

## **Ortiz Middle School**

### **Inclusion Policy**

#### **Inclusion Philosophy**

Ortiz Middle School believes that all students can learn to their fullest potential when provided with effective teaching and support. The faculty and staff at Ortiz are committed to providing the best education possible for our students. Through continuous professional development, we equip teachers with the necessary skills to help students grow academically. By utilizing classroom resources, differentiating instruction, and accentuating academic rigor, Ortiz teachers can address the needs of each student in the varied populations that we serve. We strive to create an environment with a global perspective that is appropriate for all students regardless of individual abilities and needs.

#### **Special Educational Needs and Services**

Approximately 42% of our students have distinct academic, physical, social or emotional needs that are addressed so each student can be successful. Specifically, these needs include, but are not limited to:

- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Emotional Impairments
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Physical Impairments
- Health Impairments (Other Health Impaired)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Cognitive Impairments
- English Language Learners (ELLs)
- Gifted and Talented (GT)

The Houston Independent School District has policies in place to ensure compliance with all rules and regulations regarding the education of students with disabilities, including but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Texas Education Code (TEC), and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

At Ortiz, students with special needs, approximately 12% of our student population, are provided access to the curriculum in the least restrictive environment. For some, that means a self-contained classroom or mainstreaming for part of the day, such as for art and physical education. However, most of our students with special needs are in regular classrooms, receiving support from a special education teacher in reading and math following a co-teach model. The teachers are aware of each child's individual needs and provide any special services and/or materials they require. Teachers of content areas other than reading and math are provided information about each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are required to adhere to the accommodations/ modifications documented. Teachers collect and analyze data, monitor progress, set and update goals, and provide support as specified in each child's IEP.

Students designated as English Language Learners (ELLs), comprising approximately 25% of our student population, are provided instruction that incorporates best practices for students learning a new language. These classes acknowledge and embrace the mother tongue as well as the culture and heritage of these students, while providing a safe, non-threatening environment in which students explore the newly acquired language. Teachers must have their ESL endorsement in addition to the required teaching certification.

Gifted and Talented students, approximately 8% of our student population, are provided rigorous academic coursework in advanced classes. Teachers have a minimum of 30 GT professional development hours and must complete a 6-hour update every year.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring of students' IEPs and communication with parents regarding the annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings is the responsibility of the campus Special Education Coordinator, who, along with case managers, also maintains students' cumulative folders in a secure location.

### **Connection to Other Policies:**

All students are expected to adhere to the Ortiz Academic Honesty Policy and Assessment Policy. Students with special needs are provided accommodations regarding testing according to their IEP documentation. Students with special needs who are considered to be English Language Learners (ELLs) are provided accommodations as outlined in both their IEP and LEP documentation.

Ortiz complies with all requirements regarding special education students as specified by federal, state, and local regulations and policies.

This policy will be reviewed annually.