

Inclusion Policy

In collaboration with our community, the Oberlin City School district is committed to academic excellence, intercultural understanding, and emotional and social support that promotes inquiring students to be caring global citizens and agents of change.



Oberlin Elementary School
210 North Park Street
Oberlin, OH 44074

Langston Middle School
150 N. Pleasant Street
Oberlin, OH 44074

Oberlin High School
281 N. Pleasant Street
Oberlin, OH 44074

IB Primary Years Programme
IB Middle Years Programme
IB Diploma Programme

Updated February, 2025

I. Philosophy

The Oberlin City School District believes that all students can learn and actively work towards a better and more peaceful world. Each student is seen as special within the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). Every teacher is responsible for understanding the needs of the individuals within their class to ensure teaching is inclusive, values diversity, and affirms students' identities. The relationship between class teachers and other support staff within the entire continuum is seen as being collaborative and cooperative where all are actively involved in the planning processes that support teaching and learning to ensure all barriers are removed from learning in order for every student to have the opportunity to attain personal goals, achievements, and feel successful in the learning process.

II. Mission Oberlin City School District is a diverse community working together to inspire each student's full potential to become responsible citizens of the world.

III. Why Do We Provide Services to SEN Students

Federal and state law mandates that Oberlin Elementary School, Langston Middle and Oberlin High Schools provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for every child in its jurisdiction.

Oberlin City School District is mandated to develop and implement an effective and practical system for identifying and assuring that all children within our buildings receive equitable, appropriate services based on eligibility and student needs in the least restrictive environment.

OES, Langston Middle and Oberlin High Schools implement a strategic response to intervention process in order to identify student needs, determine special education eligibility, build on the learner strengths, circumvent difficulties, and celebrate learning successes to develop the whole student.

IV. What We Provide to our SEN Students

Eligibility

Oberlin City School District has developed an intervention assistance program designed to

meet the needs of struggling learners. Specific teams including: principal, general education teacher, support staff, parents, custodial adults and related service staff (Speech and Language Therapist, School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, and Physical Therapist) meet regularly to design interventions to target the identified needs of a struggling student. These interventions are progress monitored by staff and reported back to the intervention team to include the parents to determine the effectiveness of the interventions.

If the student is not making enough progress with the interventions, the team could recommend a Multi-Factored Evaluation (MFE) and must have parent consent. An MFE includes testing in the areas of cognition, achievement, communication, social-emotional development, adaptive behavior, and fine/gross motor. School Psychologist and related service staff administer assessments with input (observations, interviews, checklists, anecdotal records) from teachers, parents, administrators, support personnel, and students. An MFE determines eligibility for special education and related services. This evaluation is conducted every three years to determine continuation of services. The MFE is a digital document with a hard copy on file in the Principal's office and the Office of Pupil Services. This document is confidential; therefore copies of the MFE are only given to the Case Manager who provides direct services to the student.

Once eligibility is determined an Individual Education Program (IEP) is written. An IEP is a yearly plan with measurable goals, objectives, and services to meet the needs of the individual student. The IEP is reviewed each trimester to evaluate the data and report progress to the team including the parents. The Case Manager implements, collects data and reports progress on the IEP. The IEP is a digital document with a hard copy on file in the Principal's office and the Office of Pupil Services. This document is confidential; therefore copies of the IEP are only given to those staff members who provide direct services to the student. When a student transfers to another building/across the IB continuum, a transition meeting occurs in which the IEP and all necessary documentation is shared to ensure the continuation of interventions and services, which may be updated as needed.

Students who have identified needs that impact major life activities such as: speaking, learning, working, concentrating and thinking can be found eligible to receive a Section 504 Accommodation Plan. These 504 plans provide specific accommodations for students to have access to and make progress in the general curriculum. A team, which includes the Principal, general education teacher, Guidance Counselor, nurse, and parents, review these plans annually.

OCSD has developed an assistance program designed to meet the needs of gifted students as well. Specific teams including principal, gifted and talented specialist, general education teachers, parents, custodial adults, and related people meet to design

WEPs (Written Education Plans for gifted students) and to target the identified needs of a gifted student. These plans are progress monitored by staff and reported back to the gifted team to include the parents to determine the effectiveness of the plans.

- Learning plans acknowledge student strengths and interests
- Learning plan development is a collaborative process
- Learning plans are focused on individual strengths and challenges rather than medical and psychological labels.
- Learning plans are properly integrated with the technologies the student uses in and out of the classroom
- Learning outcomes are considered relevant by students, parents and teachers.
- Teaching and learning strategies are linked to the IB approaches to teaching and learning skills and the IB learner profile
- Learning and the learning process are evidence-based.
- Learning plan meetings are student-led.
- Learning plans respect confidentiality.
- Learning plan development takes into account the local context and legislation, where appropriate.

Services

OES, Langston Middle and Oberlin High Schools support the International Baccalaureate in identifying four principles of teaching for learning diversity. These principles support equal access to the curriculum for all learners across the continuum, but they are particularly relevant to those with special needs. These principles are based on elements of good practice that are essential to the development of the whole child.

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. Every student is visible, valued, and fostered to recognize their capability to make a difference both locally and globally. Conditions will be created to affirm identity and build self-esteem for each student so they will be more likely to take necessary risks for successful learning.

- By promoting a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners.
- By valuing and using the diversity of cultural perspectives to

enhance learning.

- By communicating with parents to establish an understanding of how best to collaborate to achieve shared goals.

2) Valuing Prior Knowledge

It cannot be assumed that those learners who have diverse learning needs will necessarily all share the same previous learning and background knowledge. It may be that these learners have a wealth of relevant background knowledge that can be activated as a base for further learning. However, the teacher may have to build background knowledge in preparation for further learning.

- Meaningfully assess existing knowledge, strengths and interests.
- Recognize that there may be gaps or overlaps in learning.
- Work with students to construct individual learning profiles to inform teaching and learning.
- Explicitly activate learners' prior understanding to promote new learning.
- Take into account prior learning when designing, differentiating and planning new learning.

3) Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a teacher strategy that allows all students access to the curriculum and develops student independence over time. Scaffolding should foster the learner towards concept mastery. Teachers must assess prior learning, incorporate smaller steps, and give constructive learning feedback throughout every stage of the learning process.

- Visual aids
- Demonstrations
- Pre-teaching
- Experiential learning
- Chunking information
- Templates and Graphic organizers

4) Extending Learning

IB Approaches to teaching and learning

IB's researched-based approaches to teaching and learning are used by educators and students in the classroom to ensure that the missions and values of the IB become a reality in daily education instruction.

Teaching to variability

All teachers differentiate instruction, use Universal Design for Learning, and remove barriers to student learning to enable and empower every student to develop, pursue, and achieve learning goals despite any challenge. Differentiated instruction and universal design for learning are used.

Creating optimal learning environments

All stakeholders help to create positive learning environments where every student is welcomed and supported.

- Students are accepted for who they are
- Students are valued for their strengths
- Students are appropriately challenged by their learning
- Expectations of students are high but realistic
- Students belong to the community and feel cared for, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- Students are listened to, have their opinions sought, and are provided with opportunities to succeed
- Students are included in decisions about their learning
- Students are given opportunities to reflect on their learning
- Students understand themselves as learners
- Students have the opportunity to develop the attributes of the learner profile
- Students have the opportunity to develop as multilingual citizens
- Students have access to the relevant IB programme components to the greatest extent possible
- Students understand their role in the learning of others
- Students are supported in developing the skills to self-advocate

Assessment

Assessment for learning is the evidence that is constantly gathered throughout the learning and teaching process. Ongoing assessment is a vital key to inform teaching and learning for both teachers and students. Assessment informs teachers and creates the opportunity to remove barriers to learning and assessment. For students, assessment allows for self-reflection and peer review, which enhances and supports all learners in gaining independence and becoming advocates for their own learning. Assessment should:

- Be accessible in terms of design, content and medium to give every student the opportunity to succeed
- Be ongoing, diverse and relevant to the learner

- Actively inform and involve learners
- Be focused on learner progress
- Allow for differentiated assessment with different entry and exit points
- Be flexible, not fixed, and provide multiple opportunities in varied media for learners to demonstrate skills and express themselves
- Be pertinent and relevant to the construct that is being tested and measure what it intends to measure
- Be explicit so that the purposes and outcomes of the assessment process are understood by all
- Measure both product and process-what type of learning, how and under what conditions

Collaboration

Inclusion is facilitated within the whole school community in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support, and problem solving. The district fosters and supports dynamic learning communities where all voices are heard from the learners, parents and caregivers, support staff, and non-teaching staff.

Technology

Multiple technologies utilized are assistive and integral to IB constructivist approaches to teaching and learning to support the curriculum and aim to be:

- evident but seamless in the curriculum
- accessible to all learners, used to facilitate classroom environments that are inclusive and diverse by design, and useful in enhancing curriculum design and lesson planning
- adaptive to many contexts: cultural, physical and educational
- supportive of intercultural understanding, global engagement and multilingualism, specific hallmarks of an IB education
- consolidate, assist or enable learning
- release talent

Adapted from Learning diversity and inclusion in IB Programmes 2020

Inclusion

Inclusion at OES, Langston Middle and Oberlin High Schools is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. This can only be successfully achieved in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving. Inclusion is the learner profile in action, an outcome of dynamic learning communities.

OES, Langston Middle and Oberlin High Schools support the following principles of an **inclusive** education.

- Inclusion is a process by which schools and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include all students.
- An inclusive education service offers excellence and choice, incorporating the views of all stakeholders.
- The interests of all students must be safeguarded.
- The school community and other authorizing bodies should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.
- All students should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.
- With the right skills training, strategies and support, the majority of students with special educational needs can be successfully included in mainstream education.
- Inclusion will not always be appropriate for every student all of the time. Equally, just because inclusion may not be appropriate at a particular stage, it does not prevent the student from being included successfully at any other stage or in specific subjects as appropriate for the student.

Any inclusive environment must be effective, friendly and welcoming, healthy and protective, and gender-sensitive for all learners. The development of such child-friendly learning environments is an essential part of the overall efforts of Oberlin City Schools to increase access to, and improve the quality of, our school district.

Differentiation

Differentiation at OES, Langston Middle and Oberlin High Schools is considered a regularly reflected upon practice designed to ensure the adaptation of goals and learning methods which meet the needs of the students in each classroom. It is important to ensure that each individual is supported to make the most effective use of the range of learning opportunities provided. There should be a variety of activities and resources that match the goals and methods of the learner and are relevant to their skills and knowledge. We, as teachers at OES, Langston Middle, and OHS, must be sensitive to this variety, and be flexible enough in our thinking to accommodate those who may not perform in the generally accepted ways.

V. How We Provide Services to SEN Students

Approximately 16.3% of the students at OES, 16.7% of the students at Langston Middle and 15.4% at Oberlin High Schools are identified as students with disabilities and 29% are identified as gifted in some way. Oberlin High School has three-licensed

Intervention Specialists in the building along with 3 Para-Educators to support the SEN students. Langston Middle School has two licensed Intervention Specialists and four Para-Educators to support the SEN students. OES has six licenced Intervention Specialists and 6.5 Para-Educators to support SEN students. A Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and a Physical Therapist provide additional part-time support. These students come to us with a variety of learning, social-emotional, behavioral, language, and physical needs. In order to meet these needs, the district offers a continuum of special needs services.

These services include:

Resource Room Direct	Small Group in General Ed.	Co-Teachi ng	Para-Educator Support	Consultation Services Indirect
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------	---

VI. Future Goals for Services for SEN students

- Increase all teachers' knowledge of evidence-based practices to support struggling learners.
- Increase staffs' awareness/acceptance of inclusive practices.
- Improve the analyzing of data to monitor progress.
- Continue to develop our continuum of services.
- Increase resources/materials to support SEN students.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate professional development for staff.
- Improve SEN students' ability to reflect and assess their own learning.