

CIMS Inclusion Policy

Corwin International Magnet School -Updated February 21, 2024-

Corwin International empowers all students to be globally minded life-long learners through meaningful, rigorous learning experiences that result in academic growth, social-emotional development and success in all future endeavors.

Purpose

The goal of this policy is to outline an inclusion system that allows for teachers and students to work collaboratively to identify and remove barriers to learning in order to help learners develop an understanding of themselves at a level where they can self-advocate (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020, p.2). This document will be used to inform all stakeholders of Federal, State, District and school responsibilities.

Federal Regulations

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became effective July 1, 2005. This federal law governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. As it stands, Colorado has accepted federal funding under IDEA and is subject to all regulations. Children at CIMS (ages 3-21) will receive special education and related services as outlined in Part B of IDEA. Under IDEA students with disabilities must be provided Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) that prepares them for further education, employment and independent living (US Department of Education, About IDEA Section, 2022).

State Regulations

In accordance with IDEA, each state is required to develop a state performance plan/annual performance report (SPP/APR) that plans for and evaluates indicators of the state's implementation status of IDEA. (Colorado Department of Education ,Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) Section, 2022). In order to maintain funding from the IDEA grant, the State must submit an annual application to ensure it meets the eligibility requirements of IDEA funding. (Colorado Department of Education, Office of Special Education Section, 2022).

District and School Obligations

Corwin International Magnet School seeks to “develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through education” (International Baccalaureate Organization, Our Mission, 2022). In addition, according to D60 Board policy (2022-23), “The schools in the district are subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability or need for special education services” (para. 1).

As a result, all students at CIMS will receive equitable and meaningful access to the curriculum through inclusion in a way that all staff respond positively to each student's unique needs. The school community will:

1. Use inclusion to create procedures, policies and their overall school culture to include all students.
2. Incorporate the view of all stakeholders to inform education services.
3. Actively seek to alleviate barriers to learning.
4. Ensure all students have access to an education that allows them to achieve their personal potential.
5. Provide strategies and support that will help all students to be successful in the general education classroom.
6. Differentiate learning for all students to maximize success and reduce barriers to learning including but not limited to physical obstacles, culture and policies and success in the Approaches to Learning Skills (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020, p.4).
7. Provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (US Department of Education, 2022).
8. “Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the state and federal constitutions, pertinent legislation and applicable judicial interpretations” (Pueblo District 60, 2022-23).
9. Provide all teachers opportunities for professional development at the state, district, and building level. This includes IB specific training.
10. Provide inquiry opportunities that will allow all students access to learning within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Response to Intervention

At Corwin International Magnet School, we believe that a proactive approach to RTI is the best way to ensure all students can be successful within the general education environment. As such, the main purpose of the RTI team is to proactively identify which students will require specific Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 support and ensure those supports are provided.

The main goals for the CIMS RTI process are as follows:

1. Provide teachers with data to support Tier 1 differentiation within their classroom.
2. Proactively determine which students have academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and attendance needs requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
3. Provide strategically designed Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to support students in academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and attendance needs.

During each school year, the RTI designation process is ongoing. The designation process is as follows:

1. Beginning of Year Assessment
 - All students are screened in reading and math using initial assessment data from NWEA (grades 6-8) and ISIP (grades 4-5).
2. Tier Determinations

- Together, the MTSS team and grade level teams meet to make tier determinations and support recommendations for all students based on assessment data, grades, behavior records, attendance and other data.

3. Building RTI Meetings and Parent Contacts

- All parents are contacted regarding Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention suggested for their students over the course of the suggested intervention. The building RTI team holds meetings with parents regarding any students of specific concern.

4. Strategic Interventions

- Students with Tier 2 and Tier 3 designations receive suggested intervention programs with regular progress monitoring. Teachers have progress monitoring data, as well as all other student achievement data, available to drive Tier 1 instruction in their classroom; teachers progress monitor any Tier 1 students who they believe may require specific Tier 2 interventions in the future.

Section 504

Section 504 is the part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that guarantees specific rights in federally funded programs and activities to people who qualify as disabled. Section 504 states: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..." (As cited by U.S. Department of Education, Protecting Students with Disabilities Section, 2022). Section 504 is enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The School District is responsible for the implementation of Section 504 (U.S Department of Education, Protecting Students with Disabilities Section, 2022).

For Pueblo School District 60, a team, which will include at least one general education teacher, the school counselor, the parents, and in some cases the school nurse, a school psychologist, the school principal, a speech/language pathologist, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a special education teacher, and the student, will meet to determine eligibility for a 504 Plan. A student may be identified as eligible for a 504 if the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities which includes but is not limited to learning (Pueblo District 60, 2011).

Every 504 will include difficulties resulting from student's suspected or actual disability, any specific diagnosis if appropriate, what has been done to address the difficulties, needs related to the student's suspected or actual disability, and services or accommodations necessary to provide equal access to learning at CIMS.

Exceptional Student Services

In the cases where students are not showing progress through RTI intervention, parents are asked to give permission for further testing. Formal assessments are administered by qualified special education teachers and/or district specialists. All results are presented at a meeting with the evaluation team and parents, and eligibility for services is determined by the entire team at this meeting.

Once identified as a student with special education needs, intervention services that articulate inclusion are planned accordingly. Pueblo D60 (2022) states that the development of a student's IEP is a multi-part process that is in

compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and, in Colorado, the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA).

Every IEP must:

- Identify why the student needs special education services.
- Address the student's "unique" needs.
- Address the student's difficulties.
- Provide a basis for determining goals and accommodations for the student.
- Be reviewed at least once every 365 days.
- The eligibility for ESS services is reviewed every 3 years or earlier if requested by parents or the IEP team.

(Pueblo D60, Exceptional Student Service (ESS) Section. 2022)

Each student is assigned a case manager who is responsible for overseeing the implementation and communication of the IEP to the general education teachers. Before the beginning of the year, students are strategically scheduled to maximize support services in accordance with the IEP. At the beginning of the year, all teachers are given "snapshots" of IEP's for all students. Quarterly progress monitoring by case managers occurs in alignment with the student's IEP goals and objectives.

CIMS makes every effort to assure a seamless transition from school to school, or even from elementary to secondary level in our own building. The case manager is responsible for setting up a transition/planning meeting with parents, the new ESS teacher, and other members of the IEP team. In addition, every three years, the student's disability is reevaluated to determine continued eligibility for ESS services.

Advanced Learning Plans

In cases where students display a higher than average aptitude, adaptations and extension of the curriculum may be appropriate. The district's gifted and talented office shall designate a gifted and talented coordinator in each building to support and implement GT programming. Students can be identified as GT in a variety of categories like general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, drama, music, visual art, dance, psychomotor, creativity and leadership (Pueblo District 60, Gifted and Talented Section, 2022) through a body of evidence such as the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test-given as a universal screener to all 6th graders) and, once students are identified, an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is developed. This plan includes goals which guide the student's extended learning which are updated annually. ALPs are reviewed at least one time during the school year to determine if students are "on track" or "not on track" to meet their goal.

Guidelines for Instruction

"IB has identified four principles of good practice that promote equal access to the curriculum for all learners across the continuum, but that are particularly relevant to those with special needs. These principles are based on elements of good practice and are essential to the development of the whole person." (Learning Diversity and Inclusion in the International Baccalaureate Programmes, 2020, p.11). CIMS has adopted these four principles as good practice and outlined instruction below.

Affirming Identity and Building Self-Esteem

CIMS staff strives to create an inclusive environment where social and emotional conditions value all languages and cultures and affirm identities of each learner to promote self-esteem. This goal is primarily met through the intentional

focus on inquiry, the learner profile, action, and international mindedness. Building programs and practices that strive to affirm identity include:

1. Creating a school and class climate and culture that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners through the use of cooperative learning structures. Heterogeneous groupings allow for all learners, low and high to be challenged and supported.
2. Acknowledging nominated Students of the Month that embody learner profile attributes.
3. Parent relationships are a top priority at CIMS. It is the belief that when parents are present and accepted as part of the school culture, students feel more a part of the school community. Parents are looked at as partners in the education process in these ways:
 - a. IEP and ALP goals are created and updated with parent and/or student input.
 - b. Parent volunteer requirement of 18 hours per year per family.

Valuing Prior Knowledge

In order for new learning to take place, instruction needs to happen with the learner's prior knowledge in mind. Special education and general education teachers work collaboratively to communicate student's previous learning experiences and prior knowledge. IEP snapshots are provided for teachers at the beginning of each year and when IEP goals are reviewed. On this snapshot the students' strengths, needs and goals and objectives are listed for teachers. Teachers can look at the students' strengths and find areas of prior knowledge to build new learning upon. Prior knowledge is also considered for differentiation of learning. Differentiation and strategies for building or extending background knowledge is documented in the PYP and MYP unit planner.

Scaffolding

Teachers at CIMS strive to use best practices that allow them to scaffold new learning in the Zone of Proximal Development to support students' understanding of texts and tasks. According to Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020), scaffolding is a temporary strategy that provides support which enables learners to accomplish a task and is diminished over time promoting independence (p. 12). Ways in which teachers at CIMS may scaffold learning include: visual aids, cooperative learning structures, modeling thinking, dramatization, common writing planners across disciplines, small structured group instruction, and use of mother tongue or best language to develop ideas and initial plans. The Approaches to Learning skills have also been strategically articulated to provide structure to the implementation of important skills.

Extending Learning

All staff at CIMS strives to instruct students at a level that affords them the opportunity to interact with rigorous curricula through inquiry based education. Learner centered practices and interaction with rich materials and experiences are combined with high expectations in an environment of inclusion to help all learners be successful. Assistive technology, where needed, is offered to students to guarantee access to such materials. District 60 is a one to one technology district which allows all students access to the internet and technology resources.

Social Emotional Learning and Well Being at CIMS

At CIMS, we define well-being through the context of building the ATL social skills in order "to develop healthy identities; manage emotions; achieve personal and collective goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain supportive relationships; and make responsible and caring decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2022).

ATL Skills as Part of SEL

This chart illustrates the components of Well-Being as defined by the “What is well-being” Policy Research Paper from the IBO (Balica, 2021). It relates these components to the ATL Social Skills.

| Well-Being | Components | ATL Social Skills |
|------------------|---|---|
| Feeling Good | Inner joy, Optimism, Positive Emotions, Confidence, Growth Mindset | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take responsibility for one’s own actions ● Advocate for your own rights and needs |
| Functioning Well | Engagement, Relationships, Self-Regulation, Resilience, Perseverance, Healthy Routines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice Empathy ● Helping others to succeed ● Manage and resolve conflict and work collaboratively in teams ● Listen actively to other perspectives and ideas |
| Flourishing | Sense of meaning and purpose, Deeper-level connection, Living the good and authentic life, Sustainable impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build consensus ● Make fair and equitable decisions ● Negotiate effectively ● Encourage others to contribute ● Give and receive meaningful feedback |
| Accomplishing | Achieving goals, Maximizing potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delegate and share responsibility for decision-making ● Exercise leadership and take on a variety of roles within groups |

Communication and Review of the SEN Policy

All policies in relation to the implementation of the IB program are available on the school’s website. Review and revisions of the Inclusion Policy will take place annually. This policy is a living document that will change based on updates in federal, state or district regulations and/or best practices identified by the school or IB organization.

References

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