

## **Inclusion in the MYP and DP Programmes at MLC**

### **Inclusion**

Students enter MLC through a lottery without any academic criteria for admission. Because of this, MLC has developed an inclusion model that provides support for students with a variety of learning styles as well as diverse educational and behavioral needs. There are many components interwoven to make this model successful.

First, there is a climate of professional collaboration which lends nicely to supporting students with diverse learning needs. Special education case managers work alongside classroom teachers in order to meet the academic needs of all learners. Special education case managers and classroom teachers consult, plan, and assist with modifying lessons in order to provide all students access to curriculum. Through this environment of collaboration, the classroom teachers develop ways to incorporate a variety of strategies into their teaching with the goal of reaching all learners. At the Metropolitan Learning Center, teachers support and encourage students of all abilities to problem solve and become internationally-minded people who, recognizing their shared humanity and responsibilities to the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

At MLC, we follow the SRBI model (Scientific, Research-based Interventions) to provide appropriate supports to students; this includes a three-tiered model of supports and interventions. Tier 1 interventions are ones that regular education teachers can implement and track; these should support the majority of the student population (approximately 85% of students). The IB Learner Profile, ATL, and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports) are utilized to increase positive outcomes for student academic and behavioral expectations. The Learner Profile, ATL, and PBIS meet the needs of students in the general population; we teach, enforce, and reteach appropriate behavioral expectations to all students (Tier 1).

As students demonstrate greater academic or behavioral needs, teachers and practitioners at MLC use data to determine what additional supports those students might need. Tier 2 intervention includes students from the regular education population that continue to have difficulty meeting academic or behavioral expectations; Tier 2 interventions are specifically designed to meet the needs of the unidentified student. Tier 3 interventions include but are not exclusive to our students who receive special education services. Many of the identified students at MLC receive additional behavioral supports through social work and counseling services that are provided at the school.

### **Differentiation**

At MLC, differentiated instruction means providing different modalities to access content, process, and product in the learning environment, regardless of differences in students' abilities. This approach to instruction allows all students to set and work to achieve individual learning and behavioral goals. Differentiation provides opportunities for tiered approaches to meet high expectations.

The IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning provide ways to differentiate for students with a variety of learning styles. In being reflective and open-minded, students closely consider their own learning and experiences while understanding others' cultures and personal histories. In addition, these traits lend themselves well to development of approaches to learning for students, as reflecting on learning leads to reflecting on the learning process and how students, as individuals, can be open to capitalizing and improving on their habits of learning. This correlates well with children understanding their abilities to better advocate for themselves and their individual needs. Students are encouraged to be inquirers and

thinkers as well as pursue their natural curiosity. The IB concept of students being academic risk-takers as well as caring and principled allows students of varying abilities to express themselves in an open and accepting forum without fear of negative judgment or humiliation. In developing young communicators who express their ideas through a variety of modes of communication, learners' individual differences become less obvious, or possibly celebrated as the idea of "difference" shifts to a positive light. These students become knowledgeable as they are provided the opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across multiple disciplines. With a focus on the IB Learner Profile, the Metropolitan Learning Center is an environment for students to be balanced in maximizing their learning, while understanding their individual differences. Teachers are equipped with a multitude of avenues to best educate children so they can reach their full potential.

### **Assessment**

At the Metropolitan Learning Center, a variety of different assessments are used to measure student achievement in relation to the objectives of each course. Classroom teachers and support staff, including special education teachers, interventionists, ELL teachers, school counselors, and paraprofessionals, collaborate to provide the most appropriate assessment options for all students in order to highlight their achievement and determine any areas requiring additional instruction or practice. A variety of assessment formats are used to meet individual students' learning styles and needs, including presentations, short answer questions, essays, case studies, text response questions, structured problems, data response questions, labs, and projects. These methods provide students opportunities to demonstrate their understanding through modes such as auditory, visual and kinesthetic. These different methods assess the students' retention of knowledge, understanding of key concepts, ability to analyze and present information, and to solve problems creatively.

### **Conclusion**

At the Metropolitan Learning Center, we present a broad, balanced, and academically demanding curriculum for all of our students, while recognizing individual learning styles and accommodating the needs of our diverse population. This helps individual students affirm identity within the learner profile and ATL, and to develop self-esteem as a result. We focus on developing critical thinking and reflective skills, research skills, and the development of independent learning, while incorporating intercultural and global understanding. Through recognizing the individual strengths and areas of needs of the students, teachers at the Metropolitan Learning Center work to ensure the success of all students, and guide them toward success in both the International Baccalaureate's Middle Years and Diploma Programmes.