

Citywide Life Skills Program

This citywide special education program serves Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) students from ninth to twelfth grade with significant educational needs related to significant learning and social emotional needs. Individuals appropriate for this specialized citywide program are those who require a higher level of special education services than can be provided in the student's community or home school.

Characteristics of Students:

Typically, the students served in this program have special education disability designations of Students Needing Alternative Programming (SNAP), Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), or Mild Developmental Cognitive Disability (Mild DCD). Some students may also have behavior needs in addition to their primary academic disabilities. Most of these students are referred in their middle school years, when the team determines the student will need a more intensive program for high school. Generally, students in this program are significantly discrepant from peers academically. Often, these students' academic skills are below grade level in multiple areas.

Program Description:

The Life Skills programs are tailored to meet individual student needs, and they generally include a focus on basic academic skills with a shift toward more functional programming and preparing students for independent living and working. After age 16, students may spend a portion of their school day at a supervised job site. Students' IEP goals typically include functional academic as well as life skills areas. The goal is to prepare students for independent adult life. Vocational/transition planning is a focus for students. Many students also need assistance in improving their social and problem-solving skills.

Two examples of reading interventions used in the this program include:

System 44 is a foundational reading program designed to get the most challenged readers in Grades 3-12+ on the path to college and career. A personalized learning progression with explicit instruction engage students in reading, writing, language, speaking and listening. It is used daily with small class sizes. Students use the software daily and rotate between Small-Group Differentiated Instruction and modeled and independent reading.

READ 180 is a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction and assessment designed for struggling readers in Grades 4-12+. It is intended to move students reading two or more years below grade level towards independence with rigorous, grade level text. READ 180 leverages adaptive technology to individualize instruction for students and provide data for differentiation.