

THE

CHALLENGE PROGRAM

PROGRAM

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The CHALLENGE PROGRAM serves the needs of students with emotional and behavioral disorders and a classification of Multiply Disabled. A primary emphasis of this program is to assist students in achieving their individual goals by addressing their social, emotional, and behavioral needs. IEP goals and objectives selected for this population are based on the student's current level of functioning and developed utilizing the ACSSSD's Transition Curriculum. This curriculum is relevant to the needs of the students and cross-correlated with the N.J. Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The program uses a comprehensive classroom management and behavior modification program as a means of motivating students and fostering appropriate behaviors. All staff has been trained in Non-Violence Crisis Intervention as a means of effectively dealing with students in crisis and their related behaviors. A support team of trained staff is available for intervention when student behaviors reach a pre-crisis or crisis level requiring additional staff support. This team ensures proper management of students by supporting the students and classroom staff when intervention is warranted. Through a team approach, the program has assisted students in accessing other programs within the school, participate in the community based work settings and return to their home district.

GOALS

1. To provide an environment and experiences that will result in the improvement of behaviors and social interaction with peers and adults.
2. To provide extensive emotional support and program opportunities while maintaining flexibility to meet individual student needs.

ENTRY CRITERIA

1. Classified as Multiply Handicapped or Emotionally Disturbed.
2. Chronological age 5-16 years.
3. Demonstrates an inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and/or adults.
4. Exhibits an inability to follow conventional school rules, routines or procedures to a degree which is detrimental to the traditional educational process.
5. Student needs for program placement are reviewed on an individual basis.

Staff / Student Ratio:

Two staff (teacher and aide) to eight students.

Program Opportunities:

Project Challenge provides students with many specialized program opportunities. Examples of the programs are as follows:

- **ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION** – The IEP for each student reflects unique learning needs and identifies the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards that will be targeted. Every effort is made to expose students to grade-level content and topics while striving for proficiency at the student's developmental level.
- **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION PROGRAM** – A point system is employed to reward positive behavior and track student progress. A feedback sheet, detailing student behaviors, is sent home to facilitate school/home communication.
- **EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION** – Students are provided routine opportunities to participate in physically interactive group activities to facilitate the development of trust, communication skills, problem solving skills and pro-social skills.
- **SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING** – This aspect of the program promotes decision making and problem solving skills. A nationally validated curriculum is used by classroom teachers to develop and

- implement group lessons, on a weekly basis, within the classroom setting.
- **COUNSELING** – Counseling is provided to students on an individual and/or group basis by school psychologists and social workers.
 - **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES** – Students within this program receive extensive psychiatric support services. These services include therapy by certified psychiatric therapists and behavioral intervention programs when appropriate.
 - **PRE-VOCATIONAL / VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** – As students progress in taking responsibility for managing their behavior, they are offered the opportunities to participate in the school-based School-To-Career Program.
 - **STUDENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM** – When students are capable of managing their behavior, they can access a specialized behavioral program outside of their classrooms. Under the supervision of certified teachers, these students are used as classroom assistants with younger or less capable students. The points earned in this program are connected to a financial value and the student receives a “student incentive” check for the points.
 - **STUDENT RECREATION CENTER** – A Student Recreation Center has also been created as a reward for students who demonstrate appropriate behaviors for a given period of time.

Least Restrictive Placement Options:

As students learn to successfully manage their behavior and respond appropriately to rules and procedures, they have the opportunity to move from a self-contained setting to less restrictive settings. These include access to the following programs outside of the self-contained classes:

- Multiply Disabled Class (non-E.D.)

- Vocational Department within ACSSSD on a part-time or full-time basis for high school age students
- Student Incentive Program
- School-Based and Community-Based work experiences
- Home district placement on a part-time or full-time basis
- Enrichment – Students that can manage their behavior have the opportunity to participate in school teams, specialized art and music skill development and other extra-curricula activities at ACSSSD as well as in their home districts.