

Special Education/Inclusion Policy

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme recognizes that students come from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and have a range of academic, physical and unique needs. There are many students who may have a diagnosed, special educational need; other students may have special needs that have not yet been diagnosed and are brought to the attention of our school multi-tiered system of support (MTSS Team).

Examples of these special needs include:

- specific learning disabilities
- language and communication disorders
- social/emotional and behavioral disorders
- physical difficulties affecting mobility
- sensory impairments (such as visual or hearing difficulties)
- medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy or diabetes)
- mental health conditions (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or anxiety)
- gifted and talented students

Sebastian River High School implements the DP utilizing inclusive teaching techniques. SRHS reaches out and invites students of various learning abilities to consider the full Diploma Programme or to enroll in a DP course(s). There is an application for the full Diploma Programme; however, all students are allowed “open admission” into Diploma courses. The student, guidance counselor, teacher, and IB Coordinator meet to discuss the placement of the student and specific supports that will be necessary for student success. Throughout the year, the student’s progress is tracked in an effort to provide the supports necessary for success.

Students from social-economically disadvantaged homes are encouraged to apply for the full Diploma Programme. SRHS has utilized an approach that helps the IB Coordinator identify students from various socio-economic backgrounds. SRHS serves a population that is economically disadvantaged; currently 68% of our student body receives federal aid through the “free and reduced” lunch program. SRHS, with the approval of the Indian River County School District, provides the IB Diploma and Diploma courses at no charge to our students. Furthermore, SRHS incurs the entire cost for all IB testing to ensure our students can display their abilities without worry of financial cost.

Understanding the rigors of the Diploma Programme, SRHS utilizes an advanced curriculum in the 9th and 10th grades to prepare students for the rigors of the DP. During these developmental years, teachers, guidance counselors, parents, and students help identify/self-identify students for the DP. Currently, the SRHS DP consists of 34% minority and 72% of socio-economically disadvantaged students.

IDEA

The individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 is the federal law that requires the provision of special education and related services for students who are identified as children with a disability. The determination of eligibility and types of services required is completed following specific procedures for a multidisciplinary assessment and through an IEP process. When children are determined to have a disability under IDEA 2004, they become members of a protected class in the United States; therefore, they secure procedural safeguards, which are realized in the procedural requirements of special education and are outlined in the law.

Special education services are individualized to meet the unique needs of students with varying disabilities. The models that support Exceptional Student Education are inclusion, consultation between ESE teachers and general education teachers, in class support facilitation, resource room setting, and full time classrooms.

Specialized services such as physical, occupational, speech, language therapy and mental health counseling are also available. These services are provided in accordance with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is specifically tailored to the unique needs of each student.

Over the years, the faculty has been committed to working with students who have disabilities by incorporating differentiated teaching strategies and providing accommodations and modifications that support the needs of the student. In addition, Sebastian River High School provides tutoring to students who are working below grade level twice per week.

We document our compliance for the needs of students with disabilities, through our lesson plans, ESE department head, and guidance department, and we update each IEP or 504 plan yearly. All information regarding the progress and performance of our ESE students is contained in the student's personal cumulative folder and housed in a secure room. This documentation is protected under Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) and The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The following quote from *Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom (2013)* best sums up SRHS's inclusion policy: *Developing a positive classroom climate conducive to supporting the learning of all students requires that students are appropriately challenged by their learning, that expectations of them are high but realistic, where students belong to the community and feel cared for, trusted, understood, valued and safe.*

The School District of Indian River County's position statement on Least Restrictive Environment is:
We believe that all students with disabilities should be taught in the least restrictive environment, that is, the environment which most closely resembles the educational environment of their peers without disabilities. This inclusive setting should provide a continuum of educational services at a level which best benefits the student without infringing on the safety or learning of others.