



American Embassy School



**High School
Student
Support
Services**

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PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive guide to the Student Support Services offered at the American Embassy School (AES) High School and the procedures related to these services. AES recognizes that some students require support services in order to enhance the likelihood of success in regular classes.

The overall goal of Student Support Services is to provide individual students with the instructional services and support necessary to achieve learning success in school. Specialists and subject area teachers collaborate to meet the needs of students with learning and/or performance differences, working toward the goal of fostering motivated, confident, and self-directed learners.

The following belief statements developed by the AES High School Student Support Team (SST) guide us in providing services to students in need of learning support. The Student Support Team meets on a weekly basis, and participants may include the counselors, the academic support teacher, the school psychologist, the administration, the student's regular classroom teacher(s) and/or the health office staff.

We believe:

- students build self-confidence and better prepare themselves to be lifelong learners by developing self-advocacy skills and by understanding their learning strengths and challenges.
- it is important to work with the whole child (intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically) and to build on a student's strengths as well as to address areas of concern.
- learning issues may change as the child grows, and developmental differences may need to be considered.
- an effective student support program requires a team approach with all team members sharing responsibility for the student's learning. Teams may include students, parents, teachers, student support personnel, and administrators.
- staying current with research and best practice helps the team determine how to address student needs.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING NEEDS - POLICY

Students admitted to AES bring a wide range of multiple intelligences, learning styles and needs. The school recognizes this fact and aims to provide the support needed for all students to succeed within the daily classroom structure and program at AES.

However, when a student is identified as having exceptional needs that cannot be met within this framework, the school will strive to meeting these needs through the differentiation and accommodation of AES's established curriculum and instructional methodology.

The learning needs of students are identified in both formal and informal ways at AES including the initial admissions process, parent referral, teacher observation, student self referral and systematic review of available assessment data.

For students who need additional support, the school will assure that a Learning Center program in grades 1-5 and an Academic Support Program in grades 6-12 are available for all students identified as having mild to moderate learning difficulties. Personnel in these programs will be specialists that may provide testing, evaluative reports, and develop individual learning plans for students as needed.

For students without adequate English skills to participate fully in the regular classroom, the ESL Program will provide for the development of communication skills in listening, comprehension, speaking, reading and writing so that ESL students can satisfy their academic requirements and participate to the fullest extent possible in school life. AES has established minimum English proficiency standards for admission that begin at the second semester of grade seven.

For students with exceptional cognitive, physical, and/or artistic abilities, AES will strive to meet the individual needs in the regular school program enrichment and/or through extra-curricular activities.

The programs created to meet the exceptional learning needs of students will be based on the best educational practices and utilize technology to enhance learning and communication among all involved parties. Success will be assured through an ongoing, working partnership of the student, parents, and all staff that work with the student. AES is committed to providing the support and training necessary so teachers can help students with exceptional learning needs be successful. All Exceptional Learning Needs programs will be reviewed at least every third year.

When a student's exceptional learning needs cannot be fully met at AES, the school will work with the family to identify resources and services outside of school as possible options to meet these needs. Parents will assume responsibility for any costs associated with these outside services.

The basic goal of these programs is to provide the individual support when necessary for students to achieve academic success. The Exceptional Learning Needs program requires a team approach to ensure coordination from teacher to teacher and school to school. Principals are responsible for the successful implementation of the program.

ADOPTED: Dec. 2008, Policy 7.110; CROSS REFERENCE 8.10

OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

AES students with exceptionally well-developed cognitive, physical and/or artistic abilities will have their individual needs met in the regular school program and/or through extracurricular activities. Within the regular classroom, in addition to differentiation practices, other options teachers may employ to meet student needs include grouping with intellectual peers, enrichment strategies, curriculum extensions, offering choices, skill grouping, or independent study.

Additionally, school administration may use classroom placement, course or grade acceleration, online distance learning courses or early graduation as options to meet student needs. When appropriate, individual learning plans may be utilized to clarify and document needs and provide direction to meet those needs.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUPPORT

Support options may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- regular communication with the student or parents
- behavior contracts
- self-monitoring
- assignment to guided study or after school study sessions
- consultation with the counselor or psychologist
- assignment or course accommodations
- schedule change
- review of evaluations and recommendations

- technology support
- AES health office
- counseling
- referral to outside agency support
- documented testing accommodations
- accommodation for physical needs
- development of a learning plan
- referral for academic support class

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Referrals are directed to the student's high school counselor. The following general procedures are typically followed in referring a student for support services.

• Identification of students

- Current AES high school students are identified through the Student Support Team (SST) process.
- Incoming high school students new to AES are identified by the Admissions Review Team.
- Incoming 9th graders from AES Middle School are identified during the spring transition process.
- Referrals may be made to the SST by parents, students, and/or faculty.
- Areas of need may include social/emotional, health, physical, learning differences, study/organizational skills, and/or the accommodations of other needs.

• Concern is identified

The teacher or team of teachers, parents or the student may identify the student as having difficulty meeting academic and/or personal/social/behavioral expectations. The teacher will discuss the concern and suggestions for improvement with the student. The teacher will notify the counselor and contact parents to inform them of the concern.

- **Initial support**

The teacher or team of teachers develops intervention strategies to address the concern. The counselor and/or school psychologist are available for consultation. These strategies may include regular communication with the student or parents, signing the student's agenda, behavior contracts, self-monitoring, assignment to guided study or after school study sessions, and/or consultation with the counselor or psychologist.

- **Initial referral to the Student Support Team (SST)**

If, after an appropriate period of time, there is little or no evidence of improvement, the classroom teacher or parent may make a formal referral to the student's counselor. The student's name is placed on the SST meeting agenda. The counselor will gather information from the teachers, parents, support services faculty, and/or the student to present at the weekly SST meeting.

- **Initial SST meeting**

The SST will meet to consider other support options for the student that may include informal assessment, or other interventions either at school and/or at home. Participants in this meeting may include the counselors, the academic support teacher, the school psychologist, the administration, the student's regular classroom teacher(s) and/or the health office staff. The SST may then plan further action which may include placement in an academic support class, counseling, further testing, outside tutoring or assessment. A date is set for a follow-up meeting. The SST identifies a case manager who is responsible for coordinating the plan and communicating information, as appropriate, with the student, parents, teachers and other support services faculty.

- **Follow-up meeting(s)**

At subsequent meetings, the SST will evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions, and may recommend further action. Parents, the student, teachers or support services faculty may be involved in these meetings as appropriate.

PERMISSION TO EVALUATE

Written permission to conduct individualized achievement or psycho-educational evaluation is obtained from the parent(s) by the school psychologist or SST representative before any such testing is undertaken by the school. After the evaluation is completed, results will be shared with the parent(s), the student, teachers as appropriate, and the SST.

DEVELOPMENT OF A LEARNING PLAN

When a student is identified as needing support services, a written learning plan that identifies specific goals to address the areas of concern is developed by the case manager. The learning plan is reviewed and revised at least once per year to report the student's progress towards reaching the identified goals. The final draft of the learning plan is completed and is signed by the student, parent(s), support services faculty, and an administrator.

HS ACADEMIC SUPPORT COURSE

The academic support course helps students whose learning needs require support outside of the regular classroom setting. As with all other high school courses, academic support class is 85 minutes every other day. Students receive a letter grade of A-F and .5 credits per semester. The AES High School Curriculum Guide provides a course description.

PRIORITIES FOR PLACEMENT

1. Current AES students, with diagnosed learning needs, who have been receiving services and have continuing needs. AES's first commitment is to students already enrolled in the school.
2. Students currently enrolled at AES who are newly identified with learning needs.
3. Students applying for admission with diagnosed learning support needs.
4. Students who need support services, but have no specifically diagnosed learning needs.

COURSE INFORMATION

Individualized support within the academic support class for students may include:

- understanding of class rubrics, essay requirements, lab formats, projects, testing formats, note taking methods
- use of agenda for organization and planning
- goal setting, time management, prioritization
- review and follow up on progress reports/Skyward
- social support
- review and re-teaching of specific content
- supports such as use of a word processor, calculator
- review and follow up on report cards
- communication and self advocacy skills
- review of semester course registration

Small group instruction for identified class needs may include:

- note-taking skills
- examination preparation
- study skills
- self-advocacy and communication skills

Coordination and administration of semester exams and other testing situations as needed:

- extended time
- small-group setting
- required clarification of directions
- review with school psychologist the students needing external exam accommodations

Monitoring and communication

- academic support teacher is case manager for all academic support students
- member of the weekly SST meetings

- ◆ facilitates meetings for academic support students
- ◆ provides updates on academic support students
- consultant on Admissions Review Team
- parent/teacher/student conferences
- reviews progress reports, Skyward, and report cards
- communication and collaboration with teachers and parents regarding student progress and educational needs
- classroom observations
- monitoring of online courses if determined by SST

Documentation

Learning plans are developed for each student and distributed at the beginning of the semester or when the student begins academic support class. The learning plan is given to the student, parent, his/her teachers, counselor, school psychologist, and principal. The learning plan may include but is not limited to:

- review of assessment
- background information
- student strengths / challenges
- classroom accommodations
- other support(s) outside of school
- focus of academic support class time
- individual student goals

Review of progress and exit criteria

The Student Support Team reviews the progress of academic support students each semester and assesses continued needs. Factors considered during the review include : teacher observation, student input, student's engagement in the academic support class, grades, current academic skills, classroom and assessment accommodations, the student's future needs, and grade-level expectations. Decisions may include complete exit from academic support; accommodations provided within specialist and subject area classes; support as determined by the student during the student's study period; and/or monitoring by the academic support teacher.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

The English as an Additional Language (EAL) program helps non-native English speakers acquire and refine the English language skills necessary to do well in their academic content area courses. The program includes four components of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The EAL program is a Cognitive Academic Language (CALP) program, and the WIDA is given to assess a student's academic English competence in math, science, social studies, and English literature. In the high school, students are offered two years of study in the EAL program and are expected to be independent by grade 11.

TRANSITION PROCESS MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

- In early spring, updates are written regarding current services and recommendations for students preparing to enter high school.
- Counselors, Student Support Services personnel, and principals meet to discuss student placement and needs.
- Student Support personnel contact parents to advise them of the student's support services for the coming year.
- Communication among Student Support personnel continues in order to evaluate the student's progress throughout the transition period.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- At the high school level, students receiving Support Services must successfully complete all the requirements of the AES curriculum in order to graduate. Specific graduation requirements may be waived by the high school principal provided there is documented evidence that supports a rationale for a waiver.
- There is ongoing communication among SST members, parents and students whose needs cannot be met at the next level of our program to consider alternatives for meeting the student's needs.

COUNSELING AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SERVICES

AES school counselors, the school psychologist, and teachers work in concert, beginning with the initial referral and throughout the Student Support Team (SST) process. The counselor or school psychologist may provide direct services to students in the academic, personal, and/or social domains through small-group or individual counseling. Students and families may also, either additionally or alternatively, be referred by the counselor or school psychologist to outside resources.

The AES school psychologist may provide assessment services to students referred through the SST process. Methods of assessment include but are not limited to standardized measures of intelligence and academics, observations of the instructional environment, behavioral assessment and behavior rating scales. The psychologist obtains parent permission prior to beginning the assessment. The psychologist shares assessment results with the parents, the student when appropriate, and the SST. The school psychologist is particularly cognizant of the limitations of standardized testing and may refer the family to outside testing facilities.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND STUDENT RECORDS

Confidential records are maintained on all students receiving Student Support Services. These records are kept in the counseling offices and are available to members of the Student Support Team including the parent, the student (when appropriate), the student's regular classroom teacher(s), the student's counselor, the academic support teacher and school administrators on a "need-to-know" basis.

AES will maintain confidentiality regarding the student's special learning needs and services being provided to the student. AES will not forward confidential records to other schools or outside agencies without the written consent of the student's parents.

Counselors will make a note in the student's cumulative file indicating that a confidential file exists.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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