

**James B. Sanderlin PK-8, an IB World School**  
**Diverse Learners Policy**

**Mission Statement**

James B. Sanderlin IB World School is committed to teaching and learning with the brain and heart in mind. Our community of active lifelong learners will use an inquiry approach through our challenging programmes to become internationally minded citizens.

**Introduction & Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to communicate to all stakeholders in our IB community - administrators, teachers, students, and parent - the programmatic expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all learners as required by International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). This document also provides clear guidelines and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

**Program Philosophy**

It is the philosophy of both IBO and James B. Sanderlin PK-8 that every child can learn and that every child should be provided with creative thinking and learning skills that will carry them to success as adults, making them self-sufficient citizens, caring and reflective members of society, and productive contributors in the global market place. Therefore, it is our vision, in the context of the inclusive nature of PYP and MYP and the learner-centered nature of IB, that all students receive the necessary resources, guidance, accommodations, and differentiation needed to scaffold their skills to the highest level of personal success.

The International Baccalaureate Primary and Middle Years Programmes recognize that students come from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and have a range of academic, physical and other needs. Many students may have a recognized, special educational need; other students may have special needs that have not yet been determined. Examples of these special needs include, but may not be limited to:

- Specific learning disabilities (such as dyslexia and dyscalculia)
- Communication disorders (such as speech or language impairments)
- Emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Physical difficulties affecting mobility
- Sensory impairments (such as visual or hearing difficulties)
- Medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy and diabetes)
- Mental health conditions (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders, and anxiety)
- Gifted and talented students
- English language learners

James B. Sanderlin PK-8 implements the PYP and MYP utilizing inclusive teaching techniques. Teachers design learning experiences that allow all students, including those who have special educational needs, to meet the rigorous standards of the IB. Teachers provide all students with opportunities to achieve these goals through carefully constructed differentiated teaching strategies. Differentiated teaching maximizes students' potential, and also allows the student to demonstrate learning in different ways.

**Support Given To Diverse Learners within the School Student Body**

<b><u>Type of Support</u></b>	<b><u>Person(s) Administering Support</u></b>	<b><u>Person Responsible for Plan</u></b>
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	ESE Teachers & Assistants, Classroom Teachers	ESE Case Manager
504 Plan	Classroom Teachers	504 Coordinators
Counseling Services	School Counselors	School Counselors
School Health Services	School Nurse	School Nurse
Social Work Services	School Social Worker	School Social Worker
Psychological Services	School Psychologist	School Psychologist

### **School-Based Leadership Team**

The intervention procedures for students who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment is a multi-tiered system of support that aligns resources so that the intervention services increase in intensity in each successive tier.

The Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) model addresses both academic and behavior needs of students through interventions developed to meet those needs. The basic elements of PS/RtI are required components in the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). PS/RtI is an example of Early Intervention Services (EIS), mandated by the reauthorization of IDEA. PS/RtI serves as a process to ensure the quality and validity of classroom instruction by progress monitoring all students. This process helps to differentiate among students who are not progressing due to lack of instruction and students who are not progressing due to a learning and/or behavior disability.

The School Based Leadership Team is a multi-disciplinary team of professionals assigned to work with Tier 1 and Tier 2 data in establishing interventions and instruction at the respective tier. The Tier 3 Problem Solving Team is a multi-disciplinary team of school professionals assigned to conduct individual problem solving when students are not responding positively to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions.

The following are required components to determine identification:

- Observations - minimum of 2, at least one in the general education classroom
- Review of existing data
- Parent conferences
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Evidence-based interventions

If the Tier 3 Problem Solving Team suspects a disability, they may make a decision to refer a student for an evaluation to determine if a disability exists which would require special education services. Once parent consent is obtained, a comprehensive and individual evaluation is conducted in all areas of suspected disability to determine:

- Whether the child has a disability
- The educational needs of the child
- Whether the child needs special education and related services

If a student is determined eligible for ESE, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written to address the goals and objectives in all areas of need for the student.

A reevaluation may occur not more than once a year, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise and must occur at least once every three years, unless the parent and the school district agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.

If a student has a disability or impairment (permanent or temporary) but is not eligible for ESE services, a 504 plan may be developed to make certain accommodations in order that a student may be successful in the general education classroom.

### **Roles & Responsibilities of Stakeholders Regarding IEP and 504 Plans**

#### ***The School:***

- The school will provide guidance and information so that students with special needs can make informed decisions concerning application to our IB programmes.
- School counselors and Special Education case managers will provide the IB coordinator and teachers with a copy of all IEP's and 504 plans.
- Exceptional education case managers and/or school counselors will provide updates and host meetings for updates in IEP's and 504 plans. Site IB coordinators will be invited to these meetings.
- IB coordinators and counselors will communicate vertically as students pass from elementary to middle school so that continuity may be maintained.
- Site coordinators and counselors will oversee and supervise classroom accommodations as well as provide examination accommodations as needed.
- Schools will facilitate the provisions of appropriate accommodations such as but not limited to additional time, rest periods, separate testing space, technological aides, reading aides, (readers, prompters, Braille), assessments/assignments in a

specific color or type size, audio recordings, assignment modification, extensions and assistance or exemptions as specified by the student's IEP or 504 plan.

- The classroom teacher, in conjunction with the exceptional education case manager, will familiarize him/herself with the nature and needs of his/her students' and accommodate them by utilizing school and IB Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) resources.
- The classroom teacher will provide differentiation and accommodations, in conjunction with the exceptional education case manager, as needed and required for student success and as outlined in the student's IEP or 504 plan.
- The teacher will maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing these services.

#### ***The Parent/Guardian:***

- Families will make requests for child studies or services from the school as they are needed and in a proactive manner.
- Families will provide documentation to school officials for IEP's and 504.
- Families will communicate with teachers and coordinators concerning their observations as to their child's needs to facilitate appropriate intervention strategies.

#### ***The Student:***

- Students will be proactive in seeking assistance from their teachers and the coordinator to meet their learning needs.

### **Strategies for Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners**

#### ***Best Practice***

The IBO distinguishes five principles of best practice to assist all students in accessing the curriculum and in developing as a whole person. These principles are:

- **Affirming identity and building self esteem**

Students learn better in conditions that promote social and emotional growth. Welcoming diversity and developing the whole child through the IB Learner Profile attributes best achieve this.

- **Valuing prior knowledge**

Learning occurs when students make relevant connections between their current knowledge and new knowledge. Through its transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, PYP and MYP programmes build on what students know as they make connections across the curriculum.

- **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding instruction considers the student's current ability to demonstrate knowledge and gradually builds from concrete to abstract understanding as supports are gradually removed and students become more independent in their learning. Examples of scaffolds include visual aids, demonstrations, dramatization, and collaborative small group instruction.

- **Extending learning**

Providing students with several different ways to learn and practice a concept extends their learning and fosters a deeper understanding. It is important that students recognize opportunities for learning outside of the school setting to become life-long learners.

- **Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills**

ATL skills will be part of the practice for addressing the needs of diverse learners, at all parts of the learning spectrum for students.

#### ***Differentiation***

The nature of diversity brings about the need for differentiation. Differentiation is an ongoing process in which the teacher reviews and adopts instruction to meet the needs of all students. This process becomes more seamless as teachers develop relationships with their students and can be fostered through a working relationship with families, as they know the student best. As students develop metacognitive awareness of themselves as learners, they are better able to advocate for themselves and become more independent.

#### ***Inclusion***

Inclusion of all students in the general education setting increases access to the curriculum while breaking down barriers. It promotes a respectful and collaborative learning environment between colleagues and students alike.

#### ***Assessment***

Assessment is an important part of the learning process. It provides students with a venue for reflection of personal growth and provides the teacher with valuable insight that will direct future lessons.

**Summary Matrix of Expectations for Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners**

	Teachers will...	Families will...	Students will...
Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces diversity</li> <li>Encourages developing attributes outlined in the IB Learner Profile</li> <li>Consider the learner's prior understanding when planning and teaching learning engagements</li> <li>Scaffold instruction from concrete to abstract</li> <li>Provide cognitively rich materials and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with teachers to help them become more knowledgeable and aware of their child's needs and differences</li> <li>Support student learning and integration of prior knowledge with new understandings discovered in the classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate diversity of perspectives to enhance learning</li> <li>Demonstrate open-mindedness and acceptance of new learning experiences in the classrooms</li> </ul>
Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a range of learning engagements relevant to students for achieving common goals</li> <li>Continuously review and adapt goals and teaching methods</li> <li>Identify effective strategies for specific goals</li> <li>Be open and flexible to different approaches to learning</li> <li>Guide students to access content through resources on their level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support student learning</li> <li>Share effective strategies observed at home with the school</li> <li>Be open and flexible to different approaches to learning</li> <li>Guide students to access content through resources on their level</li> <li>Maintain open communication with the school in order to productively assist teachers with the learning process of the child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand themselves as a learner</li> <li>Grow as their own advocates</li> <li>Be open and flexible to different approaches to learning</li> <li>Play an active role in the planning, carrying out, and reviewing what is learned</li> <li>Develop productive relationships with teachers and family members</li> </ul>
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in collaborative teaching approaches</li> <li>Organize classrooms such that diversity is evident, accessible, and used as a resource</li> <li>View differences as opportunities for enriched learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in positive, cooperative interactions with teachers</li> <li>Collaborate with teachers to help them become more knowledgeable and aware of differences that may exist in the classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in becoming active, compassionate, and life-long learners who understand that other people with their differences can also be right</li> <li>Respect differences in the classroom as they arise and ask clarifying questions to encourage better understanding</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess students ongoing to drive instruction</li> <li>Encourage and develop independence and accountability</li> <li>Develop assessments to match the strength and special needs of all learners, and include elements of social interaction and personal growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and develop independence and accountability</li> <li>Prepare students adequately for optimal school performance including diet, rest/sleep, and other basic needs</li> <li>Provide support and encourage critical thinking in the home</li> <li>Be an advocate for the student</li> <li>Provide structures conducive to learning in the home (i.e., quiet study area/time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be reflective learners</li> <li>Provide constructive feedback to peer</li> <li>Self-advocate</li> <li>Be open minded and become independent and accountable for learning</li> <li>Take responsibility for basic needs</li> <li>Work cooperatively with teachers, peers, and family members</li> </ul>

## **Terminology**

**504 Plan:** An individualized plan developed for a student with a mental or physical impairment that specifies what accommodations and/or services they will get in school to "level the playing field" so that they may derive as much benefit from their public educational program as their nondisabled peers. The plan follows from the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and also applies to extracurricular activities and non-student situations such as employment.

**Accommodation:** An alteration in the way material is presented, or in the environmental setting, or task demands and/or conditions as necessitated to "work around" interference from a disability.

**Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD):** An education term and not a specific diagnosis. It generally refers to a situation in which the student has significant or prominent problems adhering to the expected behavioral standards and/or in regulation their emotional state. Includes: attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessive preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance abuse; disruptive antisocial and uncooperative behavior; and anger, frustration and violence.

**Individualized Educational Plan:** A written education plan for a school-aged child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child's parents. The program is written for a student who has first found to be eligible under IDEA for special education. It must specify goals and objectives for all areas of deficit that are disability-related. It must include a statement of any supports or services that the student requires, showing how often they will be provided, for what duration, and in what setting. To the extent that the student's needs cannot be met in the regular classroom, the IEP must indicate what proportion of the time the student will be in the mainstream setting.

**Problem Solving/Responses to Intervention (PS/RtI):** A tiered framework for instructing, assessing, and providing academic and behavioral interventions for all students through implementation of scientifically based instructional practices based on data.

**Special arrangements:** Changed or additional conditions during the assessment process for a candidate with special educational needs. These enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment more fairly and are not intended to compensate for any lack of ability.

**Special assessment needs:** A candidate with special assessment needs is one who requires special arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate his or her level of attainment.

**Special educational needs:** This refers to candidates with individual learning needs, who have the intellectual capacity to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, and who require special arrangements to demonstrate their level of achievement.

**Communication Disorders:** Speech and language issues characterized by communication problems (for example receptive/expressive language impairment, speech sound disorders and fluency and stuttering disorders).

**Varying Exceptionalities:** This refers to students with a variety of disabilities; the Varying Exceptionalities (VE) teacher is a special education teacher who works with students exhibiting a variety of disabilities.