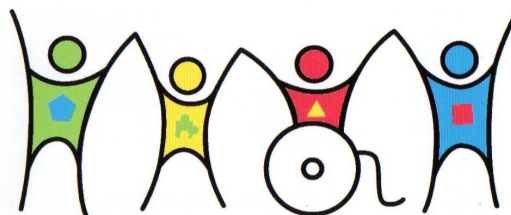


Inclusion involves everybody regardless of special needs. We must work together to face the challenges and enjoy the benefits of fostering a diverse community of learners.

- We are Inclusion -



Including Every Mind & Every Body

In Our Piedmont Elementary Schools

What We Can Do

Communication is important when fostering a healthy learning environment. PRAISE has been working with local organizations such as PADC, ALPS, and ESS in promoting an inclusive Piedmont community that supports informative and constructive dialogue. PRAISE invites you to be part of the conversation. For more information and to find out about future events, please go to www.piedmontpraise.org.

References

¹Sulak, Tracy N. (2014). *School climate and academic achievement in suburban schools*. Education and Urban Society.

²Cole, C.M., Waldron, N., Majd, M. (2004). Academic progress of students across inclusive and traditional settings. *Mental Retardation*,42.

³McGregor, G., Vogelsberg, R.T. (1998). *Inclusive schooling practices: Pedagogical & research foundations*. Baltimore: Paul. H. Brookes.



PRAISE

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Benefits and Challenges of Inclusion

The presence of students with disabilities can lead to new learning opportunities and new relationships for all students. It has also been shown that students without special needs can make greater gains in math and reading in inclusive settings versus in a general education classroom where students with special needs are not included.² The presence of students with disabilities can lead to new learning opportunities for all students.³

Because of the Inclusion Program:

- Teachers are trained and given tools to develop more strategies for differentiated learning
- All students are able to practice strategies for self-regulation, problem solving, and social interactions
- Students with different perspectives provide unique perspectives in the classroom

Fostering inclusion is challenging, but the benefits outweigh the effort. It is crucial for our children, who are growing up in a world full of different minds and bodies, to learn in a healthy, diverse environment that reflects the outside world, including their future colleges and workplaces. Inclusion develops skills such as empathy and perspective-taking; it integrates social intelligence with academics; and it makes the school into a safe environment where kids can take risks and try new things.

All students must feel emotionally and physically safe and know that they are important parts of their school communities - in the classroom and on the playground. This maximizes their learning potential and encourages the academic and social risks needed to advance their development.¹

This includes students with special needs.

This includes every mind and body.

Special Education Accessibility Across PUSD

Special education addresses the individual differences of students who have special needs, involving an individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, and accessible settings. All PUSD schools have students accessing Special Education Services with a fairly even distribution across the elementary schools. Individual schools may be better-equipped and/or staffed to handle certain needs. A student who has limited movement may be placed at either Havens or Beach if the physical layout at Wildwood does not allow that student to properly access their education. Sometimes a student's needs cannot be met within the PUSD system, in which case, the student may be placed outside of the district to get appropriate educational supports.

What does Inclusion Mean?

The Inclusion Program is a model of special education in which students with disabilities are part of the general education community, including those with both visible (physical) and invisible (social, language, behavioral, and/or academic) challenges. Inclusion is how we as a community of parents and educators foster inclusive learning environments within the diverse school population through respect, compassion and open communication.

Some Inclusion Program Methods and Practices

“Push-In” Support Services are worked into the classroom during instructional time for individuals or even groups of students with specific needs.

Some examples:

- An Occupational Therapist working with a Kindergartener on her handwriting skills during a group project
- A Speech Therapist, working with a student to provide verbal prompts to integrate him into the activity

“Pull-Out” Support Services are often implemented in cases where students need more intensive academic intervention and/or additional support with social or behavioral skills than can be provided in the general education classroom. Some examples:

- Therapy for articulation in the school’s Speech and Language Therapist’s office
- Learning balancing skills in the sports field with the Adaptive PE Teacher
- Lunch Bunch social group with the School Counselor
- At the play structure with a para-educator to practice OT exercises.
- **Home Base and Learning Center Classrooms**

Special Education Para-educators are assigned to work alongside a Classroom Teacher to support a specific child or children in the classroom and schoolyard. They may offer physical help, social facilitation, focus prompts, or behavioral support. In some classrooms, they may help the general education teacher with various duties that support the entire class. In all cases, para-educators are a benefit for the classroom as a whole.

Accommodations in the Classroom may be used to help a student learn more effectively.

These tools and methods may include:

- Yoga balls or inflatable cushions to increase attention
- Stations where students can stand while doing written work
- Keyboards for typing when fine motor skills interfere with output
- Seat assignments that minimize distractions
- Classroom jobs to increase movement and sensory breaks

More about Home Base & Learning Center Resources

Some students may need more specialized or individualized instruction. PUSD elementary schools use Home Base and Learning Center models to provide such services.

- All three elementary schools have Learning Centers with Resource Specialists where students receive specialized academic help in either small group settings or individually.
- Beach Elementary has two Home Base classrooms – generally separated into K-2nd and 3rd-5th. Students receive specialized academic and/or social learning instruction either on a one-one basis or as a small group with teachers with Special Education training. This is a more comprehensive level of intervention than Learning Centers.

The services provided under Special Education are not extra help or special tutoring. A student who qualifies for special education services and accommodations has been assessed with the conclusion that he/she cannot access his/her education without such interventions.