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PERSONALIZED LEARNING CENTER (PLC)

The Personalized Learning Center (PLC) is a general education class at Needham High School that strives to improve student academic performance by building strong organizational and study skills.

Population Served

The PLC serves students with or without a diagnosed disability, on a 504 or not, who are who are struggling to achieve in their academic classes. These are students who require academic support in a structured environment in order to improve their organizational skills, study skills, and/or their self-advocacy skills. Students in PLC are general education students. Students must be brought through the SST process to be recommended for PLC.

SKILLS CENTER

The grade level Skills Centers provide academic support for students on IEPs who are in general education classes at the standard, honors or accelerated level. The goal of the Skills Center is to lead students towards independent learning and self- advocacy through the direct teaching of skills in accordance with the student's IEP. Each student is taught how to learn and how to use their strengths to compensate for individual areas of difficulty.

Population Served

The Skills Center is designed to work with students with diagnosed disabilities who currently are serviced through an IEP. Students who attend the Skills Center require specialized instruction from a special educator in order to make progress in the general education curriculum.

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INSIGHT

Insight is a program designed for students who require supports in the area of social thinking, social pragmatics and executive functioning skills. Students are enrolled in general education classes at the standard, honors or accelerated level and also have a specially designed Skills Center. This Skills Center provides academic support as well as direct teaching of social pragmatic skills. The special educator provides support for developing organizational strategies, previewing/ reviewing concepts, and breaking down assignments. In addition, the Speech and Language Pathologist provides individual and group lessons to the students as well as program consultation. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) also provides consultation and support to the program.

Population Served

Insight is designed for students with social communication deficits and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder that directly affects their ability to access the high school curriculum and participation in extracurricular activities. Students in the Insight Program have diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Nonverbal Learning Disability, and/ or Social Communication Disorder. These students have cognitive abilities that range from average to superior but have social pragmatic and/or executive function skills that are below grade level expectations.

FOUNDATIONS

Foundations is a program consisting of highly structured, small group academic classes. There are Foundations classes in the core curricular areas of math, science, social studies and English dependent upon the needs of the incoming students in each grade. Students do not need to be enrolled in all four subject areas in order to be a part of the program. In addition to the academic component, there is a vocational skills class taught by a transition specialist. All students in the Foundations program are included in electives classes, physical education as well as homeroom and lunch. The classes follow the grade level curriculum frameworks of MA but the classes are taught or co-taught by a dually certified special educator. Units are taught at a slower pace often using alternate texts.

Population Served

Students in Foundations classes have been recommended for a small group, highly structured learning environment by their IEP team. These students will be taking the MCAS and are working towards earning a diploma.

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FUNCTIONAL ACADEMIC & POST GRAD PROGRAM

Skills and Post Grad provides intensive, highly individualized functional academic, pre-vocational and vocational training so that students continue to develop to their fullest potential and prepare for adulthood. The program supports students from 9th grade up until their 22nd birthday. Due to the unique nature of their needs, these students require a highly structured, low stimulation environment with clear, consistent routines and specially designed instruction. Student to staff ratios are low to ensure student safety and educational success. The program provides a continuum of classroom and community based services designed to foster the development of functional academics, social pragmatic language, independent living skills and career development.

Population Served

Skills and Post Grad students have disabilities which include, but are not limited to expressive and receptive language processing disorders, intellectual impairments, autistic spectrum disorders, neurological impairments and attention difficulties that significantly impact their overall functioning. Students in the Skills and Post Grad Program will participate in state mandated testing through an alternate assessment and will earn a certificate of attendance.

CONNECTIONS

Connections is a therapeutic program developed to meet the needs of students with emotional disabilities. Students in the Connections Program attend classes in the general education curriculum at the standard, honors, or accelerated level. Students also spend one to two periods a day in the Connections Program providing them with a safe, structured and nurturing environment that facilitates academic and social/emotional growth. A special educator, clinician, and trained teaching assistants work together to meet the needs of the student. Students also participate in both individual and group counseling within the program.

Population Served

Students in Connections have a diagnosed emotional disability and have an IEP. They are dealing with a range of mental health issues including but not limited to anxiety, depression, adjustment disorder and bipolar disorder. This program is recommended through the IEP team.

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TRANSITIONS

Transitions is a short-term program that supports the needs of students re-entering high school from a lengthy absence. Entrance into Transitions begins with a re-entry meeting in which an individual plan is designed to include communication with classroom teachers, making up work for return to classes from the student's original schedule or possibly a changed schedule.

Transitions is also supported by a clinician who provides direct counseling and liaisons with inpatient and day treatment facilities.

POPULATION SERVED

Transitions is available to any student who is out of school for 5 or more days, who needs a quiet setting to catch up on work and support to integrate back to the program they were attending prior to the absence. Students returning to school after a psychiatric hospitalization or who are struggling to attend and/or succeed in school due to a variety of psychological or psychosocial difficulties (including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, etc.) are provided counseling and academic support and are closely monitored in order to tailor supports and services based on individual needs.

PATHWAYS

Pathways is a sub separate program located within Needham High School providing students in Grades 9-12 with an academic curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and high level of therapeutic support.

Pathways is designed for students with significant emotional and psychosocial challenges who necessitate a small structured educational setting with a high staff to student ratio. The program provides students with a highly structured therapeutic milieu in order to help students to make positive choices, build self-esteem, engage in the learning process, and build a transition plan for the future. The Pathways team consists of a special educator and a clinician.

POPULATION SERVED

Students in the Pathways Program have diagnosed emotional disabilities that impact their access to the curriculum. These students are serviced through an Individual Education Program and have been found to need more intensive services than can be provided in the general education classes at Needham High School.

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