



Policy for Special Needs Learners

Sutton Middle School and North Atlanta High School follow all federal and state guidelines in teaching students with special needs. The Atlanta Public Schools provides comprehensive services. Professionals are on staff to provide psychological services, health services, social services, education for the homeless, ELL instruction, gifted instruction, student support and services for students with special needs. Counselors are employed at both schools to meet routine and emergency needs. Aids are employed throughout both schools helping physically and intellectually challenged students. A nurse is available to monitor specific medical needs. Student success is supported at every level. All students are part of the MYP in both schools.

Teachers follow a specific procedure when they observe students with learning differences. They have a variety of classroom diagnostic tools. If they suspect deeper issues that they normally address, they observe, gather R.T.I. data, and proceed to a series of meetings of the Student Support Team. Parents are involved in all parts of the process. Federal guidelines direct all efforts as resolving learning problems. Students are allowed to receive instruction in the least restrictive environments. Teachers are trained to accommodate learners by differentiating instruction and assessment. If needed, special education teachers assist in the regular classroom to keep learning on target for special needs students and others. This homogenized approach allows students to thrive in an inclusive environment. Where self-contained classes are designated to be best for student outcomes, highly qualified teachers and specially designed classrooms are provided. Parents and qualified coordinators monitor school activities and student progress.

All teachers have access to the MYP special needs material. Several teachers at both schools have been to level three training at Keystone to learn how to share the MYP with special needs students. Appropriate curriculum and assessment strategies are reviewed annually for all students with disabilities. Classroom teachers, PEC teachers, parents, administrators and coordinators participate in these conferences. IEPs are written and followed. Students with significant cognitive or physical disabilities receive special consideration for grade promotion.

The special needs students at both schools are part of the fabric of the schools and the community. Genuine support for the well-being of this population is embodied in the Sutton motto: *Diversity is our Strength.*