

# **Highland High School IB Special Education Needs/Inclusive Education Policy**

## **Philosophy:**

The faculty and staff of the Highland High School International Baccalaureate Program strive to build a community that is supportive of all students and will make every effort to ensure that all students are provided the necessary support to allow them to achieve academic success as they progress through the IB Diploma Program. Our Inclusion Policy is reviewed annually in September and revisions are published in the IB Handbook and made available on Highland's IB web page.

## **Mission:**

Salt Lake City School District Special Education department assists schools in ensuring that identified students with disabilities receive special education and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act (IDEIA) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). A full-range of Special Education programs and related services are available from preschool to post-high school transition.

## **Policy:**

In order to provide appropriate services and interventions for student success, Salt Lake City School District and Highland High School's IB community acknowledges the following United States' requirements.

Three existing federal statutes address the rights of children with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE): Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act (IDEIA), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). FAPE is a civil right rooted in the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States constitution which includes Equal Protection and Due Process clauses.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..." Highland High School and the IB Program fall under this category of agency.

State and Federal laws must be followed and the appropriate accommodations must be made. The U.S. government guarantees each preschool and school age child an education in the least restrictive environment (aligned with IB Philosophies). Schools must provide this education to all handicapped students between the ages of 3 and 21 years. This was written into federal law as PL 94-142, passed in 1975. Since then the law has been modified and refined by the

Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA 2004). This law is currently under revision again to be called the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act (IDIEA); however, the need to serve diverse learners is still a priority and becoming increasingly important.

The IDEA act requires that public schools create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student who is found to be eligible under both the federal and state eligibility/disability standards. The IEP is the cornerstone of a student's educational program. It specifies the services to be provided and how often; describes the student's present levels of performance and how the student's disabilities affect academic performance, and specifies accommodations and modifications to be provided for the student. (Public Law 108-466 – 108<sup>th</sup> Congress)

Highland High School's IB Program embraces the philosophy and ideals of IB. Highland High School acknowledges that the student is at the center of the program as expressed through the IB Learner Profile. All IB teachers are expected to teach and provide accommodations to any students who are identified as having Special Education Needs in their classrooms. Students are supported with technology, adaptive teaching methods, testing alternatives, and many other identified accommodations for learning.

Students are advised upon program entry of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement and academic success in coursework. In addition to employing teaching strategies that include differentiation for students with special needs, students are also supported through special arrangements if necessary. The IB publication, *Candidates with Special Assessment Access Requirements*, will be referenced to provide support for program completion. The Diploma Program and Career Program Coordinator will submit to the IB the appropriate D1 or D2 accommodations form, along with necessary documentation, requesting Assessment modifications when needed for individual students.

“The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where normal examination conditions and assessment procedures would put candidates at a disadvantage and prevent them from being able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately, reasonable forms of assessment arrangements may be authorized. Candidates eligible for inclusive assessment arrangements are those with individual needs such as a specific learning difficulty, an emotional or behavioral difficulty, physical, sensory or medical conditions, or mental health problems” (Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures, May 2018). We believe in supporting all of our students, including those with special needs so that conditions for the program are as fair and equitable as possible.

Highland High School recognizes that the IB program assesses students on both content and process. For some students with special needs this creates increased challenges. A 504 or Special Education team, comprised of the student, the parent, teachers, counselors, the IB Coordinator, and administrators at the school and district level will meet together to discuss particular special

education challenges as related to the IB program. Students and parents are apprised of specific IB course requirements prior to and throughout the process of earning the IB Diploma so as to increase success in both the courses and exams. We recognize the need for all stakeholders, including the student, to work together to make fair and appropriate accommodations for his/her success. Requested accommodations may include, but are not limited to additional time, computer use, appropriate adaptive tools, and/or testing in a less distracting environment.

The process for identifying strengths, interests and challenges begins with the student's counselor. Every IB student has a plan for the completion of the IB Diploma. Further needs for those students who have identified learning challenges are supported and reviewed annually by the Assistant Principal responsible for Special Education at Highland High School. A team approach, with the student taking the lead and advocating for him/herself, is essential for student success. Salt Lake City School District asks for the completion and updating of the student learning plan (IEP or 504) annually using the SLCSD approved form that is recorded and distributed to all of that particular student's stakeholders.

Student Learning Plans are kept electronically in secured document storage. Notification of resources and policies are the responsibility of all stakeholders at the school and district. Expertise is provided through Salt Lake City School District and the Utah Board of Education.

### **Further Considerations:**

Additionally, as Highland High School is a school comprised of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds, we have teamed with West High School to become involved in the IB Excellence and Equity Initiative. We recognize that diversity of learning is influenced by a number of additional factors including but not limited to:

- **poverty** (45% of Highland High students qualify for US Federal Financial Assistance through the free and reduced lunch program),
- **knowledge about college access** (10% of Highland High students are identified as First Generation),
- **cultural background** (39% of Highland High students identify with a minority race in the United States), and
- **mother tongues other than English**, (12% of Highland High students indicate a first language other than English) –see IB Language Policy.

Highland High School educators have determined that additional work in our classrooms must be done to differentiate instruction in order to better serve our whole school and all members of it through the IB. This E2 work is being shared among our School Improvement Council and faculty through increased communication, focused professional development, and weekly PLCs. Work is done in every classroom to enhance and differentiate the IB Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATL), modify and adapt assessment methods when warranted, and actively pursue the IB learner profile with all Highland High Students.

We have educated our teachers in inclusive learning strategies as increasingly diverse students are demanding an IB Education.

**Acknowledgements:**

- IB Publication: *Candidates with Assessment Access Requirements* (August 2017)
- IB Publication: *From Principles into Practice* (2015)
- IB Publication: *IB Guide to Inclusive Education: a resource for whole school development* (2015)
- IB Publication: *Learning Diversity and Inclusion in the IB Programmes: Special Educational Needs within the IB Programmes* (January 2016)
- IB Publication: *Special Education Needs within the International Baccalaureate Programmes.* (August 2010)
- West High School: *IB Special Education Needs/Inclusive Education Policy* (May 2018)
- Building the Legacy of IDEA 2004 [www.idea.ed.gov](http://www.idea.ed.gov)
- US Dept. of Education. Protecting Students with Disabilities. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>
- Salt Lake City School District Board Policy S-12: Equal Educational Opportunities for Students with Disabilities <https://www.slcschools.org/board-of-education/policies/>
- Salt Lake City School District Department of Special Education: <https://www.slcschools.org/departments/educational-equity-and-student-support/special-education-and-504/>