

Exploration Academy

at St. Michael

St. Michael is excited to announce the addition of Exploration Academy to increase positive post-school outcomes for young adults. Offered in addition to the current Elementary, Vocational Training, and Joy Center programs, Exploration Academy will provide students with key transitional skills that focus on workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities to promote individual strengths and interests.

Students will be immersed in on and off campus real-world scenarios and work experiences. Using research based generalization skills, job coaches will provide “on-the-job” instruction to help students successfully apply skills learned in the classroom to community based experiences.

Engaging Curriculum Designed for Student Success

- On-Campus Apprenticeships
- Off-Campus Work Experiences
- Employment Exploration
- HiSet/GED Prep
- Career Skills and Goal Setting
- PAES Lab
- Computer and Technology
- Morality/Religion
- Individualized transition plans
- Independence promoting opportunities
- Expanded career exploration on and off campus
- Community partnerships with local businesses
- Scaffolded job coaching
- Lifelong health and wellness education
- Data driven decision making
- Continued vocational and transitional skill development



Research

St. Michael Special School faculty and staff completed a self-assessment as part of the accreditation renewal process through AdvancEd (2015-2016). Current practices were reviewed, parent and stakeholder surveys were analyzed, and additional research was conducted to develop a plan for continued improvement. Through this process, Exploration Academy was developed to provide additional transition services.

Students who have special educational needs require training in both work-related behaviors and specific job skills if they are to function effectively in the competitive job market after school (*The Benefits of Secondary Vocational Education for Young People with Disabilities; SRI International*). Studies also indicate that the delivery of workforce training in a familiar atmosphere can help students ease more successfully into their new environments and roles (*Transition Program: The Challenges Faced by Special Needs Students in Gaining Work Experience; International Education Studies*).

Continuing at St. Michael for these experiences will make the transition to post school life more successful and familiar for your child.

Program Details

- In order to be eligible, students must meet minimum requirements
 - Must complete 3 years of Vocational Training at St. Michael Special School
 - Must have the ability to complete tasks with minimum teacher supervision and direction
 - Must be able to stand for extended periods of time, independently climb stairs, walk extended distances, and lift 15 lbs.
 - Must pass the Exploration Academy prescreening assessment
 - Must be motivated to participate in exploration activities
- A student may remain in Exploration Academy for up to 7 years or until transition services are no longer needed
- Length of participation varies depending individual abilities
- Annual Tuition = \$5,600 (scholarships available for those who qualify)