

# Oak Park District 97 Middle School Inclusion Policy

## I. Philosophy

Oak Park District 97 and the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) believe that every child can learn and should have meaningful access to the curriculum in a positive learning environment that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child. **All** middle school students are expected to participate as fully as possible in the IB MYP, an inclusive, holistic program designed to meet the needs of **all** learners. Inclusion is the ongoing process and practice of increasing access and engagement for **all** students by identifying and removing barriers while designing for learner variability. According to IB, learner variability is the term that embraces **all** students and does not exclude on the grounds of strengths, challenges, age, social status, language, gender, race, ethnicity or sexuality. Inclusive education involves responding positively to each student's unique learning profile and the varying levels of strengths and challenges they experience across multiple learning contexts.

## II. Inclusive Education Learner Profile Expectations

The IB Learner Profile is integral to teaching and learning in the IB MYP. It represents the qualities of effective learners, internationally-minded students and holistic individuals. It is the responsibility of every teacher, as a teacher of **all** students, to make sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that reaches them as individual learners by motivating and empowering **all** members of our learning community to "live the Learner Profile."

### As inquirers, we:

- Develop a natural curiosity and skills for inquiry and research
- Build a foundation to become independent, active learners throughout our lives

### As thinkers, we:

- Apply creative, critical thinking skills to analyze and articulate reasoned, ethical decisions
- Take responsible action on complex problems

### As communicators, we:

- Listen, speak, write and collaborate clearly and creatively in an appropriate style and language
- Express ideas and perspectives carefully, confidently, and in a principled manner

### As risk-takers, we:

- Approach new academic experiences and challenges with courage, openness and resiliency
- Foster independence of thought and spirit when exploring innovative skills, ideas, and strategies

### As knowledgeable learners, we:

- Use what we learn across a range of disciplines to develop and expand our conceptual understandings and knowledge of local and global issues and ideas

### As principled learners, we:

- Act with integrity, honesty, fairness, compassion and respect for the rights of people everywhere
- Take responsibility for our own actions and accompanying consequences

### As open-minded learners, we:

- Appreciate and value our own cultures and personal histories as well as that of others
- Seek, evaluate and grow from a range of perspectives and points-of-view

As **caring** learners, we:

- Express empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others when speaking, listening and writing
- Show a personal commitment to service and making a positive difference in the world around us

As **balanced** learners, we:

- Understand the balance of our intellectual, physical and emotional selves in daily life
- Acknowledge our interdependence with others and the world around us

As **reflective** learners, we:

- Consider our own ideas and learning experiences in relation to the world
- Recognize our strengths and limitations in order to support and demonstrate our learning and personal development

### **III. Inclusive Education and the IB MYP**

The IB MYP Unit Planner is a comprehensive document that keeps students at the center of learning and provides teachers with a clear, creative process for planning for **all** students, including students with diverse learning needs. Teachers work together to develop IB unit plans that incorporate the key components of teaching and learning in the IB MYP while being cognizant of the barriers to learning that may exist within each component and actively working to remove the barriers. The teaching and learning components of the Unit Planner include but are not limited to the Statement of Inquiry, Inquiry Questions, Key and Related Concepts, Global Contexts, Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills, Differentiation and Assessment. Teachers engage **all** students in inclusive education in the IB MYP through the Learner Profile, Service as Action and the IB MYP Unit Planner.

- The IB Learner Profile
  - Teachers incorporate the language and practice of the Learner Profile attributes into daily teaching and learning
- Service as Action
  - Teachers engage students in service learning that is within or beyond the school community in years 1 and 2 (6th and 7th grades)
  - Teachers guide students in a community project that is self-selected by students in year 3 (8th grade)
- IB MYP Unit Planner
  - Statement of Inquiry - Teachers summarize what students will be learning and why in language that is meaningful and clear to them
  - Inquiry Questions - Teachers craft factual, conceptual and debatable questions that promote critical and creative thinking and encourage students to make real world connections and applications
  - Key and Related Concepts - Teachers identify concepts that tie into the learning
  - Global Contexts - Teachers create a learning environment in which students connect their learning to the world around them
  - ATL skills - Teachers identify the specific skills that students will develop through their engagement with the unit
  - Differentiation - Teachers meet the needs of diverse learners and build opportunities for each student to develop, pursue & achieve appropriate personal learning goals
  - Assessment - Teachers use formative assessments to gain insight into students' ongoing development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to tailor instruction specific to students' needs while summative assessments are used to provide evidence of student achievement

#### **IV. The Role of the School Community in Inclusive Education and the IB MYP**

Successful inclusive schools engage the whole school community in the ongoing process of increasing access and engagement and removing barriers to learning. Resources, programs and staff made available to **all** students in our school community to support their academic, physical and social-emotional learning include but are not limited to:

- IB MYP program standards and practices
- Illinois learning standards
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
- Special Education Services
  - Co-teaching classrooms
  - Multi-Needs classrooms
  - Resource support
- Related Services
  - Social work
  - Speech therapy
  - Occupational therapy
  - Physical therapy
  - Adaptive physical education
  - Health service
  - Assistive technology
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Program
- World Language Program
- Restorative practices
- Mindfulness work

#### **V. The Role of the District in Inclusive Education and the IB MYP**

The district affirms the vision and mission to create a positive learning environment for **all** District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child. The belief that every child can learn and should have meaningful access to the curriculum in an environment that characterizes the mission lives at every school in the district, including the IB MYP. The district must continually work to ensure that **all** inclusive education laws, policies, procedures and resources are available and accessible to **all** middle school staff, students and families. The district must work in union with the middle school to support, develop and ensure the continuous implementation of teaching and learning practices designed to identify and remove barriers, increase access and engagement, and improve academic outcomes and behavioral performance for **all** students. A successful inclusive district is characterized by its involvement with the schools and **all** its stakeholders to uphold the philosophy, standards and practices of inclusive education.

*This document will be reviewed annually by the middle school department chairs.*