

The vision of Westchester Academy for International Studies is to provide a challenging and varied curriculum in which all students can succeed. The curriculum will develop an international awareness (consciousness), including a focus on international relations and international problem solving, to create a love of learning and emphasize good citizenship. In order to complete our vision, some students will need additional support to reach their fullest potential and academic success.

This document embraces program policies of the International Baccalaureate (IB) for middle years, diploma and certificate candidates with special assessment needs to support all students in grades 6 - 12. "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*)

Our open enrollment policy supports a wide range of student learners. Some students may have an identified educational need while others may not be diagnosed or identified. "Examples of these needs are:

- learning disabilities (such as dyslexia and dyscalculia)
- language and communication disorders
- emotional and behavioral difficulties
- physical difficulties affecting mobility
- sensory impairments (such as visual or hearing difficulties)
- medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy and diabetes)
- mental health conditions (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders and anxiety
- gifted and talented students" (*MYP: From Principles to Practice*)

United States of America Special Education Statutes

There are three Federal laws that apply to special needs of children, in order to ensure they receive a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. The federal laws that address the rights of children with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) are:

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1975)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990).

Note: The Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which includes Equal Protection and Due Process clauses, contains that FAPE is a civil right. Each state has its own criteria for eligibility, available services, and implementation of these three laws.

To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts, receiving Federal financial assistance, provide a free and appropriate public

education to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Public Law 94-142, passed in 1975, guarantees all handicapped students age 3 to 21 receive an education in the least restrictive environment as their non-handicapped peers do. The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA 2004) has modified and clarified this law. IDEA requires an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student who is eligible under both federal and state eligibility/disability standards.

The ADA (1990) requires all non-religious educational institutions to meet the needs of children with psychiatric disorders. This prohibits the denial of educational services, programs or activities to students with disabilities and prohibits discrimination against all such students.

Response to Intervention

RtI is the practice of meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students through a variety of services containing the following key elements:

- High-quality instruction and scientific research-based tiered interventions aligned with individual student need
- Frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic and/or behavioral decisions
- Application of student response data to important educational decisions (such as those regarding placement, intervention, curriculum, and instructional goals and methodologies)

The instructional approaches used within the general education setting should result in academic and/or behavioral progress for the majority of the students. Struggling students are identified using data-based student progress monitoring and provided intensive instruction. The use of scientifically validated curricula and teaching methods expected in an RtI model leads to data-based school improvement. (*Texas Education Agency, Curriculum Programs - Response to Intervention*)

Learning Support

Westchester Academy for International Studies and Spring Branch ISD provide professional support, in addition, to classroom instruction for qualified students. Currently, we offer support for Dyslexia, Speech, English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Gifted and Talented, STAT and Special Education monitoring.

There are also students who receive support through collaboration or consultation with the students' teachers. Incorporating differentiated lessons/teaching strategies, utilizing small group instruction, and choice of task, when appropriate, teachers continue to increase a range of learning support for all students.

In addition, students are offered the following support to scaffold access to learning:

- Tutorials- before school, after school, during extended lunch periods and by request
- Homework Hall- Monday through Thursday for one hour after school
- Bridge Program- additional monitoring and extended day (1 hour) for struggling students

- Math and/or Reading Lab- a parallel support class for 6th -8th graders not passing Texas Assessments
- Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2- parallel support class for students not passing Texas End of Course (EOC) exams or needing extra support in math skill development
- Learning Lab- during school support for testing, extended time, tutorials, and online courses

By using a variety of tools, teachers and staff work to provide differentiated instruction to a diverse population. All students are advised of program design and requirements to assist appropriate placement and academic success. When needed at the Diploma Program level, the DP Coordinator and the Special Education Monitor teacher will submit to IB any appropriate accommodations forms with documentation for qualified students in accordance with *Candidates with Special Assessment Needs*.

Other Accommodations

Additional individualized academic support may include: IEP, 504, student contract, assistive technology devices or services or both, physical needs accommodated, small group or one on one learning, or testing modifications.

For special education and 504 students allowable accommodations may include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Extended time for testing
- Opportunity to repeat and explain instructions
- Assignment notebook
- Minimal auditory distractions
- Encouragement for classroom participation
- Large print, Braille/peer to read aloud
- Behavior intervention plan
- Assistive technology as defined by the committee
- Altered format of exams, such as highlighted instructions or alternative spacing of questions
- Altered assignments as needed for persons with motoric or visual impairment
(*SBISD Program of Studies Guide*)

Adopted by consensus of the faculty on September 19, 2012.

Resources:

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Public Law 94-142.

Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center, Special Educational Needs Policy, Inclusion Policy for SPED Students, viewed March 9, 2012.

Henrico County International Baccalaureate Programs, Special Needs Guidelines: 2010-11

High School Program of Studies Guide 2012-13, Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, Texas; http://www.springbranchisd.com/instruc/guide/HS_ProgStudies.pdf , last viewed March 28, 2012.

IB Publication: *Candidates with Special Assessment Needs* (March 2007)

IB Publication: *MYP: From Principles into Practice* (August 2008)

IB Publication: *Special Educational Needs within the International Baccalaureate Programmes*. (August 2010)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

Mesa Public Schools, IB K-12 Continuum, Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy; Revised: 09/22/2011

Middle School Program of Studies Guide 2012-13, Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, Texas; http://www.springbranchisd.com/instruc/guide/MS_ProgStudies.pdf , last viewed March 28, 2012.

Services In School For Children With Special Needs: What Parents Need To Know, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/services_in_school_for_children_with_special_needs_what_parents_need_to_know, last viewed March 29, 2012.

<http://www.idea.ed.gov>, IDEA Building The Legacy of IDEA 2004

<http://www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=5817>, Texas Education Agency, Curriculum Programs - Response to Intervention, last viewed March 30, 2012.

<http://www.rti4success.org> , National Center on Response to Intervention

This document was heavily influenced by the policies of:

- Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center
- Henrico County International Baccalaureate Programs
- Mesa Public Schools