



*"Creating an educational environment for the body, mind, and spirit"*

## **NO LIMITS ACADEMY PHILOSOPHY**

### **Vision**

Revolutionizing the education of students with disabilities.

### **Mission**

Creating an educational environment that empowers students with disabilities to reach their individual, God-given potential, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

### **Our Philosophy**

At No Limits Academy, we believe that **equality is not to be confused with equal opportunity**. All persons are not born with the same level of physical, cognitive, social and intellectual abilities, but all persons are born with the right to equal opportunity to reach their full potential. This belief is foundational for our method of individualizing student instruction, accomplished by evaluating learners against the standard of their own personal potential and tailoring instruction to meet their respective physical, cognitive, social, and intellectual needs. We believe that socially engineering equality does not work in the education of students with disabilities; instead, we believe that purposeful assessment, planning, and instruction can increase the cognitive levels of a student.

We believe that educating students is not only about taking high-performing students and making them even better but also taking under-performing students and helping them

thrive and succeed in an academic environment. This approach begins with the way we view our learners: we see them as **having a different way of thinking, rather than a deficit**. At No Limits Academy, we do not compensate for deficits; rather, we learn and embrace the way a student processes information. We embrace a divergent mindset in our approach to education that translates itself into our focus on addressing the whole child in education.

We believe that all aspects of a student—physical, mental, and spiritual—are all parts of a whole that work together to achieve academic success for a learner with disabilities. Each of these individual areas must be cultivated and grown in balance in order to produce the best results. Failure to address or neglecting one area will harm the others. This translates into what we call ***The Triangle Model: body, mind, and spirit working together to help each student reach their individual potential***. Revolutionary practices in physical, speech, and occupational therapy are combined with innovative pedagogies of effectively educating learners with disabilities in an environment that fosters spiritual growth.

We believe that in order for each student to reach academic success, **potential must be individualized**. The way we do this at No Limits Academy is developing an educational strategy for each learner that is based upon careful evaluation and tailored to the learner's specific needs. All areas discussed in *The Triangle Model* are incorporated into this educational strategy; however, the way it materializes for each learner will be unique to that learner. We understand that each student is different and that a disability can be expressed differently in each person.

We believe in a lateral thinking approach in the education of students with disabilities.

**Treating all learners the same does not promote equality but rather emphasizes difference** and keeps equal opportunity from being a reality in our students' lives. Instead, **we**

**seek to create an environment that adequately positions learners for academic success**

by providing quality education that works with the student's ability in an effort to progress this ability. Equality in education is not reached by lowering the standards to enable a larger, more diverse population of students to reach it but by rising our standards for the quality of education being delivered. We expect each student to be properly assessed and to be given the instruction and tools they need to reach their full, individual potential.

We believe that **belongingness is an important need to be addressed in a student, but not as a goal for education.** We desire for each of our learners to feel included and equal without compromising the process of reaching their academic potential. Although inclusion is essential to the social, mental, physical health and well-being of a child with disabilities, it is not an effective means to an end in reaching one's full potential academically. Rather, education is more effective when a student can be individualized and instruction can be tailored to their independent needs. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is not specific enough to achieve the type of individualized education we seek. When a child is grouped with a majority of higher functioning students, the lower functioning students' needs will be discarded in support of the needs of the majority. In keeping with our commitment to reach the best results for the whole child, belongingness and inclusion need to be fostered independent of the classroom, on a social, everyday level.

We believe that our **behaviors are the products of our beliefs.** For this reason, attention is given to the personal philosophies of our teachers and team members. What our teachers believe about the education of a child will determine the expectations that teacher will hold for the potential of a student and the pedagogy that will be enlisted to achieve goals.

Our philosophy of education must be tantamount to the individual philosophies of each

member of our team for the successful implementation of our education model. Team members who possess philosophical beliefs about educating students with disabilities that are congruent with our own will more effectively make choices that produce the results we seek of empowering each learner to reach their full potential.

We believe that **classrooms are to be catalysts for learning** that possess the key aspect of a growth mindset that always looks for ways to be more effective in achieving learning<sup>1</sup>. We believe that the quality of the way a student is taught is as important as what they are taught. We believe assessments are valuable instruments for providing feedback that must be used in evaluation if we are to effectively achieve learning with each student. Careful construction of the assessment process has created a methodology for the evaluation of learners from all levels of the cognitive process. This feedback works as an accountability process to ensure that we are effectively meeting the needs of every learner and delivering the level of instruction that is appropriate for their cognitive level.

We believe that **education occurs through experience**. Our classrooms are designed to make the learning environment an interactive one that moves the student from being an observer of the learning process to a participant. This type of environment supports the mind-body connection, maximizing the potential for new neural pathways to be formed, neural growth to occur, and the further formation of the frontal lobe. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, combining individualized instruction with research based scaffolding techniques structured to progress the cognitive ability of a learner. The student is empowered through this process, achieving the objective of not only mastering a concept but acquiring a life-long love for learning and the tools necessary to succeed after graduation.

No Limits Academy believes that God has created all things. Therefore, **every person is the workmanship of God**. We believe that God has prepared, beforehand, great things to work out in the life of every individual (Ephesians 2:10). We believe that God's Spirit works powerfully in the lives of those who love Him. There is no physical, mental or emotional disability that can impede the work of God's Spirit. We believe that God does not limit His power based on physical attributes (Mark 10:27). We are humbled (Philippians 2:10) to know that every life has limitless potential in God's plan (Philippians 4:13, Ephesians 3:20). No Limits Academy considers every student to be a vibrant, purpose filled individual, deserving respect, love and equality (1st Thessalonians 5:9-14; Romans 2:11). At No Limits Academy, our environment is designed to give every student an understanding that they are valued by God and fully capable of achieving academic excellence and individual potential.