

Lexington Middle School

An International Baccalaureate Candidate Program

INSPIRE PREPARE EMPOWER



Inclusion Policy

2016-17

It is the mission of Lexington Middle School to inspire, prepare, and empower students to make their world a better place. With this goal in mind, we strive to develop students who approach their world with a global perspective, understanding that diversity is not only accepted but appreciated. To support this development, all students at Lexington Middle School participate in the IB Middle Years Programme, receiving equal access to our inquiry-based curriculum that develops the whole student through attention not only to content but also to the Learner Profile Traits and Approaches to Learning skills. To ensure equitable access for all students to these meaningful learning experiences, Lexington Middle School students, parents, and faculty are guided by the following principles, practices, and supports.

Principles

- We believe that all students can learn and should be provided with opportunities to participate in the curriculum to the highest degree possible.
- We believe that learning experiences should be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.
- We believe in preparing all students according to the Profile of the 21st Century Graduate.
- We believe that education is a collaborative practice that includes students, parents, and faculty.
- We believe that students, parents, and faculty should receive the support necessary for participating in meaningful learning experiences.

Practices

We promote academic excellence and global mindedness through a rigorous curriculum designed to enable students to meet the challenges of today and of the future.

- Profile of the South Carolina Graduate
South Carolina graduates are expected to possess knowledge, skills, and characteristics that are necessary for success globally
- Inquiry-based Curriculum
Teachers provide content through inquiry-based units in all subject areas. Built around key and related concepts as well as

global contexts, these units thoughtfully incorporate opportunities for students to practice and further develop the IB Learner Profile traits and the Approaches to Learning skills.

- **Differentiated Instruction and Assessment**
In all content areas, teachers differentiate instruction and assessment to meet the physical, academic, and emotional needs of all learners. When possible, student choice is accommodated. At all times, teachers provide accommodations and/or modifications to their students based on students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and/or 504 plan.
- **8th Grade Community Project**
Eighth grade students participate in the 8th Grade Community Project. Emphasis is placed on the process rather than the product. Support sessions with advisors include opportunities for students to reflect on and continue to develop inquiry skills, Learner Profile traits, and Approaches to Learning. The Academic Honesty Policy is reinforced during the project experience as well.
- **English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL)**
In accord with our Language policy, students who are native speakers of languages other than English are provided additional supports according to their individual needs as determined by the ACCESS assessment, which measures student achievement in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Scores of four and below determine the amount of time students work in small groups with the ESOL teacher weekly. A score of five indicates that the student is able to move from weekly support to a monitoring system. Monitoring is provided to students for two years after exiting the weekly support level and includes periodic conferences with the ESOL teacher along with grade monitoring. LMS has one ESOL teacher for this program.
- **Gifted and Talented**
Advanced courses are offered at all grade levels for students who achieve academically at significantly high levels as determined by standardized tests, course grades, and teacher

recommendation. Course placement decisions are made at the end of each school year although adjustments are made as needed throughout the year. A total of 17 LMS teachers have earned their Gifted and Talented professional endorsement.

High school credit courses in English, math, and World Language are offered for seventh and eighth grade students. Again, placement is determined by standardized tests, course grades, and teacher recommendation. High school credit courses are taught by five teachers at LMS.

In addition, students who achieve high scores on the state standardized tests may participate in the Palmetto Junior Scholars program and Duke TIP Awards program, which are scholarship opportunities provided through CollegeBoard.

- Special Education

Various programs are available to serve students with disabilities. In all cases,

- Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI in ELA and math is provided through various tiers of support ranging from monitoring to in-class support to additional academic instructional periods. Monitoring is provided by our lead interventionist. The interventionist also works in conjunction with the regular classroom teachers to provide in-class support. The interventionist also collaborates with the RTI ELA teacher and RTI math teacher to provide focused support in skill development using guided reading and math models through additional academic instructional periods for students in need of the highest level of RTI services. EasyCBM and Northwest Evaluation Association's Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments are used to monitor student progress. Scores on these assessments along with grades and teacher input are used to determine if and when students need to move to other levels and/or out of the program. Students who move out of the program are monitored to ensure that progress continues.

- Resource

Students with an IEP may receive resource instruction that provides support for reading, math, writing, social, and functional skills. Students enrolled in resource classes receive all core instruction for ELA, math, science, and social studies in the general education curriculum. LMS has two resource teachers who provide this instruction.

Students who have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum participate in courses in the general curriculum but receive support for their cognitive, social, and functional skills through the innovative district autism program that is housed on our campus. Two autism teachers and two instructional assistants provide instruction to students in this program. The autism teachers meet at the end of the student's 8th grade year to determine if the student needs continue receiving services at the high school level. Re-evaluation may occur sooner per teacher or parent request. Re-evaluations are conducted by the school psychologist using the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) or Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) assessment tool.

- Self-contained

Students with an IEP whose needs exceed those addressed in RTI and resource are served through a self-contained class that provides instruction in academic and social development. Students who participate in the self-contained class may also attend core classes in the general curriculum if such classes are considered the least restrictive environment. The self-contained class is taught by one teacher who is supported by two instructional assistants.

- Speech

Students with special needs related to oral communication are served regularly by the district speech-language pathologist.

Supports

Support and resources are readily available for meeting the needs of all learners and ensuring that the principles and practices of this inclusion policy are carried out with fidelity.

- The three guidance counselors in our school counseling office and our school psychologist provide additional cognitive and behavioral support to students, parents, and teachers with regard to implementation of IEPs and 504s. Counselors also facilitate a peer-tutoring program that involves many special needs students.
- Two nurses in the school health room meet the day-to-day needs of all students but also give regular attention to students with persistent health issues.
- Special education teachers meet regularly with general education teachers and parents to review and adjust IEPs and 504s. Additional meetings are also scheduled as needed.
- Staff development is provided each school year that includes instruction in compliance with laws governing student medical issues as well as the implementation of IEPs and 504s.
- Staff development is provided throughout the year in instructional and assessment practices that support differentiation.
- The special education department publishes a newsletter designed at educating faculty on special needs issues.

In order to continue providing the highest quality and most inclusive educational experiences possible, this policy will be reviewed annually by a committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and the IB coordinator.

