**Joseph A. McNeil IB PYP Candidate Elementary School A close up of a logo

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**Special Education-Inclusion (Special Needs) Policy**

Drafted: Spring 2020

Revisions:

**Philosophy**

We believe that all students have unique needs to consider when helping them to meet /exceed their academic and non-academic potential. In alignment with the IB (PYP) Primary Years Program at Joseph A. McNeil we apply approaches and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of the learner, including those identified with special needs ((special education). By recognizing the diversity of our collective learning community, we support the development of internationally-mindedness.

**Purpose**

Our SpEd policy guides our practice:

* To meet the educational needs of all students in our learning community
* To ensure a free and appropriate public education to all eligible students with disabilities
* To define the roles and shared responsibility of each stakeholder (staff, students, parents)
* To define structures and systems needed to support all students
* To align resources

**Practice**

**Differentiation:**

At Joseph A. McNeil Elementary, all students receive instruction that enables them to succeed within the areas of their approaches to learning, abilities and interests. Differentiation is seen as a process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies to achieving agreed goals and in conformity with their individualized educational program (IEP)and in the least restrictive environment appropriate to meet their individual educational needs. Special education services or programs will be designed to enable a student with disabilities to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum, to the extent appropriate to his/her needs Groupings within classrooms, tiered lessons, use of pre-assessments and formative assessments to learn of students strength and areas to focus on targeted instruction on inquiry learning experiences, and provision of materials (such as leveled reading materials, thematic projects, and online iReady; reading//math programs, Acellus remote learning) designed to address students level of readiness are some examples.

**Building Social, Emotional Learning (SEL):**

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

* School wide celebration assemblies focused on demonstration of the IB learner profile attributes
* PBIS tickets given for individuals in demonstration of behavioral traits (IB learner profile traits: coupled with school-wide rewards, and other forms of recognition

**Support for students through the RtI process and special education services:**

We are required to use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model as the starting point to identify and serve students who need additional academic or behavioral support to make satisfactory progress towards meeting grade level expectations. We will establish a plan and practice for implementing school-wide approaches and interventions in order to remediate a student's performance prior to referral for special education services.  The school will provide general education support services, instructional modifications, and/or alternative program options to address a student's performance and collect data weekly to determine student progress. Classroom observations that are based on recommendations provided by the school Instructional Support Team (IST) The Instructional Support Team (IST) will develop, implement and evaluate pre-referral intervention strategies (4321.2, School-wide Pre referral Approaches and Interventions). If a student does not show growth after 6 to 8 weeks of intervention have been tried, he/she is referred for special needs evaluation, An initial evaluation will always include, at least, a physical examination, an individual psychological evaluation unless the school psychologist determines it unnecessary, a social  history, an observation of the student in the student's learning environment to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty, and other appropriate assessments or evaluations (including a functional behavioral assessment for a student whose behavior impedes his or he learning or that of others) to ascertain the physical, mental, behavioral and emotional factors that contribute to the suspected disabilities.

The CSE or CSE subcommittee will determine whether a student is eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA and [Article 89](http://redirector.microscribepub.com/?cat=code&loc=ny&id=edn&spec=a89), as well as the student's educational needs.

Student who qualify for special education services receive daily or weekly support from the school special education support resource staff*.* Students’ academic deficits are addressed with research-based curriculum in reading, math and writing using a pull-out model. The majority of Joseph A. McNeil students receiving special education support have specific learning disabilities. The special education staff collaborates with classroom teachers to help improve modifications in the classroom so a student can participate in the general IB PYP curriculum.

**Support for Staff:**

The response to Intervention (RtI) process includes support for students, parents, and teachers. Teachers or parents can refer a child who is not making adequate progress. Our Instructional Support Team (ITS), comprise of classroom teachers, itinerant support specialist and special education staff, provide/strategies, ideas for teachers to implement in the classroom. While theses interventions take place, progress monitoring may be initiated to check the students’ progress with the intervention in place. If the student shows adequate progress with the provided interventions then theses interventions will continue, If not, the student may be referred for further assessment or new interventions’ may be used.

**Support for Parents:**

Parents may also request to have their child referred to the IST/ The team will meet with parents to provide/ideas and interventions for the parent to try at home, as well as interventions the child’s classroom teacher may implement. Follow-up meetings are scheduled as needed.

We provide multiple opportunities for parents to learn about school support for students with special needs. These include:

* Parent teacher conferences
* Meetings with school support staff and/or administration as requested
* Parent nights
* The JAM page on the website

**Communication and Evaluation of Policy**

Our SpEd, special needs policy is posted on the school website. It will be reviewed annually by the entire staff.

When formal revisions to the policy are being considered, feedback will be obtained from the staff, IB Leadership team, Instructional Support Team (ITS), support staff at Joseph A. McNeil (including the special education resource teacher, AIS teachers, school psychologist, social worker, and the SCEP committee.

Ref:

Policy 4351

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), [20 USC §§1400](http://redirector.microscribepub.com/?loc=US&cat=usc&id=20-1400)*et seq*.;

[34 CFR Part 300](http://policy.microscribepub.com/redirector/?cat=cfr&loc=us&id=34&spec=300)

[N.Y. Education Law Article 89](http://redirector.microscribepub.com/?cat=code&loc=ny&id=edn&spec=a89), [§§4401](http://redirector.microscribepub.com/?loc=ny&cat=code&id=EDN&spec=4401)*et seq*.

Replacement Policy Adopted: March 15, 2012