Primary Years Program
Inclusion Policy
Final Review: May, 2025

Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School is dedicated to Franciscan, Catholic values by being a vibrant, inclusive school community that teaches, nurtures, and supports compassionate, open-minded, and inquiring students in becoming active and respectful contributing members of their global communities.

Philosophy

St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School, an educational ministry of the St. Francis of Assisi Parish, strives to create a Franciscan environment which supports the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical needs of our students. Together with parents, our vocation is to inspire and develop balanced, internationally minded young people who recognize our common humanity, care for God's creation, and embody peace for our world in the spirit and tradition of our Franciscan, Catholic heritage.

Identification

St. Francis wants to make learning accessible to all students. St. Francis strives to include and celebrate all types of learners. In light of this, students with social, emotional, and/or academic differences are referred to the Student Support Team (SST). The Student Support Team members may include the parents, Educational Achievement Specialist, principal, associate principal, teachers, and/or any other relevant support personnel.

Any school staff member can request a SST meeting with the Educational Achievement Specialist (EAS). The teacher will discuss concerns in regards to work habits, behavior, academics, and/or perceptual /motor /language /hearing /vision concerns. Other cases in which the Student Support Team may meet include: concerns expressed by parents/guardians, a new medical diagnosis for the child, and/or scores that are 2 grade levels below benchmark on their STAR testing.

During the SST meeting, parents/guardians discuss student health and school history with the Educational Achievement Specialist. Teachers will also provide the EAS with all appropriate documentation such as testing scores, anecdotal records, and work samples. At the meeting SST members discuss student achievement and any concerns. Recommendations may be made for the child to visit their pediatrician or complete testing through their local school district or a private educational psychologist. At the conclusion of the meeting a student success plan will be created. This plan will note all the types of support the student will be given both in and outside the classroom, as well as at home, and a plan for data collection to monitor progress. Within two days, the student success plan and all meeting notes will be emailed to invested parties. The SST

will also be kept updated on student progress and any testing results, especially those resulting in an IEP or 504 plan. Ongoing communication with parents and staff that work directly with the student will ensure that all are aware of specific student learning needs, accommodations, and strategies for success.

St. Francis Elementary seeks to provide an educational environment which serves each student's best interest and offers a variety of learning opportunities. St. Francis considers our students to be a community of learners who work together contributing to the classroom with their unique talents.

Students also may apply to St. Francis with physical, social, emotional, or academic difficulties or disabilities already identified via an IEP, 504 plan, or medical diagnosis. In that case, the Student Support Team will meet to develop a plan with the family to let them know what resources we can offer and develop a plan to best meet the needs of the student. Tuition is no different for any student with special needs. If at any point our limited resources do not best serve the student, we will let families know as soon as possible. Since we are a historically registered building we are prevented from being able to make all accessibility accommodations. St. Francis does not have staff certified to conduct educational evaluations or write IEP plans. We will assist families with the process of testing through private psychologists or their local public school.

Inclusion Model

Inclusion provides all students equal access to an appropriate curriculum. In order to meet the needs of all learners, St. Francis uses a variety of strategies and staff members. Classroom teachers, EAS, and administrators collaborate to develop high quality differentiated instruction in the least restrictive environment. This allows all students to be valued participants in their general education classroom. In addition to the classroom teachers, St. Francis utilizes classroom aides for small group instruction and one-on-one conferencing. For those instances where a student's academic needs are best met through an alternative setting, the EAS utilizes "push in" and "pull out" services to give the student individual or small group instruction. The student may also receive outside services in the form of speech or occupational therapy through private or public-school providers. Both these internal and external services are monitored and adjusted based on student progress.

Monitoring Student Success

Every student at St. Francis engages in ongoing assessments to measure academic success. These take the form of formative and summative classroom assessments geared towards project and inquiry based learning and Renaissance STAR testing every 9 weeks.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Kindergarten (K) teachers provide families with ongoing progress updates and assessment information as needed. In grades 1-8, parents can monitor their child's progress by viewing FACTS online grading system. In addition, St. Francis holds yearly parent-teacher conferences. Teachers are available for follow-up conferences throughout the

school year. They also engage in "as needed" phone calls and emails to support the parents as the primary educators of their children. As such, parent involvement in their child's education is vitally important. This includes communicating with their children, as well as with their child's teacher, and checking the FACTs online grading system regularly.

For those students on success plans, parents are expected to complete SST recommendations and follow through with agreed upon actions. The EAS regularly collects data and checks progress for these students. The EAS, along with the classroom teacher, will also attend all yearly IEP meetings. They will also facilitate any follow-up meetings with parents and the Student Support Team to provide progress updates.

Differentiation and Instruction

All teachers are encouraged and supported in the use of differentiated instruction. Classroom differentiation helps increase learning for all students, especially those on success plans. This includes the use of differentiated materials such as guided reading and audio books. In addition, students on success plans may be given modifications on their assignments such as increased time or decreased homework problems. During "push-in" or "pull out" time the EAS may employ the use of an intervention curriculum to help close any gaps in learning.

While we make accommodations for students on success plans, in very rare instances a student may be working on a modified curriculum separate from their general education peers. For the qualifications to meet a modified curriculum, St. Francis follows the Diocesan SST Reference Manual (see attached).

Assessment

Students on a success plan are expected to participate in assessments using modified criteria, in which they are given choices to articulate their knowledge. Success criteria includes the use of scaffolded materials, extended time, and multiple ways of demonstrating learning and understanding.

Conclusion

As a community that values service and diversity, the members of St. Francis accept and celebrate differences.

Sources:

International Baccalaureate Organization. "IB Guidelines for school self-reflection on its inclusion policy." *ibo.org*, 2012. ibpublishing.ibo.org/server2/rest/app/tsm.xql?doc=m_0_mypxx_tsm_1609_1_e&part=3&chapter=4. Accessed 14 Feb 2019.

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