



EASTSIDE CATHOLIC

2025-26

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFILE

Options Program

The Options Program

at Eastside Catholic School supports the belief that high school-age students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities deserve an opportunity to maximize their academic, social and spiritual potential.

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“...no child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.”

- Pope Benedict XVI

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We proudly offer an individualized, faith-based special education program for high school students (grades 9-12) with diagnosed intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Our inclusive model encourages community involvement, social engagement, life skill development, career exploration and academic growth through participation in academics, school events, activities, retreats, clubs, campus ministry and athletics.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT

The Options Program is a special education program of choice for families seeking a faith-based, inclusive model that offers individualized academic and life skills instruction. We are dedicated to serving students who thrive in a school environment that celebrates the whole person. By integrating Catholic values, community engagement and specialized instruction, we help each student maximize their unique potential and grow in all aspects of life.

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Options Program provides instruction tailored to each student's unique needs, utilizing research-based teaching methods to help maximize their potential. Throughout the school day, students in the Options Program attend courses alongside their general education peers while also benefiting from targeted instruction in dedicated Options Program classrooms.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum places a strong emphasis on vocational and transitional exploration, preparing students for life beyond the classroom. Through project-based learning, students engage in hands-on, real-world projects that deepen their understanding of key concepts. Core courses include language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, religious studies, life skills, career exploration and social skills.

We offer a multi-level curriculum with tiered projects and assignments that add depth and complexity to meet each student's individual needs. Enrichment opportunities are available to further enhance student growth, and students are encouraged to participate in general education courses that align with their intellectual abilities and where they are able to meet the demands of the curriculum. Examples of general education courses include visual arts, drama, theater, choir and physical education.



ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS

Students are encouraged to get involved in extracurricular activities, including school plays, liturgies, assemblies and sports. Athletic opportunities range from participation in Special Olympics to joining Eastside Catholic High School (ECHS) athletic teams, ensuring a variety of ways for students to stay active and engaged.

RELATIONSHIPS

Through meaningful relationships with their peers, peer tutors and the broader Eastside Catholic community, students develop essential academic and social skills for independence.

SERVICE TO OTHERS

Throughout their high school experience, students participate in service projects that foster a sense of community and responsibility. These projects include involvement in the schoolwide Peace and Justice Day, as well as participated in food and clothing drives and other service opportunities within the local community.

FACULTY AND STAFF

In the Options Program, teachers provide individualized instruction through small groups, utilizing a wide range of teaching tools and methods to meet students where they are in their social, academic and adaptive skill development. Collaboration with general education teachers is a key component of our successful inclusive approach, ensuring students receive well-rounded support.

PEER TUTORS

A beloved aspect of our school is the Peer Tutor program. General education students selected for this course play a vital role as advocates, supporting the path of inclusion. Peer tutors work one-on-one or in small groups, both in Options Program classrooms and general education classes, assisting with learning, serving as positive role models and building meaningful friendships. Many peer tutors form lasting bonds with students in the Options Program, connections that often extend well beyond high school.



COMMENCEMENT AND OPTIONS PROGRAM CREDENTIAL

The Options Program is a non-diploma track, and Options-specific classes do not receive academic credit. However, students fully participate in commencement exercises alongside their peers. Upon completing the four-year modified high school program, students are awarded a Certificate of Completion, recognizing their achievements and growth throughout their time at Eastside Catholic.

POST-SECONDARY COUNSELING

Our College Counseling Department supports students in the Options Program interested in exploring post-secondary opportunities. Our services include:

- Individual meetings with families to discuss goals and plans
- An annual planning presentation offering valuable insights on trends in post-secondary options for students with intellectual disabilities
- Guidance on exploring two- and four-year colleges, vocational and technical programs, adult education, continuing education and life skills programs

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

- Diagnosed intellectual and/or developmental disability, or another diagnosis indicating a need for an integrated special education program
- Demonstrated minimum levels of academic achievement, reflecting past successes in learning environments
- Appropriate behavior patterns conducive to a school environment, ensuring a successful experience
- Willingness to partake in the spiritual opportunities provided by the school
- Ability to exhibit responsible, socially adaptive and appropriate classroom behavior without the need for one-on-one adult or aide support
- Capacity to function independently throughout the school day, including schoolhouse navigation, sitting through 50- to 70-minute classes, independently logging on to a computer and accessing school-related platforms, managing personal belongings and attending to individual needs and hygiene
- Ability to independently perform all activities of daily living, such as toileting, self-feeding, cafeteria management, dressing and washing



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