

Alternative Cooperative Education Program Description

The Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE) Program is a multi-occupational Career and Technical Education program for students with identified special education needs as well as students who are at risk of dropping out of school. All 10 DPS high schools have Special Education ACE programs and Emily Griffith High School has a high-risk ACE program.

- The ACE Program strives to prepare young adults to be occupationally effective, socially responsible and functionally independent.
- All high school students with identified special education needs (ages 14 - 21) are eligible to receive services from the ACE Program. Placement in the program is based on the recommendation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.
- Students in the high-risk model are eligible in grades 9-12.
- All students successfully completing classes in the ACE Program earn credits toward a high school diploma.
- The ACE Program provides students with the opportunity for shadowing experiences, internships, apprenticeships and paid employment.
- Students may enroll in the ACE Program in their freshman year and continue through their senior year.
- ACE programs include both a work or training component and a career class which teaches vocational assessments, job readiness skills, interviewing techniques, resume writing, work ethics, career research, life/transition skills, and job placement or training.
- ACE students have the opportunity to become involved in any of the career and technical student organizations (CTSO's) in the high school.

Work experiences for pupils (3-40 hours weekly) in the ACE Program typically begin with in-school training stations and/or service learning projects. Next, is a placement within the community where students learn specific on-the-job skills and may be for pay or for service learning credit.

The length of time a student stays in the ACE Program is dependent on the ability, maturity, age and level of independence of each student. Older ACE students may have successfully completed at least two semesters of CTE classes and they have the recommendation to work or be trained full-time in the community written in their IEP or Transition Plan. These students typically work or are at training sites in the community from 30-40 hours a week.

The credentialed teacher-coordinator for the ACE Program teaches at least one CTE related class and collaborates with academic teachers to monitor and assure the ACE students' IEP goals and objectives are being addressed and that students are meeting the Colorado ACE Program Curriculum Standards.

Depending on the school of attendance, students in the ACE Program may take any of the following CTE vocationally related classes: Vocations 1-4; Vocations/Transition 1 -2; Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE) 1 -2; or Career and Technical Program (CTP at Emily Griffith High School). In addition to the vocationally related class, students enroll in a cooperative work experience - either Work Experience and Study (WES) or Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE) Training.