



# Peyton Forest Elementary School Inclusion Policy



## Philosophy of Inclusion

It is our mission to create an environment of excellence by removing barriers, providing a safe place that encourages mutual respect, enthusiasm for learning through personal attention, and access to an integrated, challenging curriculum so that students can reach their full potential as positive members of the community and beyond the classroom.

At Peyton Forest we support the following principles of an inclusive education where:

- education for all is considered a human right
- education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth, and growth for every student
- every educator is an educator of all students
- learning is considered from a strength-based perspective
- learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities
- all learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning
- full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge
- assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated
- multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right, and an asset
- all students in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as citizens
- all students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are considered
- all students in the school community develop the IB learner profile attributes and are inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect
- diversity is understood to include all members of a community
- All students experience success as a key component of learning.

## **Atlanta Public Schools Policies for Inclusive Education**

### **Gifted Education**

“The Atlanta Board of Education recognizes the need to provide gifted education services to students who have the potential for exceptional academic achievement in grades K-12. The superintendent shall provide programs for gifted students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability, exhibit an exceptionally high level of motivation, and/or excel in specific academic fields.” (Atlanta Public Schools, IDD, 2013).

### **Special Education Programs**

Pursuant with Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA), §20-2-152 (2019), “special education shall include children who are classified as intellectually gifted, mentally disabled, behavior disordered, specific learning disabled, orthopedically disabled, other health impaired, hearing impaired, speech-language disordered, visually impaired, severely emotionally disturbed, and deaf-blind and who have any other areas of special needs which may be identified.”

### **English Learner Students**

“The Atlanta Board of Education will provide a program for students who are English learners (ELs) The purpose of this program will be to help ELL students develop proficiency in the English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, so that they may be integrated into regular classrooms as quickly as possible. The Atlanta Public Schools English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program shall operate based on the rules and requirements of the GA Board of Education and GA Department of Education.” (Atlanta Public Schools, IDDG, 2013).

## **Stakeholders**

In order for Peyton Forest to be successful, several stakeholders are vital to the implementation of this policy. The following is a list of all stakeholders who work to ensure that this policy is implemented to the fullest extent:

- Students and parents
- Whole Child Team (SEL Coach, Counselor, Social Worker, Attendance Specialist, Nurse, MTSS)
- Early Intervention Teachers
- School Psychologist
- General Education Teachers
- Specialist Team Teachers
- Administration Team

Peyton Forest stakeholders will be informed about the policy through ongoing job-embedded professional development. All other stakeholders will be notified of its publication via public resources, including the school website and handbook.

## **Definition of Inclusion in the PYP at Peyton Forest**

Peyton Forest's Primary Years Programme (PYP) embraces an inclusive education model, ensuring that all students, from Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade, learn in supportive and engaging environments. Students remain in the whole class setting as much as possible, with individualized support provided based on their unique needs. In cases where students require specialized services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), they may receive instruction in a smaller setting. Regardless of the setting, Support Teachers continue to facilitate and implement the Unit of Inquiry to maintain an inclusive learning experience.

Peyton Forest is committed to meeting the diverse needs of all students, including those receiving support through special education, gifted education, student support services, guidance counseling, medical services, and psychological services. Homeroom teachers collaborate with these specialized teams to create a cohesive and supportive learning environment.

Collaboration among staff is essential to student success. Essential staff members work closely to develop effective, research-based instructional strategies that help students

meet shared academic expectations. Differentiated instruction is planned based on students' abilities and needs, using data from Response to Intervention (RTI), standardized test scores, yearly benchmarks, and formative and summative assessments. Through specialized services, collaboration, data analysis, and continuous reflection, teachers ensure that all students have the opportunity to thrive.

### **Legal Inclusion Obligations**

Peyton Forest is obligated to follow the local, state, federal and international laws regarding students specifically with 504s and IEPs. The legal obligations from each agency are as follows:

#### **Local – Atlanta Public Schools:**

- **Response to Intervention (RTI)** – Atlanta Public Schools follows Georgia's four - tiered student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions to provide appropriate and effective response to Intervention services, which incorporates universal screening, targeted interventions, and a team approach to decisions making the development and implementation of services.
  1. **Tiers I and II** – Interventions are provided in the general education environment by grade level teams. Student data is used to make decisions based on intervention needs and progressing through the tiers.
  2. **Tier III** – This tier is supported by the Student Support Team (SST) and implemented by the general education teacher for an extended period of time. The SST Specialist ensures that the process is accurately followed and that decisions are made based on the data and student progress.
  3. **Tier IV** – The interventions and services within this tier are facilitated by specialized programs and/or instructional delivery models such as the Program for Exceptional Children, English Language Learners and Gifted Instruction.
  4. **Student Support Team (SST)** – The SST is a state mandated and school-based intervention process. As outlined in the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions, SST Compliance serves as a basis for facilitation of Tier 3 Response to Intervention services. The SST Resource Manual states “the purpose of the Student Support Team is to provide support to both students and teachers with the outcome being to improve student performance”.

The Response to Intervention (RTI) and Student Support Team (SST) are dedicated to equipping grade-level teams with the training, resources, and guidance needed to ensure

high-quality instruction, implement research-based interventions, monitor student progress, and identify students at risk in a timely manner.

The SST consists of students, interdisciplinary teachers, support staff, the school nurse, school psychologist, special education lead teachers, parents, translators (as needed), and other specialists as required. This team employs a systematic, problem-solving approach to address students' learning and behavioral challenges, including those struggling with academic progress and students eligible for a Section 504 Plan.

- **Section 504** - Section 504 prohibits discrimination against individuals whose physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities, including caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working and learning. 504 accommodations are implemented to ensure equity for all students with disabilities within the general setting. 504 accommodation plans are created and monitored through the Student Support Team (SST).
- **Special Education** - The Atlanta Public Schools' Special Education programs are founded on the belief that students with disabilities will receive a quality education that will lead to meaningful academic, social, emotional and behavioral outcomes for our students. For students with 504 plans, we are in compliance with the Americans with disability Act (ADA) guidelines.
- **Gifted and Talented** - The philosophy of the Gifted and Talented Program states that "through advocacy and innovation, the unique needs of gifted and talented students will be recognized, valued, and nurtured so their inspired minds are equipped to change the world". At Peyton Forest, we strive to nurture our gifted students as they take ownership of their learning.

### **Legal Regulations**

Peyton Forest is subject to follow the legal regulations from the following organizations:

- State Department of Education (GADOE)
- United States Department of Education (ED)

Peyton Forest is in compliance with the guidelines set forth through the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

### **Inclusion Policy Review**

The Peyton Forest Inclusion Policy will be formally reviewed, yearly by our school staff and community stakeholders. This will enable us to make improvements to the policy as needed. The effectiveness of this policy will be reflected in our assessment data and feedback from stakeholders.

### **Resources**

- Frank Martin International Center, 2020 Special Education Needs Policy
- Warren Jackson, 2019 Inclusion Policy
- Hawthorne IB World School, 2018 Special Education Policy
- Bolton Academy, 2018 Inclusion Policy
- Georgia Department of Education, 2014 Georgia Standards of Excellence
- Beecher Hills, 2022 Inclusion Policy