

W. H Council Traditional School

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy



Established: February 2016

Philosophy

Our philosophy is that all learners have different characteristics and needs to consider when helping them to meet and/or exceed their academic and non-academic potential. To provide access to the IB Primary Years Program at Council we apply approaches and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of students, including those identified with special needs such as gifted and talented. As an IB Magnet school of choice, Council does not provide special education services. A student's right to services is waived by the parent when they enroll. Access to intervention services is provided for struggling students through the use of the universal screening process, grades, and teacher input. The Problem Solving Team (PST) works with the classroom teacher to implement the services and interventions that address student's specific needs and give them access to the IB Primary Years Programme at Council. The PST aides in the identification of special education students. By recognizing the diversity of our collective learning community, we support the development of internationally-minded people.

Purpose

Our SEN policy guides our practice:

- To maintain open access to the Primary Years Program for all students
- To validate and enhance the efforts of our learning community to meet the educational needs of all students
- To define the roles and shared responsibility of each stakeholder (staff, students and parents)
- To unite the IB continuum within our school
- To define the structures and systems needed to support all students
- To align resources with common core standards

Practice

Differentiation:

At Council Elementary all students receive research based instruction from highly qualified teachers. Differentiation is seen as the process of identifying, within each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Dynamic groupings within classrooms, tiered lessons, and the use of pre-assessments and formative assessments are used to uncover students' strengths and areas of need. Students receive targeted instruction, open-ended learning engagements, and provision of materials (such as leveled reading materials, enrichment packets, choice menus, and online reading/math programs) designed to address students' level of readiness. Struggling students are given Tier II and Tier III targeted intervention through the teacher or pulled out for small group instruction with the reading or math coach. Afterschool tutoring provided by highly qualified teachers is also offered to students that are underperforming in math and reading. Students that excel academically are identified, and provisions are made to meet their needs. Advanced students may participate in the Core Plus Program and work in the

next grade level's classroom during the reading and/or math blocks. The formal procedures include three levels of differentiation:

- Tier 1 – Differentiation at the Current Grade Level
- Tier 2 – Subject Acceleration
- Tier 3 – Grade Acceleration

A request for Tier 2 or Tier 3 acceleration begins with the Resource Teacher. A meeting is then scheduled with the supervisor in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. Then, the Iowa Acceleration Scale – 3rd Edition is used to evaluate the student. The following data is gathered for students in kindergarten and first grade:

1. STAR Reading report
2. Early Literacy report
3. STAR Math (Remember this is given to children who can read. No one can read the STAR math for a child)
4. Running Records (use Dominie Kit)
5. Sentence Dictation (use Dominie Kit)
6. Writing Journal
7. Samples of the child's art
8. Evidence of creative or critical thinking (i.e., TALENTS)
9. Any other above grade level performance data

In addition to the acceleration process, independent projects may be assigned by the gifted teacher. Many extracurricular activities are offered to Council students. These extracurricular activities include Geography Club, Geology Club, Engaging Youth in Engineering (EYE), Math team, dance lessons, strings instruction, and piano lessons, to name a few.

Affirming Identity and Building Self Esteem:

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

- 30 minute weekly guidance lessons for grades K-2 and 45 minute guidance lessons for grades 3-5 every two weeks
- Quarterly Council Accelerated Reader Program (CARP) celebrations recognize the students meeting 100% of their Accelerated Reader goals with 85% accuracy.
- CARP (Council Accelerated Reader Program) Class of the Week
- IB Students of the Week are recognized from each class based on monthly IB Learner Profile.
- Quarterly Honors Assemblies recognize students with honor roll and/or perfect attendance.
- One IB student from each class is recognized quarterly during the Honors Assembly. This student exhibits the IB learner profiles and attitudes. Students receive a pin to be worn on the lapel for one quarter.
- Quarterly IB Newsletter
- P.E. Class of the Week
- Random Acts of Kindness board

- Council's Got Talent (talent show)
- Elementary Student Council
- National Elementary Honor Society
- Girls Engaged in Math and Science (GEMs)

Support for students through the RtI process and special education services:

We are required to use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model to identify and serve students who require additional academic and/or behavioral support. Classroom interventions based on recommendations provided by the school Problem Solving Team (PST) are implemented and data collected weekly to determine student progress.

The PST model follows these steps:

- Identify the student's needs, i.e. the specific academic skill or behavior to be targeted
- Analyze the problem
- Set goals and identify research-based programs and/or strategies for helping the student improve in their area(s) of need
- Progress monitor with Universal Screening at least every 4 weeks to determine if the interventions are working, and, if not, what interventions need adjusting or if new interventions need to be added
- Behavior is monitored through Review 360 on a daily basis.

If a student does not show growth after several interventions have been tried, he/she is referred for an evaluation. The forms of assessment are determined by the suspected exceptionality. Testing for speech, behavior and physical/motor skills are also conducted if determined to be appropriate.

Students who qualify for special education services are encouraged to return to their home schools to receive daily or weekly support from the special education staff. Other students have their needs met through the implementation of 504 plans.

Providing support for students identified as Gifted (GT)

Gifted students are those who perform at high levels or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields. These children require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Gifted students may demonstrate the following characteristics:

- takes initiative
- shows leadership
- is curious
- takes creative risks
- uses ideas and learning in new situations
- shows persistence
- becomes passionately interested in a topic or idea
- chooses difficult tasks
- has a keen sense of humor
- expresses thoughts with ease, often at great length
- has many different and unusual ideas
- is resourceful in solving problems

Students must be enrolled in a public school and at least six years of age in order to be referred, evaluated and served. A student may be referred for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents/guardians, peers, self or any other individual with knowledge of the student's abilities. Gifted students are identified annually during the second grade child find.

For each referral, information is gathered in the following three areas:

- **Aptitude** - individual or group test of intelligence or creativity
- **Characteristics** - behavior rating scale designed to assess gifted behaviors completed by classroom teacher
- **Performance** - three indicators of performance at the gifted level (i.e. achievement test scores, grades, products, work samples, portfolios, leadership, motivation)

The scores from the assessments/items used are entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

Once a student is identified as GT:

- a student GT profile sheet is generated
- parents are notified
- a Gifted Education Plan (GEP) is created with targeted goals to meet the students' specific academic and educational needs in a collaborative process between students, parents, and teachers
- the GEP is suspended during the student's Council enrollment

Council Traditional School offers in-direct gifted services via the general education classroom for students in Gr. 3-5, as well as, the Core Plus Program.

"Mobile County Public Schools :: Gifted Education." site. 26,47,2016. publisher, Web. 26,47,2016. <http://documents.mcpss.com/?DivisionID=2149&DepartmentID=2014&ToggleSideNav=ShowAll>

Support for Staff:

The Response to Intervention (RtI) process includes support for students, parents, and teachers. At the beginning of each school year, all teachers are trained on the RtI framework and Review 360. Also, two faculty members are trained to complete the BASC 2-SOS.

Teachers or parents can refer a child who is not making adequate progress. Our Problem Solving Team (PST), is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, classroom teachers, reading and math intervention teachers, and the counselor. They provide/brainstorm ideas for teachers to implement in the classroom.

Support for Parents:

Council Traditional School provides numerous opportunities for parents to learn about support systems for students with academic concerns within the school and community settings.

- Multiple Parent Meetings
- Parent Nights (Open House, PTA meetings, Spanish Night, Science Night, Literacy Night, and Math Night)
- Monthly Bulletins
- Parent-teacher conferences
- School's website
- Statewide Parenting Day
- MCPSS website

Communication and Evaluation of Policy

Our SEN policy is posted on the school's website. It will be reviewed annually by the entire staff. When formal revisions are considered, feedback will be obtained from the staff, IB coordinator, Problem Solving Team (PST), and the support staff at Council (including the special education resource teacher).