



MILES ELEMENTARY INCLUSION POLICY

Est. 2022-2023

Miles Elementary IB-PYP Inclusion Policy

Philosophy (What We Believe)

At Miles Elementary, we believe that all learners have the right to an equitable and appropriate education and that all learners have unique needs to consider when helping them to meet/exceed their academic and social emotional potential. To provide access to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme at *Miles Elementary*, we apply approaches and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of students, including those identified with special needs (special education, gifted and talented and English Learners). By recognizing the diversity of our collective learning community, we support the development of internationally minded people.

Practices

At *Miles Elementary*, we adhere to federal and state guidelines governing the education of students with disabilities, "The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)." Students with special needs are provided access to the curriculum in the least restrictive environment according to each student's Individualized Education Plan. Students may receive specialized instruction in the general education classroom from a certified special education teacher, supportive instruction from a special education paraprofessional or special education services in the resource/specialized unit setting such as Pre-K and Moderate Intellectual Disability (MOID) from a certified special education teacher as well.

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), "[s]pecial 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 EL 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).

Differentiation

At *Miles Elementary* all students receive instruction that enables them to succeed within the range of their approaches to learning, abilities, and interests. Differentiation is seen as the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Dynamic groupings within classrooms, tiered lessons, use of pre-assessments, diagnostic and formative assessments are used to discover students’ strengths and areas for targeted instruction, and open-ended learning engagements are designed strategically to address students’ level of readiness. Some tools to support these strategies include: most co-teaching models, station teaching, parallel model, one lead one support, least prompting levels, independent, modeling, visuals, gestures and physical prompting, leveled phonics readers, board games, application(app) use on android and IOS operating devices, free websites on classroom desktops and teacher accessed sites to support Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension and Mathematical Skills Development.

Stakeholders

In order for Miles Elementary 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
- Special Education Teachers
- Early Intervention Teachers
- Gifted Teacher
- School Psychologist
- Guidance Counselor
- Response to Intervention Specialist
- General Education Teachers

- Specialist Team Teachers
- Administration Team

Miles Elementary stakeholders will become aware of the policy through ongoing job-embedded professional development. All other stakeholders will be made aware of the publication of this policy on the school website and via the school handbook.

Definition of Inclusion or PYP Inclusive Education

The program consists of students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade. Students remain in the whole class setting as much as possible. Based on students' needs, there may be circumstances where students are taken out of the regular classroom based on IEP services. Regardless of whether or not a student is pulled out, Support Teachers continue to support the implementation of the Unit of Inquiry. Miles Elementary continuously supports students with special needs and our homeroom teachers teach them through our special education team as well as through our gifted team, student support team, guidance counseling series, medical services, and psychological services.

Staff work collaboratively together for students to be successful. Our gifted teacher, intervention staff, and special education teachers meet collaboratively with the general education teachers to brainstorm and plan the most effective, researched based methods on how students can meet unified expectations. Teachers plan differentiated lessons for students in various tiers of instruction based on what they know and can do. Much of the planning from this team is based on data through Response to Intervention, Standardized test scores, yearly benchmarks, and summative/formative assessments. Teachers also work diligently through specialized services, collaboration, data, and reflection to ensure that all students can learn.

Inclusion at Miles Elementary evolves around educating all students in their least restrictive environment. In this environment, peers are together as much as possible. For most, the least restrictive environment begins in the general classroom setting for academic subjects where two or more teachers work in a co-teaching environment to instruct students. Students may receive instruction in a small group environment based off their Individualized Education Plan. The Gifted and Talented students receive services through the collaborative model where the gifted teacher co-teaches with the general education teacher. All students participate in specials classes together (Spanish, Art, Music, PE, Writing and Media Services) in the whole class setting. Overall, students are in various tiers based on their needs, and regardless of their levels of instruction, all students participate in the International Baccalaureate Programme.

Legal Inclusion Obligations

Miles Elementary 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.

The Response to Intervention/Student Support Team (RTI/SST) is committed to providing training, resources, and guidance to grade-level teams to help ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction, research-based interventions, progress monitoring, and prompt identification of children at risk. SST are comprised of students, interdisciplinary teachers, support staff, nurse, psychologist, special education lead teachers, parents, translators (as needed), and other specialists as needed. This team uses a systematic, problem-solving approach to address learning and/or behavioral difficulties experienced by students. This includes students who are experiencing a lack of academic progress and those students who are eligible for 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 have been 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 Miles Elementary, we strive to nurture our gifted students as they take ownership of their learning.

Legal Regulations

Miles Elementary is subject to follow the legal regulations from the following organizations:

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

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

Affirming Identity and Building Self-Esteem

We provide a variety of opportunities to affirm and support the diverse needs of students:

- Class Dojo
- House System
- Weekly Shout outs
- SEL (Social Emotional Learning)
- School Gameroom
- PAWS celebrations (In class celebrations of demonstrated achievement and character/Attitudes)
- Ongoing Parent Communication

Valuing Prior Knowledge

When planning Units of Inquiry, the teachers at Miles Elementary incorporate strategies that will be used to explicitly activate and build prior knowledge for all students. Understanding each learner's level of prior knowledge in turn determines the differentiated tasks and activities for the learners to deepen their learning throughout the unit of inquiry.

Academic Support:

Learning is extended for all students at Miles Elementary through additional opportunities and resources. Student tutorial is provided to allow access to the homeroom teacher and the Special Education teacher. Students with disabilities and English Language Learners extend their learning by accessing increasingly sophisticated texts using assistive technology and read aloud software. These resources allow our students to extend their academic language and create additional student-centered learning activities.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Our confidentiality of student records reflects the policy guidelines in the Parental Rights for Special Education. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures that all students' educational records are private. Miles Elementary adheres to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines to ensure that data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding medical information are honored. Parents are only allowed to ask for copies of their own child's records. School employees involved with a particular student may see a child's record and do not require parent's permission but are obligated to keep a child's records confidential. Besides school employees, no one else may see the results of a child's records without the consent of the parent.

Inclusion Policy Review

The Miles Elementary 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 Elementary, 2021 Inclusion Policy