Exceptional Education Policy
JT Moore Middle Prep, an IB World School

We believe that all students can and should participate as fully as possible in the IB Middle Years Programme. Each student with special educational needs and/or English language learning identification is provided with the appropriate support to ensure academic success. Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and each individual school is required to be in compliance with all state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

IDEA requires that schools provide special education services to eligible students as outlined in a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). IDEA and Section 504 also provide very specific requirements to guarantee a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). FAPE and LRE are the protected rights of every eligible child, in all fifty states and U.S. Territories. Public schools receive funding through IDEA. This money is allocated to the school to provide services, which schools use to implement services under the umbrella of IDEA.

The International Baccalaureate Organization, along with all Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, strive to provide an open, accessible MYP curriculum to all students whenever possible and whenever it proves to be in the student’s best interest.

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is:
• To ensure that all students are provided appropriate access to our school’s IB curriculum and opportunities for reasonable academic rigor aligned with the goals of the IEP;
• To emphasize that all students and staff are encouraged to embody the mission and vision of the IB Middle Years Programme, as well as the Learner Profile;
• To explicitly state that we use the Learner Profile to support students as risk-takers, while promoting compassion, effective communication, and inclusion;
• To emphasize that we make efforts to design and implement a curriculum that is standards-based, creative, engaging, and differentiated to support all our students in reaching their unique potential;
• To communicate the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the success of students requiring exceptional education services.

MNPS District Responsibilities
Vision
Work collaboratively to enhance educational opportunities for students with exceptionalities.

Mission
Collaborate with schools, families and community agencies to develop successful learners in the least restrictive environment.
Inclusion brings classrooms together by teaching all students as one group, including those with exceptional education needs. In an inclusive classroom, all students learn more and specialized services can be made more readily available throughout the district.

Metro Nashville Public Schools is committed to providing inclusive services to students. The district will continue offering highly specialized services to those students who need them.

School Responsibilities
The mission of the Department of Exceptional Education at John Trotwood Moore Middle School is to provide an individualized and rigorous education for students with disabilities. This education utilizes quality data-driven and research based instructional methods, a collaborative and cooperative relationship between staff, families, and students, an interactive and mutually supportive relationship among both general and exceptional educators, and accountable commitments to the individualized education plans (IEPs) for all students with disabilities. In doing so, our department seeks to provide the necessary and needed resources without which our students would not grow, excel, or succeed.

In short, our goal is to create an environment where all students with disabilities learn with our resources and support. We do what is best for students every time.

Teachers’ Responsibilities
General and Exceptional Education teachers support students as directed by the services indicated in the IEP. Collaboration between general and exceptional education teachers is crucial to student success.

Parents’ Responsibilities
The school and teachers partner with parents to fully support students. Parents need to ensure that students’ timely attendance at school is a priority, and they should work closely with the case managers to ensure the IEP goals are met. Parents can also help students by practicing basic math and reading skills at home to accelerate student learning, and facilitate the use of Think-Through Math, IXL, and Moby Max online learning platforms.

Definitions
Special Educational Needs (SEN) – refers to any student who shows a need for extra support or for challenge beyond the general curriculum. We recognize the wide spectrum of needs and abilities along a continuum, including students with learning disabilities as well as the intellectually gifted.

Inclusion – refers to providing reasonable access to all components of the IB Programmes for all students. JT Moore supports students in Math and Language & Literature via inclusion at every grade level.

Differentiation – an instructional design model that modifies the written, taught, and assessed curriculum in order to meet individual needs.

For more information, visit: http://www.state.tn.us/education/student_support/resources.shtml.
Service Delivery
MNPS strives to encompass a continuum of services so that we can be responsive to students’ needs. The Inclusive Services Model represents our collaborative efforts to support students:

Screening Process
Per Tennessee law, MNPS now requires the implementation of a Response to Intervention program, with monitoring data for exceptional education screening. Tennessee’s version of RTI is Response to Instruction & Intervention, or RTI². MNPS uses the historical TCAP data and AimsWeb Universal Screener to identify students struggling in reading, writing, and math. The RTI² program is evaluated by the school-based RTI² team using several fidelity monitoring measures.

Once in the screening process, we use the Woodcock Johnson IV assessment, along with WRAT-IV, Brigance, BASIS, and/or functional behavioral assessments (FBA) to identify students struggling to display appropriate behaviors. Case managers and school psychologists document the progress through the screening process. If a student qualifies for exceptional education services, the case manager drafts an IEP and develops goals with the parent(s), school psychologist, general education teachers, and advocates.

Transition
In order to help students transition from one campus to another, the district trains staff on effective transition planning, we participate in vertical planning between feeder schools and high schools, and we attend incoming IEP meetings and invite high school representatives to attend outgoing meetings.

Policy Review
This policy was collaboratively developed and is reviewed annually.

Most recent review date: 12 October 2015 by JT Moore’s Exceptional Education Department and general education professionals.