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Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle Inclusion Policy (Last update: April 2026)

Philosophical Basis for an Inclusion Policy

The Inclusion Policy at Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle is fully aligned with the school's IB-mandated policies on assessment, language, admissions, and academic integrity, reflecting current inclusive practices and IB philosophy. Inclusion is embedded across all aspects of teaching and learning to ensure that all admitted students—regardless of learning differences, language background, or socio-emotional needs—have meaningful and equitable access to the MYP curriculum. In alignment with the Language Policy, multilingual learners are supported through scaffolding, explicit language instruction, and assistive technologies. This policy also adheres to the International-Mindedness policy by considering and honoring cultural, linguistic, and experiential diversity as fundamental assets of the IB educational experience. Assessment practices are inclusive and differentiated, with clear criteria, formative feedback, and accommodations aligned to Section 504 and MTSS plans. The Admissions Policy ensures open access consistent with district guidelines, while the Academic Integrity Policy is upheld through explicit instruction, structured supports, and skill-building that allow students to demonstrate authentic learning. Collectively, these interconnected policies reflect TMS-M's commitment to international-mindedness, learner diversity, and equitable educational opportunities in accordance with IB expectations.

Learner Agency and Reflection

Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle intentionally promotes learner agency by positioning students as active participants in their learning and inclusion journey. In alignment with the IB Learner Profile, students are encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences, identify strengths and areas for growth, and set personal and academic goals. Opportunities for student voice, self-advocacy, and reflection are embedded across the curriculum, advisory experiences, and support structures to ensure inclusive practices are responsive to individual learner needs.

While TMS-M is an academic magnet school, we recognize that some students may arrive with barriers that require additional support and/or accommodations.

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

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, 2016):

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
    b. purposeful teacher planning to connect students' prior knowledge to new materials
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)
    j. These learning experiences intentionally support the development of IB Learner Profile attributes—particularly reflective, communicators, and principled learners—by providing students with opportunities for choice, self-assessment, and ongoing reflection.
    k. Use of online and digital resources such as Schoology, Canva, Newsela, Xello, i-Ready, Sora, Saavas, and HMH.

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. At Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle, families are valued partners in their child's learning, growth, and well-being. We believe students are most successful when schools and families work together.

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 Faculty/Staff leader: Mrs. LaTiffany Richardson-Tabb

Students are supported in reflecting on their progress and participating in goal-setting discussions in developmentally appropriate ways, reinforcing learner agency within the MTSS process.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (formerly referred to as Response to Intervention (RtI); or the Problem-Solving Team (PST))

The MTSS program in the Tuscaloosa City Schools provides individualized academic, behavioral, and foundational wellness interventions for students from PreK-12 while increasing the intensity and levels of support needed based on their individual needs.

School-based MTSS teams, composed of school administrators, teachers, school counselors, parents, and students, meet to develop an identified student's MTSS plan and establish individualized goals for targeted areas of need. Following the initial development of a plan, teachers meet with the

student daily in their individual classes to provide direct instruction and monitor student progress towards their goal. Monthly updates are shared with parents during scheduled meetings, where student data and progress are reviewed. At these meetings, monthly goals are evaluated and either continued or adjusted based on the student's progress.

In addition to daily monitoring, which may include documentation of individualized instruction in the regular class schedule, students in need of academic intervention will attend an intervention period, referred to as FOCUS, three times weekly, to receive additional support in their areas of need. The school counselor, serving as an additional resource, conducts weekly and/or bi-monthly academic counseling sessions to monitor students' academic progress and personal growth toward self-identified goals.

The MTSS framework in Tuscaloosa City Schools strongly supports the core principles of the IB Middle Years Programme by promoting inclusive education, student-centered learning, and holistic development.

Leadership roles and responsibilities

At Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle, this Inclusion Policy serves as a guiding framework for pedagogical leadership and curriculum decision-making. School leaders and teachers reference this policy when designing MYP units, selecting instructional strategies, developing assessments, and determining appropriate supports and learning pathways for students. The policy informs decisions related to professional learning, intervention and enrichment structures, and the intentional design of physical and virtual learning environments to ensure equitable access, student agency, and alignment with IB philosophy, the IB Learner Profile, and international-mindedness.

Students share responsibility for contributing to an inclusive school culture by demonstrating IB Learner Profile attributes, engaging in reflection, and advocating for their learning needs. Opportunities for student leadership, voice, and reflective practice are intentionally embedded across academic, advisory, and service-learning experiences.

The inclusion policy is revised 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://tmsm.tuscaloosacityschools.com/for-families/ib-middle-years-programme-information