



# The Private School Option for Students with Disabilities



WHAT PARENTS **NEED**  
**Need to K** TO **KNOW**



# Letter from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST OTHER PARENTS that are considering a private special education school for your child with a disability, you are worried and wondering: Is it the right decision?

You know that most students with disabilities can and should learn alongside typical peers at their local public school. In order to succeed, these students should receive all necessary services, supports, modifications, and accommodations to help them learn and meet their IEP goals.

In some situations, however, public schools are simply not able to do this. That is why the federal law requires your local school district to consider a full range of options – including private schools – when determining a child’s placement.

Your child – and every child – has the right to maximize his or her full potential. If that cannot occur in your local school, you have the right to have your child educated, at no cost to you, in another setting.

We developed this guide to help you learn more about one of your options: private schools for students with disabilities.



Gerard Thiers, Executive Director,  
ASAH

# A History of **SUCCESS**

SINCE 1895, PRIVATE SPECIAL education schools have been providing high-quality special education services and supports to students with disabilities in New Jersey. Many private schools were started by parents just like you who were frustrated by a lack of appropriate, effective options, and who wanted a unique environment for their child that could offer highly specialized instruction and services.



Today, there are nearly 200 private schools serving more than 12,500 students with a wide range of disabilities including learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, mental health and behavioral disabilities, and intellectual disabilities, such as Down syndrome. All are approved and monitored by the State of New Jersey.

“I had a **dream** for my son, and I wanted him to go to a **school with others** who could believe in him!”

## One of Your **OPTIONS**

“My Child Study Team and I looked at a number of **options**, both public and private, for my daughter. It was **clear** that the **only place** that could meet her needs was a private school.”



FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS REQUIRE THAT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL district offer all students with disabilities a full continuum of options including placement in a private school. If you and your school district determine that a private school is the appropriate setting for your child, your local school district pays the tuition and provides transportation to and from the school.

# Exceeding Parents' **EXPECTATIONS**

IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST PARENTS, YOU ARE LOOKING FOR:

- A school with a positive history of educating children with disabilities like your son or daughter.
- A school that recognizes your child for who he or she is, with unique talents and strengths, and unique challenges.
- A school that can implement your child's IEP and can meet all of your child's educational needs.
- A school with well supervised staff trained to educate children and youth with disabilities, and that is accountable for your child's progress.
- A school in which your child feels safe and valued.
- A school that will use the technologies and research-based teaching strategies that can make a difference.
- A school with a network of community referrals to support your family and your child beyond the school day, and after graduation.
- A school that values parent participation and recognizes it as essential to the success of a child.
- A school that offers the same Core Curriculum Content Standards as those required in public schools.
- A school in which students are fully included in all aspects of school life, from assemblies and field trips, to school teams, proms, and the school play.

“Here, **my input** is sought out and valued. I am part of a **team!** The teachers, the therapists, the director – they actually **WANT** parents to come to the school, observe and **get involved.**”



# Meeting Students' **NEEDS**

PRIVATE SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES EXIST FOR one reason: to serve children with disabilities. They are creative, flexible environments that can truly individualize their educational program to meet the unique needs of each child. Many offer a full range of related services, such as speech, physical, and occupational therapies, and assistive technology. Many serve children who have not succeeded in other settings, and who may have a history of challenging behavior. And because they are small, the entire staff at a private school can really get to know each child.



“Here, everyone knows **my son**.  
He does not **stand out** because  
of his disabilities. He stands out  
**because of who he is!**”



# The Teachers Make the **DIFFERENCE**

THE TEACHERS AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL ARE UNIQUELY QUALIFIED, energetic and motivated. They became teachers because they love children; they remain teachers because they know that working at a private school allows them to truly make a difference in the life of a child. At a private school they can teach smaller classes with students they get to know personally. They are encouraged by other teachers and administrators who value their commitment, skill, and talent. The internal network of support at a private school, and the high morale it generates, helps to create an environment of success for all.

They must meet the same rigorous certification and credentialing standards as their public school colleagues.



“Since my daughter has been attending a **private school**, the most amazingly **gifted** and dedicated **teachers** have been part of her life.”

# Offering Specialized **SERVICES**

Private schools can provide a full range of supports and services designed to prepare students with disabilities to be fully participating members of their families and communities.

- Community integration and community-based instruction
- A full range of therapies and related services
- School-wide and individualized positive behavioral support
- Parent education programs, parent support groups, and sibling groups
- Extended school year instruction
- Smaller classes with individualized instruction
- Low student/staff ratios
- Unique transition services that guide a student from school to adult life
- College preparation for students who will pursue post-secondary education
- Community-based work experiences
- Formal and informal “linkages” to adult service providers for students who will likely need ongoing support and services into their adult years
- Camp and recreational experiences

“I don’t know what I would do  
without the **support** I get from  
my daughter’s school.”



# Supporting Students' **TRANSITIONS**

MANY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES NEED PRIVATE SPECIAL education for a period of time, and then make the transition to another setting – often the local public school. In fact, a recent research study found that 49 percent of the students who transferred from a private school returned to district educational programs. Private schools can provide highly individualized training, technical assistance, and support to insure that this transition goes smoothly and successfully for the student, the family, and the new teacher.





“When we agreed that my **SON** was **ready** to come back to our local school, the staff at the **private school** worked in close consultation with his **new teachers** and staff to provide **training** and support.”

# Measuring **SUCCESS**

PRIVATE SCHOOLS MEASURE THEIR SUCCESS NOT JUST BY NUMBERS of graduates, but also by what those graduates go on to do with their lives. For some students, that may mean going on to college or technical training. For others, it means getting a job or a community volunteer experience; perhaps securing adult day services and supports. Whatever the desired outcome, private schools are setting the pace. A recent research study found that only four percent of the students graduating from private schools did not have plans for further education, training employment, or community programs.









# Making the **DECISION**

IF YOU BELIEVE A PRIVATE SCHOOL is the right choice for your child, call ASAH for help getting started. We can guide you through the process and provide information and support. Our advocates can help you understand your rights and your child's rights. Call 1-800-287-ASAH.



# 2010-2011 **ASAH Member Schools** by County

## **ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Y.A.L.E. School East, Inc.

## **BERGEN COUNTY**

Alpine Learning Group, Inc.

Bergen Center for Child

Development, Inc.

The Children's Therapy Center

The Children's Therapy Center,

Upper School

Community High School

Community School, Inc.

David Gregory School

ECLC of New Jersey, (Ho-Ho-Kus

Campus)

Educational Partnership for

Instructing Children (EPIC)

Felician School for Exceptional

Children, Inc.

The Forum School

The High Point School of Bergen

County

Holmstead School

Institute for Educational

Achievement

JCC on the Palisades Therapeutic

Nursery

Learning Center for Exceptional

Children, Inc.

Palisades Regional Academy

REED Academy

YCS - Fort Lee Education Center

YCS - George Washington School

YCS - Sawtelle Learning Center,

Paramus Annex

## **BURLINGTON COUNTY**

Children's Home, Mary A.

Dobbins School

Garfield Park Academy

Githens Center

Kingsway Learning Center,

Moorestown Campus

Y.A.L.E. School North, Inc., c/o

Nokomis School

## **CAMDEN COUNTY**

Bancroft Early Intervention

Program

Bancroft Early Education Program

Bancroft School

Bancroft School at Voorhees

Pediatric Facility

Brookfield Academy

Brookfield Elementary

Brookfield Schools

Brookfield Transition to College

Kingsway Learning Center,

Haddonfield Campus

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Larc School, Inc.  
Y.A.L.E. School, Cherry Hill  
Campus  
Y.A.L.E. School Southeast, Inc.  
YCS – Sawtelle Learning Center  
South

### **CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

Devereux New Jersey,  
Comprehensive Community  
Resources  
Pineland Learning Center, Inc.

### **ESSEX COUNTY**

ARC of Essex, Stepping Stones  
School  
Banyan School  
Child Development Center  
The Children’s Institute  
Deron School of New  
Jersey, Inc. (II)  
Essex Valley School  
Garden Academy  
Horizon High School, CPNJ  
Horizon School, CPNJ  
Mt. Carmel Guild Academy  
Mt. Carmel Guild School and  
Preschool  
Northwest Essex Community  
Healthcare Network,  
Therapeutic School & Preschool  
Phoenix Center, Inc.  
YCS - Independence High School

YCS - Sawtelle Learning Center  
North  
YCS - Therapeutic Learning  
Center

### **GLOUCESTER COUNTY**

Durand Academy and Community  
Services  
HollyDELL School  
St. John of God Community  
Services: Archbishop Damiano  
School, EIP, Vocational  
Rehabilitation, Adult Services  
Y.A.L.E. School, Williamstown  
Campus

### **HUDSON COUNTY**

Concordia Learning Center at St.  
Joseph’s School for the Blind  
Mt. Carmel Guild High School  
YCS - Ernest M. May Academy  
YCS - Sawtelle Learning Center,  
Kearny Annex

### **HUNTERDON COUNTY**

Hunterdon Learning Center  
Spring Run School

### **MERCER COUNTY**

Bridge Academy  
Children’s Day School of Family  
Guidance Center  
Eden Institute, Inc.

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Newgrange Educational Outreach  
Center  
Newgrange School  
Princeton Child Development  
Institute  
The Titusville Academy

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

The Center School  
Lakeview School, CP Assoc. of  
Middlesex County  
Newmark High School  
New Road School  
You & Me School

**MONMOUTH COUNTY**

ARC of Monmouth, Dorothy B.  
Hersh High School  
Children’s Center of Monmouth  
County  
Coastal Learning Center, North  
Coastal Learning Center, South  
Collier High School  
CPC Behavioral Healthcare, High  
Point Schools  
LADACIN Network, Schroth  
School  
Oakwood School  
The Rugby School at Woodfield  
School for Children  
SEARCH Day Program, Inc.

**OCEAN COUNTY**

Coastal Learning Center,  
Tuckerton Campus  
The Education Academy  
LADACIN Network, Lehmann  
School  
New Road School of Ocean  
County  
School for Children with Hidden  
Intelligence (SCHI)

**MORRIS COUNTY**

Allegro School, Inc.  
The Calais School  
Celebrate the Children  
Chancellor Academy  
Chapel Hill Academy  
Daytop Preparatory School  
ECLC of New Jersey, Chatham  
Campus  
Kentwood Academy  
Montgomery Academy  
P.G. Chambers School

**PASSAIC COUNTY**

Banyan Upper School  
Lakeview Learning Center  
Passaic County Elks Cerebral Palsy  
Elementary School  
Passaic County Elks Cerebral Palsy  
High School  
Windsor Learning Center  
Windsor School

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## **SALEM COUNTY**

HollyDELL School  
Ranch Hope/Strang School  
St. John of God Community  
Services: The Damian O'Shea  
Children's Center

## **SOMERSET COUNTY**

Bonnie Brae School  
East Mountain School, Carrier  
Foundation  
Green Brook Academy  
Lord Stirling School  
The Matheny School at the  
Matheny Medical and  
Educational Center  
McAuley School for Exceptional  
Children  
The Midland School  
New Road School of Somerset  
Rock Brook School  
Somerset Hills Learning Institute  
Somerset Hills School

## **SUSSEX COUNTY**

Willowglen Academy

## **UNION COUNTY**

ARC of Union, Kohler School  
Cerebral Palsy League, Come Play  
and Learn Early Childhood Ctr.  
Cerebral Palsy League, CPL Adult  
Services  
Cerebral Palsy League, Jardine  
Academy, Cranford Campus  
Cerebral Palsy League, Jardine  
Academy, Union Campus  
Cerebral Palsy League,  
Kaleidoscope Early Intervention  
Program  
Deron School of New  
Jersey, Inc. (I)  
First Children  
The Newmark School  
Summit Speech School

## **WARREN COUNTY**

Stepping Stone School

# NOTES

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# ABOUT **ASAH**

ASAH is a non-profit organization of over 130 state-approved private special education schools serving over 12,000 children and adults with disabilities. ASAH provides resources and referrals, parent and student advocacy, legislative initiatives, and technical assistance.

For more information or assistance, please contact us:



2125 Route 33  
Lexington Square  
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

Phone: (609) 890-1400  
Toll free in New Jersey 1(877) 287-ASAH  
Fax: (609) 890-8860  
E-mail: [asahinc@aol.com](mailto:asahinc@aol.com)  
Visit us online at <http://www.asah.org>