



Palm Beach Gardens Campus

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# INCLUSION POLICY

## **Philosophy**

Franklin Academy acknowledges and appreciates the individuality of our diverse population. We recognize students who may have obstacles affecting their educational experience and implement strategies and supports in order to help them persevere. We agree that inclusion is a priority to facilitate the academic success of each and every student. We also accept the responsibility to provide equal access to the curriculum and academic rigor, regardless of individual abilities and needs.

## **Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Inclusion**

Franklin Academy identifies special educational need students as having a recognized, diagnosed special educational need (SEN) and requiring extra support beyond the general curriculum. Some of these special needs include: Specific Learning Disabled, Language Impaired, Other Health Impaired, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Emotionally/Behaviorally Disturbed, and Speech Impaired. We also recognize gifted and talented students as having a special educational need that requires enrichment in order to help the students meet their highest academic potential. We believe that inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement by providing the necessary individualized supports. Inclusion also gives each and every student the opportunity to access all aspects of the curriculum and the IB program. A differentiated instructional design model is implemented at Franklin Academy to accommodate the various types of learners.

## **Eligibility**

Franklin Academy follows the Palm Beach County School District policies and procedures to determine eligibility for special educational needs. If a classroom teacher has a concern about a student's progress in a certain area, he or she will employ interventions intended to improve the student's performance. There are a variety of methods a teacher may choose to accomplish this result. If the student continues to have difficulty, the teacher will meet with other school staff and parents to discuss the child's needs, consider other interventions, and outline a method to carefully monitor the student's progress. The insight and expertise of the various school staff members and parents is brought together in what is called the School Based Team (SBT). Response to Intervention (RtI) is then implemented. RtI is a process that provides interventions and educational support to all students at increasing levels of intensity based on their individual needs. The goal is to prevent problems and intervene early so that students can be successful. RtI is a process designed to help schools focus on interventions that are matched to student needs and monitored on a regular basis. The information gained from the RtI process is used by school personnel and parents to adapt instruction and to make decisions regarding the student's educational program. If the three-tiered RtI interventions produce inconsistent or unsuccessful results, a referral to psychological services is completed by the Special Programs Coordinator to request a full comprehensive psychological exam by a Palm Beach County School psychologist. Along with the data collected during the RtI process, a variety of other information is presented with the referral to rationalize the need for the evaluation. A comprehensive psychological evaluation can also be requested by the family of the child or the child's teacher, and RtI must be run concurrently in order to adhere to the compliance time line set by the county. At the conclusion of the psychological evaluation, several components are utilized to determine if a student qualifies. The RtI data and the results of the evaluation as well as the Special Policies and Procedures Manual, which outlines requirements for eligibilities, are all used to conclude eligibility. Individual Education

Plan (IEP) is developed based on the findings, along with input from the student, teachers, and/or family.

### **Supports**

Support for students with special educational needs and abilities include push-in assistance, pull-out assistance, collaboration, and/or consultation. A certified ESE teacher provides push-in services in reading, English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and/or Science to students who require this service. These students remain in the general education classroom and are provided support and assistance on classroom assignments and assessments by the ESE teacher and the general education teacher. The students are provided with accommodations and strategies to be successful on mastering grade level standards.

A certified ESE teacher provides push-in services in reading, English Language Arts, and/or Math to students who require this increase in service. These students are removed from their general education classroom and placed in a small group setting to work on their individualized goals. They are also provided with strategies to help promote mastery of grade level standards.

Collaboration and consultation services are also provided by a certified ESE teacher. These services consist of observations, support facilitation, consultation and/or collaboration with students, teachers, staff, and parents to help support the struggling learners. General education teachers provide differentiated approaches to learning in order to help reach students of all learning styles. ESE teachers and the Special Programs Coordinator support the general education teachers to help them implement effective strategies for students with IEP's.

### **Assessments**

In addition to the district and/or state required standardized assessments, ESE students are given additional forms of assessments in order to identify their current instructional levels and enable teachers to provide the most effective supports for students.

### **Documentation**

Data relating to the academic achievement of all ESE students is organized by the Special Programs Coordinator in order to continually assess if a student's needs are being properly met. Precise data and logs are collected on students who receive all types of supports (pull-out, collaboration, and/or consultation.) Documentation of services received is also provided through the districts web-based platform. All types of documentation are used to generate a student's IEP and identify what supports from which they will benefit best.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development is provided by the Special Programs Coordinator to all staff prior to the start of the school year. A general session addressing the processes and model of Franklin Academy is communicated with the staff. Additional break-out sessions by grade level are presented in order to specifically discuss particular students and their individualized needs with teams of teachers. Students' teachers from the previous school year are also invited to attend to give some "helpful hints" to the new teachers. On-going collaboration and consultation are implemented through team and grade level conferences, observations, and/or individualized meetings. The Special Programs Coordinator also provides staff with information to access professional development opportunities presented by the school district. Prior to the school

year, all teachers are provided with a variety of tools to help them successfully support their ESE students. These tools include copies of the IEP-at-a-Glance, checklists, charts, accommodations breakdowns, and strategies on differentiating instruction for specific eligibilities and/or learning types.

### **Special Needs under Section 504**

To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for one's self and performing manual tasks, have a record of such an impairment, or be regarded as having such an impairment. The determination of whether a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity must be made on an individual basis. A 504 plan is generated by the Special Programs Coordinator and the appropriate team members. This plan includes accommodations to offer equal access to the curriculum on an individualized basis. Funding is not attached to 504 plans.

### **Gifted and Talented Learners**

Students who have been identified as gifted and have a current Education Plan (EP) receive grade level enrichment services within the general education classroom. This service allows our gifted population to receive differentiated enrichment while interacting with their same-age peers. Our gifted-endorsed teacher provides our general education teachers with support in order to help enrich the gifted students in their general education classes.

### **Accommodations**

Based on a student's IEP, accommodations may be applied for all tasks, including assessments. Some of these accommodations include, but are not limited to, extended time for oral and/or written responses, reducing the number of items on a test or the number of answer choices, oral reading of the test, small group testing, use of a calculator or formula chart, use of a dictionary or assistive technology, and paper-based materials. Staff is trained during professional development sessions on how to properly implement accommodations in the general education classroom. Support is provided on an as-needed basis to address unique accommodations. A testing database for all grade levels is created to ensure that the testing coordinator is aware of all required accommodations for each student during district and/or state standardized assessments.

### **Communication**

Meetings are held throughout the school year with teachers and/or families to address the students' needs and assess the effectiveness of the supports provided. Annual reviews, interim meetings, and reevaluations are required to be completed based on a student's eligibility and IEP dates. Compliance guidelines are set by the district and strictly enforced in order to ensure accurate funding is received to support ESE students. The Special Programs Coordinator is available on a daily basis for teachers and/or families to request support and/or testing for their struggling learners.

### **Policy Creation Process**

The ESE Special needs policy was created by a committee which consisted of the IB Coordinator, a Language and Literature teacher, a Science teacher, a Language Acquisition teacher, a Math teacher, an ELL specialist, two Curriculum Support members, the Special Programs Coordinator and our administrative team consisting of our Principal and both Assistant Principals. The ESE Special Needs Policy was developed by publications from the IB "Principles into Practice" and "Guide to Authorization" as well as examples of "ESE Special Needs Policies from IB World Schools." The following individuals comprised the ESE Special Needs Policy Committee.

- Ms. Gore-Science
- Ms. Appleman-Mathematics teacher
- Ms. Young-Curriculum
- Ms. Caperna-Language and Literature
- Ms. Taylor-Special Programs Coordinator
- Ms. Varela-Assistant Principal
- Ms Gamache- Assistant Principal
- Mr Ratner-Principal
- Ms Hanza- IB Coordinator

Staff members were made aware of the policy-making process through regular updates of the meeting agenda during curriculum meetings and bi-weekly MYP meetings.

### **Policy Communication**

The ESE Special Needs Policy is shared with all stakeholders through a variety of communication methods. Staff members learn about the Special Needs Policy through regular updates of the meeting agenda during curriculum meetings and bi-weekly MYP meetings. We have an information website that consistently updates parents on all IB aspects as well as provides all IB related documents. In addition, the ESE Special Needs Policy is highlighted during the IB MYP Parent Information Nights that are held throughout the academic school year. Our goal is to translate our ESE Inclusion Policy into Spanish to reach all stakeholders and families.

### **Policy Review Process**

The ESE Special Needs Policy Committee has determined that the policy will be reviewed two times each year. The initial review will occur during the second week of pre-planning, the second mid-way through the year in January. The implementation of the ESE Special Needs Policy in all MYP classrooms at FAPBG will be reviewed by the MYP leadership team (which consists of the Principal, two Assistant Principals, IB Coordinator, Curriculum Support Team and the Special Programs Coordinator) as part of the teacher observation process (which is also documented on the observation checklist created by FAPBG).

## Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation or Term	Brief explanation	Page number
EP	Education Plan	page 3
ESE	Exceptional Student Education is an educational program that includes various services for students with special learning needs.	whole
IB	International Baccalaureate	whole
IEP	Individual Education Plan	pages 2-3
MYP	Middle Years Programme	whole
Response to Intervention (RTI)	Interventions and educational support to all students at increasing levels of intensity based on their individual needs.	page 3
Special Education Needs (SEN)	A student that has a recognized, diagnosed special educational need	page 2

## Bibliography

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Franklin Academy Palm Beach Gardens is a candidate school\* for the MYP. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy- a commitment to high-quality, challenging, and international education- that we believe is important for our students. World Schools share a common philosophy- a commitment to a high-quality, challenging, and international education that we believe is important for our students.

\*Only schools authorized by the IB organization can offer any of its three academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) or The Diploma Programme (and in addition the IB Career-related Certificate. Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted.

For further information about the IB and its programmes visit our website at <http://cc.franklin-academy.org/> under the IB tab.