



Highlight on Special Education

*MUFSD Board of Education Study Session
October 15, 2019*



~Elementary Special Class
~Secondary TASC Program
~ESP at Mamaroneck High School
~ Transition Academy

What's Notable?

- Developed around the specific needs of a cohort of students over time
- Achieved a high level of success supporting learners with complex learning profiles
- A professional skill set that is constantly refreshed, honed, and adapted according to the cohort
- Daily professional collaboration and planning.
- Home-School partnerships

MAS

Special Class - 12:1:2

Teacher: Mrs. Lori Dressler

Class Support Staff:

Ms. Moriwaki - Teaching Assistant

Ms. Buehler - Aide

Ms. Rivera - Aide

Students' disabilities include:

- Developmental Delays
- Language Impairment
- Autism

There can be up to a 3 year age range in these classes.



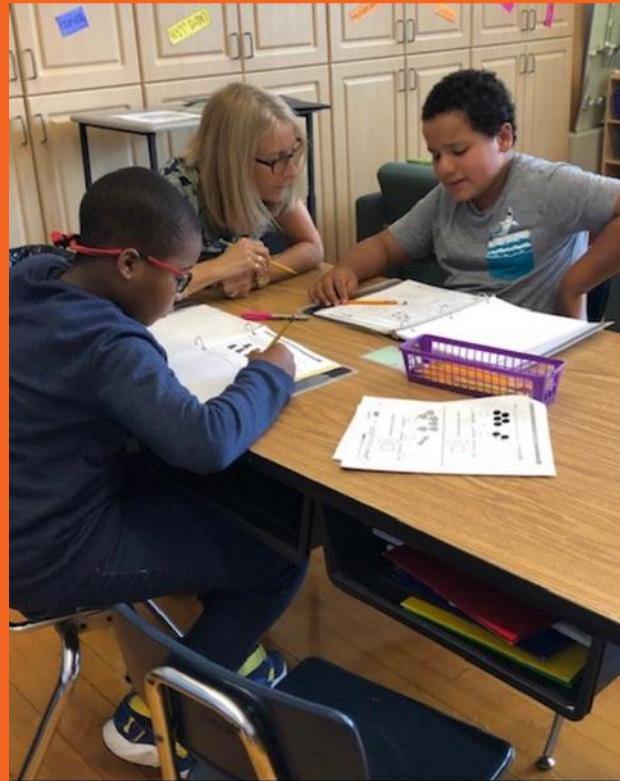
MAS Special Class 12:1:2 - Goals

- To provide students with the academic, social-emotional and life skills which can result in increasingly integrated and less restrictive supports in middle school.
- To provide differentiated support to interact with grade level peers during non-academic periods (lunch, recess, specials).
- For students to be able to engage appropriately outside the supported structure of a school environment is what enables them to be independent, productive members of a community.

MAS Special Class

Academic Focus

- Differentiated and individualized instruction in reading, writing and math
- Modified grade level curriculum/topics in Social Studies and Science
- Instruction is given through 1:1 small groups and learning stations
- Strong collaboration with related service providers (Speech/OT/PT) - Frequent team meetings to discuss strengths, needs and growth.
We work together to plan service aids and supports to be used in and out of the classroom

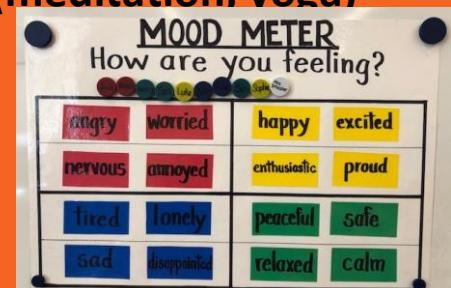




MAS Special Class

Social Emotional Focus

- Positive behavioral supports and interventions
- Social skills/interpersonal skills/coping skills explicitly taught through role playing, modeling, repeated practice and picture books
- Emphasis on independence and time management skills
- A focus on emotional regulation - teaching of strategies/skills (meditation, yoga)
- Psychologist is connected to the program and supports students both in and out of the classroom- weekly lunch bunch groups, monthly classroom group lessons



Noteeworthy

Recipient of several grants that target the unique needs of our students.

- ❖ **Amazon Alexa Echo** - A tool that is used to support language and academic skills, executive functioning and mindfulness.
- ❖ **Cooking in the Classroom** - Teaching students to prepare simple meals/snacks to improve independence and nutrition.
- ❖ **Social Emotional Picture Books** - These books serve as tools for guiding conversations about SEL topics and as a way for students to learn from characters' actions and experiences and relate them to their own.
- ❖ **Flexible Seating** - Increases student engagement and addresses a variety of learning styles.

Potential Pathways

Within the elementary years, student programs change based on individual needs/progress:

- Mainstream into a general education class for specific subjects
- Move into a co-teaching class (part-time or full time)
- Shift into a general education class

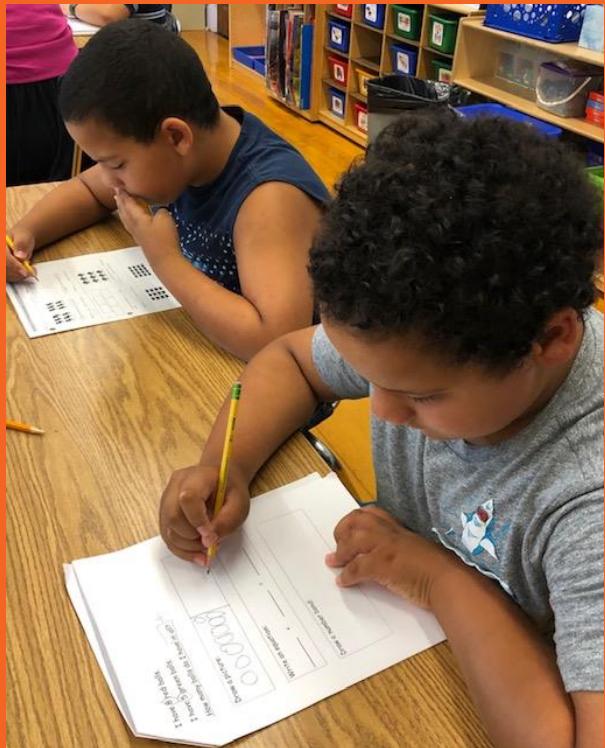
Students enter middle school on different paths:

- Special Class
- Combination of special class and ICT
- Full time ICT



Parent Quote

“The special class settings offered at Mamaroneck Avenue School have been immeasurably valuable to my 3 children. The teachers and staff throughout the years have been committed to the growth of academic, language, and social skills. In special classes, my children are provided the time and support they need to achieve their goals while at the same time growing more independent every year. We are so grateful they have had the opportunity to be educated in their home school district as this has made my children more a part of this community.”



Parent Quote



"I had to accept early on in my daughter's education, that she may not be able to function in a regular class setting, but little did I know that she would come upon some amazing educators in a unique and equally amazing setting. This special class is not just special because of the students in it, but because high expectations are the norm. Sophia has gained confidence in her abilities and shines even when challenged. I am truly grateful each day that my daughter goes to a class where a culture of learning, care and respect are fostered and developed daily."

Hommocks

Therapeutic Academic Support Class (TASC Program)

- Modeled after BOCES Irvington program, but less restrictive.
- Initial cohort grade 6 only. Currently 6-12.
- Cohorts capped at 12. Skills class capped at 8.
- Oversensitivity to triggers in the school environment.
- Need for in-class emotional, behavioral, and academic support.

Hommocks

Therapeutic Academic Support Class (TASC Program)

Goal of TASC:

- ◆ Increase student independence in the ability to manage their social and emotional functioning so that they can reach their academic potential

Students are:

- ◆ Cognitively and academically capable
- ◆ Socially and emotionally fragile (i.e. anxiety, mood dysregulation, Autism, ADHD)
- ◆ Social and emotional fragility prohibits their ability to function in the classroom without TASC support

TASC Staff Members

HMX Special Education Teachers:

Jennifer Martinez (6th grade)

Nicholas LaRosa (7th grade)

Haley Weber (8th grade)

Psychologist: Alessandra Twomey, Psy.D.

**Aides: Yusef Yizar, Carolina Yan,
Patricia Scerno, Karen Guinne,
Iyanna Clarke, Suella Drummond**



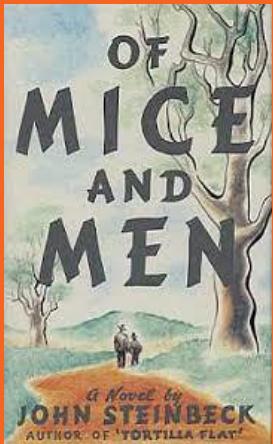
TASC Space

Homebase classroom:



- **Three special education teachers**
- **Psychologist's office**
- **Middle of second floor of South House**
- **Close proximity to students' general education classrooms**
- **Location for Skills Classes**
- **Lunch socialization support**
- **Safe, supportive space to build relationships and promote emotional regulation**

Academics



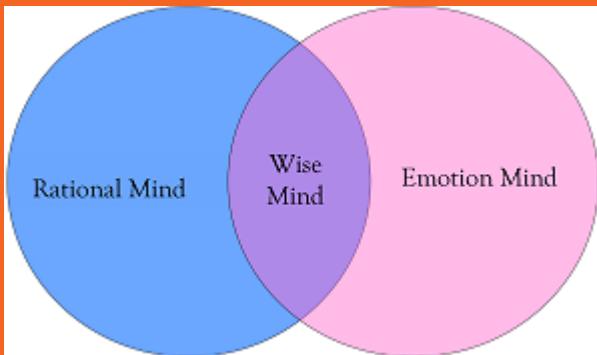
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- Special educator for each grade with support staff
- Consultant Teacher Support in all core general education, regents track academic classes
- Still provides academic rigor
- Aide support, when needed, in non-core classes and unstructured activities
- Academic needs are supported through a variety of programs (i.e. ICT, Special Class, Consultant Teacher Support)

Social and Emotional Support

Staff training in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Promote skill development in the following areas:



- **Mindfulness**
- **Emotion regulation**
- **Distress tolerance**
- **Interpersonal effectiveness skills**

Generalization of skills from counseling sessions to the classroom to manage emotional regulation so that students are accessible for learning.

Continuum of skill development across grade levels to foster internalization of DBT skills.

Our “Zen Den”



TASC “Zen Den”

- Access to sensory tools and mindfulness applications on iPods that are located in the TASC homebase classroom
- Proactive and reactive strategies
 - Strengthening and practice of mindfulness skills
 - De-escalation of dysregulated behavior
- Goal is to increase independent use of these strategies

Communication, Consultation, and Collaboration

Daily consultation and communication between TASC staff members

- Weekly team meetings with general education team
- Real time team-driven interventions with goal being for students' swift return to class and academic demands.
- Frequent and consistent communication with parents and outside providers (i.e. psychologists, psychiatrists) regarding student's daily emotional functioning and the impact upon their learning.
- Monthly consultation with Cognitive Behavioral Consultants of Westchester to support DBT work.

It Takes a Village...

Relationship building is key to the success of the interventions we put in place to support students.



Relationships:

- **Student to teacher**
- **Student to student**
- **Staff to parent**
- **Teacher to teacher**
- **Staff to outside providers**
- **Staff to administration**

Parent Quotes

“TASC was very supportive for our child. We didn’t know it existed until the school approached us and followed through with what would be a life changing experience for our child. Having a place to go when a child is feeling anxious or in a bad head space is amazing. The support is endless and the communication is key.”

“The TASC program has been invaluable for our son with anxiety, Autism, and attention issues. It provides our son the opportunity to attend mainstream classes, even advanced classes, with the support he needs to get through the day. There is no other setting that will provide him with the academic rigor he needs, with the appropriate support.”

Indicators of Success

- Excellent academic performance across grade levels
 - Achieve at least 1 high school credit
 - 99% passing rate for the Earth Science Regents exam
- Internalization of DBT and other coping skills to manage emotional regulation
- Increased success in social relationships and self-advocacy skills
- Increased participation in social activities
- Increased independence
- Less restrictive support while still achieving academic success
- Successful transition to high school
 - Ongoing articulation of students' needs with MHS staff
 - MHS visit with rising 9th graders in TASC program

MHS TASC



Special Education Teachers:
Ron Blain (9th-12th grade)
Marni Ross (9th-12th grade)

Psychologist: Kelly Carrillo

Aides/T.A.s: Rene Alvarra, Indira Bashli, Joe Eacobacci, Tim Johanson, Brad Levine, Joseph Phillips, Nicole Pierrette, and Maria Siciliano

MHS TASC Program

- 4 year program with 1 cohort per graduating class
- Students attend general education classes that are supported by aides, teaching assistants, and the special education teachers.
- Students are provided individualized support through a Skills Class
- TASC room- acts as a home base
- Students have a range of both academic and social/emotional needs that require support throughout the day
- Psychologist is attached to the program to support students' social/emotional needs



TASC Student Profile

Students have a range of both academic and social/emotional needs that require support throughout the day

- Anxiety
- Emotional Disturbances
- Autism
- ADHD
- Mood Disorders
- Executive Functioning



MHS TASC Program

Goal: To increase student independence to prepare for post-secondary goals.

Skill Development

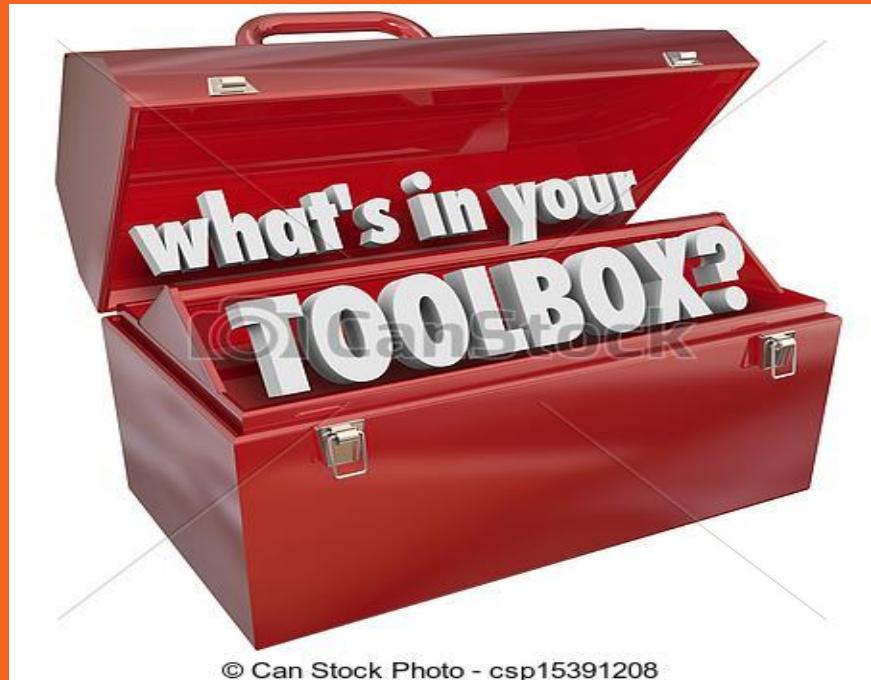


Collaboration



Skill Development

- Increasing self-awareness and the ability to regulate emotions
- Build self-advocacy
- Enhance social skills and social engagement
- Improve student skills-i.e.executive functioning, study skills, note taking, organization, time management, & writing skills



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Staff

- Daily Check-ins
regarding student
functioning

COLLABORATION

Administration

- Scheduling
- Student & Parent Meetings

Home-School

- parent conferences
- daily emails
- behavior contracts

Teachers

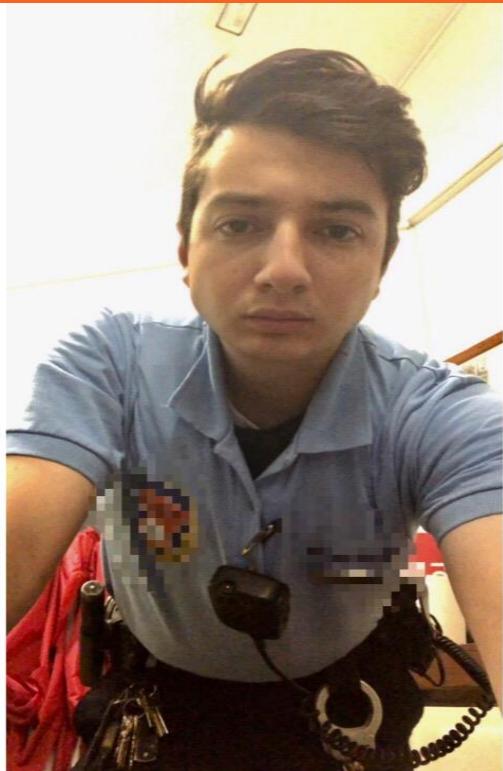
- Team Meeting
- Ongoing Communication

Program Outcomes

- All students have successfully passed New York State Regents requirements and graduate with a local diploma
- Excellent rate of student success beyond high school
- Most graduates are currently in college with a small number working full time.
- Strong emphasis on transition planning and independence
 - Some students do not remain in TASC for all 4 years and move to less restrictive
- Students return every year showing great appreciation for what the program has personally done for them.

College Success





Student Graduate Quote

- “Not a day goes by I don’t think about you guys. You all helped me become the man I am today.” - *Anthony Tufo*
- “I don’t know what I would have done or if I would have made it through high school without this program.” - *Peter Grega*

Parent Quote

“When I moved to Mamaroneck 4 years ago, I remember dropping him off on his first days of high school and I knew that he was going through so much. I was so afraid that he would become depressed. He was so timid and shy!



He received so much more than academic support. You were able to support him as he confided in you about his personal struggles and guide him forward.

Of course, I have always realized that he has the potential to be a success. You helped HIM realize it, and there will never be adequate words for me to express my gratitude.

Former TASC Student



ESP- MHS



Emotional Support Program (ESP)

- Created in 2017 as an alternative to out of district placements for students who are emotionally fragile
- Students are enrolled in MHS courses and access center-based support where needed

ESP serves the following students:

- Up to 12 students
- 9th - 12th grade
- Classified and non-classified
- Emotionally fragile
- Buy-in

ESP Team



★ **Dr. Storey Trush** (Psychologist)



★ **Ms. Mara Hersh** (Special Education Teacher)



★ **Ms. Meaghan Boyle** (Teaching Assistant)



★ **Ms. Jeana Lotano** (Teaching Assistant)



Creation of the Program

Building a Cohort:

- Common challenges and need for similar supports
- Small, therapeutic environment within larger school

Designed for Best Practice:

- Bringing together what worked well from OOD placements
- Adding what was missing
 - Advanced courses and electives
 - Peer group activities/community
 - Academic rigor



Example of an ESP student across 4 years

Pre -ESP: Student struggled with significant school avoidance, general instability and maladaptive behaviors - no credits earned.

2nd year in ESP: Continued improvements in school/class attendance (with intensive staff support), ongoing challenges with mood fluctuation although much improved general functioning- 6 credits earned.

Future: Some students may require additional time in high school in order to graduate. ESP would continue to adapt the level of support to meet their changing needs.



1st year in ESP: Improved school attendance, class attendance still inconsistent, established relationships with ESP staff, ESP staff providing intensive support - 2 credits earned.

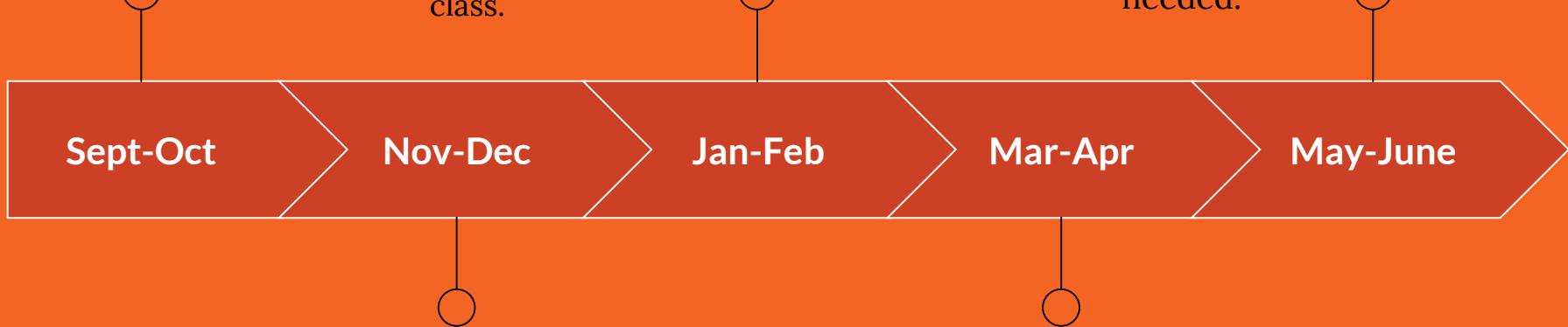
3rd year in ESP: Attending all classes with moderate staff support, ESP providing monitoring of attendance and work production in all classes as well as problem solving - projected to earn 6.5 credits.

Example of an ESP student across 1 year

Student presented with significant school phobic behaviors and was unable to enter the building.

Emotional functioning beginning to stabilize. Student showing ability to complete work in ESP program. Student receptive to accessing academic support from teachers in ESP space and establish relationships prior to returning to class.

Student attending **4-6 classes daily** with moderate support. Occasionally attending 1-2 classes independently. Student accessing ESP center throughout the day, when needed.



Gradual exposure treatment, involving small successive steps towards entering building and ESP program in partnership with outside providers. Focus of work on emotional well-being. Not completing academic work or attending classes.

Student showing increasing comfort attending **1-3 classes daily** with ESP staff present. When unable to attend class, student completes work remotely in ESP with staff and teacher support.

Creative Solutions

THERAPEUTIC RESPONSES

- Individual and group counseling (DBT)
- Crisis management
- Exposure therapy
- Contact with outside providers

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

- Real-time communication
- Private entrance/space
- Meeting students in alternate locations

PROGRESS MONITORING

- Real-time attendance
- Parent contact
- Partnerships with teachers
- Modifications to support students' needs
- Data informed planning and decision-making





Outcomes

- Students remain in district, as there is less need for out of district placements
- Increased school and class attendance
- Better emotional regulation and use of effective coping skills and problem solving
- Successful completion of high school for students previously at risk of not graduating
- Increased credit fulfillment
- Improved staff and peer communication and interactions

How has ESP helped you? How do you use the program?

ESP has helped me overcome negative and stressful thoughts. ESP makes me feel more comfortable than the general school environment. I use the program in order to feel better about myself, and remove myself from the chaotic environment.

How has ESP helped you? How do you use the program?

ESP is a safe space for students. Getting work done at a comfortable pace is the most helpful thing that has come out of my time at ESP :)

How has ESP helped you? How do you use the program?

ESP has helped me get back into school and help overcome anxiety. I use the program to do work in more of a safe space and meet with members for short sessions. The room is a nice space to focus and calm myself.

How has ESP helped you? How do you use the program?

STARTING THE DAY IN A QUIET, RELAXED SPOT REALLY HELPS ME GET SETTLED IN AND HELPS ME PREPARE FOR THE LONG DAY AHEAD OF ME.

How has ESP helped you? How do you use the program?

ESP has helped me to feel more relieved with the flow of the school and I use the program by doing homework that I may have not finished and to read more before class. It is a very comforting place.

How has ESP helped you? How do you use the program?

ESP HAS HELPED ME MANAGE MY ANXIETY AND GET TO MY CLASSES PAST YEARS AND OVERALL BE MORE HEALTHY IN LIFE IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL. THERE ARE A LOT MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME TO GET MY WORK DONE WHICH I LIKE WHILE EATING AND THE STAFF IS ALWAYS AROUND TO HELP



Transition Academy provides students who have cognitive disabilities with the functional, social-emotional and vocational skills so that they may become independent, productive and fulfilled members of the community.



Who We Are

Laura Petersen

Transition Counselor



Grayson O'Reilly

Special Education Teacher



Alyssa Kazakevich

Special Education Teacher



Our Support Team



Stephen Pride, Angela Fraioli, Michelle RAYSOR, Norma Havranek, Arlene Jacobelli, Linda Geiger, Ebony Yizar,
Cat LaRusso, Enkeleta Temali, Francine Talt, Kathy Imperiale, Susan Voina, Mercedes Samayoa-Rodriguez,
Terence Saunders-Rhett, Lori Kaplan, Daniella Nardozzi, Krystyna Stepien, Amalia Maldonado

Who Are Our Students?



- Students in need of instruction on functional, social-emotional and vocational skills
- 19 students are currently enrolled full time in Transition Academy
- Classes are a 12:1:2 ratio
- Students exit at age 21, most likely with a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential



Program Goals

Transition Academy aims to change the landscape of Mamaroneck and Larchmont through developing abled, resilient, fulfilled and independent young adults- ready to be apart of the fabric of our community.

Teaching-Exposure-Generalization-Specialization



Pathway to Independence

Classroom Based Instruction



Teaching

Refined Application of Skills



Exposure

Generalization

Specialization

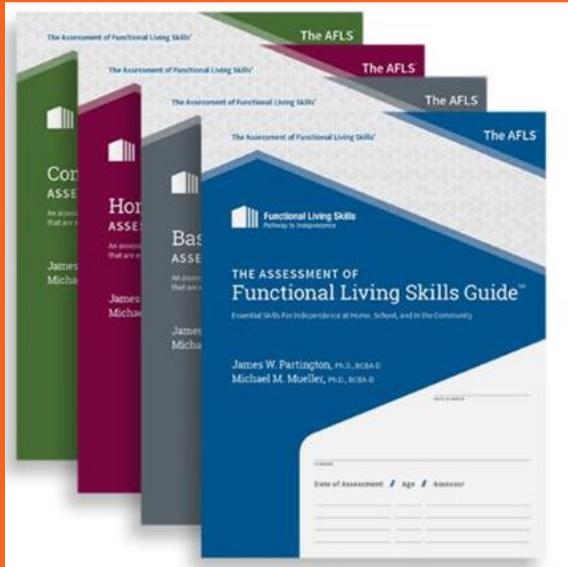


Authentic Learning Experiences



Community Internship

Assessment at the Foundation of our Teaching



- **Assessment of Functional Living Skills**
 - Vocational, Home, Community
- This assessment guides curricula and individualized educational goals
- As a student matures in the program, their capabilities and interest designate their path

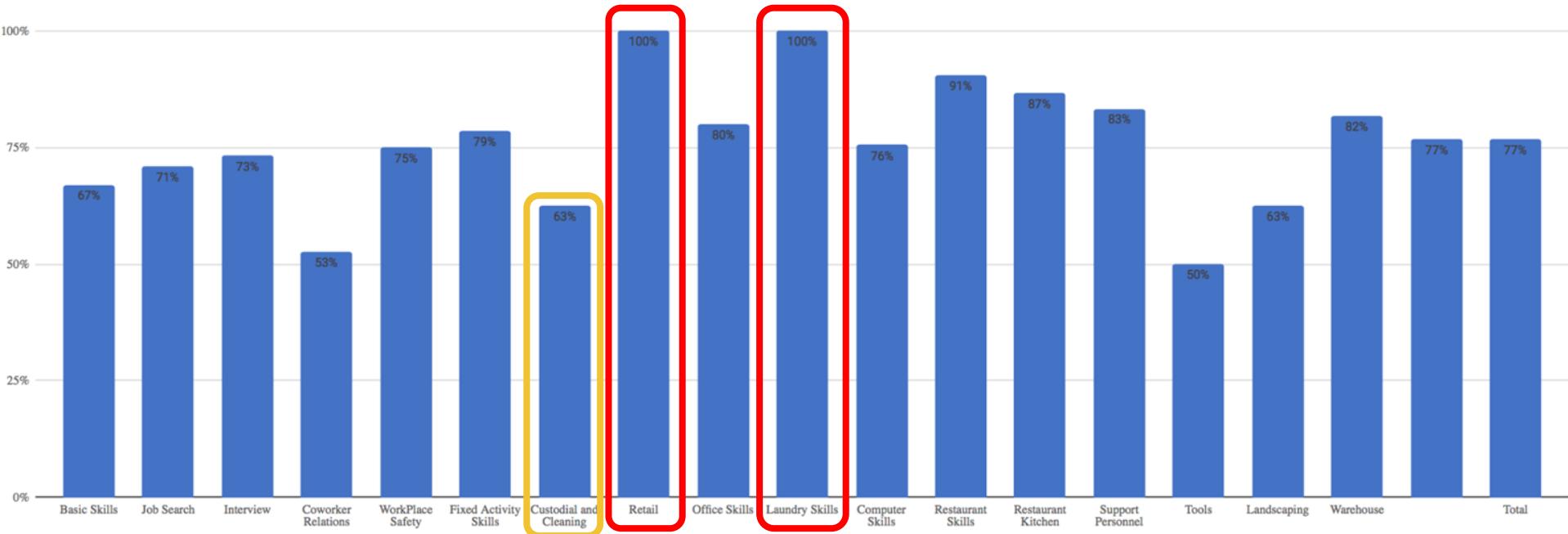
Teaching

Generalization

Exposure

Specialization

Assessment of Skills by Vocational Area



June 19



What We Teach: Functional Living Skills

Activities of Daily Living



Examples of Application:

Home

Preparing a Snack

Laundry

Community

Crossing The Street Safely

Vocation

Brushing Teeth/Shaving

English Skills



Examples of Application:

Home

Reading a Recipe

Community

Following a Shopping List

Vocation

Emailing/ Calling a Boss

Filling out Job Applications

Math Skills



Examples of Application:

Home

Time management

Budgeting

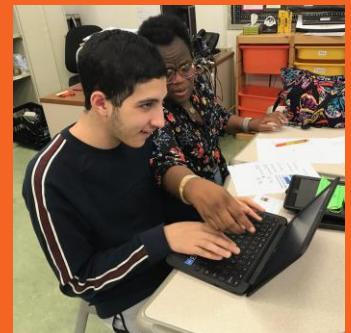
Community

Monetary skills

Vocation

Sorting Expiration Dates

Executive Functioning Skills



Examples of Application:

Home

Planning and Organizing

Community

Navigating using Directions

Vocation

Maintaining a Schedule

Advocacy / Problem Solving

Example: Laundry Skills

Classroom Based Instruction:

Activities of Daily Living



Authentic Learning Experiences

Community Outings to Excelsior & Wash and Dry



Refined Application of Skills

TA Laundry Program



Community Internship

Equinox



Teaching

Generalization

Exposure

Specialization

Social Emotional Skills

Health & Wellness

Behavior Specialist

Psychologist-led Social
skills group

Mindfulness

Speech therapist and
vocational partnership

Therapeutic Learning
Center & Peace Corner

Authentic Learning
Experiences

School-based businesses

Be a Friend Club



Community Internship
Transition Academy
Community experiences



Teaching

Exposure

Generalization

Specialization

Vocational Skills



Authentic Learning



MHS Businesses



Vocational



Internship



Task Analysis Data Sheet

- Used by students as a checklist
- Used by job coaches to collect data

Name:	I - Independent	G - gestural	V - verbal	M - model	P - physical
Date:					
Beginning Shift					
Let job coach know it is time to leave for work					
Walk from MHS to Town Center					
Enter town center					
Walk to HR to check-in					
Return to front desk					
Take out your materials for work					
Greeting and Assisting Customer					
When someone enters the Town Center say "Good Morning or Afternoon!"					
Can I help you find where you are going?"					
If they say no, say "Ok, have a nice day!"					
If they say yes, ask "where are you going today?"					
Wait for them to answer					
Directing Customers					
Using your map or notes as needed, find their location					
Direct the person to where they need to go					
Salutation					
Say "Have a nice day!"					
Ending Work Shift					
Let your job coach know it is time to leave work					
When your shift is over collect all your materials					
Report to HR to let them know your shift is over					
Walk from Town Center to MHS					
Percentage of independence					



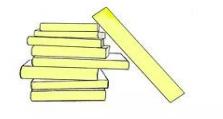
Collected Data

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Town Center						
Date						
9/16/2019	60%	First day this year for greeting. I worked with student a lot to get back in the routines that go with greeter job.				
9/18/2019	57%	Student is improving in giving short, direct, clear directions. We added giving choice of stairs or elevator and indicating their locations.				
9/23/2019	64%	At school:Working on student initiating looking over work binder before work--especially map; initiating leaving for work; At work: student is improving in giving short, direct, clear directions. We added giving choice of stairs or elevator and indicating their locations.				
9/25/2019	53%	Before work, I'm still prompting him to study work binder bf work, working on using larger gestures when directing people, using consistent language when giving directions.				
10/2/2019	53%	Needed reinforcement for saying goodbye consistently. I suggested he bring something to read during his downtime, rather than converse with me.				

Town Center vs. Date

Date	Performance (%)
9/16/2019	60
9/18/2019	55
9/20/2019	55
9/22/2019	60
9/24/2019	65
9/26/2019	52
9/28/2019	52
9/30/2019	52

Current MHS Vocational Education Sites



More Than Teaching...

Community Outreach

- Vocational Partnerships
 - Job sites for students
- Transition Academy Community Experiences
 - Volunteer work
 - Travel Training
 - Application of classroom skills in authentic environments

Develop Partnerships

- Teachtown
- The Arc Westchester

Counseling Families

- Transition Fair
- OPWDD
- ACCES-VR



Who Makes This Possible

ARC of Westchester

Assistive Technology Specialist

Psychologists

Behavior Specialist

Occupational Therapist

Speech Therapist

SEPTA

Student Support Services

Transition Academy Families

Community members / Business

Partners

Teachtown



Q & A

