

# Prince William County Public Schools International Baccalaureate Programme Inclusion Policy

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) believes in equal and equitable education for all students. All International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme students within PWCS receive all the county benefits and rights of an inclusive education. This belief is reflected in the PWCS vision and mission statements and some of our division's core values.

## Philosophy of Inclusion

### PWCS Vision

Every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

### PWCS Mission

- We serve as trusted partners in education with our students, families, and community.
- We prepare our students to be critical thinkers, responsible digital citizens, innovators and visionaries, resilient individuals, and global collaborators.
- We commit to inclusive practices and equity with an expectation of excellence from every student and employee every day.

## PWCS Core Values

### Equity

We strive to provide equitable opportunities and support for all students.

### Inclusivity

We celebrate our diversity as a strength and welcome all students.

## Learning diversity and inclusion in IB Programmes

The PWCS mission, vision, and values align with the IB philosophies of inclusion in access. Within IB programmes, inclusion is increasing access and engagement for all by removing barriers.

*“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)

## **IB Principles of Inclusive Education**

The IB supports the following principles of an inclusive education, where:

- Education for all is considered a human right.
- Education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth, and overall development and growth for every student.
- Every teacher is responsible for the education of all students.
- Learning is considered from a strength-based perspective.
- Learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities.
- All learners belong and experience equitable opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning.
- Full potential is unlocked through connecting with and building on previous knowledge.
- Assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated.
- Multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right, and a resource.
- All students in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as global citizens.
- All students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are considered.
- All students in the school community develop the IB Learner Profile attributes and develop into inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- Diversity is understood to include all members of a community.
- All students experience learning as a key component of success.

(Learning Diversity & Inclusion in IB Programmes, 2016)

## Removing Barriers for Inclusion and Equity

### Scaffolding and Differentiation

In PWCS, all students receive instruction that allows them to succeed based on their individual learning styles. Differentiation is seen as the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Examples include:

- Dynamic groupings within classrooms
- Tiered lessons
- Use of pre-assessments
- Formative assessments to discover students' strengths and areas on which to focus targeted instruction
- Open-ended learning engagements
- Use of graphic organizers and other scaffolding materials
- Provision of materials (e.g., leveled reading and math materials)
- Extension and enrichment activities
- Choice menus
- Online reading/math programs designed to address students' level of readiness
- Opportunities for content mastery through remediation and reassessment

### Multi-Tiered System of Supports

PWCS uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program, which is an adaptive and responsive framework that helps schools identify and provide targeted support for students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally.

The focus is to identify students by name and need, while providing differentiated instruction and the necessary academic, behavior, and social-emotional wellness supports for all students across all schools. In PWCS, MTSS is built upon strong and intentional collaboration, enhanced by the belief that all students can learn at high levels.

PWCS implements coherent, articulated, aligned, culturally, and linguistically responsive instructional practices and learning pathways across all grade levels and content areas, focusing on improving the academic progress of English learners and students with disabilities.

Some of the key components of the program include:

- Student Support Team (SST) with an identified leader to guide MTSS implementation
- Culture of collective responsibility for **all** students
- High-quality tier 1 core instruction for academics, behavior, and student social-emotional wellness

- Goal setting and monitoring student progress
- Data-informed decision-making across the tiers
- Early implementation of evidence-based interventions with fidelity
- Families as authentic partners to support student success

## Universal Design for Learning

PWCS recognizes the benefit of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to develop student agency by reducing barriers to instruction, providing suitable accommodations and support, and maintaining high expectations for all students. The UDL framework is based on three core principles: designing multiple means of engagement, designing multiple means of representation, and designing multiple means of action and expression.

Starting in 2021-22, PWCS started implementing UDL with a five-phase roadmap to achieve divisionwide Strategic Plan goals by 2025. These Strategic Plan goals include:

- 100% of teachers will be trained in and employ Universal Design for Learning.
- 100% of leaders and teachers will participate in professional development on Universal Design for Learning.

Roadmap for achieving UDL strategic goals.

- **Phase 1:** Explore (2021-22) – Build awareness
- **Phase 2:** Prepare (2022-23) – Introduce and develop educator expertise
- **Phase 3:** Integrate (2023-25) – Apply UDL to instructional practices and decision-making
- **Phase 4:** Scale (2025-27) – Expand effective practices, processes, and structures and promote professional growth of UDL practices
- **Phase 5:** Optimize (2027 and beyond) – Focus on enhancing a systemwide culture that aims to maximize the improvement of teaching and learning practices in a way that reflects and aligns with the UDL principles.

## Supports for Diverse Learners

### Special Education Program and Services

PWCS is committed to providing special education students with opportunities along a continuum of services that offer access to and participation in the activities of the school and community environments as appropriate to the age and educational needs of the student. In PWCS, services to students with disabilities are designed with long-term outcomes in mind. Annual goals and objectives consider development in the areas of cognitive/academic,

communication, personal, interpersonal, and career skills. Resource teachers are committed to their role in planning with a student and family, through these annual goals and objectives, for the student's post-secondary education, employment, and residential independence.

PWCS upholds the principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and supports the rights of students with disabilities to make decisions regarding their individual instructional program through the collaboration of parents who know their child best and professional educators who have knowledge of instructional practices. PWCS protects the rights of students with disabilities and provides teachers trained to instruct through adapted curriculum, varieties of instructional strategies, and supplementary materials appropriate for the student's individual educational program (IEP).

Across the continuum of special education services, PWCS serves students with one or more of the following identified disabilities:

- Autism
- Hearing impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Deafness
- Intellectual disability
- Speech and/or language impairment
- Deaf/blindness
- Multiple disabilities
- Traumatic brain injury
- Developmental delays
- Orthopedic impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional disability
- Other health impairment

The goal of these services is to tailor the academic support provided to the specific needs of the student. These programs and interventions may involve one or more of the following: the school counseling department, the school social worker, school psychologists, administrators, and teachers, all working collaboratively to serve the needs of each student.

### **Special Education Instructional Program**

The curriculum for PWCS is guided by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and the PWCS standards, which includes objectives that have been identified for each grade level and

curriculum area. This curriculum is a tool for planning, monitoring, and evaluating students' work and progress on a continuous basis. Specialized instructional programs for reading, writing, and mathematics are evidence-based, providing students with targeted, systematic, and explicit instruction on a consistent basis as determined by the IEP team. These programs are used to supplement the general education instructional program and provide students with differentiated approaches to access the curriculum.

Teachers provide special education services across a continuum of delivery options, ranging from the least to most restrictive learning environments in the following areas:

- Consultation with general education teachers/employers to include co-teaching with the general education teacher
- Individual and small-group support within general education classroom
- Individual and small-group pull-out services outside of the general education classroom
- Small-group, self-contained classes within a general education school
- Special education schools co-located within general education sites
- Separate special education schools

## **English Learner Instructional Program**

PWCS provides a program of language instruction at each K-12 school in supportive settings so that English learners (ELs) attain proficiency in English and meet the same challenging academic content and student achievement standards as other students. Components of instruction include:

- Academic language instruction to students at English Language Proficiency levels 1-5 for success in language arts, math, social studies, and science.
- Delivery styles to maximize service opportunities: Co-taught, push-in, pull-out, inclusion, and EL-only class.
- Support from ESOL-certified teachers and content teachers knowledgeable in techniques that support English language development.

## **Gifted Education and Talent Development**

The definition of *gifted* used in PWCS is based on Virginia [Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students](#). Students who are found eligible for gifted education services demonstrate high levels of academic accomplishment or show exceptional academic potential beyond their age peers of similar experience or environment in general intellectual aptitude or in one or more specific academic areas.

Gifted students need advanced and complex content that is paced and sequenced to respond to their intellectual curiosity, exceptional problem-solving abilities, and rapid acquisition and mastery of information. The Gifted Education and Talent Development program offers resource services from kindergarten through 12th grade for students whose learning needs cannot be entirely met in the general education classroom setting. Minutes and frequency of services vary depending on the grade level. Differentiated classroom services are also provided through collaboration between classroom teachers and the gifted resource teacher.

Increasing equitable access to challenging opportunities is a strategic goal in PWCS and is a priority for Gifted Education and Talent Development. Accurate identification of economically disadvantaged, minority, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students requires purposeful action. Strategies, including universal screening, professional development for educators, community outreach, and early exposure to enriching opportunities, are implemented in PWCS to remove barriers and increase equity.

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