# Bob Lanier Middle School

*A Vanguard Magnet and International Baccalaureate World School*

# Inclusion & Special Education Needs Policy

## Campus and District Philosophy

***Culture 2:1*** *The school implements and reviews an inclusion policy that meets IB guidelines.*

Lanier Middle School has a continuum of services designed to meet the needs of individual learners. Services range from case managers monitoring mainstream students to self-contained classes, where the students spend more than 50% of the day in special education classes.

Houston ISD believes in inclusion. Special education and general education teachers are given training and support to ensure students can and do learn at Lanier. Individual Education Programs (IEPs) are developed to meet the specific needs of each special education student. Special education staff members are in our Special Education Department.

**Our Special Education Beliefs:**

- With the proper support and opportunities, every student can learn and succeed.
- Learning differences and disabilities are to be respected.
- Parents of children with special needs should be viewed as valuable partners.
- Collaboration between special education and general education staff is imperative.
- All school staff are for meeting the individual needs of students.
- Language differences are not disabilities, nor should they be a barrier to special education support and services.
- All special education services should aim to minimize the impact of a disability while maximizing opportunities for students to participate in the general curriculum.
- Involving students with special needs in decisions affecting their education is empowering – fueling self-efficacy and the ability to successfully transition into higher education and/or employment.
- High expectations informed by ongoing assessments foster a special education system that is fluid, enabling students to enter and exit as appropriate.
- Special education staff are valued professional members of a school team.

***Culture 2:3*** *The school describes in its inclusion policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and clearly states the school's vision for implementing inclusive programmes.*

- Students who struggle academically or behaviorally flow through the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process prior to being tested for special education services.

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- Campus administrators, educators, assessment staff and parents participate in a collaborative process of Admission/Review/Dismissal (ARD) to determine student needs and services provided.
- Students with special needs are provided services in the "Least Restrictive Environment" (LRE). • Educators provide prescribed modifications and accommodations according to the student's Individual Education Program (IEP).
- A student's IEP includes a schedule of services, goals and objectives, LRE, classroom accommodations, assessment accommodations, the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), and the transition to high school and career path. Human, virtual, and curriculum resources are utilized to meet the needs of each student as determined by the ARD committee.

## Special Education Services Provided at Lanier Middle School

**Case Manager Assistance**
A variety of services are offered to special education students. Each grade level is assigned a Special Education Case Manager. These professionals have multifaceted roles to consult, collaborate, and/or co-teach with general education teachers, as well as, provide content mastery for students whose IEPs indicate a need for resource classes. Case managers are responsible for conducting annual ARDs, developing new IEPs, and monitoring student progress.

**Speech Therapy Services**
Students who have been evaluated for speech therapy receive specific assistance as documented in IEPs and modifications. A speech therapist is available to evaluate, monitor and provide direct and indirect services to identified students.

**Resource Classes**
There are resource classes for students identified through the ARD committee who need off-grade level instruction or small group instruction in the areas of Reading and/or Math. Resource teachers also help develop IEPs so that students are able to master Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) at their functional level. Our staff is knowledgeable and receives specific content area training annually.

**Skills for Learning and Living**
Students identified by the ARD committee with severe disabilities are given assistance so they can learn in functional environments. Students are taught skills necessary for daily living. Students are actively engaged in the community. Students spend over half the day in specialized classes and participate with peers during curricular and extracurricular activities. SLL classes are designed to address the needs of



HISD HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
2600 Woodhead St
Houston, TX 77098-1615
Phone: 713-942-1900
Fax: 713-942-1907

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students with moderate cognitive impairments in the areas of communication, literacy, independent living skills and community based vocational instruction.

## Special Education Models Utilized

Our school utilizes the following instructional services in order to meet the needs of our special education students:

- **Co-Teacher Services**
  Students receive cooperative interactive instruction from both general and special education teachers in the general education classroom.
- **Content Mastery Services**
  Students with disabilities who are enrolled in general education classes receive instructional support and assistive services for their general education classes.
- **Resource Services**
  The student attends general education classes for most of the day and is scheduled to receive instructional and/or support services from a special education teacher in one or more academic areas in the special education classes.
- **Consulting Teacher Services**
  On the basis of collaboration between general and special education teachers, the special education teacher consults the general education teacher on the implementation of instructional modifications and the delivery of instructional techniques for students with disabilities.
- **Self-Contained Class Services**
  The student is assigned to special education classes for most of the school day and attends those general education classes that the ARD Committee has determined to be appropriate to addressing the student's needs.

## Principles of Practice

We have incorporated within special education needs the four principles of good practice identified by the International Baccalaureate that promote equal access for all learners across the curriculum. We recognize that these principles are based on elements of good practice that are essential to the development of the whole person.

1. **Affirming Identity and Building Self Esteem**
   First and foremost, we have chosen to utilize the development of the Learner Profile attributes in our regular advocacy class meetings. These classes are inclusive of our entire student population which helps develop a sense of camaraderie among the whole student body. During class time, students are encouraged to explore the various attributes and strive to identify with one or more of them. Students who exhibit particular strengths in a Learner Profile attribute are recognized by the



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campus as a whole.

2. **Valuing Prior Knowledge**
   We recognize that it cannot be assumed that those learners who have diverse learning needs will necessarily all share the same previous learning and background knowledge. If new information is to be understood, it must be linked to prior knowledge. All teachers on our campus activate prior knowledge through the use of either formal pre-assessment or questioning strategies. In addition, our teachers engage in a process of regular, collaborative planning in order to consider and develop the strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning units of study.

3. **Scaffolding**
   Scaffolding provides a concrete context for understanding. Our teachers use the following strategies to foster learners' increasing independence:
   - Visual aids
   - Demonstrating
   - Collaborative groups
   - Sentence Stems

4. **Extended Learning**
   Students receive multisensory instruction that is explicit, direct, cumulative, intensive, and focused on the structure of language. Multisensory learning involves the simultaneous use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile pathways to enhance memory and learning of written language.

Ultimately, it is our goal to foster learners increasing independence in taking responsibility for developing strategies for their own learning.

## Inclusion and Special Educational Needs Accountability

During the first two weeks of school, the Special Education Department provides folders of special education students currently enrolled in classes. The folder contains modifications, test information and specifics of the child's IEP. The case manager of each grade level meets with teachers individually to answer questions regarding specific students.

If a teacher suspects a student is failing due to a learning disability and the teachers were not notified that the child has a special education label, teachers may refer the student to the Intervention and Assistance Team. The first step teachers take in the referral process is to discuss the child with the grade



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level team members. Next, teachers discuss the issue with the grade level administrator. Finally, teachers are asked to attend an MTSS meeting.

The Case Manager concept ensures that students do not "fall through the cracks". Case managers enable Lanier to have an inclusion model with co-teaching and content mastery as appropriate. The special education and general education teachers may do parallel planning for what best will meet the needs of our students. The special education teacher is NOT a teacher aide for the general education classroom. The case manager will track students' success and be proactive for any possible failures. Both teachers will collaborate to assign grades for these students.

The Case Level Manager arranges and presides at ARD meetings for their specific grade level. Prior to the ARD, a teacher from the student's cluster will be designated by the cluster leader or team, to:

- Gather pertinent information from the student's teachers.
- Be familiar with information and able to present as relevant.
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***Culture 2:2*** The school identifies in its inclusion policy all of its legal requirements and outlines the school's structures and processes for compliance.

At Lanier Middle School, we recognize and appreciate that no two students are the same. Every student is, in fact, an individual with unique personal and educational needs. While we encourage all students to embody the IB Learner Profile and to strive for academic success, we understand that this is no simple task. For many students, simultaneously trying to overcome other obstacles in their lives and/or in the classroom can be daunting. The purpose of this policy is to outline the best practices for addressing our students with special needs in an effort to allow ALL students access to the MYP curriculum. As our students and schools continually evolve, so will this document. To stay current, our intention is to reevaluate our special needs population, available services, philosophy, and procedures on an annual basis.

Special needs, for this purpose, is defined as any permanent or temporary diagnosed need that could put a student at a disadvantage and prevent that student from being able to demonstrate skills and knowledge adequately.

Some students may have special needs but may not qualify for special education services. These students are identified through the Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a free and appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability. Under this



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Fax: 713-942-1907

law, individuals with disabilities are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Some examples are: caring for one self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, or learning.

The purpose of Section 504 is to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity provided by school districts and other educational providers that receive federal financial assistance. No qualified student with a disability may, solely on the basis of a disability, be excluded from a district's programs and activities. Stated another way, the purpose of Section 504 is to ensure that students who are Section 504-eligible have educational opportunities equivalent to those of their nondisabled peers. School districts are required to provide appropriate general education or appropriate special education and related aides and services. This means that school districts may be required to provide accommodations to ensure that equal educational opportunities are available to eligible students with disabilities. Through Section 504, Lanier Middle School will provide disabilities-appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of qualified students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 regulations could consist of education in general classrooms, education in general classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services.

**The process for admission into special education is:**

- The school receives consent from the parents for an initial evaluation.
- A licensed educational diagnostician or a licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP), or speech and language pathologist as needed, conducts initial evaluations of the student to determine area(s) of disability.
- ARD committee meets to review assessment results and determine appropriate services needed to ensure access to free and appropriate public education.

**The process for annual review while a student is receiving special education services are:**

- An annual ARD is held to review progress and update the individualized education program.
- IEP Committee members will be assured during each IEP meeting that IB Policy is in alignment with IB expectations and in accordance with all Houston ISD Special Education expectations as well as local, state and federal requirements.

**The process for dismissing a student from special education are:**

- The ARD committee meets if it is determined that a student no longer has an eligibility condition based upon an evaluation, or the student no longer requires an individualized educational program.
- The ARD committee reviews the evaluation to determine if any less restrictive supports are needed (through 504 or MTSS) and the student is dismissed from special education.



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## Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure academic success for our students with special needs it is imperative to inform all stakeholders of their responsibilities in this joint venture. Stakeholders may include parents, students, families, teachers, and MYP staff and administrators. Lanier Middle School has the following expectations:

**Parents/Students/Families:**

- Families will communicate the special needs of their students.
- Families will provide accurate and current special needs documentation.
- Families will be actively engaged in and supportive of their students' learning at home.
- Families will contact appropriate staff members to voice concerns and/or to clarify programming.

**MYP Teachers/Staff/Administrators:**

- Staff will be proactive in familiarizing themselves with their students and their individual special need(s). Staff will seek out and utilize appropriate tools and resources to best serve their special needs students. Staff will respect student privacy and maintain confidentiality in providing special need services.
- Staff will communicate with parents and students as often as necessary and appropriate.
- Staff will provide and maintain a safe learning environment for all students.
- Staff will collaborate with stakeholders to provide information and guide special needs students regarding the IB Middle Years Programme.

## Inclusion and Special Education Review Policy

This policy has been created using IB support materials, district data, and input from all stakeholders and shall be reviewed by all stakeholders each year to ensure continued alignment with IB and local district expectations. Newly hired teachers will be trained on assessment practices throughout the first semester of their teaching contract. Parents and students shall be made aware of this policy through normal communication channels at the beginning of each semester. This policy is communicated to staff and faculty in regular PLC meetings and team meetings.

**Resources**

Houston Independent School District: Special Education. Accessed May 13, 2026, from https://www.houstonisd.org/schools-academics/special-education



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Springwoods Village Middle School MYP Inclusion Policy. Accessed May 11, 2023, from https://www.springisd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=15650&dataid=28371&FileName=SVMS%20Inclusion%20Policy%20%2022-23.pdf

Travis Science Academy IB Inclusion and Special Educational Needs Policy. Accessed May 12, 2023, from https://4.files.edl.io/6722/08/06/20/040145-1029deaa-d07d-41fc-a70d-cac4bf515a26.pdf

**Lanier Middle School Inclusion & Special Education Needs Policy**
Assessments policy will be reviewed yearly with staff, leadership, and families.

*Updated May 2026 by Eileen Bell, IB MYP Programme Coordinator



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