

**Special Education  
Program Descriptions:  
Acton Public Schools  
Acton-Boxborough  
Regional School District  
2005-2006**

This list of programs and services is not exhaustive. APS and ABRSD may develop new programs and services and expand existing services throughout the school year.

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**  
**Program Descriptions: Acton-Boxborough Regional High School**

**Overview**

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District offers a wide range of identification, diagnostic, educational, therapeutic and support services for students in Grades 7-12.

**Therapy Services Available** – this list is an example and not exhaustive

Speech and Language Services  
Psychological and Counseling Services  
Occupational Therapy  
Physical Therapy  
Mobility Services  
Vision Services  
Deaf Education

## **Program**

### **School to Work Alternative Program (SWAP)**

#### **General Overview**

In 1998, the SWAP program was initiated at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School for a small group of students who were experiencing chronic attendance difficulties, difficulty maintaining acceptable grades, and behavioral challenges. SWAP, a program that services both special and regular education students, offers an alternative educational experience for students over 16 within the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, but outside of the regular school day.

#### **Curriculum Methodology**

All students are required to participate in both an academic and vocational component while successfully maintaining a 20-hour a week job. (All students received small group instruction based on their individual needs.) Students are taught skills, which will help them become successful both in the classroom and in the world of work.

## **Program**

### **Learning Centers – Grades 9-12**

#### **General Overview**

Learning Center programs provide special education services to students who have diagnosed learning disabilities and require varying degrees of skill development and academic support. The goal of the Learning Center is to help students become independent learners in the regular education setting. The great majority of students are fully enrolled in mainstream classes. All students are working towards earning an Acton-Boxborough diploma.

#### **Curriculum Methodology**

All students receive small group and/or individual instruction in the Learning Center. The time spent in the Learning Center depends on individual needs and scheduling priorities. Learning Center staff work cooperatively with regular education teachers to individualize or supplement the curriculum to meet the needs of students. In general, classroom materials are used to develop skills in reading comprehension, written expression, mathematics, and study skills such as note taking, outlining, report writing and test preparation.

Within the Learning Center, special education staff support many regular education courses. A supported experience allows special and regular education teachers to share instructional techniques and strategies, and coordinate services for individual students. While not all students require this additional degree of support, supported classes are available across curriculum areas.

## **Program**

### **R.E.A.L.**

#### **General Overview**

The R.E.A.L. is a therapeutic behavioral program designed to facilitate behavioral change in students and to create a more positive attitude in students towards school and their future. All students are viewed as high-risk students with significant behavioral, social or emotional needs. Students who attend R.E.A.L. have typically experienced previous school difficulties. Some are transitioning back from out-of-district placements.

#### **Curriculum Methodology**

Within R.E.A.L., students are mainstreamed for the majority of their courses with classroom support. Classroom support is provided to support the learning style and work habits of each student.

Behavioral programming is offered within the program as well as individual and group counseling. Each student can anticipate personal growth in areas of self-esteem, decision making, communication, and problem solving as well as in assuming increased responsibility for his or her own behavior. All students are expected to participate in the counseling component of the program.

## **Program**

### **Occupational Development Program (ODP)**

#### **General Overview**

Most students involved with the Occupational Development Program will be unable to meet the requirements for an Acton-Boxborough diploma. The focus of this program is to provide an age appropriate, functional and inclusive education for students with moderate to intensive special needs. Students are considered unique individuals with diverse learning styles and skills. A highly individualized educational program is provided to each student that includes time within the general education curriculum as well as small group remediative basic skill instruction. Flexible staffing and scheduling allows for students to learn in the company of their peers in general education classrooms as well as through small group instruction geared to meeting individual needs. Each student's schedule is determined based on their individual needs and priorities.

#### **Curriculum Methodology**

All academics not taken in the mainstream are taken in a small group setting. In these small group classes, individual learning styles and skill levels are addressed within content areas. An inclusion model is encouraged for non-academic subjects and for certain general education classes depending on each student's needs.

For some students, increased skills may lead to participation in small group special education academic classes outside of the ODP classroom. The focus in these classes is to parallel the mainstream curriculum as much as possible while enhancing skill levels that will enable students to work towards increased mainstream participation. These courses fulfill graduation requirements and prepare students for MCAS participation.

At the age of 16, employability training becomes a priority within the Occupational Development Program. ODP students follow a coordinated "tier system" within various in-school and community work settings where fundamental work behaviors and attitudes are taught, practiced and reinforced. Individual productivity levels, work quality, ability, and personal strengths are closely considered and monitored. Once fundamental employability goals have been achieved, students rotate through a number of "career clusters" to prepare them for vocational choices outside of high school.

In addition to a highly individualized academic program, a comprehensive life skills curriculum is also offered to all students. Students are grouped according to skill ability and rotate through a curriculum that addresses topics such as: nutrition and meal planning, sex education, telephone skills, first aid and CPR, travel training, restaurant and leisure skills, citizenship and current events.

### **Specialized Services**

Speech and language services are provided to students in small groups several times weekly and strategies are integrated across the curriculum throughout the school day as well. Students also participate in small group and individual counseling where conflict resolution, self-esteem and social issues are targeted. Adaptive physical education classes are offered to students based on individual need. Emphasis is on developing motor coordination, increasing strength, playing games, following rules and directions, and improving social relationships. Some students also participate in mainstream physical education classes and in extracurricular activities, sports, and school clubs.

## **Program**

### **Supported Career Education Program**

#### **General Overview**

The Supported Career Education Program is a highly structured program for students who need close monitoring, a high degree of staff/student involvement, and academic work individualized to meet specific learning needs.

All SCE students have a unique learning style as well as a specific learning and/or communication disability. All students exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Difficulties with oral or written expression
- Difficulties with reading and reading comprehension
- Difficulties with math computation and applications
- High anxiety levels, distractibility and/or focussing difficulties
- Significant difficulties with all aspects of organization and academic production

#### **Curriculum Methodology**

Students within the SCE program are working to earn a high school diploma. In this vein, many students participate in supported mainstream classes where classroom teachers and special education staff can share instructional techniques and strategies, and coordinate services for individual students.

For some students, not all-academic classes are taken in a mainstream setting. In small group credit bearing special education classes, students' individual learning styles are addressed within content areas. Intensive and specialized basic skill instruction is also provided. The focus is to parallel the mainstream curriculum as much as possible while enhancing skill levels that will enable students to work towards increased mainstream participation. These courses fulfill graduation requirements and prepare students for MCAS participation.

## **Specialized Services**

For some SCE students, speech and language services are provided to students individually or in small groups several times weekly. Again students are grouped by skill ability. Students also participate in small group and individual counseling where conflict resolution, self-esteem and social issues are targeted.

For many students, participation in a life skills employability training is recommended. If prioritized, SCE students follow a coordinated “tier system” within various in-school and community work settings where fundamental work behaviors and attitudes are taught, practiced and reinforced. Individual productivity levels, work quality, and personal strengths are closely considered and monitored. Once fundamental employability goals have been achieved, students rotate through a number of “career clusters” to prepare them for vocational choices outside of high school. Within the life skills program, students are grouped according to skill ability and rotate through a curriculum that addresses topics such as: using community resources, career planning, health and safety, and social skill building.