

# Semper Elementary Special Education Needs Policy

## Philosophy

At Semper Elementary we believe that every child can and will learn and grow to their fullest potential. All learners have unique strengths and needs that influence their development. We utilize assessments, observations and communication with families to determine a baseline from where a student is working. We then set goals alongside students and parents and monitor those goals for progress. We believe in developing the whole child: physically, emotionally, socially and academically. We provide every student access to rigorous core curriculum while differentiating instruction to meet individual student needs. We celebrate the diversity of our student body and aspire to develop an internationally-minded community of learners.

## Purpose

At Semper Elementary we believe no two learners are the same. Each learner has a different perspective; a different way of looking at and learning new things. It is our role as educators to celebrate and explore each student's way of thinking, being, and seeing the world. It is our obligation to provide every Semper student with access to the core curriculum as well as the IB Programme of Inquiry so that when they leave Semper they can demonstrate and embody the five essential elements of an IB learner:

Knowledge: learning is transdisciplinary

Concepts: why things are the way they are, real world application

Approaches to Learning: thinking, communication, self-management, social, research (skills)

Attitudes: (confidence, cooperation, curiosity, empathy, tolerance, appreciation, commitment, creativity, enthusiasm, independence, integrity)the foundation for international mindedness

Action: making change in the world

## Implementation

### Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data based problem solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the education system for supporting students. The framework of MTSS is a "way of doing business" which utilizes high quality evidence based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of support to be successful. MTSS helps schools and districts to organize resources through alignment of academic standards and behavioral expectations implemented with fidelity and sustained over time in order to accelerate the performance of every student to achieve and/or exceed proficiency.

MTSS is a general education process that is inclusive to meet the needs of all learners. It ensures that all students have access to the core curriculum and the IB Programme of Inquiry. Through a plan-teach-assess cycle, teachers routinely collaborate to review data, group children by instructional or behavioral needs, set goals and determine a means to progress monitor. The cycle continues with

instruction, adjusted strategies, new data, regroupings, new goals and more monitoring. Formative assessment plays a key role in evaluating student progress. The Special Education Team and the Linguistically Diverse (ELL) Teacher collaborate with grade level teams to meet the needs of all students. Considerations are made to what supports; people, time, extended learning experiences, and technology need to be put in place or adjusted for all students to access the IB Programme of Inquiry. Establishing a master intervention schedule at the start of the school year ensures that students are not engaged in any small group work during direct instruction times. If students are pulled out of the classroom, it is only for a short amount of time to work on skills and strategies that will allow them to more successfully access the units of inquiry. A District Gifted and Talented Coordinator also collaborates with teachers to assist in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.

From the IB Standards and Practices:

Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles.  
The school provides for grouping and regrouping of students for a variety of learning purposes.  
The school provides environments in which students work both independently and collaboratively.  
The school provides evidence of student learning over time and across the curriculum.

In Colorado, a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is defined as a prevention-based framework of team-driven data-based problem solving for improving the outcomes of every student through family, school, and community partnering and a layered continuum of evidence-based practices applied at the classroom, school, district, region, and state level.

At Semper our assessment drives instruction, informs groupings and support as well as provides opportunity for extension of the core curriculum and the IB POI.

Tier 1: Core curriculum instruction is planned, implemented and assessed. The data informs the teachers as to whether students are growing and thriving from core curriculum instruction or if other supports might need to be put into place to provide support or extension. Supports may include classroom adjusted instruction, small skill group work, extension opportunities, social emotional support, behavior plans. Over time (about six to eight weeks) goals are set, instruction is adjusted, data is kept, growth is measured and analyzed to determine if the support that is in place is helping the student.

Tier 2: In addition to the core curriculum and classroom adjusted instruction, students may participate in additional small group instruction which may include: intervention groups, Advanced Learning Plans (ALP), extension groups and projects, self-paced work opportunities, lunch groups for social emotional support. Over time (about six to eight weeks) goals are set, instruction is adjusted, data is kept, growth is measured and analyzed to determine if the support that is in place is helping the student.

Tier 3: At this point in the process it may be determined that students need further testing by specialists to determine the least restrictive environment. Over time (about six to eight weeks) goals are set, instruction is adjusted, data is kept, growth is measured and analyzed to determine if the support that is in place is helping the student.

Semper MTSS Form 2017

## Resources

At Semper we employ one full time Learning Specialist (LS) for students with mild to moderate disabilities. The District allocates an additional half time (LS) to help support our students with mild to moderate disabilities. We also have a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) allocated by District to support students with speech and/or language impairments one day per week. A Speech Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) is allocated four days a week to work with students and support the plans developed by the SLP. District provides a half time Social Worker (SW) two and one half days per week to support our general education students with mental health needs. We also have a full time paraprofessional for our special needs students. The District also provides access to multiple itinerant services to support our students. These include: District Behavior Analyst, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Vision Specialists, Audiologist, and teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as needed.

At Semper we have two Pioneer Programs (K-2 and 3-5) for students with significant social/emotional disabilities. Our Pioneer Programs are supported by two full time LS's and a full time School Psychologist (SP). The Pioneer Program students are also supported by three full time paraeducators and the support of the following external resources: Jefferson County Mental Health, Court Appointed CASA Representatives, etc.).