



Shaker Heights City School District

Special Education Needs Policy

2015-2016

The Shaker Heights City School District believes that all students can learn and that the MYP provides a framework to ensure this philosophy. As stated in IB's *From Principles to Practice*,

"The MYP is intended to be an inclusive programme that can cater for all students. The central place of approaches to learning (ATL) helps teachers and students respond in a flexible way to varied learning needs, including the needs of those who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue, or special educational needs of all kinds." (p. 5)

In order to guarantee this inclusivity, teachers work to learn about their students and examine where each student is along the continuum of learning. By choosing lessons, materials and learning objectives that will best help each individual grow, teachers are able to maximize growth in all students, ranging from our highest achievers to those that need additional support for success. This level of individualized attention allows for the inclusion of nearly all students in mainstream classes, oftentimes supported by intervention specialists that co-plan and co-teach with subject-area teachers.

Through the collaboration of subject-area teachers and intervention specialists, students with special needs are at the core of all lesson plans, ensuring that each lesson is designed with access for all students in mind. This might include individualized scaffolding, additional time on assignments and/or other supports, while retaining the expectation for all students to be successful on the learning objectives. In classrooms without dedicated intervention specialists, communication between classroom teachers and intervention specialists is maintained with Present Level of Student Performance (PLOP) forms, Observation Forms and annual IEP meetings.

The Shaker Heights City School District accepts all students that live within the City of Shaker Heights and is committed to providing a world-class education for each young person within its diverse population. One way that Shaker Heights does this is by providing a rich array of course offerings from which students may choose, varying in depth as well as topic. Counselors work with students to find the right fit, but Shaker also encourages students to challenge themselves by choosing courses that will stimulate their learning most. Ultimately, however, each child and his/her family are able to choose which set of courses they find most appropriate through the Shaker Heights City School District's commitment to open-enrollment, ensuring that each child finds themselves in the course that they want. In this way, each child experiences an education that is highly tailored to their needs, life-goals, and passions.

This philosophy is applied to our students with special education needs as well. Students with special needs are provided with an individualized education plan (IEP) that has been developed by an intervention specialist with the input of classroom teachers, parents, counselors and administration. These plans include life-goals as well as intended areas of growth, such as reading comprehension, organization, or potential vocational options. The development of IEPs is a good opportunity for the stakeholders in a child's education to come together and ensure that each student has access to an education that best fits their needs. In addition to the support of IEPs, 504 plans may be put in place to ensure equal access to a quality education despite any impairment or disability a child may display. Using these tools, each child has the best opportunity to experience a quality public education with their peers.

If a student would be better served under the guidance of a teacher in a resource room, however, that is a possibility in Shaker Heights as well. There are currently resource room classes that include all core curriculum requirements for the State of Ohio and beyond. The MYP philosophy is prevalent in these courses as well, focusing on the role of the Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning skills in the holistic development of each student.

For more information on the Shaker Heights City School District's Special Education Needs programming, such as special education testing and qualifications, public notices, health services and more, refer to the "Pupil Services" button under the "Parents & Students" tab on Shaker.org.