

# Baltimore International Academy West



## INCLUSION/SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

*Home of Rising Diplomats and Global Leaders*

# BALTIMORE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

## Special Education Policy

### Philosophy

At Baltimore International Academy West, we are committed to providing our students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education in an Inclusion teaching model, in which a student is taught using differentiation strategies within the general education classroom. All children with special educational needs have the right to a fair and equitable education. The students will receive services outside the general education setting (pull-out) for less than 21% of the school week.

BIA West recognizes that every classroom may contain a variety of special education needs across the social, emotional, linguistic and academic spectrum. All our students are considered valuable contributors to our community and are treated and respected as such. BIA staff embraces the diversity of our student population and is committed to ensuring that all of them are given a high-quality education through differentiation and special services as needed. These strategies and practices include recognizing the needs of the school's Gifted and Advanced Learners (GAL)

BIA West aligns its Special Education policy and procedures with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Baltimore City Public Schools' policies, and the inclusion philosophy of IB.

Tailoring our curriculum and teaching to meet the individual needs of our students is essential. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed for each student who qualifies for special education services. These IEPs are developed and implemented with a foundation of core beliefs. We believe:

- all students can learn and have a right to a holistic and inclusive education in a caring and stimulating environment

- all children with special educational needs have the right to a fair and equitable education
- our entire school community needs to be aware of and provide for students with special educational needs
- all students will participate in their learning to the best of their abilities
- student's education is a partnership between the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the school

## Pre-Referral Process

Students suspected of having disabilities may be referred to the IEP Team for an evaluation. Prior to making a referral to the IEP Team, the following checklist should be completed.

### Pre-Referral Checklist

- Record review
- Review of grades and transcripts
- Student conference
- Parent conference
- Counselor referral
- Administer referral
- Behavior management techniques
- Modification of work assignments
- Adjustment of workload, including homework and class work
- Referral to the student support team

## The IEP Team

**The Individualized Educational Plan Team (IEP)** is the group of individuals who are responsible for evaluating and developing educational programs for students with disabilities. The IEP Team makes all decisions regarding special education students

and documents these decisions on the Prior Written Notice Form. The IEP Team will not make decisions for students identified as disabled under Section 504, nor does it make decisions for general education students, unless the student is suspected of having a special education disability.

The IEP Team is organized to ensure that each individual student has the opportunity to receive the best instruction available to meet his/her needs. This team is comprised of a school administrator, special education teacher, school counselor, social worker, school psychologist, speech pathologist, nurse (when needed), classroom teacher, and a parent/guardian. The IEP can include non-school based personnel to meet the individual student's needs.

Teachers who wish to refer individual students to IEP over concerns with academics, attendance, performance or behavior initiate the Student Support Team (SST) referral process.

## The IEP Evaluation Process

The IEP Evaluation is a process by which the IEP Team, including the parent, reviews existing information about a student to determine whether the student has a special education disability and/or to determine the content of the student's IEP. The IEP Team may decide that additional data is needed to make these determinations; if so, they will select appropriate assessments. The process is:

- Pre-referral Interventions
- Referral to IEP Team for Evaluation
- Evaluation is completed within 90 calendar days of the written referral
- Prepare an assessment report
- Classroom observation
- Evaluation Report

**If the IEP Team does not suspect a disability** as a result of the evaluation process, the student will not be referred for assessments, and the Team will document the reasons why disability is not suspected and identify the information the Team considered in reaching the decision. A student who is not eligible is referred to the Student Support Team (SST) to develop an action plan that will promote the student's academic progress.

**The IEP Team will develop an IEP** within 30 days for students who are identified as having a disability. Student's progress will be monitored by regular assessments, both formal and informal.

## Student Support Team

The Student Support Team is a team of professionals and stakeholders that meet together to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of individual general education students who require prevention or intervention strategies. If necessary, the team will create a plan of interventions to support the student in his or her education. Students may be referred to the Student Support Team for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, academics, behavior, and attendance. The team is composed of an administrator, parent, teacher, and others who are knowledgeable about the student as appropriate. SST requires parent notification and is reviewed periodically throughout the school year to determine if the plan is meeting the student's needs or if the plan needs to be revised.

### **504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides services and accommodations to students with disabling conditions or impairments, but who do not require special education services. To qualify for a 504 plan, students must have documentation of a disability from an outside health provider. The 504 Team consists of an administrator, parent, teacher, and others who are knowledgeable about the student as appropriate and a 504 plan cannot be created without parent consent. Accommodations and modifications are provided to students who qualify, meaning the student needs the accommodations or modifications to progress and access the general curriculum. A 504 plan is a legally binding

**Commented [1]:** Explain how identified students are supported academically.  
Are teachers aware of the policy.  
What differentiation strategies are usually used?  
Add a paragraph about gifted students.  
How often is this policy reviewed?

document. The 504 Team will review the plan on an annual basis and will reevaluate a student's eligibility every three years.

## Gifted and Advanced Learners

Baltimore International Academy West aligns its practices with the Baltimore City Public Schools' policy for Gifted and Advanced Learners, which acknowledges that Gifted, Advanced, and Talent Development learners are found in all schools, in all grades, and come from all racial, cultural, ethnic, and economic groups. The school further acknowledges that Gifted and Advanced learners exist within the population of students who have been formally identified for specialized services and therefore require supports for each exceptionality. Through this policy, Baltimore City Public Schools establishes the requirements for formal identification inclusive of universal ability screening, articulates instructional expectations via services, supports, and/or programs, embraces the need for purposeful and sustained professional learning associated with the best practices in gifted education, and accepts the value of annual reevaluation and reporting. Finally, BIA West commits to being guided by the fundamental principles of equity and excellence in the pursuit of identifying and meeting the needs of our Gifted and Advanced learners.

### **Identification**

- The identification pool for Gifted, Advanced, and Talent Development learners shall encompass all learners as stipulated by COMAR.
- The identification process shall use universal screening and multiple indicators of ability and achievement from an annually reviewed MSDE list.
- Students identified as Talent Development learners may lack one or two qualifying achievement scores that limit their formal identification as Gifted or Advanced learners, but they are expected to be included in all school level practices designed to support Gifted and Advanced learners.

- A universal screening process shall occur in Kindergarten and be used to identify a significant number of students in every school.
- While universal screening and the beginning of formal identification occurs at the kindergarten level; students will continue to be formally identified at all three levels of learners throughout their enrollment in Baltimore City Public Schools as new results from norm-referenced tests are reviewed throughout the year.

### **Instruction**

- Appropriately differentiated, evidenced-based services, supports, and programs shall intervene, accelerate, and/or extend instructional content, strategies, and products to demonstrate and apply learning and shall:
- Provide a continuum of appropriately differentiated curriculum and evidence-based academic programs and services in grades Pre-K—12.
- Support the social and emotional growth of formally identified learners.
- Be experienced in a heterogenous classroom environment in order to provide these learning opportunities to students beyond those who have been formally identified.
- All formally identified learners will have an ILP that requires regular pre-assessment of students which allow for purposeful differentiation within the classroom whereby students can “skip” previously mastered content as determined by the pre-assessment so they can spend time developing new skills built into their ILP project.

## Common Practices

### **Teachers**

General Education and Special Education teachers adapt their instruction to suit individual educational needs. Federal and state laws dictate that goals and objectives of an individual’s IEP supersede the requirements of the IB. All teachers are committed to including all students in general education classrooms as

determined by annual meetings. Special education teachers collaborate with general education teachers to address individual students' needs for success in the classroom. General education teachers work with their Special Education students' support staff to structure supports and accommodations as identified in students' IEPs.

Examples of modifications and accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Provide a student with extra time to complete a test or to use technology to assist them in a task
- Reduce the length of a task
- Allow a student to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in an alternative way
- Participate in an alternative environment such as a small group
- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in the classroom

General education teachers will consult with support staff when they are unsure of the best way to modify a task to support a student's success without changing the core essence of the task.

Differentiation to meet the needs of all students includes addressing the needs of Gifted and Advanced Learners. (GAL) The school has a GAL Coordinator who:

- attends all District meetings and professional development for GAL
- provides school staff with updates and professional development on strategies to meet their GAL students' needs as well as identifying gifted students
- assists teachers with developing Instructional Learning Plans (ILPs), as required, for their GAL students
- assists the testing coordinator with scheduling kindergartens students for non-verbal testing to identify gifted learners (kindergarten students in the school district are tested and evaluated to identify gifted potential)

### **Students**

BIA West students should:



- Work in conjunction with teachers to meet the goals of their IEP
- Strive to participate in PYP and MYP units and IB curriculum to the best of their ability with help from general and special education teachers
- Use the IB Learner Profile attributes to achieve success in school

### **Parents/Guardians**

Baltimore International Academy parent(s)/guardian(s) should:

- Work with mainstream and special education teachers to reinforce learning at home
- Attend parent/teacher conferences
- Attend IEP meetings

### **Assessment**

Students with an IEP will be assessed according to the modifications and accommodations identified on their plan. When general education teachers are unsure how to modify their approach to assessment, they should consult the student's case manager. If no modifications to assessment are identified in the IEP, the student will be assessed with the same expectations as the rest of the class.

Modifications to assessment may include, but are not limited to:

- Determining the student's grade based on participation, work completion, effort, or progress towards goals
- Use of a modified rubric (PYP rubrics and MYP subject area rubrics for Year 1 or Year 3 )
- Differentiation, to help students with special needs meet their goals, is available to all teachers at BIA West

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### **Professional Development**

Professional Development related to IB Standards and Practices, differentiation, and meeting the needs of students with special needs is available to all teachers at Baltimore international Academy West.

- Special education teachers are included in school, District-wide, and IB

professional development.

- All teachers will continue to develop their skills with strategies for supporting the needs of all students.
- IB Programme Coordinator support collaboration between Special Education, Gifted and Advanced Learner Coordinator and General Education teachers
- IB Programme Coordinator maintains a record of Baltimore International Academy West educators who have participated in IB trainings and IB-related professional development and make training and professional development available to all teachers.

## On-going Review

This policy will be reviewed annually during the BIA Inc. Summer Academy stakeholders, to include Board of Directors, Schools' Administrators, Grade Team Coordinators and Parent Teacher Organization officers. Updates will be made based on changes in Federal, State, District School legislation or changes in schools' climate, processes, or procedures.