



## Higher Learning Academy

### -Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy-

**HLA Mission and Vision Statement** - All Higher Learning Academy (HLA) scholars will acquire knowledge, concepts, and skills to succeed in their choice of college and career in order to positively contribute to both their local and global communities.

To prepare our scholars for the competitive global economy, HLA Charter School will provide a safe learning environment that fosters scholar risk-taking, inquiry, and independent thinking skills.

**Philosophy** - At HLA, we challenge our scholars with a rigorous, college preparatory, international-minded curriculum that encourages scholars to embody the values and skills promoted by the IB learner profile. We understand that all our scholars are different, and as such, they have different needs. We emphasize that the needs of all scholars are identified to ensure equal access to learning and the IB curriculum. At HLA, we recognize that some scholars have identified special education needs while others have needs that have not yet been identified.

**Identification** - At HLA, we strive to identify the special needs of our scholars through the collaboration of all stakeholders including scholars, families, teachers, and other important people in a scholar's life. Scholars are referred to our scholar Study Team (SST), a problem-solving and coordinating approach that assists scholars, families, and teachers to seek positive solutions for maximizing scholar potential academically, socially, and/or behaviorally. It provides an opportunity for the stakeholders to present their concerns for the scholar through discussion and study, to plan a positive course of action, to assign responsibilities, and to monitor results.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a federal law that requires schools to serve the educational needs of eligible scholars with disabilities. IDEA strives to grant equal access to scholars with disabilities as well as provide additional special education services for scholars who qualify. Special education services are individualized by determining the needs of the scholar. These services may include individual or small group instruction, teaching or curriculum accommodations/modifications, and/or specialized services such as specialized academic instruction, speech, or occupational therapy.

**Resources and support** - Scholars' needs and supports are determined when a team of educational professionals and parents meet and create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a legal document that clearly describes how an educational institution will provide services for scholars in



compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). IEPs are stored and overseen by our Special Education teacher and 504 plans are overseen by an onsite coordinator.

**Meeting needs in the classroom** - Whenever possible, teachers will develop assessments that are differentiated to provide necessary modifications or accommodations to meet the scholar's specific academic needs and goals.

HLA values our special needs scholars. To support our scholars, families, and staff HLA policies support the following:

- All teachers differentiate their lessons to meet scholars' specific academic needs.
- The general education teachers and special education teachers will collaborate on a regular basis to prepare lesson plans, implement behavior plans, and create differentiated IB Unit planners to support scholars' learning.
- Special Education scholars are included in all off-campus trips and on-campus events.
- Grades for Special Education scholars may or may not be differentiated based on their IEP and district guidelines.
- All faculty and staff are required to adhere to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Special Education scholars' schedules and changes to schedules are made through a collaboration between the Special Education teacher and general education teachers.
- The Special Education teacher will collaborate with all teachers and administrative staff throughout the school to discuss special education scholars and distribute current copies of their IEPs as needed.
- All teachers and/or administrative staff members are required to read the IEPs and behavior plans of all their special education scholars, to be aware of, and to implement required accommodations/modifications.