



Special Needs Policy

Philosophy

Warren T. Eich Middle School recognizes that all students are individuals with unique personal and educational needs. It is our goal to meet the educational requirements for all students. The purpose of this document is to show best practices for addressing our students with unique needs through inclusion and differentiated instruction in order to allow all students access to the Middle Years Program (MYP) curriculum. As our MYP program takes form and changes, so will this document. To stay current, our intention is to re-evaluate our special needs population, available services, philosophy, and procedures annually.

This document mirrors the policy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) for middle years, diploma and certificate candidates with special assessment needs. “The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a candidate with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing him or her from demonstrating his or her level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized. This policy applies to candidates affected by a temporary, long-term or permanent disability or illness, including candidates with a learning difficulty.” (Candidates with Special Needs 1)

We believe that all students:

- Can learn at a higher level.
- Have unique learning needs.
- Have equitable access to MYP curriculum.
- Will have a positive and safe learning environment.
- Learn from a variety of academic experiences.

Expectations

At Warren T. Eich Middle School, we recognize and appreciate that no two students are the same. Every student is, in fact, an individual with unique personal and educational needs. While we encourage all students to embody the IB Learner Profile and strive for academic success, we understand that this is no simple task for many students who are simultaneously trying to overcome other obstacles in their lives and/or in the classroom; therefore, all staff will work collaboratively as student goals are integrated across all educational settings.

Parents/Students/Families:

- Will communicate to the school the unique needs of their student to the best of their abilities.
- Will provide accurate and current special needs documentation (when possible).
- Will be actively engaged in and supportive of their student's learning.
- Will take proactive measures necessary to contact appropriate staff members to voice concerns, clarify programming, and ensure best practices.

Staff:

- Will utilize a variety of formative assessments to determine individual student needs and abilities to tailor subsequent instruction.
- Will develop summative assessments that are differentiated to provide necessary modifications, challenges and student choice.
- Will be proactive in familiarizing themselves with their students and their individual need(s).
- Will seek out and utilize appropriate tools and resources to best serve the unique needs of the students.
- Will respect student privacy and maintain discretion in providing services.
- Will make a concentrated effort to communicate with parents and students as often as necessary and appropriate.

Supports

Classroom: Support for students with special educational needs and abilities may include curriculum modification, enrichment activities, classroom accommodations, small group instruction, or one-on-one support.

Other Services: When it is determined that a student would benefit from additional support outside of the classroom, pull-out services are provided to meet academic, social, or behavioral needs. Additionally, paraprofessionals may provide further support to some students.

Inclusion

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers that impede academic progress. At W. T. Eich Middle School, we accomplish this by ensuring:

- Access to the least restrictive environment through the use of support staff.
- Collaboration between specialists, support staff and general education teachers to create differentiated teaching.
- Providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of modalities.

Differentiation

Differentiation is the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Each student will be supported to make the most effective use of the range

of learning opportunities provided through a variety of activities that match the goals and methods of the learner and that are relevant to their skills and knowledge. Differentiation provides an avenue for effective teaching and learning so that all students are included and can be successful.

- Teachers differentiate with content, process, product, and learning environment.
- Teachers utilize ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, in order to guide instruction and identify what students know.
- Teachers utilize rubrics in order to determine progress towards proficiency in order to ensure students are on target towards end-of-year academic expectations.

Wildcat Enrichment and Intervention (WEI)

W.T. Eich Middle School offers Wildcat Enrichment and Intervention, also known as WEI, on a weekly basis. It is an opportunity during the school day for students to receive support in academic classes or attend enrichment sessions. Through the use of common assessments, teachers can identify what their students know in order to provide targeted reteaching opportunities. In addition, students that demonstrate proficiency on common assessments can participate in enrichment sessions in order to deepen their understanding of concepts.

Student participation in Spanish and/or VAPA

Resource Specialist Program (RSP): These students may have reading difficulties (including comprehension and decoding), difficulties with the writing process and/or problems with math concepts. These students are typically 2-3 grade levels below their peers. At Eich, we support students using a push-in model where a member of the Resource staff assists in the general education class for goal areas while the CORE teacher provides the instruction. There is a smaller group of students who require specialized academic instruction in the area of reading because their skills make participating in the general education Language Arts class more challenging. For these students, Spanish is not recommended. Their reading acquisition takes precedence over the learning of a second language. As they progress through systematic programs to bring their reading levels up, they will become eligible to take Spanish. This group totals 2% of the school population. All Resource students participate in VAPA courses. When students are no longer reading 3-5 years below grade level, they will be able to participate in Spanish.

Special Day Class (SDC): The students in this program require more intensive specialized instruction in a self-contained setting. They are mainstreamed with staff for Physical Education and one additional period which may be a VAPA course or in cases of Native Spanish speakers, Spanish class. Their educational needs require an additional period of reading. They are typically 3-5 grade levels below their peers. For this group of students, 2% are not enrolled in Spanish or VAPA. When students are no longer reading 3-5 years below grade level, they will be able to participate in Spanish. Students in the Special Day Class program also mainstream in 6th and 7th grade Science as well as 8th grade Individuals and Society one period daily with staff who adapt the curriculum to meet their needs.

Functional Skills Class (FSP): These students are working solely on independent living skills and basic academics. The needs of this population do not make it possible for students to participate in Spanish or VAPA.

