



Barack Obama Academy of International Studies Special Education Policy



Obama Academy Mission Statement

The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies is an International Baccalaureate World School that prepares students to become well-rounded, globally competitive, compassionate, and confident, in a safe and supportive environment.

The IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

A clear Special Educational Needs policy that is easily accessible to students, teachers, parents, and the school community at large is essential to ensure that all students enrolled in IB programmes should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum. The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies, in accordance with the International Baccalaureate Organization, recognizes that students have various needs in their academic, physical, and emotional development. The Obama Academy is a full magnet school that aims to admit students of all walks of life who are dedicated to rigorous academics, and becoming global citizens. The Obama Academy Mission Statement encourages students to become well-rounded, globally competitive, compassionate, and confident, in a safe and supportive environment, this document addresses the needs of our special education students in regards to these goals.

Special education helps children with special needs reach maximum potential. If a student needs a higher level of academic or behavioral support, modifications and adaptations are put into place to allow the student to be successful. Social and behavioral needs are met in a variety of ways which include but are not limited to mentoring, daily progress reports, intervention services, individual and small group environments and if needed school based or outside support from Mental Health service providers.

INCLUSION

All students with Individual Education Plans (IEP's) that are enrolled at The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies are provided educational or behavioral support services in the Inclusion environment for IB

courses from grades 6-12. All Obama Academy classes are IB classes. The Inclusion model in our programme allows all students to access the IB Curriculum. The individual needs of the students can be met in the following ways. Based on the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) the level of services that are necessary for student success is determined by the school's IEP team. Students are supported with special education teachers throughout the day in their general education classes. The IEP teachers (case managers) collaborate with the general education staff on a regular basis to ensure that all teachers are providing appropriate accommodations.

- Examples of services provided to students include:
 - Co-teaching
 - Consultation
 - Modifying and adapting unit plans
 - Modifying and adapting assessments
 - Scaffolding
 - Pre-Teaching and Re-Teaching

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

English as a Second Language (ESL) is an instructional program for students whose dominant language is not English. The purpose of the program is to increase the English language proficiency of eligible students so they can be successful.

DIFFERENTIATION:

Based on a student's proficiency level, accommodations, modifications, and other differentiation strategies can be implemented by the classroom teacher. Differentiation of assignments is based on student ability levels at Obama Academy. At Obama Academy, data drives our instructional decisions and creates our best practice for all students.

Some examples of differentiated instruction at Obama Academy are:

- Graphic organizers
- Opportunities for meeting with individual teachers (QRT Time)
- Daily sign in sheets
- Adaption of speed in content delivery
- Extended time for assignments and assessments
- Modified assignments and assessments

ASSESSMENT

Assessments at Obama Academy may be adapted based on the individual needs of our students. It is understood that students at the Obama Academy have different skill and ability levels. The goals of formative and summative assessments are to identify where individual skill levels are and adjust instruction based on the entry and exit points of these students.

Assessment adaptations and modifications are usually provided in the regular classroom setting. Students who need more intensive support can take their assessments in the Obama Academy Resource Room. The Resource Room provides additional support for students with an IEP.

These supports include:

- Tutoring
- Additional time for the assessments
- Re-Teaching
- Taking Notes
- Chunking
- Additional Reinforcement (notes, computer, technology)
- Pre-Teaching vocabulary and background information

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

In order to promote equal access to the IB MYP and DP curriculum for all learners, The IB has identified four principles of good practice that promote equal access for all.

1.) AFFIRMING IDENTITY AND BUILDING SELF ESTEEM:

Affirming the identity of a learner encourages the qualities, attitudes and characteristics identified in the IB learner profile, promoting responsible citizenship and international mindedness. All staff, students, and administration at Obama Academy affirm identity and self-esteem by:

- promoting a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners
- valuing and using the diversity of cultural perspectives to enhance learning
- communicating with parents and guardians to establish understanding of how best to collaborate to achieve shared goals.

2.) PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

The Obama Academy recognizes that all of our students do not share the same previous learning and background knowledge. Teachers and staff understand that it will be necessary to tap into relevant background information and build necessary information for further learning. In accordance with this teachers should:

- explicitly activate learners' prior understanding
- use their knowledge of learners' prior understanding to differentiate tasks and activities that are necessary for new learning to occur
- record information in learning profiles that will support planning for future differentiation of teacher practice
- consider the time and the strategies necessary for planning a unit of work or lesson

2.) SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is an instructional strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task. The use of graphic organizers to develop a piece of written research is an example of scaffolding. Other scaffolding strategies may provide a more concrete examples to assist in text understanding. Examples of these strategies are:

- Visual aids
- Demonstrations
- Dramatization
- Learning support assistance

- Small structured collaborative groups
- Approved usage of word banking
- Graphic organizers

3.) EXTENDED LEARNING

Students at Obama Academy extend their learning and meet our high expectations with utilization of available support. The belief of the Obama Academy is that learners who strive to extend their learning outside of the classroom have greater success than those who do not. Obama Academy offers a wide range of subjects, and electives that will pique the interests of all of our students. School staff provides modification and accommodations so that all students can access these opportunities.

CONCLUSION

At Obama Academy we have an environment that meets the special education needs of every child. Practices exist that ensure that the special needs students are identified, assessed and provided support and services according to district, state and federal mandates. Our future goals for our special education students include increasing teacher's knowledge of evidence based practice, improving our methods to analysis and monitor student progress, and providing professional development opportunities all staff.