

Buckland Mills Elementary School Inclusion Policy

Philosophy

Buckland Mills Elementary believes that all students are entitled to an education that is equitable, inclusive, and adaptable to their individual learning styles and needs. We share ownership of our students by collaboratively planning and teaching with our specialists to provide differentiated and multi-modal instruction that services our students in the least restrictive environment. We are committed to offering a level of support and services to students with diverse academic, behavioral and health related needs. We apply strategies and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of students, including those identified with special needs (special education and gifted and talented), English Language Learners, and students with special medical needs.

Learning: How Do We Meet the Needs of Our Students?

Differentiation:

All students at Buckland Mills receive instruction that enables them to succeed within the range of their approaches to learning, abilities, and interests. Differentiation requires the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Dynamic groupings within classrooms, tiered lessons, use of pre-assessments, and formative assessments to discover students' strengths and areas on which to focus targeted instruction, open-ended learning engagements, and provision of materials (ex. leveled reading and math materials, extension and enrichment activities, choice menus, and online reading/math programs) designed to address students' level of readiness are some examples.

Collaboration and Co-teaching:

Teachers at Buckland Mills Elementary co-plan and co-teach to meet the needs of all students. Forty-five-minute planning session is provided each day to collaborate and plan co-teaching/inclusion models. Teachers have received training on the different co-teaching practices and are required to include these practices in their daily lesson plans.

The Learning Setting for Students with Special Needs:

Students with disabilities that are found eligible are placed according to their needs and within the least restrictive environment. While some students require a self-contained setting all day, others attend core instruction, and/ or single subject classes within the general education setting. All students at our school participate in inquiry-based learning as applicable to their ability level and are taught the Learner Profile traits with the attitudes, key concepts, and approaches to learning. The special education staff collaborates with classroom teachers to help provide accommodations and/or modifications in the classroom to facilitate participation in the general/PYP curriculum. A pull-out model of special education services may be implemented, in which students focus on specific IEP goals in a small group or one-on-one setting. Services are aligned with the grade level units of inquiry.

Support for students through the Intervention Team and special education services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the law that outlines rights and regulations for students with disabilities in the United States who require special education. Under the IDEA, all children with disabilities are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least-Restrictive Environment (LRE), and some are entitled to Early Intervention (EI) and Extended School Year (ESY). The law specifies how schools determine the provision or denial of services, as well as steps for mediation, if needed.

We are required to use the Response to Intervention model as the starting point to identify and serve students who need additional academic or behavioral support to make satisfactory progress towards meeting grade level expectations. Classroom interventions based on recommendations provided by the school Intervention Team are implemented and weekly data is collected to determine student progress. If a student does not show growth after several interventions have been tried, he/she is referred for a special needs evaluation. An evaluation always includes cognitive and academic testing. Testing for speech, behavior, and physical/motor skills are also conducted if determined to be appropriate. Students who qualify for special education services receive support from the school special education resource staff who collaboratively plan and teach with our classroom teachers.

Students' academic deficits are addressed with research-based curriculum in reading, math, and writing using an inclusion model and/or pull-out model based upon individual student needs. The IEP team convenes annually to assess student progress and create new goals as needed. The IEP team consists of all stakeholders in the students' educational process. Partnership with parents plays a key role in creating a successful learning experience for all students. The school recognizes that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them.

Support for English Language Learners

A student that is identified as needing to receive ESOL services via the county-wide home language survey, or parents indicate that another language is spoken in the home, the student's English language proficiency is tested. After testing, students receive a score leveled 1-6, where level 1 is considered minimal English language proficiency and level 6 is considered to be as proficient in English as their native speaking peers. Based on their proficiency level and their grade level, students are serviced in a few different ways to meet their language needs. Some students receive daily pull-out language instruction from a certified ESOL teacher with supplemental instruction in class from their classroom teacher who has been trained in EL techniques. Other students receive daily push-in instruction in which the ESOL teacher and classroom teacher co-teach to instruct. The remaining students receive a combination of the two. Please see attached chart for further description of the required minutes of ESOL services for each student identified as an English language learner.

Support for students identified as gifted and talented

Gifted children are defined by the state of Virginia as “those students in public elementary, middle, and secondary schools beginning with Kindergarten through twelfth grade who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show the potential for higher levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. Their aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs.” At Buckland Mills Elementary, gifted students include students with disabilities (twice exceptional) and students who are also English Language Learners. The Gifted Education Program at Buckland Mills Elementary embraces the philosophy of constructivist, inquiry-based learning. Students participating in the START (K-3) and SIGNET (4-5) programs receive a combination of differentiated classroom services and direct services with a gifted education resource teacher. Instruction is based on the four areas on which students are assessed: critical and creative thinking and interactive and independent learning, ties in conceptually to the Primary Years Programme units of study, and/or enriches and extends the Primary Years Programme units of inquiry. A Differentiated Services Plan (DSP) is created to meet the needs of each gifted student’s specific academic and educational needs in a collaborative process between the classroom teacher, gifted education teacher, and the student’s parents.

Communication and Evaluation of Policy

The Buckland Mills Elementary Inclusion Policy is posted on the school website. It will be reviewed annually by the entire school staff for feedback on changes and revisions.