Inclusion Policy

Steering Committee: Stephanie Gronholz, MYP coordinator; Natalie Lewis, Assistant Principal; Stephanie Graves, Multi-intensive Center Program Teacher; Danielle Mangas, Mild-Moderate Special Education Teacher; Aimee Justice-Lundt, Gifted and Talented Coordinator; Lizzie Hoff, Language and Literature Teacher.

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Philosophy
One of our school’s guiding principles is “diversity and inclusion.” To that end, “We believe the diversity of our school community is a strength and fosters a feeling of home for each student. We’re committed to the personal growth and academic achievement of all our students. We work to eliminate achievement gaps by creating equitable opportunities and supports for all students.” Students receiving special education services are placed in the “least restrictive environment,” which promotes an inclusion model where all students in the building are McAuliffe Manual Middle School students.

This principle of inclusion is evident through the school’s mission statement, which is replicated below (words bolded for emphasis):

McAuliffe Manual is a diverse, inclusive community of learners that nurtures students to lead fulfilling, balanced lives and to transform their community. We are committed to the personal growth, academic achievement and equity of opportunities of all students, which prepares them for high school and supports their lifelong success and wellbeing.

Legal Requirements
As a publicly-funded school in the state of Colorado, we are held accountable to monitor students using the following plans:

● Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are for students receiving modifications to grade-level curriculum. Determinations about special education placement are determined by a body of evidence that includes the WIAT-III assessment tool. These documents also record the number of support hours students receive in addition to general education classes, as well as classroom-based goals. Parents and teachers are involved in the monitoring of IEPs through annual meetings.

● A Section 504 plan documents the accommodations made for students with medical, academic, and/or behavioral needs. To put a 504 in place, families and teachers must be involved in the creation of the plan.
  ○ As noted in our assessment policy, an “I” in our Infinite Campus gradebook reports indicates that student received in-class modifications and accommodations. An “M” indicates that the students received a fully-modified curriculum.
READ Plans are set up for students who are reading below grade level. Parents and teachers are made aware of the plan, and progress is monitored through the use of the STAR reading assessment. Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs) are for students identified as Gifted and Talented by the district. Identification is determined using a body of evidence that can include the Cogat and Naglieri tests, standardized state assessments, and parent and teacher observation forms. An ALP is created to detail the services received. Students are required to have an academic goal for every area of demonstrated strength as well as an affective goal. Students, teachers, and parents/guardians are invited to participate in the development of ALPs.

It is not uncommon for students to receive the support of both an ALP and an IEP or 504. Such students are considered “twice exceptional” and work with both the Gifted and Talented coordinator and a special educator. Particular attention needs to be paid to students who are typically underidentified for GT services, such as English language learners, students receiving free and reduced lunch, and students from diverse backgrounds.

**School-based structures**

One of the features of MMMS is our Multi-intensive (MI) center program. To qualify for placement in the center, students must have a primary disability that leads to a secondary cognitive disability that results in them being three standard deviations below their age peers. The MI center is staffed by a full-time special education teacher and two full-time paraprofessionals. The eight students who are currently enrolled in the center program receive targeted language and literature and math instruction with their MI teacher and are mainstreamed into all other classes, where they receive a modified curriculum (and the indication of an “M” on Infinite Campus gradebook reports). They do not participate in a language acquisition course. Because there are at least four grade levels represented in the language and literature and math instruction these students receive, while formal MYP units are not taught, the Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning skills are emphasized as students engage in life skills topics like cooking and personal finance.

When students have less significant needs for support, they may receive support from our Mild-Moderate (MM) special education teacher. Currently, there are 22 identified students who receive a block for reading and/or math support but are otherwise fully included in the rest of the school day. The MM teacher works closely with the general education teachers to create accommodations that may involve visuals or teacher notes.

Our Gifted and Talented (GT) program currently involves 39 identified students. The GT coordinator manages the students’ ALPs and works with general education teachers to create extensions that may include curriculum compacting, independent studies, or extension tasks that require ethical, synergistic, or divergent thinking.

Both MM and GT programming rely on ongoing monitoring of students who have demonstrated that they may benefit from more targeted services. The special education provider and gifted and talented coordinator manage identification and assessments of these students. Our school’s weekly multi-tiered student support (MTSS) and data-driven instruction (DDI) meetings open up conversations about how to support students, collect data, and make decisions.

School administrators, teacher leaders, our full-time school psychologist, a part-time social worker, and our school nurse are all instrumental members of the student support team. Through their work, MMMS is able to act on our belief that even without a formal diagnosis or legal document, all students deserve access to an education of the highest quality.
**Professional Development**

Having the right structures with the right people is important, and sharing their knowledge and building capacity in everyone is what leads to success in an inclusive school. Small group collaboration should happen both organically and in a routine manner. The result of this collaboration should be appropriate modifications, adjustments, and extensions of the MYP unit planner and daily lesson activities.

We have recently identified gaps in whole-school professional development. More work must be done to build on how to question with varying levels of depth and complexity. A book study, lesson study, or monthly teacher toolbox of subject-specific strategies may be ways forward.

**Policy Maintenance**

- The inclusion policy steering committee, or substitute representatives, will review the language policy at the beginning of each academic year. Significant changes in philosophy, practice, or external requirements will require that the committee revise the policy.
- The MYP coordinator will communicate changes to the Instructional Leadership Team.
- The most recent inclusion policy will always be available to the school community on McAuliffe’s public website.