

MYcroSchool Policy for serving Students with Disabilities

Describe how the school will ensure that students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment in the charter school.

MYcroSchool's admission policy welcomes and encourages the enrollment of students of all learning profiles. Students with disabilities and students served in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs shall have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment in the School - Section 1002.33(10)(f).

MYcroSchool is a tuition-free public charter school with open-enrollment to all students. Student applications are processed by date of application with orientation of new students typically occurring each week throughout the school year. The number of special education students served in our MYcroSchool programs is contingent upon district referral or parental choice.

MYcroSchool has a clear understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of exceptional students. Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, guarantees a free public education to disabled persons from 3-21 years of age in the least restrictive environment. When the law was reauthorized and renamed the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), traumatic brain injury and autism were included. MYcroSchool will offer a free public education to exceptional children. Hiring practices will reflect a clear understanding of PL 101-336, the Americans with Disabilities Act, making it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities because of their disability.

The goal of special education at MYcroSchool is consistent with the goal of general education for all high school students: to support students in developing the knowledge and skills they require in order to live meaningful, self-fulfilling lives with as much independence as possible in their communities.

In accordance with the federal reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, MYcroSchool will assure that each student with a disability will be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), appropriate to the student's needs as determined by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. With regard to progression, promotion, and graduation options for students with disabilities, MYcroSchool will adopt the district Student Progression Plan (SPP) with the understanding that MYcroSchool is based on a competency based education model for at-promise students and will provide students with the skills necessary to graduate and attain a high school diploma.

Describe how the school will work with the sponsor and through the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process when necessary to ensure students with disabilities receive a free appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

MYcroSchool will provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities in accordance with all state and federal special education guidelines and regulations as provided in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

MYcroSchool will implement the same identification, evaluation, placement, and due process procedures as other traditional schools in the district. MYcroSchool will utilize a service delivery model of inclusion for students with disabilities and will work with the district to determine the proper placement for students with disabilities within the full continuum of services offered by the LEA.

MYcroSchool will provide students with programs implemented in accordance with Florida State Exceptional Student Education (ESE) mandates, Section 300.46 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), and the sponsoring school district's Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures; including the federal reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

(IDEA) 2004 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- This includes but is not limited to:
 - A Non-Discriminatory Policy regarding identification, location, evaluation, and selection
 - Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - Individual Education Plan (IEP)
 - Least restrictive environment (LRE)
 - Appropriate evaluation
 - Parent and student participation in decision making
 - Procedural due process
 - Anything related to sponsoring school district requirements
- MYcroSchool will work with the sponsoring district personnel to create public awareness of its special education opportunities and will advise parents/guardians of the services it can provide to students with disabilities. MYcroSchool will also advise parents of the rights of students with disabilities and provide written procedures in the primary language of the home. This will assure that information regarding the rights of students with disabilities is made available in plain language and phraseology that will be understandable to parents/guardians, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, or cultural background.

MYcroSchool will strive to be a full-inclusion program, but not at the risk of any student failing to receive full educational benefit. The IEP team will explore every opportunity for placing students with exceptionalities in appropriate inclusive settings to the maximum extent possible. The key to successful inclusion will be collaboration, communication, and prior planning using best research practices.

Describe the methods the school will use to identify students with disabilities that have not yet been identified.

As noted in Florida Statue 1003.57, a student may not be given special instruction or services as an exceptional student until after he or she has been properly evaluated, classified, and placed in the manner prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education. The parent of an exceptional student evaluated and placed or denied placement in a program of special education shall be notified of each such evaluation and placement or denial.

MYcroSchool is aware that general education activities and interventions are required prior to referral in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331. When general education interventions have been implemented, with indications that a student should be considered for ESE eligibility, a group of qualified personnel must consider if the nature or severity of the student's areas of concern makes the general education intervention procedures unsuitable in addressing the immediate needs of the student.

As affirmed in the district's Policies and Procedures Manual, the determination of whether a student demonstrates a need for specially designed instruction and related services and meets the eligibility criteria must be made by the student's parents or guardians and a group of qualified professionals, which must include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

- The student's general education teacher; if the student does not have a general education teacher, a general education teacher qualified to teach a student of his or her chronological age;
- At least one person qualified to conduct and interpret individual diagnostic examinations of students, including, but not limited to, a school psychologist, speech language pathologist, or reading specialist; and,
- The district administrator of exceptional student education or designee.

The School will document the students' data in order to demonstrate that the student was provided well-delivered scientific, research-based instruction and interventions addressing the identified area(s) of concern and delivered by qualified personnel in general education settings.

If a parent requests that the district conduct an initial evaluation prior to the completion of the general education interventions, MYcroSchool will obtain consent to conduct the evaluation and complete the general education interventions concurrently with the evaluation but prior to the determination of the student's eligibility; or provide the parent with written notice of its refusal to conduct the evaluation. MYcroSchool will work with the district to ensure that initial evaluations of students suspected of having a disability are completed within 60 school days (cumulative) of which the student is in attendance after the school district's receipt of the parental consent for evaluation.

MYcroSchool is aware that the 60-day timeline for evaluation does not apply if:

- The parent repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the student for the evaluation
- A student enrolls in a school served by the school district after the timeline has begun and prior to a determination by the student's previous school district as to whether the student has a disability.

This exception only applies when the current school district is making enough progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation and the parent agrees to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed. Assessments of students who transfer within the same school year must be coordinated between schools to ensure prompt completion of evaluations. MYcroSchool is responsible for ensuring that knowledgeable evaluation specialists conduct evaluations for students suspected of having a disability. Examiners must be qualified in the professional's field as evidenced by a valid Florida license or certificate and must have adequate training and knowledge to administer the assessment instrument. Tests of intellectual functioning must be administered and

interpreted by a certified school psychologist or professional licensed under Chapter 490, F.S.

Documentation of the interventions is then reviewed to evaluate if the strategies were successful. If the strategies were effective, MYcroSchool's personnel will monitor the student on a monthly basis to ensure mastery is occurring. If the interventions are unsuccessful, an additional set of interventions will be deployed for another three weeks. Review of these interventions is conducted. If these interventions are also deemed ineffective, a psychologist will be added to the team to determine the appropriateness of an Exceptional Student Education packet and to administer formal psychological evaluations when given parental consent.

After a psychologist concludes a formal evaluation of the student, results are given to an IEP Committee for evaluation. An IEP Committee is comprised of the minimum staff persons: MYcroSchool's ESE teacher, psychologist, administrator, parent, and regular classroom teacher(s). The IEP Committee will determine a student's eligibility for ESE services based on the results of the psychologist's formative assessment. Placement of the student in ESE services will be designed in the least restrictive environment. The IEP Committee will:

- Make placement decisions and ensure that the individual instructional needs of the exceptional student are reflected in the student's IEP
- Review placement decisions annually at the IEP review meeting
- Ensure accurate placement occurs for the student based on that student's IEP and Free and Appropriate Public Education guidelines
- Review and evaluate cumulative folders of all students coming from another state to determine their eligibility status for exceptional student educational services. Services will be provided through contracts with an appropriate agency if necessary or a School staff member will be employed having the appropriate certificate in that exceptionality.

Written procedural safeguards for students with disabilities shall be given in the native language of the parent(s), unless it is not feasible to do so, in order to notify, to make aware, and/or to offer consent for any individually administered evaluation/reevaluation; any meeting scheduled to discuss eligibility and/or placement; any time a due process hearing is filed; announcements of all Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings; all meetings to discuss transition planning; all dismissal meetings; and any time there may be doubt or question as to procedural policy.

If the native language of the parent(s) is not a written language, the explanation of the notice must be given orally or in a manner of communication the parent(s) will understand. School personnel will ensure the parent(s) has understood the information. They will also collect written documentation that this requirement has been met. These safeguards are in place in order to help the parents of children with disabilities to understand the rights that accompany programs for students with disabilities. Federal and state laws regarding the protection of both the rights of the student and parent(s) including but not limited to the protection of rights related to notice, consent, independent evaluation, records, hearings, and appeals. Additionally, the parent(s) may examine all records of his/her child, receive explanations and interpretations of the educational

records, receive copies of the records with the understanding that a fee may be charged for the copying of the records, and/or receive a copy of the evaluation report and any other documentation used to determine a child's eligibility for an exceptional student education program or used for assessment purposes.

Describe the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide, including supplemental supports and services and modifications and accommodations to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities whose education needs can be met in a regular classroom environment with at least 80% of instruction occurring in a class with non-disabled peers.

To meet the full range of needs of exceptional students, MYcroSchool will provide a continuum of services within the full-inclusion program model within the general education classrooms of the facility. Therefore, when pull-out services are determined to be needed as outlined in a student's IEP, the team will determine what logistics, services, materials, and possible program accommodations and adaptations of the physical learning environment may be needed, and provide them to the extent determined by each individual IEP. The ESE teacher will meet with the general education teachers to ensure the success of the student's IEP and will record quarterly updates of the student's progress on the IEP.

MYcroSchool students who do not have success with classroom strategies outlined in the IEP or 504 will work directly with the ESE teacher in individual and small-group settings. Alternative materials will be utilized so that each student has the opportunity to successfully access the regular curriculum. In cases where the solutions are not working, the IEP will be modified making necessary accommodations to permit students with disabilities to access learning opportunities on the same basis as general education students. No student with a disability will be unlawfully excluded from participation in any program or activity of MYcroSchool, nor will any student be subject to discrimination by MYcroSchool.

For students with needs beyond the traditional classroom setting and standard curriculum, MYcroSchool will provide the following services:

- Academic pullouts for students who require extra services or instructional assistance for tutoring by a certified ESE teacher as determined as part of the IEP.
- Consultation and collaboration for students who do not require pull-out services but require assistance and extensive monitoring as part of the IEP.
- Contracted speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy as necessary and according to each student's IEP.
- Enriched curriculum for gifted students through partnership with Florida Virtual School.

MYcroSchool will also provide accommodations and modifications of the curriculum as necessary to permit access to technology-based learning and related services provided on the student's IEP. These modifications/adaptations will include:

- Adapted curriculum assignments
- Test modifications
- Adapted computer devices, as necessary

Describe how the school will work with the sponsor and through the IEP process to determine whether a student with a disability whose education needs require a regular classroom and resource room combination (between 40-80% of instruction occurring with non-disabled peers) can be provided FAPE by the school.

MYcroSchool employs a full inclusion model which means that students with disabilities will work in courses with students who are not disabled 80% of the time. MYcroSchool works closely with the authorizing district to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are met and will adopt the support design offered by the district. In most districts we serve, an ESE specialist is assigned to our school to provide consultation on the best placement and evaluation for the students who chose to enroll. We work with the district to identify the alternative placements available within the district and meet with a child study team, made of school-based representatives, our district representative, parents, or student advocates, as needed to make the best placement choice for the student. All placement decisions are made in accordance with Least Restricted Environment (LRE) guidelines. Student placement decisions are reviewed based on the student's IEP and a student with a disability is not solely placed due to needed accommodations in the general education classroom, but through a shared decision making process that evaluates the best interest of the student within FAPE guidelines. MYcroSchool will provide a regular classroom and resource classroom combination as needed to meet the needs of a student when the placement decision by the child study team feels that MYcroSchool is the best placement decision for the student with this level of need.

Describe how the school will work with the sponsor and through the IEP process to determine whether a student with a disability whose education needs require a separate classroom (less than 40% of instruction occurring with non-disabled peers) can be provided FAPE by the school.

MYcroSchool employs a full inclusion model which means that students with disabilities will work in courses with students who are not disabled 80% of the time. MYcroSchool will work with the district to determine alternative educational placement options for the ESE student with this level of need. We have made an exception for a short period of time when alternative placement was not readily available, but our goal is to support the student in the best placement decision for the student to meet his or her long-term goals.

Describe the plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of students with disabilities to ensure the attainment of each student's goals as set forth in the IEP or 504 plans, including plans for promoting graduation for students with disabilities (high schools only).

MYcroSchool exceptional education students will be identified by completing the ESE information section on the application for admission and through incoming transcripts. Once identified, the ESE teacher will contact the parents or guardians to schedule a pre-entry meeting during the student's orientation week to perform an academic needs assessment. The effectiveness of the student's prior accommodations will be reviewed and changed as necessary.

- In-Class supports – the ESE teacher provides direct and varied levels of support for the ESE students in the classroom while working with the classroom teacher to deliver instruction. Teachers will utilize cooperative learning strategies, flexible grouping, small group interventions, and seminar instruction to meet the student’s needs.
- Out-of-Class supports – All ESE students will have both the ESE teacher and an advisor who will work together to plan, implement, and monitor instructional methods designed to ensure success for students with disabilities.
- Accommodations to the curriculum are developed on an individual student basis and behavior supports are implemented as needed.
- The ESE teacher and Advisor will maintain detailed records of the students served and provide recommendations for additional instructional support during the activity period or in an on-line capacity as needed based on the students IEP, Progress Monitoring Plan, and Individual Learning Plan.

Identify the staffing plan, based on the above projection, for the school’s special education program, including the number and qualifications of staff.

MYcroSchool will employ one full-time one full-time Exceptional Special Education (ESE) teacher who will meet all licensure and/or certification requirements that apply to the area in which the individual is providing special education. This teacher will provide general education in-class support and services for students with disabilities based on their individual educational plans (IEPs) as reflected in their matrix. The teacher will provide any pull-out services as needed. All teachers at MYcroSchool will receive Exceptional Student Education training and be required to seek ESE K-12 certification within the first two years of employment. We feel it is essential for every instructional staff member within our school to have ESE K-12 certification as we use the inclusion model.

MYcroSchool will contract with licensed and certified consultants for speech and language services on an as-needed basis. The school is also willing to partner with the sponsoring school district's and utilize the school psychologist, vision/hearing screening specialist, and other designated instructional services in accordance with Florida state credentials and mandates as assigned by school district. Compliance of the ESE program at MYcroSchool will be evaluated on an annual basis by assigned personnel the school district. The MYcroSchool ESE teacher is supported by a learning support Special Education Director, monthly or quarterly video conferencing, and in person training as needed to ensure that all regulations are met.

MYcroSchool will use the PEER software if applicable, or train to use district created systems for tracking and supporting exceptional students in addition to district and school-based student information systems.

Describe how the school’s overall effectiveness in serving exceptional education students will be evaluated.

MYcroSchool will evaluate its effectiveness in serving exceptional education students on a regular basis through the following reviews:

- Quarterly updates and record-keeping of each student’s IEP goal progress and

- attainment on the appropriate document insert within the IEP.
- Annual IEP meetings with parents/guardians and/or adult students.
 - Analysis of the number of ESE students who meet graduation requirements for a standard diploma and graduate each year.
 - Measured by the standard cohort based graduation rate.
 - Measured by a secondary one-year graduation rate.
 - Annual compliance review meetings conducted by the sponsoring school district.
 - Annual feedback from students, parents, and staff on the Cognia School Climate Survey.
 - Annual feedback on the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) survey for parents/guardians of students with disabilities, when applicable.

MYcroSchool will also evaluate its effectiveness in serving exceptional education students by analyzing student achievement data on the following assessments in an effort to address deficiencies and apply instructional strategies to raise student performance:

- All end-of-course exam grades
- Module course grades in the core academic areas
- Florida Standards Assessments, PERT, and/or ACT performance
- Florida Alternative Assessment performance if used
- Baseline and growth performance in reading, writing and mathematics
- Teacher observation and evaluation of individual student progress
- School based portfolio assessment measures required of all students

These regular status reports and evaluations will indicate whether the measurable goals and objectives for ESE students are being met at the same rate as those for general education students.

Where students with disabilities are included in general education classes, it may be necessary to delineate an explanation of the grading criteria and an explanation about the necessary accommodations on the IEP.

Accommodations may include increases/decreases in instructional time, employ varied instructional strategies, and modified test administration procedures as permitted by test protocol. Accommodations and supports required by students with disabilities will be adjusted as necessary and documented on the IEP.

Describe how the school will serve gifted and talented students.

Due to its unique program design in drop-out recovery, MYcroSchool will not offer separate gifted courses. If required by the school district, however, MYcroSchool will provide services to gifted students via the Consultation Model. These services will be provided by a certified teacher who has Gifted Endorsement or one who is in the process of attaining the Gifted Endorsement. Students enrolled in MYcroSchool who are identified as gifted will have an active Education Plan (EP) indicating consultative service. MYcroSchool will align systems as needed with the sponsoring school district's procedures relating to serving gifted students to provide each student with a learning environment conducive to developing and expanding their individual areas of giftedness. MYcroSchool recognizes a gifted student as a student who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance. For students identified as gifted, an educational plan (EP) in accordance with

Rule 6A6.030191, FAC., shall be developed. The EP team will make the following considerations when developing the EP:

- The strengths of the student and needs resulting from the student's exceptionality.
- The results of recent evaluations, including class work and state or district assessments.
- In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as they relate to the EP.

The EP shall be accessible to each of the student's teachers who are responsible for the implementation. Each teacher of the student shall be informed of specific responsibilities related to implementing the student's EP.

Each student identified as being eligible for gifted services is entitled to receive a FAPE. MYcroSchool will provide appropriate challenging coursework for all students, along with opportunities to accelerate in order to maximize each student's potential, through a variety of options including but not limited to modifications of content, processes, or products through a differentiated curriculum, curriculum compacting, acceleration, and/or enrichment. These services will occur in a general education class. MYcroSchool's flexible classroom environment is designed to challenge and nurture gifted learners. Independent projects, enrichment activities, learning styles, mentors, and leveling assignments are just a few of the strategies that are used to address the needs of all. Coursework will be adapted to meet individual gifted student needs. These adaptations may include adding depth, breadth, complexity, or abstractness to the course curriculum and/or adjusting the pace with which material is presented.

MYcroSchool will evaluate its effectiveness in serving its gifted and talented students based on several criteria:

- EP goal progress and attainment
- End-of-Course exam results
- Senior Project and Graduation Portfolio presentations
- Module course grades
- Florida Standards Assessment/ACT/SAT/PERT passing percentages
- Baseline and growth assessments in reading and mathematics (STAR)
- Baseline and growth assessments in writing
- Teacher evaluations