to approach unfamiliar situations with confidence and independence, encouraging them to take risks in their learning and personal growth within an inclusive setting.
8. **Balanced**: The school supports students in maintaining a healthy balance between intellectual, emotional, and social growth, ensuring they thrive academically while fostering their well-being.
9. **Reflective**: Roton encourages students to reflect on their learning and personal experiences, helping them to understand their strengths and areas for growth, and apply this understanding to their future development.

10. **Open-Minded**: The school promotes an open-minded environment where students appreciate and respect diverse perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds, fostering an inclusive mindset that celebrates differences.

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy and the MYP Approaches to Learning (ATLs)

1. **Communication**: Roton Middle School's inclusive philosophy ensures that all students, regardless of background or learning needs, can express themselves confidently and engage in meaningful interactions, which aligns with the IB MYP ATL Communication's focus on effective expression and collaboration across diverse contexts.
2. **Social**: Roton fosters a collaborative environment where students learn to respect and work with others from different cultures, reflecting the IB MYP ATL Social's emphasis on developing teamwork and positive interpersonal relationships.
3. **Self-Management**: At Roton, students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning, manage their emotional growth, and practice resilience, which aligns with the IB MYP ATL Self-Management's focus on personal organization, reflection, and self-discipline.
4. **Research**: Roton supports students in developing inquiry-based skills by providing opportunities to explore diverse global perspectives, aligning with the IB MYP ATL Research's goal of fostering critical thinking, analysis, and independent investigation.
5. **Thinking**: Roton promotes critical and creative thinking, encouraging students to reflect on their learning, approach challenges thoughtfully, and appreciate multiple viewpoints, in alignment with the IB MYP ATL Thinking's focus on problem-solving and creative decision-making.

Roton Middle School's Inclusion Philosophy with IB Programme Standards and Practices

1. **Standard A1 - The school has developed an inclusive educational philosophy and practice**:
   Roton Middle School's philosophy emphasizes equity, inclusion, and diversity, ensuring that all students have access to learning opportunities that respect their individual needs, cultures, and backgrounds. This aligns with the IB's requirement for an inclusive educational approach.

2. **Standard A2 - The school has an inclusive admission philosophy that provides access to all students**:

Roton's approach to inclusion mirrors the IB's standards by providing equitable access to education for all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or learning needs, in alignment with the principle of inclusivity outlined in IB Standard A2.

3. **Standard B1 - The school's leadership demonstrates commitment to inclusivity**: Roton's leadership is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive school environment, as shown through its continuous efforts to promote equity, inclusion, and respect among all students, which aligns with IB's Standard B1.

4. **Standard B2 - The school develops an inclusive curriculum**: Roton's curriculum supports diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs, ensuring that every student has access to the resources and opportunities necessary for success. This aligns with IB's emphasis on inclusive curriculum development in Standard B2.

5. **Standard C1 - The school supports students with diverse learning needs**: Roton's commitment to supporting students with different learning needs, including interventions and enrichment courses, directly aligns with IB Standard C1, which calls for schools to provide support mechanisms to meet diverse educational needs.

6. **Standard C3 - The school fosters a collaborative learning environment that respects the contributions of all students**: Roton's inclusive community, where all students are encouraged to participate and collaborate, reflects IB Standard C3, which focuses on fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.

7. **Standard D1 - The school evaluates its policies and practices regularly to ensure inclusivity**: Roton consistently evaluates and adjusts its practices to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, are supported and included. This aligns with IB Standard D1, which requires schools to regularly review and refine their inclusive policies and practices.

By aligning with these IB Programme Standards and Practices, Roton Middle School ensures that its inclusion philosophy is consistent with the rigorous requirements set forth by the International Baccalaureate.

Communication of the Language philosophy: Roton Middle School is committed to maintaining transparent communication about its philosophy throughout the school community. A collaborative working group, including teachers from various departments and subject areas, ensures that the philosophy is effectively shared and understood across the school.

This philosophy is aligned with the school's overall strategic plan, which is accessible on the Roton Middle School website.

---

philosophy Review: The first year of implementing the current practices helped to solidify the foundations for ongoing improvements. Although the initial changes in our policies presented challenges, they have resulted in long-term benefits. This philosophy was last reviewed in January of 2025, and feedback on its effectiveness continues to be shared with stakeholders through meetings with parents, conducted by the MYP Coordinator, and through our website and handbook. These continuous reflections and updates ensure that our practices remain relevant and effective in supporting student success.

Sources

International Baccalaureate. (n.d.). *Access and inclusion philosophy*. International Baccalaureate Organization. https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/programmes/dp/pdfs/access-and-inclusion-philosophy-en.pdf

International Baccalaureate. (n.d.). *Adverse circumstances philosophy*. International Baccalaureate Organization. https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/programmes/dp/pdfs/adverse-circumstances-philosophy-en.pdf

International Baccalaureate. (n.d.). *Equity and inclusive education in the IB*. International Baccalaureate Organization. https://www.ibo.org/programmes/equity-and-inclusive-education-in-the-ib/

International Baccalaureate. (2020, July 1). *Building practices for inclusivity within the IB community*. International Baccalaureate Organization. https://www.ibo.org/news/news-about-the-ib/building-practices-for-inclusivity-within-the-ib-community/

Programme Standards and Practices (2020) Further guidance for developing MYP assessed curriculum

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Programme Standards and Practices Authorization Process*.

Norwalk Public Schools. (n.d.). *Educational equity philosophy*. Norwalk Public Schools. https://www.norwalkps.org/about/district-overview/educational-equity

Roton Middle School. (2024-2025). *Assessment philosophy*. Roton Middle School, Norwalk, CT.

Roton Middle School. (2024-2025). *Language philosophy.* Roton Middle School, Norwalk, CT.
Roton Middle School. (2024-2025). *Academic Integrity philosophy.* Roton Middle School, Norwalk, CT.
Roton Middle School. (2024-2025). *Admission philosophy*. Roton Middle School, Norwalk, CT.