

# Dracut Public Schools

## *Special Education Programming*

**Letter from Kimberly Lawrence**  
*Director of Student Services*

Dear Dracut Community:

Dracut Public Schools pride themselves on providing each and every student with a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. All students learn differently. For that reason, Dracut provides an array of services for students to ensure that students have access to the life of their school and can demonstrate academic progress across the curriculum. For students requiring inclusion support, therapeutic services or specialized instruction by a Special Education teacher, services are provided in each and every school building. For students requiring a more specialized approach to teaching and learning, specialized programs are located across the district, at all educational levels, in order to meet students' unique needs. This book describes all current specialized services provided to students with different learning profiles. As the academic and social emotional needs of students evolve, so too will the services and programs provided in the district.

I take great pride in offering this resource and ensuring that as a district we aim to identify, service and support the academic progress and social emotional health of all Dracut students beginning at age three and commencing at age twenty two.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Lawrence  
*Director of Student Services*



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# Dracut Public Schools

## *Special Education Programming*

### Table of Contents

4    Preschool Program

6    OT Program

8    PT Program

11   Speech and Language Services

15   Student Support Centers

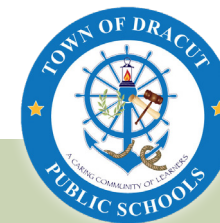
17   Choices Program

20   RISE Program

23   STRIVE Program

25   The Academy Post-Grad Program

27   Flow Chart



# Preschool Programs

## ABOUT THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

For students identified with significant developmental disabilities, the Dracut Public Schools provide a highly structured, safe, and nurturing learning environment and experience. The Special Education Preschool program utilizes strategies and interventions based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) to promote cognitive, social, communication and emotional development of young children. Task analysis/breakdown of skills, discrete trial format/direct instruction, positive reinforcement, systematic prompting, prompt hierarchies, and fading procedures are used to teach new skills. Individualized protocols are developed based on the child's learning profile.

Students are provided with visual support to facilitate and enhance understanding and processing of information. All classroom staff uses consistent interventions and strategies. Instruction in IEP goal areas is developed and implemented by classroom staff across all settings.

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

Curriculum for all Special Education Preschool classrooms is language-based and developmentally appropriate. Staff utilize the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences developed by the Early Childhood Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education. Activities to support individual student's IEP goals and benchmarks, as well as the overall development of all the students, are created by the teachers and supportive staff for the program.

Curriculum for the sub separate preschool program is based on the principles of ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis). All students programs are individualized and address the goals and objectives of their IEP. Students work to gain skills that can be generalized into the integrated preschool setting.

## GOAL

In the Special Education Preschool program, students ages three to five with disabilities are encouraged to learn through play. They gain skills they can take with them into preschool and beyond. Specialized instruction and services are delivered in an environment that includes peers with developmentally appropriate social/behavioral and communication skills. The program facilitates growth and development in both the children identified as having disabilities and the model students.

## LOCATION

- Brookside Elementary School
  - Integrated Preschool Program
  - Intensive Services Preschool Program
- Campbell Elementary School
  - Integrated Preschool Program
  - Substantially Separate Preschool Program





## STAFFING

Staff:

- Special education teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Speech and language therapy providers
- OT/PT therapy providers
- BCBA

Contracted Staff:

- Augmentative communication
- Vision specialist
- Orientation and mobility
- Deaf and hard of hearing specialist
- Nursing

## REFERRAL

Students are referred to the Special Education Preschool Team through:

- Parent referral
- Early intervention
- Child Find

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

Students between the ages of 3-5 identified with a disability through the team process are served through this program. Students present with delays in more than one of the following areas:

- Language skills
- Social/play skills
- Classroom functioning
- Behavior

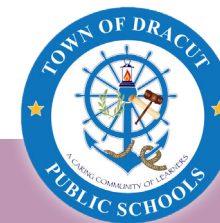
Students eligible for the substantially separate preschool program are students identified through the TEAM process as students with ASD or signs and symptoms of ASD, such as:

- Limited communication skills
- Limited play skills
- Delayed cognitive skills
- Difficulties with behavior regulation
- Requiring a curriculum based on the principles of ABA
- Students are systematically included in the LRE

## EXIT CRITERIA

- Transition to Kindergarten at age 5
- Evidence of mastery of IEP goals and ability to access the curriculum of the LRE
- Students are capable of accessing and participating in the LRE with supports to exit the sub separate classroom





# OT Program

## ABOUT THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Educational OT services are proposed and developed by the Special Education Team and provided by trained, school-based OT professionals. Our program develops individualized strategies to serve the needs of each participating student. Federal law mandates that occupational therapy in the school system be educationally relevant. To meet that mandate, our Occupational Therapists and OT Assistants use purposeful, goal-directed activities and task analysis, to promote independence and achieve participation in the school environment and curriculum.

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

Areas of Assessment:

- Visual perception
- Visual motor integration
- Fine motor skills
- Sensorimotor

Examples of tools used in school based-assessments:

- Peabody Developmental Motor Scales
- Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency
- Developmental Test of Visual Perception
- Beery Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration
- School Function Assessment
- Sensory Processing Measure

How OT services are delivered in our schools:

- Small group
- Individual
- In the general education setting as an inclusion service or consultation
- In the special education setting as a direct service

## GOAL

The focus of our Occupational Therapy (OT) program is to enable a student with a disability to achieve independence in the school environment and to actively participate in the curriculum.

## LOCATION

Occupational therapy services are offered at all Dracut Public Schools Student Support Centers:

- Dracut High School
- Richardson Middle School
- Brookside Elementary School
- Campbell Elementary School
- Englesby Elementary School
- Greenmont Elementary School





## STAFFING

- Occupational therapists
- Occupational therapy assistants

## REFERRAL

Students with a suspected disability in the areas of fine and visual motor as well as sensory processing are referred to the Occupational Therapy Program through:

- Parent Referral
- Student Support Team
- Early Intervention
- Child Find

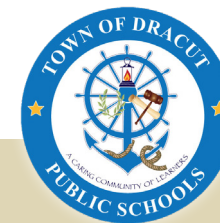
## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

- Standardized test scores below average
- Difficulties due to atypical sensory processing, decreased strength, bilateral coordination, grasp patterns, manipulative skills, visual motor coordination
- Impact on functional performance in the school setting including but not limited to:
  - Tolerating stimuli in school
  - Tolerating transitions
  - Participation in routines
  - Following and sequencing directions for motor tasks
  - Using school tools
  - Using manipulatives (the physical tools used in teaching and engaging students such as pencils, markers, rulers, coins, blocks, puzzles, etc.)
  - Participating in writing tasks
  - Performing school related self care tasks

## EXIT CRITERIA

- Based on standardized testing, observation and team decision
- Recommendations are individually-based on student need
- Student no longer requires specialized instruction
- Goals and objectives are achieved
- Potential for further impact is unlikely and skills have stabilized





# PT Program

## ABOUT THE PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Services provided through the Physical Therapy Program include:

- School bus observation/evaluation with regard to bus accessibility with appropriate recommendations
- Specialized seating observation/evaluation for proper seating requirements with appropriate recommendations in an educational setting (classroom, cafeteria, etc.)
- Functionally-based gross motor evaluations to children who are turning three years old from an early intervention setting as it relates to accessing a student's educational environment in allowing them to benefit from special education.
- Functionally-based gross motor evaluations/screenings to all special education students at all grade levels if there is a concern regarding their ability to access their education based on gross motor concerns.
- Training (transfers, non-skilled range of motion, therapeutic exercises, etc.) to appropriate staff members who are involved with student care/well being
- Direct, functionally-based therapeutic exercise/neuromuscular reeducation to qualified students to help improve strength, balance, range of motion, motor control and coordination, and mobility in relation to accessing their educational environment
- Consultative services to appropriate staff members, as well as the entire IEP team, on various needs of a student with regard to their gross motor presentation
- Gait training to help students access their environment (hallway, classroom, stairs, etc.)
- Educational environment modifications as need be to help students better access their environment to benefit from special education
- Consultation services with physical education team members to modify gym based activities to help students better access/participate in their physical education class
- Supervised/structured gross motor groups for preschool aged children typically developing and with special needs to promote activity and motor skills as well as response to intervention strategies

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

Services are delivered through consultation with classroom teachers. Students are supported in the general education classroom and school setting, as well as direct instruction to facilitate access and participation in the general education setting.

## GOAL

The Physical Therapy program strives to help students develop and improve the areas of physical performance that are needed for participation in the education process.

## LOCATION

Physical therapy services are offered at all Dracut Public Schools Student Support Centers:

- Dracut High School
- Richardson Middle School
- Brookside Elementary School
- Campbell Elementary School
- Englesby Elementary School
- Greenmont Elementary School



## STAFFING

Physical Therapist

## REFERRAL

Students with a suspected disability in the area of gross motor development are referred to the Physical Therapy Program through:

- Parent Referral
- Student Support Team
- Early Intervention
- Child Find

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

The objective of a school-based physical therapy evaluation is to identify whether a child is developing the necessary skills for participation in the education process. Are the specialized services of the PT service provider essential for the student to meet his or her educational goals?

If it is determined that a child's development in the areas of physical performance is delayed or atypical in some way that negatively affects his/her ability to function in a school environment, and that area is within the scope of practice for physical therapy, then physical therapy intervention is recommended.

## EXIT CRITERIA

Physical Therapy is not a lifelong activity such as learning. Parents and appropriate staff must recognize that after a period of no change in developmental status, PT should be terminated or the child placed on a monitoring service. A continued desire for ambulation or similar activity is not sufficient reason for continued therapy after due diligence in trying to achieve an objective.

When a student has completed or met one of the following, criteria the physical therapist should recommend to the team that other avenues of related services need to take place (i.e. reduction in direct services, transition to a consultative model, or discharge from services):

- The student has met his/her physical therapy goals and objectives and has reached a functional level which allows him/her to successfully meet classroom expectations. No additional goals are appropriate
- Lack of progress documented for one year. Potential for further change appears unlikely and skills have stabilized/plateau



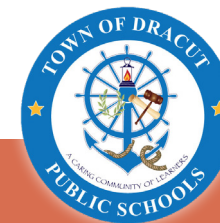
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- The student utilizes an appropriate compensatory strategy which allows him/her to adequately function within the educational setting despite not having age appropriate skills in a particular area.
- The skill in the area(s) addressed by physical therapy remain delayed, however, commensurate with the student's academic abilities.
- The student's difficulties are not educationally relevant. The problem ceases to impact functional performance in the school setting
- The student's gross motor needs can be met by other professionals within the school system with or without the consult/training model.
- Standardized test scores in the average range and /or student is able to achieve tasks independently with or without accommodations and /or strategies
- The parent or physician request discontinuation of physical therapy.
- The student is unwilling to participate in PT sessions; attendance has been inconsistent or poor, and efforts to address these factors have not been successful
- Physical therapy is contraindicated due to medical, psychosocial, social or behavioral complications.
- There does not appear to be any reasonable prognosis for improvement with continued treatment.





# Speech and Language Services

## ABOUT SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

The program serves students identified with disabilities requiring services as identified in the IEP for the following:

- Speech: Articulation, fluency, phonological process and voice.
- Oral Language: Receptive Language, Expressive Language; listening, speaking, vocabulary and language structure.
- Social Communication: Pragmatic Language the understanding of the use of language and social purposes.

Speech and Language services are delivered as a consultation within the General Education setting or in a separate setting, based on the student's individual disability. Density of service delivery is assigned based on presentation in evaluation.

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

### Speech/Language Therapy—School-Based vs. Clinical

- School based SLPs are available to support children who meet eligibility for language, pragmatic (social skills), articulation, voice and/or fluency disorders if it adversely impacts the student's educational performance and requires specialized instruction. Educational performance refers to the child's ability to access the curriculum as well as the life of the school.
- Clinical/Private SLP may provide services for a student that has a disorder, regardless of their school performance. SLPs in private practice are not held to the same eligibility guidelines as school-based SLPs, and they can treat disorders that may not be addressed in a school setting.

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## GOAL

The Speech and Language Department provides specialized instruction to eligible students who have a disability that adversely impacts their access to, and participation in, the general education curriculum.

## LOCATION

- Dracut High School
- Richardson Middle School
- Brookside Elementary School
- Campbell Elementary School
- Englesby Elementary School
- Greenmont Elementary School





## *continued*

How school-based SLP services address stuttering:

- Educating the team about the disability and its treatment
- Teaching student and educators strategies to support them in the class
- Consultation with educators, families, and other involved staff
- Recommending accommodations in class
- Indirect and direct services for stuttering

The role of the SLP in Reading and ELA:

- Sound symbol/letter correspondence for students with speech sound disorders
- Support reading comprehension through answering main idea, sequential, detail, factual, inferential, and prediction questions
- Support vocabulary development
- Support language organization and formulation
- Support syntax and morphology (word order, pronouns, verb tenses, sentence construction, grammar, etc.)
- Support summarizing/narrative skills

## STAFFING

Speech and Language Pathologists:

- Assess students for the presence of language, speech or social communication disability.
- Provide direct service to students identified with a disability.
- Participate in team meetings and pre-referral process.
- Develop IEP goals, objectives and identify services.
- Collaborate and consult with staff.
- Support families in skills and generalization to the home.

Speech and Language Assistants:

- Provide direct service to students identified with a disability.
- Participate in pre-referral process.
- Collaborate and consult with staff.
- Support families in skills and generalization to the home.

Contracted Staff:

- Augmentative communication consultant
- Teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing





## REFERRAL

Any preschool or school-aged student residing in Dracut may be referred for a speech/language evaluation by families or the Instructional Support Team (IST). The referral process will determine what areas are appropriate to evaluate at that time based on concerns expressed, referral questions, and other relevant factors. Before the IST determines a speech/language evaluation is recommended, consultation with the SLP is required.

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

To be eligible for speech language services within the school setting, a formal assessment is required. This may include standardized testing, informal assessment, observation, language samples, clinical judgment, review of medical and educational history, and team input about communication skills in the educational setting. This process is used to determine the presence of a disability and whether it is impacting the student's access to the curriculum or life of the school. It also must be determined if specialized instruction is required to make effective progress.

- Assessments must fully consider the impact of the student's culture, language, and dialect on communication and linguistic abilities, in order to determine language difference versus language disorder. Language differences are not considered to be an area of disability, and do not require speech language therapy services.

- Assessments must be integrated and interpreted in relation to other relevant evaluations and assessments (e.g. academic, cognitive, social/emotional, etc.) if they have been conducted, in order to gain a full understanding of the child's presentation and performance in the school setting. Based on all of this data, the team will determine disability based on IDEA Disability Areas. Outside evaluations are considered as one data source, and do not solely determine eligibility for school-based services.

Areas of Assessment and Examples of Tools:  
*See chart on following page.*

## EXIT CRITERIA

The main reasons for termination are:

- The communication disorder has been remediated, compensatory strategies have been successfully established, or the disability no longer affects their ability to access the curriculum
- The IEP team determines the child no longer needs speech language services to benefit from special education (for example: the student's communication needs can be met through the communication goals worked on in the regular or special education classroom)
- The individual or family chooses not to participate in treatment
- Treatment no longer results in measurable benefits after multiple modifications have been attempted
- In order for services to be terminated, the student must be formally re-evaluated in the area of the disability.



**Areas of Assessment and Examples of Tools:** The following chart provides a brief list of examples of assessment tools for communication evaluation. Clinical judgment of the SLP, paired with referral concerns, will determine which tools are appropriate to administer and are made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Domain to be Assessed	Standardized Assessments	Non-Standardized Assessments
Receptive/Expressive Language	PPVT EVT EOWPVT CELF PLS TOLD CASL	Conversation/Language Sample Play-Based Assessment Observation
Articulation/Phonology	GFTA-3	Informal Phoneme Inventory Connected Speech Sample Stimulability Self Rater/Teacher Rater Oral Mechanism Exam Observation
Phonological Awareness	CTOPP	Informal Rating Scales and Tasks
Fluency	SSI-4	Conversational Speech Sample Interview Observation
Social Pragmatics	TOPL CELF SLDT	Conversation Rating Observation Social Thinking Dynamic Assessment
Record Review		
Other		







# Student Support Centers

## ABOUT THE STUDENT SUPPORT CENTERS

Students with disabilities are exposed to grade level curriculum and social experiences, and are provided the supports and accommodations they need to handle schoolwork at their own pace. Direct instruction is provided outside of the general education classroom specific to the goals and objectives in the IEP. Direct specialized instruction is provided to students in the areas of Reading, Written Language, Math and Organizational/Study Skills.

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

Each school in the District has a Student Support Center to serve its students. Services are provided in the general education setting or in the special education setting based on the determination of the IEP Team.

- Inclusion support is support provided to students in the general education setting. Support is provided by Special Educators, Para Professionals, Adjustment Counselors, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists. Support is provided in the major content areas such as: ELA, Math, History, Science as well as other academic courses where students struggle with reading, writing, math and organization.
- Specialized Instruction services are provided outside of the general education classroom and are clearly defined in the IEP. Curriculum provided in the special education setting is different from the general education classroom and geared towards addressing the students individual challenges. Services are delivered in a small group setting or individually, based on the student's IEP.

## GOAL

The Student Support Centers are designed to provide an academically challenging experience for all students identified with a disability, using an inclusion model.

## LOCATION

- Dracut High School
- Richardson Middle School
- Brookside Elementary School
- Campbell Elementary School
- Englesby Elementary School
- Greenmont Elementary School



## STAFFING

- Special Education teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Supportive staff such as SLP, OT, BCBA and adjustment counselors

## REFERRAL

Students are referred for services through the Student Support Centers when they are identified through the IEP Team process with a disability impacting their ability to access and participate in the general education curriculum. Disability categories include but are not limited to:

- SLD
- Health
- Autism
- Neurological
- Communication

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

Through the team process students are identified with a disability and requiring support or specialized instruction in order to access the curriculum.

## EXIT CRITERIA

Students exit the Student Support Center upon:

- Mastery of IEP goals and objectives
- Demonstration of independence in the general education setting
- Determination of ineligibility through the Team process
- Graduation from High School





# Choices Program

## ABOUT THE CHOICES PROGRAM

The Choices program provides an educational environment that is student-centered, safe, respectful, and inclusive. The Choices program exists on the premise that all students want to experience success, want to feel self-worth, and want to learn.

Students served by the Choices program are those who have historically demonstrated difficulty with accessing the general education curriculum or the life of the school as a result of their social emotional needs and/or struggles with behavioral regulation, coping skills and communication. Students in the program demonstrate a wide range of diagnostic criteria but are cognitively capable of accessing grade level curriculum. They struggle with impact of trauma, mood instability, impulsivity, executive functions, anxiety, depression, conduct disorders, and inappropriate responses to real life situations.

The Choices program has succeeded with a student if it has assisted that student in gaining a better understanding of their individual challenges and helped them learn to regulate and cope in all school situations.

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

Students in the Choices program are educated based on grade-level academic standards. Students receive instruction in the Choices program or they are supported in the General Education Classroom. Students receive specialized instruction in emotional regulation, coping skills and relationship building through a variety of interventions. Systematic inclusion in the general education classroom is implemented as students demonstrate stability in the Choices program. All students receive individual and/or group counseling for their individual goals, as determined by the IEP Team.

## GOAL

The Choices program helps students gain a better understanding of their individual challenges while they build their capacity to regulate and cope across all school settings.

## LOCATION

- Englesby Elementary School
- Richardson Middle School
- Dracut High School





## STAFFING

Staff:

- General education teachers
- Special education teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Adjustment counselor
- BCBA

Contracted Staff:

- Clinical consultation through an independent agency

## REFERRAL

1. Students enrolling in the Choices program need a Referral packet that includes their last signed and accepted IEP, most recent evaluations, any discipline reports, attendance records, academic history, and results of a recent FBA.
2. Each referral packet is reviewed by Team Chair, Choices Teacher and Choices SAC, Principal and Director of Student Services.
3. If a student packet meets entrance criteria, an observation of the student will be scheduled and conducted by the adjustment counselor for the Choices program.
4. Upon acceptance, a Team meeting will be held and a new IEP developed outlining placement in the Choices program, or an Extended Evaluation will be developed.
5. The Director of Student Services should be apprised of all referral activity and final decision.

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

- Students identified with an Emotional Disability or like disability through the IEP Team process where there is a marked difficulty with emotional regulation and coping skills.
- Students demonstrate a continued challenge accessing the curriculum despite being supported within a less restrictive setting.
- Students are not making academic progress due to emotional or behavioral factors which prevent the students from accessing the general education curriculum.
- Students have multiple documented interventions, accommodations, and modifications



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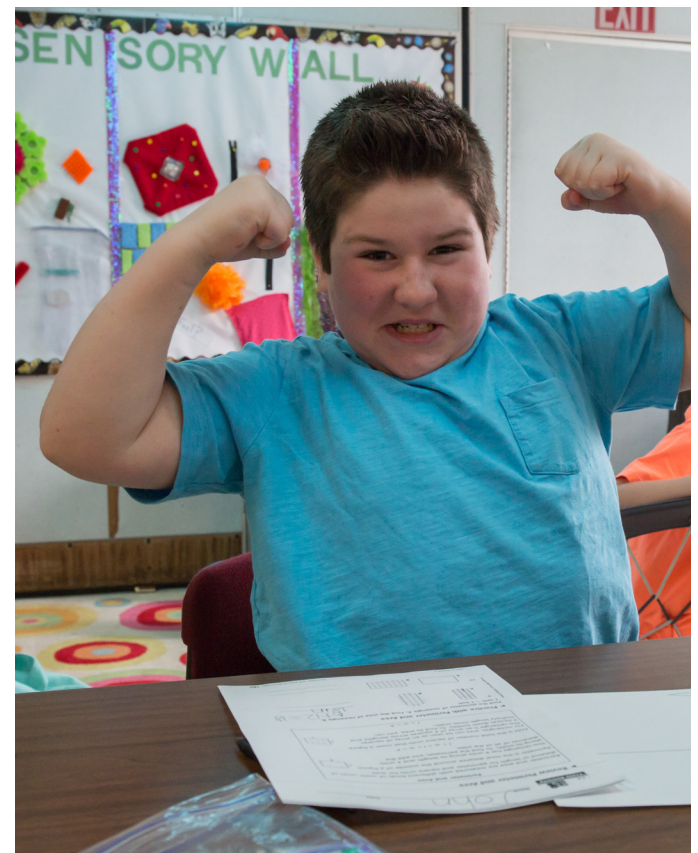
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## EXIT CRITERIA

The Choices Team may determine at any time that the student is eligible to participate in general education classes on a full or part-time basis if they meet the following criteria. The student:

- Has demonstrated progress academically, emotionally, and behaviorally in the general education classroom with minimal supports
- Demonstrates independent ability to regulate and manage emotions.
- Demonstrates increased appropriate independence and an understanding that there is a way in which to satisfy their needs without infringing on others.

There may be times when a student is not succeeding in the Choices program. In this case, the Team will reconvene and a more restrictive environment may be required.







# RISE Program

## (Reaching Independence through Structured Environments)

### ABOUT THE RISE PROGRAM

The RISE Program serves students with significant cognitive impairments including, but not limited to:

- Autism
- Intellectual impairment
- Health impairment—significant medical needs
- Significant communication impairment

Core academic skills provide learning relevant to student's everyday life. Students' unique learning profiles are addressed through highly individualized instruction with material and methodologies that differ from the general education curriculum and instruction.

At Brookside Elementary School, students will be provided modified instruction in a specialized classroom, specific to their individual needs. Instruction will be designed to build solid academic, communication, language and motor skills necessary for increased independence.

At Richardson Middle School, students are exposed to pre-vocational skills through a vocational opportunity: Friday Lunch Ordering for RMS staff.

At Dracut High School, instruction focuses on preparing students to transition to independent living and adulthood. Vocational training provides students opportunities to develop employable skills, explore future career options and to make good choices.

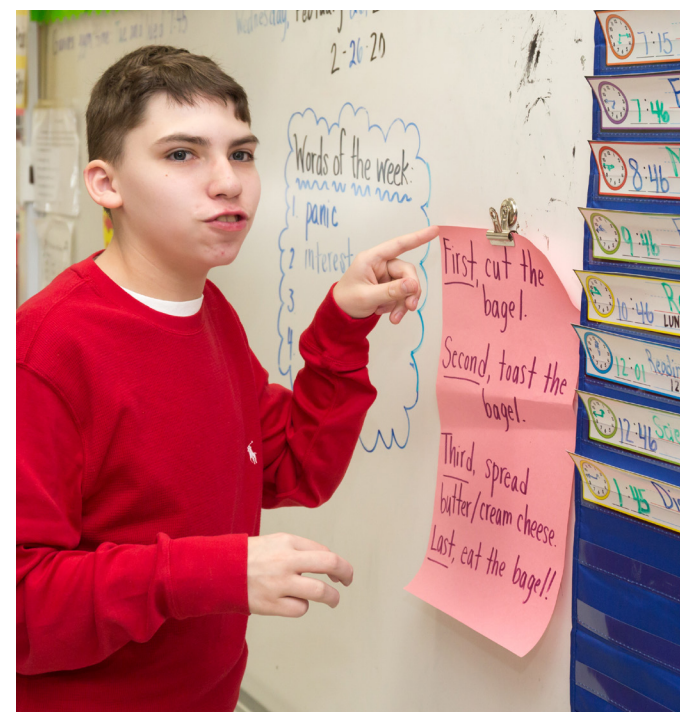
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### GOAL

To empower students with intellectual disabilities to become independent learners, through an educational setting, where the focus is a functional academics curriculum with hands-on learning.

### LOCATION

- Brookside Elementary School
- Richardson Middle School
- Dracut High School





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## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

At BES, students will learn in a specialized classroom for the core content curriculum. Academics will be substantially modified in complexity and pace. Specialized instruction will be delivered in adaptive skills, social skills, and early vocational skills. Inclusion opportunities will be provided with peers of the same age, in order to generalize skills mastered in the specialized classroom.

At RMS, students will learn in a specialized classroom for the core content curriculum. Instruction is delivered in life skills, social skills, academics, adaptive skills and independence. Academics such as English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies are substantially modified in complexity and pace. Students are included with same age peers for specials (art, physical education, music), lunch, Best Buddies and other aspects of the life of the school.

At DHS, Students learn in a specialized classroom for the core content curriculum. Instruction is delivered in academics, vocational skills, health and adaptive skills (self care, cooking, laundry and cleaning). Regularly scheduled community trips and functional community experiences are important aspects of the curriculum. Students are taught in an inclusionary setting for computer class, art class, chorus, physical education, and Best Buddies.

Students enrolled in RISE may participate in the MCAS Alternative Assessment and receive a certificate of completion upon graduation from the program at the age of 22.



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## *continued* STAFFING

District Staff:

- Special Education teacher with moderate to severe certification
- Paraprofessionals
- Speech and language therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Physical therapist
- BCBA
- School adjustment counselor

Contracted Staff:

- Augmentative communication specialist
- Teacher of the visually impaired
- Teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing

## REFERRAL

Students are referred to the RISE Program when access and participation in the general education setting with special education services does not support continued progress towards IEP goals and objectives. Students referred have been found eligible for specialized instruction via the IEP TEAM process and present with disabilities which include significant cognitive impairment.

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

Students requiring specialized instruction in the areas of:

- Activities of daily living
- Social skills
- Communication
- Functional academics
- Behavior
- Executive functions

## EXIT CRITERIA

- Independent adaptive skills
- Appropriate social skills/behavior skills
- Accessing General Education Curriculum, with minimal supports
- Graduate at age 18
- Independent life skills
- Independent skills for job training
- Age out at 22







# STRIVE Program

## ABOUT THE STRIVE PROGRAM

The STRIVE program is designed to provide specialized programming to meet the needs of students from Preschool through grade 12 who are identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or demonstrating signs and symptoms of ASD including:

- Significant impairment in verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Sensitivity to sensory input impacting access to general education setting
- Restrictive, repetitive and self stimulatory patterns of behavior
- Rigidity in maintaining routines and expectations of the general education setting

At the Middle and High School level, the focus of the program is on language, communication, social skills, academics, behavioral challenges, adaptive life skills, pre-vocational, vocational, work skills and community skills.

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

STRIVE focuses on evidence-based instruction, intervention and support emphasizing safety, independence, social, academic, communication and behavior skills. Programs at all levels support students based on their IEP and service delivery grid. Students consistently work to gain independent skills required for access and participation in the general education setting (Least Restrictive Environment).

Students learn skills through a variety of methodologies including but not limited to:

- Discrete trial training
- ■ Small group instruction

Specialized instruction in the areas of academics, daily living skills, social skills, behavioral skills and pre-vocational skills.

Middle school students engage in pre-vocational training through a Coffee Cart and Lunch ordering experience for teachers where they learn to stock, inventory, take orders, make coffee and order lunch from outside vendors.

## GOAL

The mission of the program is to provide an educational environment where students with Autism or signs and symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder are encouraged to maximize their language, communication, social, academic and behavioral skills through the principles of ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis).

## LOCATION

- Campbell Elementary School
- Richardson Middle School
- Dracut High School



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At the High School level, more emphasis is placed on community training, job skills, travel training and independent living skills. Speech and Language therapy targets language skills, social communication skills, and conversational skills. Data collection on all IEP goals and objectives indicates progress and forward movement.

Students are included with same age peers for specials (art, music, physical education), lunch, recess and Best Buddies at the Middle and High School level.

## STAFFING

Professional Staff:

- Special Education teachers with moderate to severe Certification/autism endorsement
- Paraprofessionals
- Speech and language therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Physical therapists
- BCBA

All programs are staffed with CPI certified staff for de-escalation.

Contracted Staff:

- Clinical consultation by Triumph Center
- Augmentative communication specialist

## REFERRAL

Students are referred to the STRIVE Program when access and participation in the general education setting, with special education services, does not support continued progress towards their IEP goals and objectives. Students referred have been found eligible for specialized instruction via the IEP TEAM process and present with characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

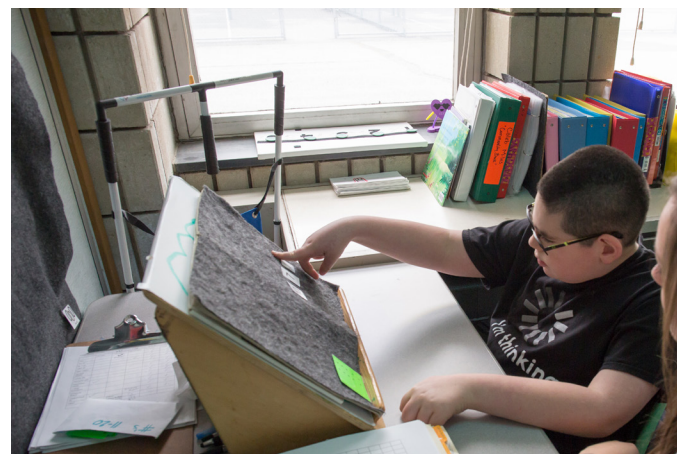
## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

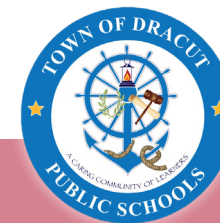
Students identified through the IEP TEAM process as eligible for special education as a student with Autism or related disability. Student demonstrates restricted and self directed interests, behaviors that significantly impact access and participation in the general education setting, inappropriate response to sensory information and significant deficits in social interactions including receptive, expressive and pragmatic language. Student requires the following:

- Requires specially designed instruction in a small group
- Requires ABA and/or CBT
- Sensory diet
- Social skills development
- Communication intervention

## EXIT CRITERIA

Student is able to access the general education curriculum with minimal support. Student has demonstrated independent success with systematic fading of supports. Graduation or age out at 22 years old.





# The Academy Post-Grad Program

## ABOUT THE ACADEMY POST-GRAD PROGRAM

The Academy is a collaborative post-secondary program designed for students, ages 18-22, with moderate to intensive learning challenges and a wide range of concomitant abilities. The program's curriculum incorporates a variety of teaching methodologies designed to help students integrate skills acquired in the classroom into real-life, everyday situations. Academic proficiency, activities of daily living, employment competencies, community inclusion, recreation and leisure skills are gradually transitioned from controlled environments of the classroom and school buildings to the realities of public places, volunteer and job development opportunities and social situations in the community.

### Student population served:

- Students 18-22 that have completed a publicly funded program focused on academic skills.
- Students with an IEP for moderate to severe learning challenges
- Students may or may not have met high school graduation requirements to receive a diploma

## PROGRAM MODEL/CURRICULUM

The curriculum of The Academy at Dracut High School focuses on the transition to adulthood and independent living. Skill building in the areas of career/job development, independent/community living and social/emotional development are the primary focus for students.

The program will identify vocational interests and skills through assessment, develop interviewing skills, resume writing and facilitated work opportunities.

*continued on next page*

## GOAL

The goal of the Academy is to provide students, ages 18-22, with the services and supports to gain necessary skills and become confident, independent young adults who are integrated in their community.

## LOCATION

- Dracut High School





## *continued*

Students in The Academy program will:

- Work on self-advocacy skills, personal health, maintaining healthy relationships, travel training and home management (cleaning skills, cooking skills and budgeting). Through group lessons and real life application, students will cultivate pragmatic social skills necessary for community participation.
- Develop functional academic skills as well as safe internet and technology practices.
- Go out into the community throughout the week to put their new skills into action at local grocery stores, restaurants, shopping establishments and through travel training.
- Create and maintain a career portfolio and obtain MA identification cards, transportation access, bank accounts and library cards for community outings

## STAFFING

Staff:

- Special Education teacher—moderate to severe certification
- Job coaches
- SLP/Augmentative communication specialist
- OT/PT/Assistive technology specialist
- Teacher of the visually impaired
- Teacher of the deaf

## REFERRAL

Students are referred to the Academy Post Grad Program following completion of traditional high school education at the age of 18. In the Academy Post Grad Program, students continue developing functional academic, vocational, social and life skills.

## ENTRANCE CRITERIA

Students enter upon completion of traditional high school and upon turning 18.

## EXIT CRITERIA

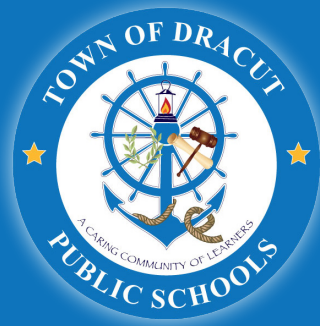
Students will leave the program upon turning age 22 or when they have achieved goals and objectives demonstrating skills that will allow them to be successful in post-grad life.



# Dracut Public Schools

## Special Education Programming

	Campbell Elementary	Englesby Elementary	Greenmont Elementary	Brookside Elementary	Richardson Middle School	Dracut High School
Preschool	✓					
Occupational Therapy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical Therapy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speech and Language	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Support Centers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Choices K-5		✓				
Choices 6-8					✓	
Choices 9-12						✓
RISE 6-8					✓	
RISE 9-12						✓
STRIVE K-2	✓					
STRIVE 3-5	✓					
STRIVE 6-8					✓	
STRIVE 9-12						✓
The Academy Post Grad Program						✓



# Dracut Public Schools

## *Special Education Programming*

Dracut Public Schools Special Education Department  
2063 Lakeview Avenue, Dracut, MA 01826 978-957-4633