

INSTRUCTION

Differentiation and Grouping

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to set policy so that students can be educated across a wide range of developmental levels, learning rates, previous preparation, learning styles, backgrounds, native languages and special needs. To this end, the Board endorses the need to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student.

The Board of Education, therefore, charges the Superintendent to see that each school develops an effective plan for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of its students. The goal of any differentiation and grouping practices is to provide challenging learning experiences for every student every day regardless of learning ability or performance level. High expectations shall be set for all students.

When grouping is used for instructional purposes, parents will be informed of the criteria used for placement. Academic achievement will be monitored on a regular basis. Students will be assured of continuous learning opportunities and will be able to change groups as their progress warrants.

Children with special learning needs such as handicaps, disabilities, dominance of a language other than English, skill deficits, learning rates significantly above or below the local norm, or giftedness may need instruction which supplements the regular classroom. Such instruction may require small group or individual instruction beyond the regular classroom. In such cases educational programs will be designed to place the child in the least restrictive environment.

Differentiation and Grouping (K-8)

- A. Classroom groups will be heterogeneous in composition, reflecting the variety of students in the school at a given grade level.
- B. Within heterogeneously grouped classes, subgrouping for instruction will be expected. Teachers will create instructional groups to reflect different skill and performance levels, varying interests, different learning styles, and other formats consistent with effective instruction.
- C. So that teachers may provide for the range of concept and skill development emerging at the K-8 level, instruction will be differentiated on a regular basis for mathematics and language arts. Instructional approaches shall provide both enrichment and acceleration for optimum learning. Students will be instructed based on their performance in the curriculum area and their readiness to progress in that discipline. Such organizational techniques must be responsive to student growth and avoid inappropriate permanent placement in groups.
- D. At the primary and intermediate levels, groups involving more than one class shall be provided for in grade level teams. Students may work in groups outside of their own grade level when the need is evident. In the middle level grades, such differences shall be provided through scheduled classes and support services among teacher teams organized by department.

- E. When curriculum areas other than mathematics and language arts warrant grouping children together from different classes, teachers will work in teams to provide instruction and support services. This will be especially true when small populations need to be provided for without isolation. Such teams will be small enough to effectively communicate with each other and with parents.
- F. Grouping plans must reflect substantial teacher contact with meaningful engagement and reflect a variety of instructional methods and experiences so that all children benefit from quality instruction. Differentiation will be expected within grouped instructional settings.
- G. Student progress in grouping plans shall be monitored on a regular basis so that adjustment can be made as children mature, grow, learn and develop at different rates.
- H. Principals shall create a differentiation and grouping plan for their schools supporting teachers and coordinating teaming and support services within the master schedule for the building.

School wide plans shall ensure that students are challenged. Plans shall reflect practices that foster well-being for all students and ease of communication among staff and parents.

- I. Within the context of the school plan, teachers will develop differentiation and grouping plans for their classes each year for approval by the principal. The plans shall reflect the students in their classes and anticipate the need for instruction involving teaming and the use of support services.

Differentiation and Grouping (9-12)

- A. Recognizing the shift to a discipline-based curriculum without grade level teams, the High School shall offer a range of instructional levels within each department consistent with the needs of the student population.
- B. Special education students whose individualized instructional plans call for mainstream classes with modifications shall have their modifications clearly defined.