

Program Highlights

- Innovative individualized and small group instruction
- Focus on functional academic development with experiential learning opportunities based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Support through a low student-to-teacher ratio
- Positive behavior intervention plans
- Individual and group social skills instruction
- Extended School Year Program option
- Ongoing communication with all constituents
- Transitional support back to sending school



Admission Criteria

- Students must be ages 11-18 and be referred by their sending district
- Students must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Students with complex language and learning difficulties
- Requires moderate to significant modifications to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to make effective progress

ACCEPT, founded in 1974 and headquartered in Natick, Massachusetts, is an education collaborative serving 16 school districts in Boston's MetroWest area. ACCEPT provides a wide range of innovative, high quality regional programs and services, including special education student programs, transportation, technology, home-based services, Medicaid reimbursement, behavioral consultation and professional development.

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.

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

Member School Districts are: Ashland, Dover, Dover/Sherborn, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Sherborn, South Middlesex Regional Technical, Sudbury and Wellesley.

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PALS

Program for Academic and Life Skills



Program Overview

ACCEPT's Program for Academic and Life Skills (PALS) prepares students for a successful middle and high 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.



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) and Transition Plans based on assessment information and ongoing quantitative data collection are developed to maximize student independence and participation within the school and community environment.

ACCEPT Guiding Principles

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

Educational Services

The PALS program offers highly specialized individual and small group instruction through empirically-based and functional programming. Special educators and speech, occupational and vocational rehabilitation counselors, and other therapists, work in collaboration to provide a wide range of direct services and supports. The development of skills related to functional academics and independent living is fostered by tailoring the program to each student's age, interests and transitional goals.

ACCEPT's highly trained professionals work with students to build on their strengths and help manage their challenges. Students may require specific and direct instruction in a number of academic skills, such as receptive and expressive communication, sight word development, functional comprehension, written expression through technological supports, money management and foundational mathematics skills. Academics are presented and tracked daily with hands-on experiences and interactive opportunities that also embed social skills instruction with an additional focus on increasing student independence.



Inclusion opportunities are made possible through the strong partnership ACCEPT has built with member school districts. Students who meet individualized academic, behavioral or social development criteria have the opportunity to integrate within the less restrictive environment when possible, with ACCEPT staff support carefully provided through specified criteria.

Behavioral and Social Skills Services

All students participate in an individualized positive behavioral support program designed to provide clear expectations and feedback regarding expected classroom and community behaviors. Staff work with Board Certified Behavior Analysts to identify the underlying functions of student behavior and to provide each student with a positive and effective method of developing more appropriate adaptive skills. Individual reinforcers are identified for each student, and data is collected on a continual basis. If an individual demonstrates behavior that is inappropriate and/or disruptive, staff utilize a variety of behavioral intervention strategies to redirect the student.

The PALS program also offers individual and small group social skills instruction on a regular basis. Conversational skills, personal hygiene, safety concerns and peer relationship development are systematically broken down and taught through the use of a variety of techniques. These may include social thinking, behavioral mapping, video modeling, video feedback, self-rating scales and other tools that assist PALS students in generalizing skills from the smaller group environment to larger classrooms or into the community.

Prevocational Services

As students within the PALS program reach age fourteen, they access the ACCEPT Center for Transition (ACT) on a weekly basis. 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.