

WARREN T. JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY 2014-2015

Philosophy

We believe that all learners have unique needs to consider when helping them to meet/exceed their academic and social-emotional potential. To provide access to the IB PYP at Warren T. Jackson we apply approaches and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of students, including those identified with special needs (special education, gifted and talented and English Language Learners). By recognizing the diversity of our collective learning community, we support the development of internationally minded people.

Practice

At Warren T. Jackson Elementary, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students identified as gifted and talented are educated with appropriate support and services. Students with special needs are instructed along a continuum of placements where appropriate instruction is available. Teachers with specialized degrees and/or certifications support students in the general education setting with a co-teaching model, in a small group resource room setting with a pull-out model, and a self-contained setting. We work to build positive learning communities in which a culture of collaboration encourages and supports problem solving for all students.

Differentiation

At Warren T. Jackson, all students receive instruction that enables them to succeed within the range of their approaches to learning, abilities and interests. Differentiation is seen as the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. The teachers at Jackson differentiate by using dynamic groupings often based on pre and post-tests, multi-sensory approach to presenting information, collaborative activities, peer coaching, using a strong visual component to instruction, using hands-on activities and manipulatives, and writing individualized goals and objectives.

Assessment

At Warren T. Jackson, we assess our special needs population in a large variety of ways. We use Functional Behavior Assessments to determine the cause of problem behaviors, assess progress on individualized goals and objectives, on-going assessment of daily work, and our students are provided with a variety of assessment accommodations. Students have their own goals and objectives upon which grades are based on in some cases.

Affirming Identity and Building Self-Esteem

We provide a variety of opportunities to affirm and support the diverse needs of students:

- * Talent development
- * Afterschool tutorial
- * Autism Awareness and lessons
- * Counselor support
- * Establishing personal goals
- * Manipulating the environment to set students up for success
- * Use of positive reinforcement through behavior or skill specific praise or behavior charts
- * Frequent use of self-assessment

- * Media center resources
- * Jackson Afterschool enrichment courses
- * 15 Minutes of Fame birthday celebration
- * Paws Applause
- * 5th Grade Exhibition
- * 5th Grade school play
- * Student Wellness Ambassadors
- * Orchestra
- * Art Club

Valuing Prior Knowledge

When planning units of inquiry, the teachers at Warren T. Jackson incorporate strategies that will be used to explicitly activate and build prior knowledge for all students. Understanding each learner's level of prior knowledge in turn determines the differentiated tasks and activities for the learners to deepen their learning throughout the unit of inquiry.

Scaffolding

Learning at Warren T. Jackson is scaffolded in order to foster each student's increasing independence in their own learning. The following are examples of how instruction is scaffolded for learners.

- Preloading new concepts
- Visual aids like graphic organizers
- Example of final product for visualization
- Modelling of skills
- Paraprofessional support
- Cues: verbal, visual, and physical
- Reduced work
- Modifying the presentation of a task
- Co-teaching
- Peer helper/mentor
- Assistive technology

Extended Learning

Learning is extended for all students at Warren T. Jackson through additional opportunities and resources. Students with disabilities as well as our English Language Learners extend their learning by accessing increasingly sophisticated texts using assistive technology and read aloud software. These resources allow our students to extend their academic language and create additional student-centered learning activities. Examples of low-tech assisted technology include number lines, graph paper, sounds boxes, alphabet strips, word banks, and hundred charts. High-tech assistive technology in use includes tablets, word processors, read aloud software, and communication devices.