Inclusion Works!
Celebrating Neurodiversity in a Charter School Environment

Dr. Matthew Tyson, Principal & CEO
Dr. Nicole Allen, Assistant Principal
Ms. Maria Kepler, Assistant Principal
Why inclusion?

The discussions and debates around inclusion have evolved over the last generation. Why? What have we learned?

*Inclusive education benefits everyone involved:*
- It normalizes diversity.
- It models how to build relationships and community with people who differ from you.
- The hallmark principles of coteaching, UDL, educational supports, and structure, order, and predictability benefit all students in the classroom.

Why create an environment where neurotypical and neurodivergent students can learn together in the general education classroom?
Why in charters?

- 1994 UNESCO’s Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policies and Practice in Special Needs Education asserts that education for all must encompass the inclusion of all types of learners in a single learning environment.

- Inclusive teaching practices have been endorsed by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) since 2007.

- Speaking about inclusion in other countries, Chong (2018) has argued that the larger national agenda around education must support inclusion as practiced by individual schools.

- When we don’t have optimal, structural, research-based supports, charter schools allow the flexibility and innovation necessary.
What does the co-taught classroom look like?

We have implemented a number of models that rotate based on the current needs of the classroom:

- **parallel teaching and stations teaching** (the teachers each teach a group, and in parallel they remain with one teacher, while in stations, they shift between)
- **one teach/one assist and one teach/one observe** (in the first, one teacher floats to help, and in the second, one gathers data—good in small doses for specific reasons)
- **small group teaching and team teaching** (based on assessment data, one small group is pulled for targeted work, while in team teaching, both teachers teach at the front)
How to support the cotaught classroom?

One of the chief complaints from teachers is that the structure of the school does not support coteaching.

*Privilege the model. Make sacrifices for it.*

- build shared planning
- provide shared classroom space
- keep coteachers together throughout the day
But a truly inclusive school extends inclusion beyond the classroom. Here’s what we’ve learned through implementation.
How does Tapestry do it? OUR MISSION

The mission of Tapestry Public Charter School is to offer an inclusive, individualized learning environment that is academically engaging, both for neurotypical students and those on the autism spectrum, and to create a positive school culture that empowers all students to take possession of their innate talents and become creative builders of their own future.
School Overview

• 301 students
• Grades 6-12
• College Preparatory Program
• 50% neurotypical, 50% Students with Special Needs (Primarily ASD)
• Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ Caucasian, $\frac{1}{3}$ African-American, $\frac{1}{3}$ Hispanic
• Approximately 20% Free and Reduced Lunch, 15% ESOL, 20% Gifted
• Founded by Dekalb parents searching for a more inclusive educational environment for their students
• All core academic courses are co-taught
• Focus on equity, restorative practices, STEAM, and SEL
SCHOOL FEATURES
Innovative * Inclusive * Individualized

• Project-Based Learning
• Individualized Learning Plans
• Technology Focused School
• Arts Integration for all subjects
• Extensive Music and Drama program
• STEAM Program
• School garden maintained by the students
• Athletics Program
• UDL Framework and differentiated instruction used for all academics
• Elective subjects include Drama, Art, Technology, Music, Spanish, and Physical Education
• AP & Honors Courses
We offer an inclusive, individualized learning environment that is academically engaging, both for neurotypical students and those on the autism spectrum. TapestryCharter.org
In education, inclusion refers to the practice of having all students learn together in the same classroom environments, which is diametrically opposed to the traditional notion that students with neurological differences should be taught separately, away from their peers. Schools that adopt inclusive practices and recognize each student’s unique learning profile can help all their students thrive. Numerous academic, social, and emotional benefits have been found with an inclusive approach, for all types of learners.
Individualized learning is a type of instructional strategy where the learning is informed by the student's prior knowledge, learning profile, and interests. This differs significantly from the widely utilized approach of teaching where the entire class progresses together through the curriculum at a pace predetermined by the teacher.
School Climate & Culture

The foundation of our positive school culture is a respect for diversity and an appreciation for each child’s unique talents and abilities. As a staff, we strive every day to develop personal, meaningful relationships with students and to be engaged and invested not only in their academic learning, but their personal development as well. Furthermore, we prioritize communication and strong relationships with all school members.
Co-teaching is the practice of having two teachers lead a classroom, one who specializes in content and another who specializes in special education. Both teachers are of equal importance and allow us to meet the varied needs of our student population. At Tapestry, our four core content areas are co-taught by a general education and special education teacher.
As part of our commitment to innovation, we have created an inclusive STEAM program where all students can participate, regardless of their learning differences. We have accomplished this by extensively training our staff on how to utilize STEAM processes, including cross-curricular approaches, in all facets of the students' learning. Purposeful STEAM elements are evident in all courses, not just Science and Mathematics, and the Arts are embedded in academic content.
Assessments are a tool to evaluate the progress and current level of understanding our students have in a particular topic at a specific moment in time. By varying our assessments and looking beyond the typical data to gain a better picture of the whole child, we can guide all of our students to more positive learning outcomes.
MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

- All middle school grades are split into two teams, red and blue
- Students will be with their team for most core academic courses
- All students in sixth grade will participate in either a Technology or Music elective and will switch halfway through the year
- Daily Physical Education classes
- All students will have a Flex Lab time built into their schedule to provide them with individualized guidance and support as they progress through the curriculum
- Gifted and Support classes will be offered to help students build their academic skills
- All students will choose a House to be in based on their interest areas
Houses of Tapestry

- Life Science
- Art
- Drama
- Game Design
- Fitness
- Makerspace
- Spirit
- World Cultures
High School Program

- Block Schedule: Four 1.5 hour periods each day, students switch to new classes in January
- Extensive Electives Program: Drama, Music, Visual Arts, Spanish, Technology
- Honors & AP Classes offered to all students: AP Calculus, AP World History, AP Human Geography, AP US History, AP Biology, AP Art
- Fine Arts Pathways & CTAE Pathways offered (Engineering, Marketing, Agriculture)
Academies of Tapestry

- Human Services (Food & Hospitality)
- Engineering & Game Design
- Advanced World Languages
- Agriculture
- Theatre
- Visual Arts
- Band
INNOVATIVE

- 1:1 Student Technology
- MakerSpace
- Coding Club
- Agro Lab
- Virtual Reality Lab
- STEAM Program
- HS Academies
- Courses that prepare students for High School technology-based CTAE pathways
INCLUSIVE

• A warm and supportive environment where diversity is celebrated
• Every core academic class has a content teacher and a co-teacher
• Students taught to control emotions through Zones of Regulation
• All students have access to sensory rooms throughout the day
INDIVIDUALIZED

- Individualized Course Progression
- Student-Focused Learning Model
- Opportunities embedded for student choice
- Opportunities for Acceleration & Remediation
- Projects tied to student passions
- Multiple Means of representation
MIDDLE SCHOOL HOUSE STRUCTURE

- All students will be able to choose a House at the beginning of each semester
- Houses will be based on student interest areas and led by a team of teachers
- Each House will complete a project each semester that benefits the school or community in some way
- These projects will help to build students’ academic and social abilities while teaching them how to be a part of a team
ATHLETICS PROGRAM, CLUBS, AND OTHER OFFERINGS

• Track and Field, Cross Country, Basketball, Volleyball, Flag Football, Tennis, and Soccer offered for all students

• Clubs include a Coding Club, Art Club, Chess Club, Spanish Club, Yearbook Club, Drama Club, and Minecraft Club

• Band, Chorus, Reading Bowl Team, Student Government, Black Student Union, and Gay-Straight Alliance
History

2014-2015
- Grades 6-8

2015-2016
- Added grade 9
- Moved to a new building
- Developed high school program

2016-2017
- Added grade 10
- Expanded high school
- Guidance Counselor
- Assistant Principal

2017-2018
- Added grade 11
- Drama
- Expanded High School
History

• 2018-19
  – Added grade 12
  – First graduating class!
  – Achieved a 3-year renewal
  – Achieved AdvancEd Accreditation
  – Began MS Individualized Learning/STEAM Program

• 2019-20
  – Tapestry Graduation Rate: 86.2%
  – Dekalb Graduation Rate: 75.9
  – Winter Drama Production: Nightmare before Christmas
  – Began Virtual Learning

• 2020-21
  – New Principal Dr. Tyson
  – Began HS Individualized Learning
  – Began Equity Taskforce

• 2021-22
  – New Assistant Principal Dr. Allen
  – Began Transition Taskforce

• 2022-23
  – New Assistant Principal Ms. Kepler
  – Began STEAM Taskforce
New for this Year!

<table>
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<th>New Programs</th>
<th>New Houses</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Revamped Internship Program</td>
<td>• School Spirit</td>
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<td>• Academy Program</td>
<td>• Athletics</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Courses</td>
<td>New Academies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• AP Art History</td>
<td>• Advanced Language</td>
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<td>• AP Art Studio</td>
<td>• Hospitality &amp; Food</td>
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<td>• Metalwork</td>
<td>• Agriculture</td>
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<td>• Sculpture</td>
<td>• Game Design/Engineering</td>
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<td>• Intro to Ag. Science</td>
<td>• Visual Arts</td>
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<td>• Forestry</td>
<td>• Theatre</td>
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<td>• Food &amp; Life</td>
<td>• Band</td>
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<td>• Food Science</td>
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<td>• Computer Science Principles</td>
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Academic Review

New Courses

• Marketing
• Food and Life
• Writer’s Workshop
• Ecology
• Instrumental Ensemble

New Taskforces

• Transition Taskforce
• STEAM Taskforce
• Equity Taskforce
NWEA MAP - Language
Fall 2021 to Spring 2022

% of Students Meeting or Exceeding Growth Targets

Grades

20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70

6 7 8
NWEA MAP - Math
Fall 2021 to Spring 2022
Academic Review

NWEA MAP - Language
Spring 2022

Graph showing Mean RIT Score across grades 6 to 10, comparing Tapestry, National, and DeKalb performances.
Academic Review

SWD ELA GMAS 6-8 2021-22

% of Students Proficient or Higher

- APS
- Tapestry
SWD Math GMAs 6-8 2021-22

% of Students Proficient or Higher

- APS
- Tapestry
Academic Review

SWD GMAs 9-12 2021-22

% of Students Proficient or Higher

Axis Title

US HIS
BIO
ALG
AM LIT

APS
Tapestry
Academic Review

EOC - American Lit

Mean Scale Score

School Year

20-21

21-22

22-23
EOC - American Lit

% of Students Passing (Dev. & Above)

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<tr>
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Academic Review

EOC - American Lit

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<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% of Students Scoring Prof. &amp; Above</th>
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<tr>
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Academic Review

EOC - Algebra

Mean Scale Score

School Year

20-21
21-22
22-23
EOC Algebra

% of Passing Students (Dev. and Above)

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Academic Review

EOC - Algebra

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Student Socio-Emotional Well-being

The above graph shows the emotional regulation of Tapestry students over the course of the 2021-22 School Year. Students rate their happiness each week on a scale of 1-5 through the Sown to Grow program, with a 0 being very unhappy and 5 being extremely happy. Students who score low are flagged for review by a counselor, who then can pull the student and have a conversation with them. Tapestry began the year with a schoolwide score of 3.6 and ended the year with a score of 3.8.
The above graph shows the parent responses to the above question from the Fall Parent Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
The above graph shows the parent responses to the above question from the Fall Parent Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Does your student have friends or people they enjoy spending time with at Tapestry?

62 responses

The above graph shows the parent responses to the above question from the Fall Parent Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
The above graph shows the parent responses to the above question from the Fall Parent Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Student Socio-Emotional Well-Being
Tapestry Fall Parent Survey

The above graph shows the parent responses to the above question from the Fall Parent Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Do you prefer Tapestry to any other school your student has attended?
60 responses

- Yes, Tapestry is the best school ever! 48.3%
- Yes, Tapestry is a much better school than others we have attended 33.3%
- Yes, Tapestry is a slightly better school than others we have attended 15%
- No, Tapestry is not as good as other schools we have attended

The above graph shows the parent responses to the above question from the Fall Parent Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Fall Parent Survey Highlights

- 90% of parents believe Tapestry supports student academic growth
- 88% of parents said that they feel like other students accept their child for who they are
- 95% of parents said that they feel like staff accept their child for who they are
- 89% of parents feel like people care about their student's emotional wellbeing when they are at Tapestry
- 91% of parents feel that their student is safe when they are at Tapestry
- 98% of parents prefer Tapestry to any other school their student has attended
The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Do you feel like students at Tapestry accept you for who you are?
201 responses

The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Do you feel like staff at Tapestry accept you for who you are?

The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Do you have friends or people you enjoy spending time with at Tapestry?

201 responses

- 49.3%: Yes, I have many friends
- 39.3%: Yes, I have a few friends
- 8%: I'm not sure
- 8%: No, I do not have friends

The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
The above graph shows the student responses to the above question from the Fall Student Survey of the 2022-23 School Year.
Fall Student Survey Highlights

- 75% of students feel like Tapestry supports their academic growth
- 73% of students feel like other students at Tapestry accept them for who they are
- 81% of students feel like staff at Tapestry accepts them for who they are
- 90% of students feel that they have friends or people they enjoy spending time with at Tapestry
- 80% of students feel that they are safe at Tapestry
Virtual Learning Overview

- 100% virtual learning attendance
- 100% virtual MAP participation
- Almost 100% EOC attendance
- 96% of parents say their students are progressing in their knowledge through virtual learning
- Communication & Creativity
Accomplishments

• Five-year renewal awarded by State of GA and County of DeKalb
• Part of GCSA Incubator Program for Replication of Quality Schools
• MAP Scores surpassed the district’s in almost all subjects and grade levels 2019-20, 20-21
• Fall to Winter MAP 21-22: 2nd best improvement in district (Language Usage), 4th best improvement in district (Reading), 6th best improvement in district (Math)
• 2022 & 2023 GA AP Access & Support School (only one other HS in Region received this)
• 100% Graduation Rate in 2021 (Highest in County)
• Reacclimated students to being in the school building
• COGNIA 5-Year Accreditation
• COGNIA 5-Year STEAM Certification

Comments from COGNIA accreditors:
“There’s hope for education with people like you out there.”
“I was thoroughly impressed and I don’t get impressed by much.”
“You are on the forefront of what’s happening in schools.”
“This is a true school of education.”
“I dream of being a part of something like this”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>TIPs Trip</strong></td>
<td>A Small Group of Faculty &amp; Staff Members can Visit Tapestry School for an Onsite Tour</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Talkin’ TIPs</strong></td>
<td>We Visit Your School and Deliver Our Presentation to Faculty &amp; Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TIPs Workshop</strong></td>
<td>A Small Group of Faculty &amp; Staff Members Take Part in a Day-long Full Immersion Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching TIPs</strong></td>
<td>A Full Semester of Support as You Launch Your Inclusion Program</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TIPs Resources</strong></td>
<td>Downloadable Files to Help Lay the Foundation of Your Program</td>
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Questions?

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