



**Parent Handbook
Learning Center Services
2015-2016**

- **What is the mission of the Learning Center?**

Through specialized instruction and support, the MDYES Learning Center provides students with language-based learning disabilities a foundation of skills to help them realize their academic and personal potential.

- **Who is responsible for the Learning Center?**

<i>Lower Division Director:</i>	Ashley Hager (AHager@mdyschool.org)
<i>Upper Division Director:</i>	Daniella Werman (DWerman@mdyschool.org)
<i>Assistant Director:</i>	Devorah Krakauer (DKrakauer@mdyschool.org)

- **In which academic areas does the Learning Center provide support?**

The Learning Center provides students with language-based learning disabilities the following supports:

General Studies

- Reading accuracy and fluency (grades 1-5)
- Reading comprehension (grades 1-6)
- Mathematics (grades 2-8)
- Writing (grades 1-6)

Judaic Studies

- *Humash* (grades 1-8 boys and girls)
- *Safa* (grades 1-4 boys and girls, 6-8 boys and girls)
- *Keria* (grade 1 boys and girls)
- *Gemara* (grades 6-8 boys)

- **How are students recommended to the Learning Center?**

In the general studies program, all students are assessed in September using the Lexia (a computerized reading assessment) and the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE). Students performing 1^{1/2} grades below grade level, and following a conversation with the classroom teacher, may be placed in the Learning Center for their respective area(s) of need.

In the Judaic studies program, teachers recommend students who, based on an in-house assessment and Learning Center Specialist input, may require Learning Center support.

- **At what points during the school year can a student transition into or out of the Learning Center?**

Transitions in or out of the Learning Center occur only at marking periods (after checklists and progress reports have been distributed). The checklists and progress reports will explain the reasons for these decisions.

- **At what point does the school require private educational testing for students receiving Learning Center support?**

Parents of students, who have been receiving support in the Learning Center and, despite the support, continue to fail to meet academic expectations will be required to seek private educational testing for their children. Our goal in requiring this testing is to better understand and meet the needs of our students.

- **How is information regarding private educational testing shared with the classroom teacher?**

Classroom teachers meet with the Learning Center Directors to discuss the implications of testing for classroom instruction. They will also be provided with a written summary of test results and recommendations.

- **When, and from whom, does the classroom teacher receive information regarding a student's learning needs and progress?**

Learning Center Specialists and classroom teachers meet weekly to discuss the progress of students in the Learning Center and monthly with the Learning Center Director, to discuss any concerns regarding the progress of their students.

- **Support for students in the Learning Center is offered using two different models, push-in and pull-out, what do these terms mean?**

Push-in refers to an intervention model in which the Learning Center LC Specialist comes into the classroom to provide support to one student or to a small group of students.

Pull-out refers to an intervention model in which a student or a small group of students are pulled out of the classroom to receive support in a Learning Center class.

The Learning Center provides both **push-in** and **pull-out** support as follows:

Lower Division

➤ *General Studies*

- Specialists provide **push-in** support during full group *Foundations* classes and during reading comprehension mini lessons. Students requiring additional instruction (e.g. students requiring additional instruction on the same topic or skill) of *Foundations* or additional reading comprehension instruction also receive **pull-out** support.

➤ *Judaic Studies*

- Grade 1, Learning Center Specialists have devised a unique *Keria* program and, together with the *Keria* Rabbi, conduct the lessons for the mainstream classes. **Pull-out** is also offered to small groups of students requiring additional *Keria* support.
- In grade 2, Learning Center Specialists provide **push -in** support during small group *Safa* lessons. **Pull- out** is also offered to small groups of students requiring additional *Keria* support.
- In grades 3 and 4, students receive a combination of **push-in** and **pull-out** support.

Upper Division

➤ *General Studies*

- In grades 5 and 6, students primarily receive support through a **push-in** model for English Language Arts (ELA) during full group reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary lessons. On occasion, students requiring phonics instruction may receive **pull-out** support in this area.
- In grade 5 students who are not on grade level receive support through a **pull-out** model for mathematics.

- In grades 6-8, students are grouped by ability for mathematics and do not receive additional Learning Center support in this subject.

➤ *Judaic Studies*

- In grades 5-8, students primarily receive support through a **push-in** model for Judaic Studies. **Pull-out** support may occur for some students requiring additional support in *Humash*, *Safa* or *Gemara*.

- **Some students in the Learning Center may receive accommodations and/or modifications. What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification?**

An **accommodation** is a change that helps a student work around his/her challenges.

Examples:

- Preferential seating
- Teacher provides a copy of notes
- Peer note taker
- Extended time
- Test questions read aloud
- Verbal responses acceptable in lieu of written responses
- Fewer questions on test and /or homework

Please Note: Arrangements for readers, extended time and/or testing in a separate location are only available for duration of test of forty minutes or longer.

A **modification** is a change in what is being taught or what is expected.

Examples:

- Content adjustment of class work or homework
- Tests questions are less demanding
- Information is omitted from tests
- Hebrew tests or homework questions are translated into English
- Student is allowed to respond to Hebrew questions in English

- **What do we mean when we say that a student is entitled to a modified test? Modified homework?**

➤ *General Studies*

- In grades 1-6, a **modified** test and/or homework assignment means that the content has been changed in some way. For example, Learning Center students may participate in separate small reading comprehension groups and in that case the content of their tests and/or homework will be different than those given to the rest of the class.

➤ *Judaic Studies*

- In grades 2-4, **modified** tests and or homework means that the content has been changed in some way or that the test questions are translated into English. Occasionally, students may also be permitted, with prior permission from the Learning Center Director, to respond to test questions in English.
- In grades 5-8, **modified** tests and homework means that the content is the same as their fellow classmates, but the access to content may be changed. For example, there may be a word bank on a test or the question format may change.

- **Who determines whether a student is entitled to a modification on tests and/or homework?**

For both general studies and Judaic studies, teachers may provide an **accommodation** at their own discretion. However, for any **modification**, prior permission from the Learning Center Director is required.

- **How is a student's modified test graded?**

Students who are entitled to modified tests will receive the grade that they have “earned” on that modified test. In addition to the grade, the Learning Center Specialist will add a comment regarding the degree of modification and its relationship to the expectations of students in the mainstream classroom.

- **Who is responsible for preparing student checklists and progress reports?**

Grades for students receiving Learning Center support, on both the checklists and progress reports, will be decided collaboratively between the classroom teacher and the

Learning Center Specialist. The anecdotal portion of the progress reports is written by the Learning Center Specialist.

- **How is a parent informed of student progress in the Learning Center?**

In addition to scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTC), progress reports and report cards, you will receive an email from your child's Learning Center Specialist approximately every four school weeks. Of course, in the event of a specific question or concern, please feel free to call your child's Learning Center Specialist or leave a message in the educational office.

- **What is the MDYES policy regarding behavioral “paras” or “shadows” in the classroom?**

Beginning this year, we are discontinuing the use of “paras” and “shadows” for children in grades 4 and above.

- **What is MDYES policy regarding “P3” and other related services?**

- Students in grades 1 and 2, who are entitled to “P3” services, will receive those services in school with the provider using a **push-in** model in the classroom. Other services will not be available during the school day.
- Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 who are entitled to “P3” will receive those services after school. Other services will be available to them during the school hour but only for total of twice a week.
- Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 will, due to the challenges of finding time during a departmentalized program, receive all related services after school.