



Inclusion Policy

Sutton Middle School and North Atlanta High School

Sutton Middle School and North Atlanta High School embrace the diversity of all our students, and does not exclude, for example, on the grounds of strengths, challenges, age, social status, economic status, language, gender, race, ethnicity or sexuality. Taking into account changing histories, circumstances and contexts, learner variability represents the shifting combination of strengths and challenges that learners experience. We embrace the aims and purpose of IB that “In all IB programmes, teaching is ... designed to remove barriers to learning. Teaching is inclusive and values diversity. It affirms students' identities, and aims to create learning opportunities that enable every student to develop and pursue appropriate personal goals.” (What is an IB education? 2013:6)

The Atlanta Public Schools mission is: “Through a caring culture of equity, trust, and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college, career, and life”. At both schools, we therefore, provide comprehensive services and changes to the learning environment to enable students to learn alongside their peers that meet a child’s unique needs. Professionals are on staff to provide a range of services, such as, psychological, physical, health, social, language, enrichment, and any other student support that requires a specialized service or instruction. Counselors and social workers are employed at both schools to meet routine and emergency needs. Paraprofessionals are employed throughout both schools helping physically and intellectually challenged students. A nurse is available to monitor specific medical needs. Student success is supported at every level. All students are part of the MYP in both schools. The Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP) include students who are designated as gifted, homeless, English Language Learner (ELL), Student with Disabilities (SWD), and 504.

Inclusion is facilitated in both school’s culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the entire school community. Teachers follow a specific procedure when they observe students with learning difficulties. They have a variety of classroom diagnostic tools. If they suspect deeper issues, they observe and gather Response to Intervention (RTI) data, and proceed to a series of meetings of the Student Support Team (SST). Parents are involved in all parts of the process. Federal guidelines direct all efforts in accommodating learning problems. Students are allowed to receive instruction in the least restrictive environments. Teachers are trained to accommodate learners by differentiating instruction and assessment. Teachers also embed inquiry and problem-solving activities in their



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units to encourage student engagement for all learners. Where appropriate, teachers use technology and collaboration in order to reach all students' learning needs in the classroom. Teachers also engage in the gradual release model of teaching to encourage students to develop independence in their own education. All teachers have been trained in the Approaches to Learning skills and embed these skills in their unit plans.

If needed, special education and ESOL teachers assist through support and through co-teaching in the regular classroom to keep learning on target for students with special needs and language learners. Special education paraprofessionals attend class with assigned students to provide additional support. This approach allows students to thrive in an inclusive environment. Where self-contained classes are designated to be best for student outcomes, highly qualified teachers and specially designed classrooms are provided. Parents and qualified coordinators monitor school activities and student progress.

All teachers have access to the MYP/DP/CP special needs material located in the Programme Resources Center. Appropriate curriculum and assessment strategies are reviewed annually for all students with disabilities and English Learners. Classroom teachers, special education and/or ESOL teachers, parents, and administrators participate in these conferences. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written and followed. Students with significant cognitive or physical disabilities receive special consideration for grade promotion. Each student's accommodations are received by teachers and coordinators and they are signed off on to ensure understanding of the accommodations.

IB Coordinators work in collaboration with the Special Education Lead Teachers, Student Support Coordinators, and ESOL Department Chair/Lead Teacher regularly to ensure all students who require accommodations receive them in their IB classes as well as on IB exams. Upon exam or personal project registration, the IB Coordinator is responsible for facilitating requests for IB student needs and makes the appropriate requests with the IB. It is at the discretion of the IB to allow for the accommodations which include, but are not limited to extended testing time, larger font on paper exams, and the use of a scribe during exams.

The students with special needs at both schools are part of the fabric of the schools and the community. Genuine support for the well-being of this population is embodied in the Sutton



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motto: *Diversity is our Strength* and in the North Atlanta mission statement which begins, "Through a nurturing culture that embraces diversity....".