

BENJAMIN ELIJAH MAYS HIGH SCHOOL

INCLUSION (SPECIAL NEEDS) POLICY

Benjamin Elijah Mays High School follows all federal and state guidelines in teaching students with special needs and accept that IB should be accessible to all students. Inclusion is not only based solely on differentiation, but also addresses barriers to learning by creating optimal learning environments. These environments celebrate and embrace diversity of all learners through adherence to the following:

- using technology that is accessible to all learners;
- developing collaborative learning activities that include shared goals and involve all members of the school community;
- promoting Approaches to Learning that develop affective and metacognitive skills;
- encourage students to view learning as a lifelong activity they do for themselves in a proactive way; and
- creating accessible assessments in terms of design, content and medium, and teach to variability, which includes differentiation and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)-a framework for curriculum development that provides all students with equal opportunities to learn (Pletser & Parasuram, 2016).

ARTICULATION OF PRACTICES

According to the 2021-2022 Student Handbook, a guide of policies, laws and regulations that explains the rights and responsibilities for students, Atlanta Public Schools adhere to the **Child Find Policy**. The Child Find Policy identifies, locates, and evaluates children and youth, birth to age 21, who are suspected of, or have a disability or developmental delay, to provide free and appropriate Special Education services. Child Find at APS offers comprehensive special education services to eligible students ages three through 21 years of age. Parents of students, who suspect their child may have a disability, should contact the teacher, principal or the SST/RTI Specialist. All referrals are considered confidential, and services are provided at no cost. The parent, legal guardian, or surrogate parent retains the right to refuse services and are provided other procedural safeguards under federal and state law.

Public school services include screening in areas of suspected disabilities, such as vision, hearing, autism, motor skills, speech, language, and general development. Evaluations in the schools are provided several areas of suspected disabilities, including learning disabilities, speech and language development, orthopedic impairments, vision or hearing problems, intellectual disabilities, emotional behavior disorders, autism spectrum disorders, health impairments, traumatic brain injuries, and significant developmental delay (pp. 35-36).

The Department of Special Education is required to provide a free, appropriate public education to eligible children in cooperation with parents and other agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Each eligible student must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which is developed by a team of teachers and other qualified school personnel, parents or guardians and the student, when appropriate. The IEP is revised when necessary and reviewed at least annually (APS website).

STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility of school:

- The school will work with the Atlanta Public Schools Department of Special Education to ensure the program is compliant with federal and local laws regarding students with special needs
- Allow any student to participate in the IB program and provide assistance and support when needed
- Teachers will follow student IEP and 504 plans to ensure success in the program
- The IB Coordinator will work collaboratively with faculty to support students with special education needs
- The IB Coordinator, in conjunction with the Special Education Lead Teacher (SELT) and school Testing Coordinator, will provide examination accommodations as needed and approved by IB

Responsibility of Parent:

- Parent will play an active role in their child's education
- Parent will participate in annual Individual Education Plan meetings
- Parent will communicate to the school any changes regarding their child's special educational needs
- Parental knowledge of their child's entitlement within the policy

Responsibility of Student:

- Student will take an active role in their learning
- Student will communicate with teachers and IB Coordinator if additional assistance and support is needed
- Student will follow all Atlanta Public Schools and Benjamin E. Mays High School IB policies and procedures

SUMMARY

Benjamin E. Mays High School aims to encourage access into the IB program by identifying and removing barriers to inquiry learning. Policies that govern inclusion through federal, state, and local school district legislation are honored through implementation of IB pedagogy that promotes all students' exposure to individualized teaching and learning.