

Discovery School Special Needs Policy

Mission Statement: *To provide each child the educational opportunity to discover, with perseverance and imagination, the joy of learning and the interconnectedness of our world.*

Statement of Belief: Simply put, we believe that all children can learn, and that all children have the right to learn and be taught in a way that is meaningful for that individual child. The PYP will be implemented for students to the degree that it is impactful and beneficial for that child. All teachers at Discovery School are trained to implement the PYP. Teachers will design the optimal learning experiences for each child, including those with special needs, so that the PYP framework is experienced. Differentiated instruction is at the core of Discovery School and this shapes our curriculum and instruction to maximize learning potential for all students in different ways. We feel strongly that students should work in an inclusive setting and deliver our special education services directly in the general education setting as much as possible.

Discovery School implements an instructional approach, *Response to Intervention (RtI)* that applies the Primary Years Programme (PYP) utilizing inclusive teaching techniques, which provides all students with the instruction they need for learning success. The goal of RtI is to intervene early – when students begin to struggle with learning – to prevent them from falling behind and developing learning difficulties.

Our RtI is a framework for providing high-quality instruction built on these essential components with fidelity and in a rigorous manner:

- *High-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction.* All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the classroom.
- *Ongoing student assessment.* All students' progress is monitored frequently to examine student achievement and gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- *Tiered instruction.* A multi-tiered approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students. The model incorporates increasing intensities of instruction offering specific, research-based interventions matched to the individual student needs. Our school response to RtI is a multi-tiered approach that creates a well-balanced system of support for diverse student learners.

The RtI Process

Students who are having difficulty in class, either academic, social, or behavioral or a combination of these are referred to the RtI team using the Discovery School Request

for Assistance form. A teacher may make this determination based on results from the Brigance screening, Fountas and Pinnell data gathered, and any other screening devices. Preschool and Prekindergarten students will have individual plans created annually based on the results from the Brigance screening.

The RtI team consists of the Head of School, the intervention specialist, family members, and the general education teacher. If needed due to the items noted on the referral, the SLP (speech therapist) and OT (occupational therapist) may be invited to be on the team. After receiving the referral request from the teacher, a meeting is scheduled and held within five school days of the receipt of the referral.

During the referral meeting, the team decides what research based intervention to try. A data collection system is put in place to ensure the results of the intervention are clear to the team. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for six to eight weeks following the first meeting. At the follow-up meeting, data is presented and the team decides if the intervention has worked well enough to stop it, or if the intervention needs to continue, or if there needs to be another type of intervention implemented.

This process continues until all classroom interventions have been exhausted. At this time, typically, the student is referred for special education testing. If parents/family members agree with this referral for testing, the student undergoes a multi-factored evaluation performed by a school psychologist (contracted by Discovery School). These results are shared with the team which consists of the family, the general education teacher, the intervention specialist, and SLP/OT or other providers as needed in the Evaluation Team Report (ETR) meeting. If the team determines that the child qualifies for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), an IEP is written and put into place within 30 days of the ETR.

Services Provided

Discovery School currently provides intervention services (which include modifications of assignments, direct teaching, support services), occupational therapy services, and speech/language services. These services are provided to students who have IEPs and who have goals and objectives that require one or more of these services. All service providers are licensed in their area of service and delivery of these services is individualized to meet the needs of the student as outlined on his/her IEP.

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