Roberts Elementary Inclusion Policy

The Roberts Elementary community believes that all students have the right to a free and appropriate education where all children learn together. We believe that children of all ages should learn and grow in environments that resemble the environments in which they will eventually work and live as adults. We believe an inclusive society is the most effective means of combating discrimination. Inclusive education is an ongoing process concerned with breaking down barriers to learning. Inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and to build friendship, respect, and understanding. We believe all students should be mainstreamed in their least restrictive environment through our broad, balanced IB (International Baccalaureate) PYP (Primary Years Programme) curriculum, with support given for learning differences. Since all children learn at different rates and in different ways, it is necessary for learning to be differentiated to ensure student success.

Not all students are alike. Based on this knowledge, differentiated instruction is based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to the individual and diverse students in the classroom. Differentiating instruction is recognizing students' varying background knowledge, readiness, language, learning styles, interests, and reacting responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is and assisting in the learning process. Teachers will differentiate daily based on students' language proficiency, gifted and talented abilities, and learning differences.

Principles of Practice with Special Needs students

Within our Inclusion practices are 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 essential to the whole child's development.

Affirming Identity and Building Self Esteem

During class time, students are encouraged to explore the various attributes of the Learner Profile and strive to identify with one or more of them. Students who exhibit strengths in a Learner Profile attribute are recognized by their class and the community.

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 using either formal pre-assessment or questioning strategies. In addition, our teachers engage in a process of regular collaborative planning to consider and develop the strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning units of study.

Scaffolding
Scaffolding provides a concrete context for understanding. Our teachers use strategies, such as visual aids, demonstrations, and collaborative groups to foster learners' increasing independence.

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

Legal Requirements

The Inclusion Policy will be used with State and Federal Laws to provide appropriate services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with accommodations and modifications as needed. The federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) and the *Individuals with Disability Education Act* (IDEA) direct schools to focus on helping all children learn by addressing problems early on. Both laws stress the importance of providing high quality, scientifically based instruction, interventions, and holding schools accountable for the progress of all students.

Students are provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in alignment with the Individuals and Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students experience access to curriculum in the least restrictive learning environment to best meet their needs. This is dependent on identified individual student needs and could include a special education self-contained classroom or mainstreaming for part or all the school day. Students participate in a comprehensive classroom environment where the classroom content area teacher provides each student, based on their needs, access to differentiated and specialized instruction, assessment, and individualized support.

Each student with identified special needs is given an IEP or 504 developed by a collaborative team that consists of members who know the student and the guardians. Each IEP includes a Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statement and

intended areas of academic and/or social growth. Each 504 Plan contains accommodations which ensure students access to the curriculum.

Students Requiring Intervention (IAT)

Roberts Elementary has developed an Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) to assess, identify and provide academic and behavioral support for students and to provide ideas for accommodations or differentiation for classroom teachers. The IAT monitors student progress so that additional evaluations and referrals can be made, if necessary, to Section 504 or Special Education as federally mandated per the *No Child Left Behind Act 2001* and *Individuals with Disability Education Act* (IDEA).

We believe that interventions should be provided to help students fulfill their potential as confident, independent, knowledgeable individuals. Intervention should be in a safe, trusting environment and create skilled and skillful members of the community. Intervention should prepare all students to live and participate in a global society respecting and valuing all cultures and traditions.

The intervention approach includes a Multi-Tiered System of Support in which each level (or tier) represents an increasingly intense level of services. Interventions provided to a child will be continually adjusted based on progress monitoring until the child is progressing adequately. Children who do not respond to the initial interventions within a reasonable period, as suggested by research, are referred for more intensive interventions.

The Roberts intervention process begins with teachers regularly assessing student progress (see *Roberts Elementary Assessment Policy* for additional information). Data regarding a student's RLA and mathematical understanding will be used to determine if instructional interventions are needed.

<u>Teacher Responsibilities:</u>
assess all learners three times per school year in Reading and Math (BOY, MOY, EOY).
assess students' independent reading ability using running records.
assess students' proficiency in mathematical concepts using formal and informal assessments.
assess EB (Emergent Bilingual) students' progress of language using TELPAS & LAS Link.

If a teacher determines that a student requires instructional interventions, the steps below will be followed:

- Teacher refers struggling student to the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT)

- Teacher completes the *Student Concerns Profile*, gathers work samples, and submits all documentation to the IAT Chairperson (CP).
- The teacher will attend the IAT meeting to discuss student concerns.
- IAT provides support, recommendations, interventions, and assigns the student to an intervention tier (1, 2, 3).
- Depending on the determined tier, targeted interventions may be provided through small group or individual instruction

Student progress is reassessed every 4-6 weeks and IAT interventions are reviewed. At that time, new recommendations may be generated, the original plan may be continued, the student may exit IAT, or may be referred to Section 504 or Special Education for additional evaluation and services.

Community Responsibility
At the beginning of each school year, the IAT chairperson meets with every grade level team and shares information on all students currently receiving IAT interventions. IAT decisions are a result of collaboration of teacher, chairperson, guardians, and IAT committee members. IAT decisions will be communicated to the guardians. Guardians will be updated after every meeting regarding their child and as concerns arise.

Emergent Bilingual

When a guardian indicates on the home language survey that there is another language spoken in the home, the LAS Link assessment is used to determine their current English proficiency.

Then, the student's language proficiency is assessed annually using TELPAS. Students are placed into one of four tiers based on their demonstrated proficiency in each category (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High).

<u>Teacher Responsibility</u>
Teachers integrate ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standards) in lesson plans. Teachers of EB (Emergent Bilingual) students are required to be ESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) certified. Teachers will accommodate students based on their needs (providing visuals, oral administrations, providing think time, use of word banks, and pre-teaching vocabulary). Content will be differentiated for students through sheltered instruction and Imagine Learning pull-outs. Teachers will document supports and accommodations used three times per school year.

Students can exit the EB program once they have demonstrated proficiency in the English language according to TELPAS results.

Community Responsibility
LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) is required to identify and review students in the EB program.

Gifted and Talented Students

We believe that gifted and talented (GT) students should be provided opportunities to enrich their learning with strategies for mastering knowledge and skills at rates faster or earlier than the norm. These learning activities are not designed to increase students' workload but are based upon performing complex and open-ended tasks. We encourage students to show unique, fresh ideas through inspired learning within a heterogeneous classroom. Upon setting and understanding high expectations, students demonstrate strong leadership and problem-solving skills by embodying the Learner Profile.
We believe it is best practice to differentiate for GT learners. Our goal is to engage these learners in a way that challenges their thinking and raises their expectations for their own learning. We recognize and develop their unique talents and interests (Renzulli). Students can explore content within a discipline to include analyzing from the concrete to the abstract, familiar to the unfamiliar, known to the unknown. Students may explore the chosen discipline by going beyond facts and concepts into generalizations, principles, theories, and laws, and by investigating the layers of experience within a discipline through details, patterns, trends, unanswered questions, and/or ethical considerations.

We offer flexible pacing, allowing the students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills. Enrichment options are actively facilitated by teachers, administrators, and counselors. Opportunities are provided for students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines through guided and independent research, such as the Independent Investigation Method (IIM). Students are given opportunities to create and design open-ended products on self-selected topics. Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are implemented in the foundational curricula areas. In the classroom, GT students are given opportunities to reflect on their experience using information gathered during the learning process (self-reflections). We assess students with ongoing formative and summative evaluation strategies based on observations, quantitative, and qualitative data.

All kindergarten students are universally screened for gifted and talented identification. Interested guardians may also request that their 1st through 5th grade students be assessed for

identification, once per year. The assessments used for screening and selecting students include CogAt, IOWA, report card grades, and teacher recommendations.

Teacher Responsibility

Faculty members that serve GT students are continually learning with an initial 30- hour course and an annual 6- hour update.

Students Requiring Dyslexia Intervention

The school utilizes the Dyslexia Handbook (2021) as a model for all services and programs in accordance with TEA. See handbook: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/texas-dyslexia-handbook-2021.pdf Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code outlines the responsibilities of assessing kinder and first grade students to be screened to determine if they are at risk for dyslexia.

Students diagnosed with dyslexia receive a 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to implement accommodations and the designated intervention. Students at Roberts' Elementary receive either a Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction or Specially Designed Instruction.

Teacher Responsibilities

TEC §21.044(c)(2) outlines the curriculum requirement for teacher preparation programs to include the characteristics of dyslexia, identification of dyslexia, and multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.

TEC §21.054(b) and 19 TAC §232.11(e) mandate continuing education requirements for educators who teach students with dyslexia.

TEC §28.021(b) establishes guidelines for districts when measuring academic achievement or proficiency of students with dyslexia.

TEC §38.003(a) requires students to be screened or tested, as appropriate, for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with a program approved by the SBOE. Screening must occur at the end of the school year for each student in kindergarten and each student in the first grade.

TEC §38.0032 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to annually develop a list of training opportunities regarding dyslexia that satisfy continuing education requirements for educators who teach students with dyslexia.

TEC §38.0031 requires the agency to establish a committee to develop a plan for integrating technology into the classroom to help accommodate students with dyslexia.

TEC §42.006(a-1) requires school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to report through the Texas Student Data System (TSDS) Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) the number of enrolled students who have been identified as having dyslexia.

19 TAC §230.23 requires TEA to provide accommodations for persons with dyslexia who take licensing examinations.

Special Education Students

Roberts Elementary offers various services to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Depending on the child's individual needs, the least restrictive environment can be as restrictive as a self-contained special education classroom or as nonrestrictive as a general education classroom for the entire school day. A continuum of services ensures that we can make our students successful. Roberts Elementary provides the following continuum of special education services:

Consult Services
Special Education and Related Services teachers provide consult services for students who may qualify for special education services but by guardian request receive no services during the school day. By providing these services, special education and related services teachers can monitor progress in the general education classroom and make recommendations based on the child's needs.

Inclusion/Co-teach
Many students in special education have their needs met by the general education system. This program requires significantly increased resources in general education (such as special educators working in the classroom), changes in typical classroom instruction (often more multi-sensory approaches are used), and/or training for the special education and general education teachers.

Resource
Students receiving resource services have demonstrated a significant academic lag in one or more areas and are taught compensatory skills based on the student's IEP. These students spend less than 21% of the day in special education classes and are mainstreamed into the general classroom for the remainder of the school day.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
ECSE is a program for students in special education aged 3 to current kindergartners. Students' time in the ECSE classroom is based on their individual needs. The students are served on a continuum of services from full-day ESCE services to most of their day in a general education setting.

Teacher & Community Responsibility

Students in 1st -5th grade whose least restrictive environment requires more than 21% of their school day in the special education setting will be reviewed by an ARD committee. We would collaborate with the district Special Education team to determine where the student will be most successful.

504 Plans

504 plans are a way for schools to provide students with disabilities support so that they may learn in a general education classroom or an environment that is the most conducive. 504 plans come from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This law prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in programs or activities that receive federal funding (such as public schools or publicly funded private schools). This ensures that students with disabilities can get a free education that works for them.

What services are provided under section 504?

Section 504 ensures that all students with disabilities educational services are equivalent to the needs of students without disabilities. This guarantees that all of the students' needs are met. This could entail education in the general education classroom, education in the general education classroom with supplementary services, and/or dyslexia services.

Who can receive a 504 plan?

Students are eligible for 504 plans if they have a disability that limits daily life activities such as self-care, walking, seeing, breathing, hearing, speaking, or learning.
Students who need a 504 plan can include those with:

- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- diabetes
- epilepsy
- hearing problems or vision impairment
- chronic health conditions, such as asthma or allergies
- mental health conditions, such as anxiety or depression

A student returning to school after a serious illness or injury may also receive a 504 plan.