

Wedgewood Park International School
An International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program

INCLUSION & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY
Updated Fall 2023

Wedgewood Park Vision

Wedgewood Park International School aims to be the most successful IB Middle Years Programme at developing inquiring, culturally responsive, knowledgeable and respectful lifelong learners who meet the challenges of a diverse world through intercultural understanding and rigorous learning experiences.

Philosophy of Special Education Services

Wedgewood Park International School serves a diverse population of 557 students with approximately 17.5% being identified as having special education needs. Wedgewood is committed to ensuring that all students achieve high standards, therefore providing them access to high quality, rigorous instruction aligned to their needs. Persistent achievement gaps, particularly in the performance of our students with disabilities, call for greater attention. Research supports the inclusion of students with disabilities within regular education settings as a positive approach to ensuring access to academic rigor, the development of prosocial behaviors, developing a culture of learning that promotes the achievement of all students, and an overall improved student achievement.

It is our school's philosophy that all students with special education needs and 504 plans will be included in the academic rigor of the IB curriculum. We operate under a policy of placing students in the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent possible.

The administration and teaching staff of Wedgewood Park International School hold true the belief that all students should be offered the opportunity to participate in the MYP curriculum.

SEN Roles & Responsibilities

The special education leadership team within Wedgewood is composed of the MPS special education supervisor assigned to the school, and the assistant principal or SPED teacher designated as LEA. The special education supervisor is responsible for disseminating information to IEP case managers. The leadership team supports case managers and regular education teachers.

The IEP is a legally binding document that commits MPS and Wedgewood to provide and fund the special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services listed in the IEP. It also commits Wedgewood and MPS to make a good faith effort to help the student achieve the stated goals and, when appropriate, objectives. Teachers and support staff are responsible for delivering the services in the IEP. Principals/Educational Leaders are responsible for ensuring that each student receives the special education and related services in his or her IEP. Each student with special education needs has a case manager that ensures the special education services outlined in the IEP are provided. All teachers have electronic access to their student's IEP; it is the responsibility of each case manager and classroom teacher to ensure all aspects of the IEP are implemented.

Responsibilities of Leadership (School Administration and SEN Supervisor)

- To insure that all staff adhere to the expectations outlined by state and federal law as well as district and school policy with regards to students with special needs

- To insure that all SPED policies are aligned with IB requirements
- To assign all students identified as requiring an IEP to a case manager
- To provide professional development to staff to facilitate the success of students with special needs

Responsibilities of Educators

- To know the academic levels of their students and differentiate instruction to facilitate growth
- SPED teachers will keep files for each SPED student that contain an IEP, student schedule, service verification form, case manager schedule, attendance detail, and other IEP related documentation
- Provide SPED students with the services and accommodations specified in the IEP
- Special and Regular education teachers work together to plan and implement instruction that meets the individual needs of all students
- Wedgewood Staff will conduct the various types of IEP meetings and evaluations that are required for all SPED students
- To identify students suspected of needing special education services and notifying the student, the student's parent/guardian and the SPED supervisor and making sure students records and pertinent IEP records are available to every classroom teacher and caseload manager in our online records system. Records of students moving between schools in MPS are available to receiving schools. For students moving out of the district, hard copies are sent to receiving schools.

Differentiation & Continuum of Services

Wedgewood teachers recognize the diversity of our learners and that each may have a certain learning style. Due to various disabilities and IEP or 504 requirements, a continuum of services is offered at Wedgewood that may include classes taught by special education teachers in which students are educated on alternative academic standards, special education services provided in the regular education setting, or special education services provided outside of the regular education setting. Students of Milwaukee Public Schools and Wedgewood are included in the regular education setting to the greatest extent possible (LRE). An important element of teaching and learning is differentiation. As outlined in IB continuum: Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes (IBO, 2016, p. 11), Tomlinson and Cunningham Eidson outline elements of differentiation:

- Content (what students should come to know or understand)
- Can be determined through formative assessment
- Presents essential facts and skills
- Presenting ideas through auditory, visual, kinesthetic, & tactile means
- Provides students with choices in order to add depth to learning
- Provides students with additional resources that match their levels of understanding
- Process (how students come to know or understand)
- Tiered activities
- Reflects student learning styles and preferences
- Product (how students demonstrate knowledge or understanding)
- Can include reports, tests, brochures, speeches, skits
- Differentiates by providing challenge, variety, and choice
- Use rubrics that match and extend varied levels

The goal of every educator at Wedgewood is to promote “equal access to the curriculum” (IBO 2016) through incorporation of the four principles of good practice: Valuing prior knowledge, Scaffolding, Extending learning, and Affirming identity and building self-esteem. Additionally, accommodations and modification provided in the 504 or IEP may include:

- Assistive technology or equipment
- Extended time

- Leveled readings
- One-one support
- Alternate settings for assessments
- Provision of notes
- Space/time for movement or breaks
- Scribe
- Oral/audio testing
- ASL
- Braille
- Translation, including documents

For students with a primary language other than English, please refer to the language policy.

Guidelines for Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) was most recently reauthorized effective July 1, 2005. The state laws relative to delivery of educational services to students with disabilities was also revised and became effective on July 1, 2006. Significant changes of the reauthorization and revisions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The previous 90 day timeline for completion of IEP evaluation activities has been replaced with a three-part timeline. LEAs (Local Education Agencies) have 15 business days from the date of the receipt of a referral by an MPS staff member to send a consent for testing or notice that no additional testing is necessary to a parent/guardian. LEAs then have 60 calendar days from the receipt of consent for testing or date of the notice that no additional testing is necessary to complete an eligibility determination. For students who are eligible for special education services, the IEP must be developed and a placement offered within 30 calendar days of the eligibility determination. (Whenever possible, the eligibility determination, IEP development, and placement offer should occur at the same meeting.)
- IEP Team participants who administer tests, assessments, or other evaluation materials as part of an evaluation or reevaluation are no longer required to prepare written summaries of findings (individual reports).
- Short term objectives and benchmarks are no longer required in IEPs except for students taking alternate assessments. Short term objectives may also be included as a result of professional decision-making and best practices based on the needs of an individual student's IEP.
- Some changes may be made to an IEP without conducting an IEP Team meeting; however, parents/guardians must agree to the change(s) without an IEP Team meeting and must receive a copy of the revised IEP.
- Upon reviewing existing student assessments and educational records, parents/guardians and school districts may agree that a three-year reevaluation to determine if a student continues to be a student with a disability is not necessary.
- LEAs are required to conduct an initial evaluation of a student when referred by an individual.
- LEAs may not reevaluate a student more frequently than once a year, unless the student's parent/guardian and the LEA agree otherwise.
- The special education teacher who participates on IEP Teams must have recent training or

experience related to the student's known or suspected area of special education.

- LEAs are no longer required to notify a parent/guardian of the qualifications of individuals who will conduct evaluations. LEAs are still required to notify a parent/guardian of evaluator's names, if known.
- When IEP Teams determine that a student is not a student with a disability an LEA is no longer required to identify the educational needs of a student or of the services offered by the LEA or other entities that may benefit a student.
- With prior written consent of a parent/guardian and under specific circumstances, some IEP Team members may be excused from attending all or part of an IEP Team meeting.
- IEPs are no longer required to include a description of how a student will be assessed when that student is taking an alternate statewide or district-wide assessment. IEPs will continue to include a statement explaining why a student cannot participate in a particular assessment and why the alternate assessment is appropriate.
- IEPs are no longer required to include a description of the procedures for informing parents/ guardians of a student's progress to achieve annual goals. IEPs will continue to include a description of when student progress reports will be provided.
- Although parents/guardians are still entitled to request additional time and/or a copy of their child's most recent evaluation report, LEAs are no longer required to inform parents/ guardians of these rights at the IEP meeting.
- Beginning no later than the first IEP that will be in effect when a student turns 14 and updated annually thereafter; the IEP must include a statement about appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals.

The IEP is the most important document that is developed for students with disabilities and is the vehicle for providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

The IEP Team process provides the opportunity to develop an appropriate program reasonably calculated to ensure educational benefit and, ultimately, a transition to adult life for the student.

This program specifies special education and related services needed to meet the individual student's identified special education needs.

Function of the IEP:

An appropriately developed IEP should:

- Serve as a means of communication by which the family and school jointly determine the student's needs and the services that will be provided and the anticipated outcomes.
- Serve as a focus for resolving any differences between family and school through the IEP Team process.
- Establish in written form a commitment of district/school resources that the team has determined necessary for the student to gain educational benefits from the services provided.
- Serve as a monitoring tool to ensure that the student is receiving FAPE.

- Serve as an evaluation device to determine if the student is making progress.

Types of IEP Meetings:

Different types of IEP Team meetings serve different functions. The following is a description of the general IEP Team meeting types and their requirements:

Initial IEP

ELIGIBILITY, PROGRAM PLANNING & PLACEMENT

The law requires that an IEP Team be appointed following the receipt of a referral. IEP documents are developed in conjunction with the initial determination that a student has a disability and a need for special education and related services. If the student qualifies as a student with a disability, the IEP Team also determines the special education and related services, supplementary aides and services, program modifications and supports for school personnel necessary for the student and the place where the school district will implement the IEP.

Three Year Reevaluation

ELIGIBILITY, PROGRAM PLANNING & PLACEMENT

Students receiving special education services are reevaluated at least once every three (3) years from the time of the previous evaluation/reevaluation unless the district and parent/guardian/student agree not to reevaluate.

Parents/guardians and school districts may agree that a three-year reevaluation to determine if a student continues to be a student with a disability is not necessary.

Mandated reevaluations serve two purposes. The first is to verify the continuing existence of disability eligibility and the continuing need for special education services. The second is to ascertain progress or change since the previous IEP Team meeting. The IEP Team also determines the special education and related services necessary for the student and the place where the school district will implement the IEP.

Early or Other Interim Reevaluation

ELIGIBILITY, PROGRAM PLANNING & PLACEMENT

During the course of the school year, the primary special education teacher and/or other school staff may determine that a reevaluation should be completed for the following reasons: possible changes in the student's IEP, parent/guardian or teacher request, suspected additional and/or alternate special education needs, or if conditions warrant a reevaluation. A reevaluation must be conducted if the educational or related services needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance, of the student warrant a reevaluation or if the student's teacher or parent/guardian requests a reevaluation.

Annual IEP

PROGRAM PLANNING & PLACEMENT

In order to ensure that a student's program remains appropriate, a student's IEP Team must be convened and a new IEP developed at least annually. The IEP Team also determines the place where the school district will implement the IEP.

IEP goals and objectives should be developed with the expectation that they will be attained within one year. IEPs should never be written for a period of longer than one calendar year.

Yearly Requirement

At least annually (within a calendar year) an IEP team meeting must be convened and an IEP

developed. The IEP must be reviewed and revised based on a student's progress towards goals and objectives.

IEP Review Revision

REVIEW PROGRAM PLANNING & PLACEMENT

The IEP Team must be reconvened whenever a student's IEP requires substantial alteration or if a student, parent/guardian, teacher, or service provider requests a review of the current IEP.

This can be done in the form of a revision of the current IEP - this does not change the annual IEP date.

Some changes may be made to an IEP without conducting a Review/Revise IEP Team meeting, however, the changes must be thoroughly discussed with the parents/guardians and they must agree to the change(s) without an IEP Team meeting and receive a copy of the revised IEP. This activity does not replace the requirement for convening an Annual IEP.