



## **Edgar Allan Poe Elementary Special Education Needs Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

The Mission of Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School is to prepare children to function successfully in a global and changing world by helping every student:

- develop a love of learning
- become caring of others and the world we live in
- practice and demonstrate critical thinking skills through inquiry
- strive for maximum academic growth and knowledge
- recognize and enhance strengths and talents
- value and respect one's-self and other's backgrounds, beliefs and cultures
- develop a sense of international-mindedness

The parents, teachers, staff and administrators, working in partnership, will promote communication and pursue growth to maximize the educational environment.

### **Philosophy**

The Special Education Needs Policy is developed to meet the individual needs of all students at Poe Elementary. We believe that all children have strengths and talents, but they do not all learn and express their knowledge in the same way. Our goal is to provide services that allow each student with special needs to obtain their maximum growth, academically, personally and creatively.

### **Special Services**

Poe Elementary provides the following services that align with the IB PYP standards, to meet the needs of our students:

- At-risk
  - Students facing barriers such as low-performance, economic disadvantage, truancy and other external factors receive intervention to alleviate these obstacles that interfere with their learning.
- English Language Learners
  - Upon registration at Poe, all parents are asked if English is the primary language spoken at home. If it is not the primary language and students qualify as an

English Learner, they are provided with additional supports in the classroom and on assessments.

- All Poe teachers earn certification in teaching English as a Second Language. They are all proficient in delivering content while supporting the learning of the English language by identifying the academic language that may need explicit instruction, preparing students by building up their background knowledge, supporting vocabulary acquisition with interactive journals and word walls, and modeling speech through sentence stems and paragraph frames.
- On assessments, English Learners may be given the opportunity to use a dictionary in their native language, have extended time to finish the assessment or other accommodations. Perhaps the most important part of support for English Learners is building a classroom and school culture where they feel free to take the risk of communicating in a different language.
- An LPAC Committee ensures the delivery of the services by identifying students, documenting students' accommodations and providing support to the students' families.
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- Gifted and Talented
  - Students are identified Gifted and Talented (G/T) by meeting the criteria set forth by the state of Texas.
  - Part of this criteria requires a score on the Houston Independent School District Gifted and Talented Matrix which includes standardized scores from the IOWA/Cogat.
  - Exams are given November-December. Kindergarten and fifth grade students who are not already identified, must take the exam per district requirement. All other students in first through fifth grades can apply to take the exam. Students receive results in February.
  - The program at Poe is the Neighborhood Vanguard Program. Identified G/T students are clustered in each of the regular classrooms.
  - Teachers provide differentiated instruction through the IB PYP units of inquiry, which provides students with voice, choice and ownership of their learning.
  - All classroom teachers at Poe earn G/T certifications that require an initial thirty-hour training, followed by an additional six-hour training yearly.
- Section 504
  - The 504 program at Poe supports students who require accommodations to remove barriers to their learning.
  - The goal is to give the students equal access to an education.
  - A 504 service plan can make changes to the instruction, the environment, and how curriculum is presented. These decisions are made by 504 Committee after collecting information from parents, teachers, physicians, and therapists.
  - The 504 Committee creates a plan to help the student thrive in school, by determining the eligibility, and accommodations then monitoring and adjusting

the plans as needed. The Committee meets annually for each student who receives 504 accommodations.

- Individualized Education Program
  - An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is an educational plan designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services has an IEP. The teachers, administrators, and families meet together to look closely at the child's unique needs. They combine their knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an educational program that helps the child to be involved in, and progress in, the general education curriculum.
  - The IEP guides the delivery of the special education for the child.
- Skills for Living and Learning (SLL)
  - When the special needs are not met by the other special education services alone, the special education department may determine that the Skills for Living and Learning class is a more appropriate placement to meet a child's needs.
  - Most students in the SLL class were identified in preschool and many attended a prekindergarten program designed to address disabilities before moving on to SLL. If these students aren't identified until they enter elementary school a teacher makes a referral for special needs.
  - Poe has a special classroom for students with severe special needs. The purpose of the class is to equip students with the necessary skills to become productive members of society. The students learn the basic skills that everyone uses daily, such as basic math, reading, writing, and self-help skills such as feeding, dressing, and toileting. Our main goal is to help students become as independent as possible.
  - These students attend fine arts, PE and library with other grade levels. Some may even spend scheduled time in a regular classroom if that decision is made by the ARD committee.
  - SLL teachers are certified special education teachers. They are also accompanied by a full-time teaching assistant.
  - When the need exists, a student in a SLL class may be assigned to an individual teaching assistant.
- Dyslexia Program
  - At Poe, a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) provides support to teachers and intervention for students who are identified with dyslexia. The Neuhaus curriculum; Basic Language Skill is administered by the therapist to both face-to-face students, as well as virtual students.
  - The purpose of the dyslexia program is to provide early intervention before difficulties become intractable. The program is designed to support students as they acquire decoding skills, regardless of their grade level. The program, Neuhaus, Basic Language skills Curriculum will significantly benefit the academic success of each student.
  - Our Kindergarten and First grade students are all tested on a Universal Screener. The screener, along with classroom work and teacher and parent information

determines if they get further testing. Second and Third, Fourth, and Fifth graders go through more of an intervention process with their classroom teacher who collects information such as spelling, fluency rate, and reading comprehension ability. This information is presented to the 504-coordinator committee where it is determined to have a diagnostician test for dyslexia.

- The teacher is a very important advocate for each student. The teacher is the first interventionist in a child's academic success. They provide specific information on a child's abilities and disabilities. They continue to work with the student in collaboration with the Dyslexia Therapist.
- Remote Learning with Special Populations
  - The Office of Special Education Services (OSES) must make reasonable efforts to provide the services, accommodations and modifications that are required by the student's IEP. If it is not possible to provide those services while learning remotely, the student's ARD committee must decide which services can be provided.
  - Special Education @ H.O.M.E.: The Special Education students who are learning remotely will have access to online platforms that provide individualized learning designed to meet their needs such as Imagine Literacy and Imagine Math. It is recommended that these students login to the platforms daily, The Special Education students receiving face-to-face instruction will receive accommodations in class to meet their individual needs.

## **Other Offerings at Poe**

- International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme Standards
- Differentiated instruction
- Enrichment classes for all students
  - Music
  - Art
  - Dance
  - Theatre
  - PE
- After school competitive groups and clubs
  - Poe Dance Ensemble
  - Poe Choir
  - Poe Players (drama)
  - S.W.A.T. (technical theatre)
  - Art Club
  - Poe Track Team
  - Poe Soccer Team
- Counseling
  - Poe has a full-time certified school counselor to assist in supporting our students' social and emotional needs.
- Response to Intervention (RIT) classroom modifications and/or accommodations

- Universal Screening to identify students who may be at-risk
- Progress Monitoring to assess student achievement goals
- Test accommodations as allowed and needed