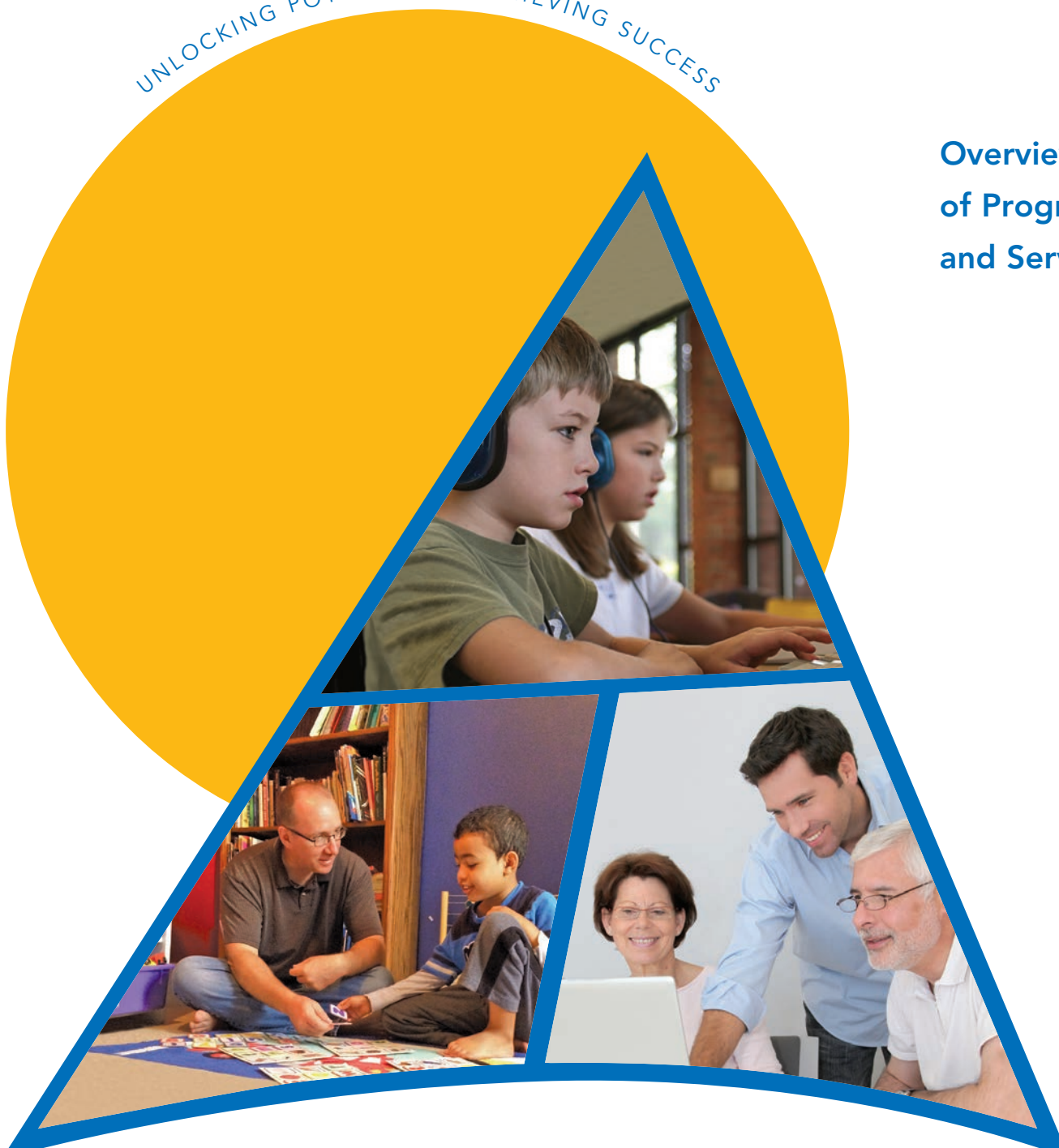


UNLOCKING POTENTIAL • ACHIEVING SUCCESS

**Overview  
of Programs  
and Services**





I am proud to be the Executive Director of an organization that has provided exemplary programs and services to students, parents, educators and school districts for more than forty years. Throughout the years, we have consistently supported a shared vision with our constituents: all unique learners deserve to receive an education maximizing their personal potential. Countless times throughout the past year I heard positive comments from parents about their child's success...how gratifying!

Every day, the professionals at ACCEPT work to make this vision a reality in an environment of honesty, respect and excellence. With our students at the center of everything we do, we provide high-quality special education programs for students from elementary through high school, with transition programs for students up to 22 years of age.

Our teachers and specialists are hired for their hearts and for their minds, coming together to do something very important. They are all compassionate, highly skilled, and experienced professionals in their areas of expertise.

It's a great feeling for all of us at ACCEPT to see the look of joy and pride on the faces of parents who have seen their child succeed, in challenges both large and small. These kinds of moments remind me of what a special organization we are. All of our students are unique individuals with their own potential ready to be unlocked. I'm proud of them all and grateful to be part of their success.

We serve parents by giving them real, practical help with their child's individual challenges. Ongoing communication and collaboration between parents and our professionals is an essential part of every student's success.

We serve educators. Great teachers are what really make the difference. Learning and sharing helps every professional improve his and her effectiveness. We train educators throughout New England, offering a broad range of professional development opportunities including workshops and courses for college credit.

We serve school districts, helping them to actualize and improve their services for unique learners. We even transport over 500 students with disabilities safely to school and back every day. ACCEPT prides itself on its core partnering principle of responsiveness to the pressing needs of our member school districts. We understand the work districts are doing is critical and important and cannot wait. It takes energy, focus, commitment and skill from everyone involved.

All of us at ACCEPT, parents, educators and school districts... we are all partners, intimately involved in the success of our students...one team, working together so all unique learners can receive an education maximizing their personal potential. Not only do we all serve students, we serve each other.

The result is a group of skilled, supportive and passionate people who are helping our students get the education they deserve.

On the wall of my office is a framed writing assignment of one of our students. It says "the happiest day of my life was when I found out that I could stay at the ACCEPT Academy." It's my reminder of why we are doing what we do. Our students love and appreciate being part of ACCEPT, and I pledge to all of you that ACCEPT will strive continuously to improve the learning experience of our students in an environment of respect and excellence.

### ACCEPT Guiding Principles

- Respect for diversity and human differences
- Best practices
- Continuous improvement
- Open and honest communication
- Integrity



Marcia J. Berkowitz, Ed.M, M.Ed.  
Executive Director

## Specialized Services

ACCEPT offers a full range of specialized therapeutic services for uniquely challenged students. Teachers and related service providers work in collaboration to ensure that therapeutic strategies are interwoven into instructional activities and routines throughout the day. Services include speech and language, occupational, physical and vision therapy. Also included are vocational rehabilitation, counseling, nursing services, behavioral consultation and other related services as required for individual students.

Educators and therapists jointly develop goals, curriculum, strategies and interventions. The entire team works to help every student maximize his or her achievement and participation in the school and in the community.

## Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

ACCEPT provides a hands-on, relevant approach to academic instruction in the areas of English, Language Arts, history, social sciences, math, science and technology, using the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as a guide. Additionally, social/emotional, behavioral and communication skill development is an integral component of the curriculum.

When appropriate, students are integrated throughout their day and receive instruction on daily living activities.

Students benefit from ACCEPT's technology-rich classroom environments. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards, laptop and/or desktop computers for student use, iPads and other assistive technology devices. Individualized Education Programs (IEP), based on assessment information and ongoing quantitative data collection, are developed to maximize student independence and participation within the school and community.

ACCEPT classrooms are highly structured environments with consistent routines. Staff use 21st century research-based teaching and assistive technologies to maximize student achievement, independence and participation.

A variety of specialized approaches include: positive behavioral interventions and supports, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), TEACCH, specialized reading programs and language and picture communication systems. Student progress is monitored and shared with families regularly. ACCEPT students participate in MCAS or MCAS Alternate Assessment.

ACCEPT Education Collaborative, founded in 1974 and headquartered in Natick, Massachusetts, is a non-profit educational organization serving 16 school districts in Boston's MetroWest area.

ACCEPT provides high quality regional programs and services that unlock the potential of students, families, educators and communities.

ACCEPT's innovative programs and services meet students' and member school districts' evolving needs.

Member School Districts are:

- Ashland
- Dover
- Dover/Sherborn
- Framingham
- Franklin
- Holliston
- Hopkinton
- Medfield
- Medway
- Millis
- Natick
- Needham
- Sherborn
- South Middlesex Regional Technical
- Sudbury
- Wellesley



**A strong home-school relationship, through ongoing communication and collaboration, is a critical and essential part of the student's success.**

# Serving Students: Special Education Programs

*ACCEPT provides a wide range of special education programs for students in elementary and middle school.*

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADES K-5)

### Academy (Therapeutic Program)

*Pittaway School, Ashland*

- **Emotional/Behavioral**

The Academy is a public day school therapeutic program for students unable to make adequate social and emotional progress in traditional classrooms. Students may experience a range of mental health issues, school adjustment difficulties, inappropriate social functioning and/or poor peer relations. Comprehensive clinical services are provided, and teachers use positive behavioral intervention supports to assist students with self-regulation and self-control.

The ultimate goal of the program is to assist students to overcome the issues at hand, practice effective behavioral alternatives and enhance their academic skills, allowing them to be successful when they return to their sending school.



### ACES (ACCEPT's Classroom for Essential Skills)

*Medway Middle School*

- **Emotional/Behavioral, Autism Spectrum and other Neurological Disorders**

ACES is a public day school therapeutic program for students who require intensive teaching supports in order to make effective academic and behavioral progress. Students may experience a range of school adjustment difficulties, inappropriate social functioning, poor academic performance, developmental delays and/or immature peer relations.

Comprehensive academic, behavioral and clinical services are provided throughout the school day. A strong home-school relationship, through ongoing communication and collaboration, is a critical and essential part of the student's success. The ultimate goal of the program is to assist students in becoming engaged learners through the use of innovative and empirically-based instruction, and to overcome behavioral and social challenges by practicing effective behavioral alternatives.

### IDEAL (Individually Designed Education to Access Learning)

*Medway Middle School*

- **Global Impairments Medically Involved**

IDEAL is designed for students with global impairments. The classroom is rich in resources, including an emphasis on assistive technology and augmentative communication devices, symbols, photos, single switches, switch accessed toys, music and computers. Direct hands-on input is required for all activities, including sensory-motor integration, physical therapy, feeding, language development and other activities of daily living.

A multi-disciplinary team of experienced staff, parents and medical specialists work together to provide comprehensive and coordinated services. A registered nurse is assigned to the program to support the complex medical needs of the students.



“ I really enjoy my school work. The teachers are great, and I have lots of friends. Every day, I look forward to going to school. ”

Student



ACCEPT's special education teachers and therapists are experienced, well trained and licensed professionals.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADES 6-8)

Academy (Therapeutic Program)

Ashland Middle School

- Emotional/Behavioral

The Academy is a substantially separate therapeutic program with opportunities for inclusion in a public middle school. Students may experience a range of mental health issues, school adjustment difficulties, inappropriate social functioning and/or poor peer relations.

A consistent therapeutic milieu and rigorous academics are the cornerstones of the Academy and include: individual and small group instruction, behavior management, attention to organizational strategies, time management and study skills. Clinical services include: counseling, individual crisis intervention, ongoing collaboration with family and community treatment teams and case management.

The ultimate goal of the program is to assist students to overcome the issues at hand, practice positive replacement behavior and enhance their academic skills, allowing them to be successful when they return to their sending school.



PALS (Programs for Academic and Life Skills)

Ashland Middle School

- Autism Spectrum and other Neurological Disorders (Moderate to Severe)

PALS prepares students for a successful middle school experience by focusing on the individualized student's needs in the areas of functional academics, social skill development, behavioral regulation, adaptive daily living skills and prevocational experiences. Staff work with students, families, schools and community agencies to provide support services that meet the unique needs of students. PALS staff work to strengthen academic, social, language and life skills to promote independence and participation in the community.

As students within the PALS program reach age fourteen, they access the ACCEPT Center for Transition (ACT) on a weekly basis. Students are exposed to a variety of prevocational opportunities related to activities of independent living, work experience, career exploration and job seeking, including resume writing and interview skills. Through simulated work stations and more than 20 community based work sites, students experience the realities of the workplace and develop technical skills and individual qualities that are required to succeed in the world of work.

STAR (Strategies and Tools for Academic Reward)

Ashland Middle School

- Language Based Learning Disabilities

The STAR program prepares students for a successful middle school experience focused on language and social skills development.

Language-based learning difficulties are a common cause for students' academic difficulties. Language and communication is the common thread present throughout all academic content areas. Thus, weak language skills may hinder comprehension and communication for students across their academic areas. STAR provides supports centered on developing oral and written language skills to enhance communication and the comprehension of academic content. Reading instruction is provided through multisensory, language-based, structured, sequential reading programs. Staff work with students, families, schools, and community agencies to provide support services that meet the unique needs of students. Skills targeted through this program include: communication and social skills, academic skills with provided individualized supports for each student level, executive functioning skills and compensatory strategies to increase student independence.



# Serving Students: Special Education Programs

ACCEPT provides a wide range of special education programs for students in high school and continues with

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADES 9 - 12)

### Academy (Therapeutic Program)

*Franklin High School*

- **Emotional/Behavioral**

The Academy is a substantially separate therapeutic program with opportunities for inclusion in a public high school. Students may experience a range of mental health issues, school adjustment difficulties, inappropriate social functioning and/or poor peer relations.

A consistent therapeutic milieu and rigorous academics are the cornerstones of the Academy.

Students engage in a blended learning environment, enrolling in The Virtual High School (VHS)

online accredited courses, as well as participating in individual and small group instruction. Attention to organizational strategies, time management and study skills are emphasized. Clinical services include: counseling, individual crisis intervention, ongoing collaboration with family and community treatment teams and case management.

The ultimate goal of the program is to assist students to overcome the issues at hand, practice positive replacement behavior and enhance their academic skills allowing them to be successful when they return to their sending school.



### ACCESS APP

*Medfield High School*

- **Moderate Disabilities**

ACCESS APP is a program for students with intellectual impairments and complex language and learning difficulties. A functional academic curriculum, accompanied by vocational experiences, support development of the social, academic and vocational skills students need to transition successfully into the community.

ACCESS APP's overarching goal is for students to achieve independent functioning in the community while developing a foundation of more advanced vocational and social skills.

### PALS (Programs for Academic and Life Skills)

*Medway High School*

- **Autism Spectrum and other  
Neurological Disorders**  
(Moderate to Severe)

PALS is designed for high school-aged students with autism, intellectual impairments and/or related disorders. Students have atypical social, cognitive and/or language delays. PALS develops and strengthens academic, social, language, life and prevocational skills and work behaviors to promote independence and participation in the community. Three program levels are available to accommodate the intensity and skill level of the individual.

### The CLUB (After-School Program)

*Ashland High School*

- **Learning Disabilities and Asperger's  
Syndrome** (Mild to Moderate)

The CLUB offers a challenging and structured social, academic, career and life skills curriculum for high school students with learning disabilities, ADHD, Asperger's and/or high functioning autism. These students require additional skills to facilitate a successful transition to college or career.

### SOAR (Short-term Option for Assessment and Recommendations)

*Assabet Valley Collaborative*

- **Emotional/Behavioral**

SOAR is a joint partnership program of ACCEPT and Assabet Valley Collaborative. This is a short-term public day school stabilization and diagnostic assessment program for students who are struggling in their school setting as a result of emotional and/or behavioral difficulties.

The clinical and educational experts at SOAR assist districts to address diagnostic and placement issues for students experiencing difficulties. SOAR staff provide counseling, behavior management, academic support and case management.

### Summer Programs

#### Extended School Year

These programs are designed to prevent substantial regression of skills and provide a bridge between academic years.

Structured individual, small group and classroom instruction is provided consistent with the students' IEP.



transition programs for students up to 22 years of age.

## TRANSITION PROGRAMS (AGES 18-22)

### C2C (Classroom To Community)

*Asbland High School, Community*

- **Autism Spectrum and other Neurological Disorders (Severe)**

Students in this program have atypical social, cognitive and/or language delays. C2C provides community, vocational, social and functional life skills activities to enhance students' abilities and facilitate transition to adult life.

### Passages

*Asbland High School*

Designed for students with varying disabilities,

Passages is a comprehensive post-high-school transition program that prepares students to be active members of their communities.

Multiple activities reinforcing targeted skills are presented in the classroom, community and workplace.



A safe, thoughtfully-planned environment encourages mutual trust and respect and fosters personal growth, responsibility and independence.

*The Passages Program has two strands:*

#### Passages ECO (Exploring Community Options)

ECO is a multi-year post-high-school transition program for students with a broad range of mild to moderate disabilities. ECO provides the opportunity for individuals to explore a variety of vocational and community opportunities to prepare students for a smooth transition to appropriate next steps.

#### Passages 5 for 5 (5th Year Transition)

5 for 5 serves students with Asperger's, nonverbal learning disabilities, ADHD, and other learning disabilities who need an additional year after high school to develop the skills necessary to transition to college or career successfully.

### ACT (ACCEPT's Center for Transition)

*Medway High School • All Types of Impairments*

All ACCEPT students age 14 through age 22 attend ACT on a regular basis. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors provide opportunities for students to explore a variety of educational, vocational and occupational opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment. Students learn a variety of skills related to activities of independent living, work experience, career exploration and job seeking including resume writing and interview skills. Through simulated work stations and more than 20 community based work sites, students experience the realities of the workplace and develop technical skills and individual qualities that are required to succeed in the world of work. ACT services are also available to districts as an adjunct to their programming.

## Serving Parents

*ACCEPT fosters an active partnership with parents in the education of their children.*



### Home-based Services

Home-based services are designed to teach parents and caregivers the skills necessary to maximize social, behavioral and educational functioning of their children at home and in the community. Strategies to manage challenging situations that may arise are provided to parents and caregivers. A variety of assessments are used to determine the individualized objectives for each family.

### Family Resources of Natick

ACCEPT administers Family Resources of Natick ([natickfamilies.org](http://natickfamilies.org)), an organization which provides comprehensive support to Natick families with young children through a combination of direct services and referrals.

Family Resources of Natick works to promote family education, literacy, school readiness and engagement in the community. It maintains a safe and enriching space for families, with time to play and to meet other Natick families.



## Serving Educators

*ACCEPT's programs for educators are grounded in the belief that what matters most in student achievement is excellence in teaching.*

### Professional Development

ACCEPT offers professional development programs to meet the learning needs of educators throughout the state. Symposia, in-depth series, workshops, and



in-person and on-line courses are designed to meet the current challenges faced by educators, counselors, therapists, and leaders in our schools. ACCEPT's offerings focus on key school-based

issues facing educators, including mental health concerns, supporting struggling learners, leading and managing programs for learners with complex needs, and improving the outcomes for students with disabilities.

ACCEPT provides opportunities to learn, and earn graduate credit, for more than 1,000 educators through its annual professional development offerings. Our offerings reflect our belief in the need for professionals to improve their practice continuously and to stay abreast of approaches to teaching that have been proven to result in positive outcomes for students who struggle in school. Customized workshops are conducted off site in various school districts.

### Evaluation and Consultation Services

ACCEPT offers a variety of educational and behavioral consultation services to help schools build their capacity to serve students with disabilities. Consultants are available to assess student needs, evaluate school programs and provide ongoing support to educators.

## Serving School Districts

*ACCEPT uses the collective power and resources of member school districts to provide exceptional programs and services that maximize the potential of students, their families, educators and communities. Direct services to districts include:*

### Specialized Transportation Services

Since 1978, ACCEPT has provided regional specialized transportation services for member school districts. Today, ACCEPT provides safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective transportation to more than 500 students with disabilities to over 100 locations daily.

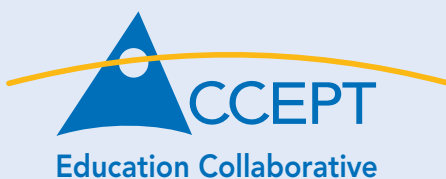


### Educational Technology

ACCEPT works with the Technology Advisory Committee, comprised of technology directors from member districts. The focus is on cooperative purchasing, policies, tools and products to improve teaching, learning and management. Also, a partnership with the The Virtual High School (VHS) provides innovative on-line courses to over 700 students annually.

### Medicaid Reimbursement Services

In 1994, ACCEPT established a Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement Program to recoup money spent on school-based health and related medical services. To date, ACCEPT has over \$44,000,000 returned to member and non-member districts and towns.



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Contact us today to learn more about ACCEPT

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ACCEPT Education Collaborative is organized according to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4e as recently amended.