

Inclusion Policy

Briarmeadow PK-8 Mission Statement

To foster learning that develops, transforms, and challenges thinking in order to nurture the whole child into a productive, global citizen. Collaboration and continuous reflection between educators, students, families, and community promote the engagement of authentic and inquiry-based experiences driven by the learner. Through these experiences, students will understand the connectedness of all people, value inclusivity, and make choices to strengthen the future of our world.

Philosophy

Our school works as a collaborative community to encourage and support a diverse range of learners. We recognize the value and strength of teamwork, the necessity for flexibility, the importance of individualization, and the understanding that successful inclusion is an ever-evolving learning process. A culture of inclusion is demonstrated by an open-minded and caring philosophy of education at all levels of the school's personnel. It requires an active and effortful approach to ensure that any barriers are being sought-out and removed to ensure students' participation in all appropriate learning experiences.

Practice

All students are included in the general education setting. Our special populations (students identified in Section 504, Special Education program, Gifted and Talented, English Learners, and At-Risk) are provided appropriate supports. To best provide assistance to our students, teachers have specialized degrees and/or TEA certifications. They also attend trainings annually to attain and refine skills to better understand how to assist students in all educational settings. Members meet in an ongoing fashion, all with the best interest of the child, to progress monitor, review, and update the student's supports.

Programs

1. Intervention Assistance Team

The Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) is a committee comprised of the IAT chairperson, administrator, classroom teacher, evaluation specialist, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, speech therapist, counselor, caregivers, and other relevant specialists. IAT is designed to support students, parents, and teachers. A consistent protocol is utilized to understand the student's strengths and areas for growth, how to best support the student (i.e. the intervention), and how to progress monitor to know if the intervention is working.

Referrals for Testing

Once a student has been provided with intense researched-based interventions and student data shows minimal or no student progress, the IAT committee will meet to determine a possible referral for an evaluation under Special Education or Section 504. A parent or school may also request a Full and Individual Evaluation to rule out the need for special education services or determine the student's eligibility to receive services. If a child has met the eligibility to receive accommodations or services, the appropriate committee will create and monitor individualized services needed for the student.

2. Special Education & Section 504

What is Special Education?

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004) is a federal law that mandates schools to provide eligible students with disabilities a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). A Full Individual Evaluation (FIE) is the first step to determine if a child meets the criteria as a student with a disability. During an Admission, Review and Dismissal meeting, or ARD meeting, the team reviews the evaluation. If the child meets eligibility, the team develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP is a legal document that provides the child's academic goals and any supports that the school will provide. Each child's case manager monitors progress on the goals and provides updates to the parents. This document is reviewed at least once per year and a full re-evaluation is conducted every three years.

What is Section 504?

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Section 504 states, "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 706(8) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his 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..." [29 U.S.C. §794(a), 34 C.F.R. §104.4(a)]. Under this federal law, "An individual with a disability means any person who: (i) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment" [34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(1)].

Services and Accommodations

Students identified under Special Education or Section 504 are supported with placement, services, and/or accommodations, depending on the need of each child. These supports allow students to be able to participate in all appropriate learning experiences.

Meetings

The Special Education and 504 Committee must meet annually or multiple times per year to review the student's progress and discuss the child as a whole. The committee includes the caregiver, an administration team member, the general education teacher, the special education teacher(s), other providers and/or possibly the student.

3. At-Risk

The Every Student Succeeds Act provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high percentages of children with low-income families to ensure that all children meet state academic standards. Briarmeadow qualifies for this funding as a Title 1 school and interventionists are hired to deliver research-based instruction to groups of students at-risk for not meeting grade level expectations. These flexible pull-out supports from the general education classrooms are continuously monitored to confirm students are making adequate progress. If at any point growth is stagnant, students are brought to IAT. During the IAT meeting, team members may suggest a change in the method of instruction, additional supports, and/or a referral for evaluation.



4. Gifted and Talented (G/T)

All students identified as Gifted and Talented (G/T) receive instruction in the general education classroom from a teacher certified to instruct G/T students. All teachers must receive their G/T certification within their first semester at Briarmeadow. All identified students are given the opportunity to work in collaboration with other identified students. Students are provided instruction that is modified in its depth, complexity, and pacing to support their intellectual abilities, creative/productive thinking, and/or leadership ability.

5. English Learners

English Learners (EL) are a group of students with different language, academic, and social-emotional needs. All teachers that support EL students are English as a Second Language (ESL) certified within their first year of teaching and are required to follow the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), which are cross-curricular student expectations. The ELPS are designed to accommodate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students identified as Limited English Proficient, or LEP, are carefully monitored by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC). They review important information on LEP students upon their initial enrollment and at the end of each school year. The Texas English Language Proficiency System (TELPAS) is an assessment program for students in Texas Public Schools who are learning the English language. Annually, Texas assesses ELs in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in conjunction with the proficiency level descriptors for the beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high levels. Students can exit based on criteria developed by TEA and HISD. LPAC monitors the students two years after they exit to ensure progress continues.