

# Richards Middle School

## Inclusion Policy

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### Philosophy

Our school district's mission desires "To inspire and equip all students to achieve unlimited potential." At Richards Middle School, we are committed to supporting the needs of our various student populations. We appreciate the individuality of our diverse population and respect their learning differences. Modifications, accommodations, and supports are provided to all students based on their academic needs. Special education and general education teachers collaborate in order to make the learning experience appropriate, rigorous, and challenging for all students. Inclusion requires a school-wide culture that supports a rigorous and appropriate education for each student.

### Identification Process/Eligibility

Our identification process is designed to determine which students need extra support academically or behaviorally in addition to students who may need additional acceleration or challenge in their academics. We use a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

### Continuum of Services/Supports

- A continuum of services are designed to meet the needs and learning styles of individual learners. **Individual Education Plans (IEPs)** are written documents prepared by the Special Education Department for student with a qualifying disability. The IEPs are developed through a collaborative process involving the school, parents, and the student (when appropriate). It refers to the adapted or modified aspects of the educational program, focusing on the learning needs while also setting specific learning goals for a student. When complete, the IEP plan outlines teaching strategies, resources, and supports necessary for the student to achieve those goals. Our inclusion model uses co-teaching, classroom support, and/or intervention(s) per the IEP.
- **504 Plans** are similar to a student with an IEP, in that it should provide access to meaningful and rigorous curriculum regardless of the student's background, circumstances, or ability. Our goal is to meet the individual needs of each learner and offer the setting that best supports each child in the most inclusive environment.
- Through **differentiation**, we offer teaching practices that build opportunities in which each student can develop, pursue, and achieve their personal learning goals.
- Our **Gifted and Talented Learners'** needs are addressed by offering all students a wide range of opportunities to be placed in an environment that is the most challenging to the learner. Following the state protocol in identifying learners as gifted, does not mean that learners are gifted in all core subjects. All of the core teachers are gifted certified which allows them to serve the gifted students but also pushes all of the students to

reach their highest potential. Students are placed according to ability and availability in core classes. We strive to meet each student at his or her current level of achievement ability.

### **Communication/Parent Notification**

Meetings are held throughout the school year with teachers and/or families to address the students' needs and assess the effectiveness of the supports being provided. Annual reviews, interim meetings, and re-evaluations are required to be completed based on a student's eligibility and IEP dates. Compliance to federal/state guidelines are set by the district and are strictly enforced in order to ensure accurate funds are received. The Lead Special Education Coordinator, or the Academic Dean, is available on a daily basis for teachers and /or families to request support and/or testing for their struggling learner.

All teachers of any student who falls under one of the above categories is presented with proper documentation regarding appropriate instructional modifications and accommodations at the outset of each academic year via the software program, GoIEP. This program indicates when the teacher has read the student's IEP. Every teacher is expected to follow and abide by the plan in terms of offering accommodations and modifications to help the student experience success.

All students who are identified to fall under one of the above categories, who are in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in Muscogee County School District and will be attending Richards in the following year, are required to attend a transition meeting at which parents, teachers, students, and a liaison from Richards explain the range of services available at Richards and work to develop an appropriate transitional plan.

All students who are identified to fall under one of the above categories and is transferring into Richards Middle School from outside the Muscogee County School District will meet with parents and teachers to review past documentation and communicate services available at Richards to develop a plan for the first year in attendance.

All students who are identified to fall under one of the above categories are required to meet with the appropriate team of teachers as well as parents to re-determine eligibility annually.

### **Process for Review of Policy**

Richards Middle School staff will review the Language Policy annually.

- This document was created by the Inclusion Policy Committee at Richards Middle School Spring of 2016.
- This document was reviewed by teachers October 2021.

## References:

- Muscogee County Schools, Department of Special Education and Psychological Services
- Muscogee County Schools, Department of Accelerated Programs and Gifted Education
- Muscogee County Schools, English Language Learners (ELL) Program
- *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes (2008)*
- *International Baccalaureate From Principles to Practice; Language and Identity (May 2014)*
- *International Baccalaureate From Principles to Practice; Multilingualism and intercultural understanding (May 2014)*
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act website:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>
- International Baccalaureate Organization (2015). The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole-school development. Accessed from [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)
- International Baccalaureate Organization (January 2016). Learning diversity and Inclusion in IB programmes. Accessed from [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).
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