

This comprehensive policy contains aspects which apply to the North-Palmer Middle Years program as well as to the Palmer Diploma and Career-Related program. Please note commonalities as well as relevant distinctions.



## Philosophy and Purpose

In alignment with the mission of School District 11, we dare to empower the whole student to profoundly impact our world, we strive to ensure each student will innovatively adapt to evolving challenges, actively pursue learning that continually challenges them to grow and achieve their personal best, and develop personal, social, and cultural competencies and apply them intentionally in their lives.

As our district's vision states, we are a dynamic, collaborative community of energized educators, engaged students and supportive partners with a passion for continuous learning. The faculties at Palmer High School and North Middle School recognize that all students, course candidates, and Career-related Programme students, including those who require inclusive access arrangements, should be provided opportunities to demonstrate their ability in rigorous, inquiry based, learning environments, to reach their fullest personal potential as they progress through the IB Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) and, as may be the case into the IB Diploma (IB DP) or Career-related Programmes (IB CP) at Palmer.

To support each student's access arrangements, and reduce barriers that students may face, we promote a dynamic learning community, including a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving opportunities, between teachers, parents/guardians, students, special education staff, English Language Learners staff, and school counselors, along with other building specialists to ensure every student has access to the learning environment that best meets their required least restrictive environment. We promote collaboration between teacher teams to increase learning through cross-curricular activities and projects. This document will be reviewed every five years when a self-study is conducted.

## Structure and Process Used to Comply with Legal Requirements

Students receive learning support through a wide variety of interventions. Within the classroom, instructional support is embedded throughout the lesson in observance with the following four principles of best practices:

- A. Affirming identity and building self-esteem
- B. Valuing prior knowledge
- C. Scaffolding instruction
- D. Extending learning for students ready for enrichment

In addition, to align with our District's Equity statement, Colorado Springs School District 11 is committed to equity and is committed to providing an ecosystem of equitable practices to meet the unique needs of all, the following list outlines layers of intervention in place, outside the classroom, to support student learning and success for all students:

1. A culture of behavioral accountability based on restorative practices
  - a. The use of restorative practices is fundamental to the culture of Palmer High School. The Palmer faculty emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions through respectful dialogue as a means for conflict resolution.
  - b. Restorative practices promote honest dialogue, understanding, reparation of harm and inclusion rather than punishment and isolation when conflict occurs.
2. Co-Teaching instructional models in all core areas where there are students with all ability levels are present. This structure provides for IEP service delivery for students with disabilities, within the learning environment, alongside their peers. Two teachers, one curriculum certified and one special education certified, share the planning and delivery of the instruction.
3. To promote student learning in all learning environments, we use a multi-tiered support system (MTSS) to strengthen tier I instruction and access diagnostic tier II assessments for a targeted approach to address individual student challenges.
  - a. At North Middle School (Years 6, 7, and 8)
    - i. During the first three years of the middle school program, teacher teams meet for "Kid Talk" to discuss students as it relates to academic, attendance, social-emotional and/or behavioral issues. Teachers then develop formal or informal plans to support the student. If increased support is needed, then the student may move forward to a multi-tiered support system and/or the Problem-Solving Team.
  - b. At Palmer High School (Years 9, 10, 11, 12)
    - i. Problem Solving Team members address individual student needs identified by teacher referral or through schoolwide Tier 1 assessment data to identify more widespread needs in math, literacy, and other instructional opportunities.
  - c. Tutorials are offered in reading, writing and math. At Palmer High school learning intervention through personalized instruction in building wide math tutoring centers, and limited access to writing tutoring center, when available. Using peer tutors and community volunteers, these student learning centers provide learning support for all levels of instruction on an individual or small-group basis each period of the day and after school.
  - d. Before and after school clubs offer both academic support and enrichment opportunities.
  - e. To support the Diploma program, A team of Extended Essay Supervisors, LTE's and the IB Coordinator provide IB Work Days where they consult with students, provide writing assistance for extended essay, support completing college applications, scholarships, homework, etc.
  - f. We recognize that behavior can also interrupt student success academically and socially and therefor have proactive interventions in place that promote positive

- relations, self-control and self-advocacy in overcoming behavioral problems. A "Behavior Intervention Team" works to ensure that students receive the coaching, structure and redirection needed for successful inclusion in a classroom setting.
- g. Some students will complete targeted assessments administered by special education teams to identify learning support requirements for individualized learning accommodations and modifications, access arrangements, they may need. These are documented in 504 Plans and Individualized Education Plans (IEP).
  - h. Some students will be evaluated for and gain access arrangements through Advanced Learning Plans (ALP), to ensure success in accelerated classes and academic enrichment opportunities.
4. To promote successful transitions between North Middle School and Palmer High School for students who have 504's, IEP's, and ALP's, collaboration processes between teams are in place to communicate the individual student needs as efficiently as possible. Often special education teachers from both schools attend the transition IEP meeting for individual students to avoid disruption of learning services.
  5. Students admitted into the IB Diploma Programme or the Career-related Programme with IEP's, 504 plans, and ALP's will have such plans reviewed by the IB Diploma Coordinator and/or the IB Career-Related Program Coordinator in consultation with the IB Counselor. As a result, the IB Diploma Program or IB Career-Related Program Coordinator may contact the IB via IBIS to make a request for inclusive assessment arrangements. As per IB requirements, "a psychological/psycho-educational document is mandatory for all access requirements necessitated due to specific learning difficulties. A medical document is mandatory for all access requirements necessitated due to medical, or psychological issues. Educational evidence is required for all requests" (IB Information Systems, "Request for Inclusive Assessment Arrangements," accessed October 8, 2015). Students and/or their parents/guardians must provide the IB Diploma Coordinator with all needed documentation by November 10 in order to process the request by the IB's stated deadline of November 15 for the May session. Ordinarily, requests made and accepted on behalf of an anticipated candidate (i.e., IB junior) will carry over into the senior year without the need to complete another official request. All decisions regarding granting inclusive assessment arrangements are made by the IB, not Palmer High School staff.

### **Federal and state legislation governing inclusion:**

District 11 schools operate in full compliance with the following federal, state and local requirements in delivering special education services to students who qualify:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
  - Outline requirements for educating students with disabilities to include identification, evaluation, funding, discipline, monitoring and enforcement related of the Individual Education Program. <http://idea.ed.gov/>
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
  - Protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
  - Forbids organizations from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf>
- Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA)
  - Outlines the rules associated with special education and gifted programming.  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/spedlaw/download/earules-march2013.pdf> (11)

### **Colorado Springs School District 11 Board of Education policies governing inclusion:**

- IHBA: Special Education Programs for Students with Educational Disabilities
  - In keeping with the intention of the state of Colorado to offer educational opportunities to all students which will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, Colorado Springs School District 11 (the District) shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all eligible District students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law.
- IHBA: Multi-Tiered System of Supports
  - The District's MTSS is our unified, prevention-based framework for advancing academic and behavioral outcomes while cultivating the social and emotional wellness of every student. MTSS guarantees an ecosystem of equitable practices to meet the unique needs of every individual by optimizing a dynamic, collaborative community of energized educators, engaged students, and supportive partners with a passion for continuous learning.
- IHBB: Gifted and Talented Education
  - The Colorado Springs School District 11 Board of Education (the Board) is dedicated to providing comprehensive programming for the identification and education of gifted students. Gifted students are those students between the ages of four and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. The Board believes that a quality instructional program that differentiates curriculum and instruction is essential so all students can learn and grow at their level of potential.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following glossary provides working definitions of critical terms used in this policy:

- Access arrangements (also referred to as inclusive access arrangements)
  - Access arrangements are changes introduced to teaching, learning and assessment to remove or reduce barriers. They do not change what the student is expected to

learn and do not lower expectations, but instead provide the optimal support to address challenges and to enable the student to work around them.

- At a fundamental level, they address equal access and fairness to learning and teaching and in addition, validity and meaningfulness to assessment.
- Learning support requirements: Support and/or access required to enable some students, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, to reach their full potential in learning and assessment. Not all students who have access requirements will need learning support.
  - Students with identified challenges (such as: autism/Asperger’s syndrome; learning challenges; speech, communication, physical and sensory challenges; social, emotional and behavioral difficulties; medical and mental health challenges) may have learning support requirements. Also, additional language learners may receive learning support to bridge and develop their language. However, learning support is not restricted to students with identified challenges and must be provided to any student who requires support.
- Dynamic learning community: all references to school or learning communities include the voices of all learners, their parents/guardians, certified and support staff as well as community members invested in our schools.
- Accommodations: Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access during instruction and assessment for students who have a documented need, including students with a disability, as defined by the Colorado Department of Education.
  - Accommodations may include changes in course content, teaching strategies, test presentation, location, timing, scheduling, student responses, environmental structuring, and/or other attributes which provide access for a student with a disability to participate in a course/standard/test, which **DO NOT fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the course/standard/test.** (Wright)
- Modifications: The student’s IEP team determines the student will receive modified instruction based on alternative academic achievement standards, known as Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEO). The student participates in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards, as defined by Colorado Department of Education
  - Modifications may include changes in course content, teaching strategies, standards, test presentation, location, timing, scheduling, expectations, student responses, environmental structuring, and/or other attributes which provide access for a student with a disability to participate in a course/standard/test, which **DO fundamentally alter the expectations of the course/standard/test.** (Wright)

## Accountability and Review

The Inclusion policy is formally reviewed as part of our IB program's five-year self-study and evaluation. Substantive changes can occur more frequently as changing demographics or other circumstances warrant.

### 2020 Language Policy Review Team

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### Works Cited

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