CHARMS COLLABORATIVE

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Informational Packet

2015-2016



**CHARMS ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

CHARMS Collaborative Alternative Education Program serves students in grades 9-12, with average to above average intelligence, who exhibit language-based learning disabilities, non-verbal learning disabilities, communication disabilities, executive functioning deficits, social-emotional fragility, behavioral difficulties and/or adjustment disorder. CHARMS Alt. Ed program is designed to meet students’ needs in an academic and therapeutic environment. Located in Canton Public High School, this diploma track program offers students access to general education classes, extracurricular activities, and other opportunities to interact with regular education peers in various social situations. Our cohesive and comprehensive program strives to prepare students to pursue post-secondary visions with a strong academic background, interpersonal competency, and intrapersonal awareness.

The CHARMS Alt Ed program is uniquely designed so that students can receive a typical high school experience with access to academic and therapeutic supports necessary to succeed in this type of setting.

**ACADEMICS**

The Alt. Ed. program offers students individual and/or small group instruction in self-contained classrooms, as well as access to general education classes. Most students take Math, English, and Academic Skills classes within CHARMS, and, with support from CHARMS staff, participate in the mainstream for other academic and electives classes. Though participation in mainstream classes is highly encouraged, arrangements may be made for students to take a comparable course within CHARMS, on an as needed basis. In additional to content specific courses, other self-contained classes focus on academic support for mainstream and/or self-contained classes, as well as organizational, test-taking and other executive functioning skills. As students progress, staff assist students with developing transitional skills as well.

Since this is a diploma track program, staff collaborate with students, parents, and sending districts regarding academic planning and make every effort to enroll students in classes of interest while also satisfying graduation requirements. For more information, please see our Program of Studies section.

**THERAPEUTICS**

CHARMS Alt. Ed. offers a therapeutic milieu with clinical support services. A variety of therapeutic services are available to address the specific needs of our students and promote academic success, emotional and behavioral regulation, social competency and personal growth.

Our Licensed Counselors provide direct individual counseling and facilitate social skills and transitional skills groups. Counselors are also available to students outside of scheduled meetings and/or group times, as needed. In addition, our Speech and Language Pathologist provides eligible students with speech and communication services; other services may be arranged for on a case-by-case basis.

All CHARMS staff maintains a therapeutic rapport with each student, allowing students to receive constant reinforcement of socially expected behavior, problem solving, conflict resolution, and management of emotions and perceptions in real time. Ongoing staff collaboration, home/school communication, family outreach, and consultation with outside providers facilitate the academic, social/emotional, and personal development of our students.

**EXTENDED YEAR SUMMER PROGRAM**

The Alternative Education Summer School Program focuses on academics, community service learning, and development of transitional skills. The academic component provides reinforcement and enrichment of ELA and Mathematic skills, as well as completion of summer reading requirement(s). Due to the low student-staff ratio during the summer program, students receive more individual attention and support to prepare for the next academic year. Students do not receive grades for academic work completed during the summer, as it is not intended to be a credit recovery opportunity; however, exceptions have been made in past years.

During the summer program, students engage in many community service opportunities (graduation requirement) and field trips to various types of attractions. Typically, these outings include trips to museums, exhibits, and different types of colleges. CHARMS staff uses these community outings to enhance social/emotional development, executive functioning, transitional skills (e.g. travel training, college/career planning), and civic responsibility.

**STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Alt. Ed program strives to create a typical high school experience for our students, both academically and socially. As such, our students not only have access to the mainstream curriculum but also to sports teams, clubs, and other non-academic events. CHARMS staff encourage students to take advantage of these opportunities to enhance feelings of integration and connection with regular education students and the school community at large.

Additionally, CHARMS seniors have the option to participate in the Canton High School Graduation Ceremony, if desired. This opportunity is contingent upon successful completion of graduation requirements of sending district as well as the appropriate number of community service hours (20 hours per year of attendance at CHARMS). Many CHARMS students take advantage of this opportunity, as it grants them the chance to celebrate graduation with the friends and peers with whom they shared their high school experience.

**CHARMS Collaborative**

**Alternative Education Program**

**Program of Studies**

**2015-2016**

**ACADEMIC COURSES**

Although students have access to the mainstream curriculum, CHARMS offers comparable courses in self-contained classrooms. Students who are able to participate in mainstream classes (with staff support as needed) are encouraged to do so. The option to enroll in the CHARMS equivalent course is intended for students whose needs interfere with the ability to be successful in an inclusion classroom at the time (\*Note: for this reason, courses are offered on an ‘as needed’ basis). These courses have a lower student-staff ratio, allowing students to receive direct instruction in a small group environment. All students participate in English and Mathematics within CHARMS; however, exceptions to this are possible for upperclassmen, if doing so is deemed appropriate by the CHARMS team. All CHARMS courses follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

As a diploma track program, CHARMS Alt. Ed. Program offers each student an individualized Program of Studies plan, which outlines the courses the student needs to successfully complete in order to satisfy the graduation requirements of the sending district. In attempt to optimize the high school experience, CHARMS staff collaborates with students and districts, and attempts to enroll students in mainstream course(s) of interest, while also ensuring that graduation criteria for the home district are met.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**English 9**

**6 credits**

This course is designed to improve reading and writing strategies, and introduce students to high school level literary and composition skills. In a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students study a variety of works from American literature. Through these readings, students develop skills in reading comprehension, story and character development, critical-thinking, and literary analysis. To complement and facilitate acquisition of literary skills, students also receive direct instruction on effective note-taking strategies, identifying main ideas and in-text evidence, and using context clues for vocabulary development. Students improve verbal and written expression through small group discussions, written responses to the reading(s) and formal compositions. Through completion of argumentative essays, students practice developing claims, analyzing text-based evidence, and improving composition skills. Explanatory, narrative, and research-based writing assignments allow students to practice the writing process, to express thoughts logically and coherently, to integrate new vocabulary, and to improve grammatical, research and technology skills.

**English 10**

**6 credits**

This course is intended to further develop skills in the fundamental components of literacy and composition through the study of American literature. Taught in a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction on literary skills, with a focus on improving reading comprehension, critical thinking, analysis, and expression of thoughts through written compositions. Analysis of one or more readings, comparison of related literary works, and integration of knowledge from related disciplines (e.g. social studies, humanities) are emphasized to prepare students for class discussions and written assignments. Students are expected to compose personal, reflective, and argumentative essays. Vocabulary acquisition and grammatical skills are embedded into the literary and composition assignments and assessments. This course is designed to prepare students to participate in the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS.

**English 11**

**6 credits**

The focus of this course is on improving literary and composition skills introduced and practiced in English 9 and English 10. The emphasis is on enhancing reading comprehension, vocabulary, critical thinking and analysis of works from British literature. Students develop skills in comparing/contrasting, making inferences and using deductive reasoning to assess literary works, in expressing thoughts verbally in class discussions, and in writing via on demand assignments and/or formal compositions. Through completion of expository and argumentative essays, students will practice developing claims, analyzing supporting evidence, and articulating thoughts in the form of logical and coherent compositions. Vocabulary acquisition and reinforcement of grammatical skills are embedded into the literary and composition assignments and assessments.

**English 12**

**6 credits**

This course is designed to help students acquire advanced literary and composition skills through the study of World literature. Taught in a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction on using context cues to improve comprehension, on identification of themes and other literary devices, as well as on critical and analytical thinking. Students are expected to compose personal, reflective, and argumentative essays, and research papers. Vocabulary development and reinforcement of grammatical skills are embedded into the study of literary works, and are assessed through on-demand and formal compositions. Through completion of various compositions, students continue to improve identification of claims, analysis of substantiating evidence from text and/or research, and creation thoughtful, logical, and well-developed essays. This course is designed to prepare students to be successful in post-secondary educational pursuits.

**MATHEMATICS**

**Algebra 1**

**6 credits**

This course is designed to introduce students to grade-level Algebraic concepts, with a focus on linear and quadratic equations and functions, inequalities, systems of equations, and polynomial and exponential equations.  In a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction in solving, graphing and modeling real-life situations with equations and functions. Simplifying, factoring, and graphing polynomials, as well as radical and exponential functions may also be embedded into the curriculum.

**Algebra 1B**

**6 credits**

This course covers selected topics typically covered in the second half of the traditional Algebra I curriculum, and is intended for students who had difficulty in Algebra 1 and/or require two years to complete the material. Taught in a self-contained classroom and small group environment, students receive a brief review of Algebra 1A topics, followed by an examination of proportions and proportional reasoning, systems of equations and inequalities, quadratic equations, and basic statistical analysis and probability. The course may cover rational expressions, exponential growth and decay, direct and inverse variation, as well as other topics based on student readiness and mastery. Particular emphasis will be placed on embedding standardized assessment preparation within the context of the curriculum.

**Algebra 2**

**6 credits**

This course builds on topics covered in Algebra 1. The course begins with a review of fundamental concepts taught in Algebra 1 to improve problem solving and mastery of algebraic expressions, linear equations, inequalities and functions, rational and irrational numbers, and systems of equations. As the course progresses, students are introduced to more complex Algebraic concepts consistent with the Algebra 2 Common Core State Standards. In a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction in modeling with, solving and graphing complex numbers, function relationships and transformations, quadratic functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, arithmetic and geometric sequences and series, data analysis and modeling, and basic trigonometry. The curriculum of this course is designed to also provide students with preparation for the SAT/ACT.

**Plane Geometry**

**6 credits**

This course is intended to introduce students to plane geometry. Taught in a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction in grade-level geometric concepts, including basic definitions of geometry, congruence, similarity, properties of parallel lines, properties of polygons, trigonometry, properties of circles, geometric applications and proofs, area and volume, and geometric modeling. This course is designed to prepare students to participate in the Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS.

**Financial Algebra**

**6 credits**

This course is designed for students who are interested in exploring the application of mathematics in the fields of business and personal finance.  This course builds on topics covered in Algebra 1 and 2 to improve problem solving, modeling, evaluating expressions and functions, solving a variety of equations, graphing linear, quadratic, exponential and logarithmic functions, and performing statistical analysis, with the material presented in the context of personal financial planning and life skills. In a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction content areas and support in applying algebraic concepts to Stocks and Investment, Personal Budgeting, Banking, Purchasing a Car, Purchasing a home, Consumer Credit, Retirement planning, et al.

**MCAS Math**

**6 credits**

This course is intended for students who are identified as requiring support with fundamental math skills and basic math concepts. This course is taught by a Special Education teacher, in a small group setting within a self-contained classroom, and follows a curriculum designed to prepare students for the Mathematics MCAS.  Students receive direct instruction in number sense and operations, pre-algebra and algebra, measurement, geometry, data and probability, and related math skill areas. Students practice fundamental math skills with gradual reduction of staff assistance. Depending on students’ ability and progress with completing content related assignments, more advanced mathematical conceptions may be introduced. \*Note: This course is offered on an as needed basis.

**ADDITIONAL CORE ACADEMICS**

**World History**

**6 Credits**

This course focuses on exploring the social-cultural histories of regions across the world. Students will examine the historical, cultural, societal, economic, governmental and religious facets of western and non-western civilizations, and explore the interactions between different societies. Students examine historical events between 1000 AD-1800 AD, including the emergence and expansion of Islam and Islamic dynasties, the Medieval Period, encounters between major religions, the Renaissance, and significant events in the histories of Europe, Central and South America, Africa, India, China, Japan, and Korea. Taught in a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive direct instruction in content domains and supports to enhance critical thinking, comparing and contrasting, and analysis. Through formal and informal assessments, students demonstrate their knowledge of material and ability to make connections between historical and current events. \*Note: This course is offered on an as needed basis.

**Physical Science
6 Credits**

This course is intended for students who have not successfully completed Chemistry and/or require an alternative Physical Science class. This course focuses on teaching the fundamentals of Chemistry and Physics using a more conceptual, and less mathematically intense perspective. Taught in a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students examine properties of matter, scientific inquiry, laws of physics, and integration of basic mathematics in both domains. Specific topics include: properties, states, and chemical composition of matter, scientific method, experimental design, data collection and analysis, motion and forces, energy conservation and transformation, and the use of mathematical skills in the representation and explanation of content. In this course, material is presented via direct instruction and experiential learning activities. \*Note: This course is offered on an as needed basis.

**ELECTIVES: ACADEMIC STRATEGIES**

**Skills**

**6 credits**

This course is designed to provide students support with effective learning and studying strategies that promote academic growth and success. Students receive direct instruction in note-taking strategies, organization of thoughts and materials, time management, planning and prioritizing, study habits and other executive functioning skills. Academic support is also available for reinforcement of academic material, completion of assignments, and test preparation. When applicable, staff offers support in transitional skills to prepare for post-secondary visions. Students may also use this course to take exams from mainstream courses in a separate setting and/or receive additional time for completion of assignments and assessments. Taught by a certified teacher, in conjunction with an assistant, in a self-contained classroom and small group setting, students receive individualized support to address specific needs. Students are assessed through in-class assignments and tracking of on-task behavior. \*Note: All students participate in this elective course.

**Skills**

**Uncredited**

This course is intended to serve as a scheduled time when students are available to engage in non-academic services, such as counseling or speech and language. This helps ensure that students receive necessary and appropriate services within the school day, without disrupting academics. When a student is not receiving services during this allotted time, this course functions as an additional skills class. In some cases, on-campus community service may be completed during this time. \*Note: Students participating in both the Alternative Education and Vocational Education programs are not enrolled in this course.

**ELECTIVES: VOCATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS**

The following courses are available to students who are dual enrolled in Alt. Ed and Voc. Ed; credits awarded are determined on an individual basis.

**Independent Living/Life Skills
Credits TBD\***

This course is designed to help students develop skills to promote independence. In a self-contained classroom, students receive individual and/or small group instruction in fundamental life skills. The curriculum includes topics such as grocery shopping, cooking, travel training, budgeting, functional mathematics, and other skills to improve problem-solving, resourcefulness, self-reliance, and independent living. Students also have the opportunity to participate in community outings, intended to allow students to practice the developing skills in real time and with staff support. Executive functioning skills, primarily planning and time management, are also taught via direct instruction and indirectly during every day activities. \*Note: This course is taught within the Vocational Education program.

**Vocational Education**

**Credits TBD\***

This course is designed to help students develop skills necessary for successful transition into post-secondary pursuits with an emphasis on employment. The curriculum focuses on career readiness with the goal of job placement. In a self-contained classroom, students receive individual and/or small group instruction in interviewing, resume writing, job searching, and completing employment applications. Students have the opportunity to attend job interviews and/or participate in part-time employment during the school day if possible. \*Note: This course is taught within the Vocational Education program; job interviews and/or part-time employment during school hours may not be available to all students depending on academic schedule.

**Social Navigation**

**Credits TBD\***

This course is designed to help students improve social pragmatics and social skills. This course integrates Social Thinking and Brain Wise curriculums to promote social/emotional development, and improve understanding of behavioral expectations, and communication skills. Topics covered include: perspective taking, social referencing, social navigation, nonverbal language, social behaviors and understanding and adapting to various social situations.

**Culinary Awareness/Culinary Arts**

**Credits TBD\***

This course is designed to educate students on the relationship between food, nutrition and wellness. Through participation in the Cooking Program offered in the Vocational Educational program, students receive hands-on experience with food preparation, with a focus on safety, sanitation, and familiarity with use of culinary equipment. The curriculum emphasizes food choice and variety, preparation and production, menu planning and evaluation, plating for various dining occasions, and dining etiquette. In addition to fundamental cooking skills, students explore the creative element to culinary work and cooking as a mode of self-expression.

**Personal Fitness/Lifetime Recreation**

**Credits TBD\***

This course is designed to help students understand the importance of fitness in a healthy lifestyle. Taught at the YMCA, students receive direct instruction on safe use of gym equipment and on development of an individual fitness program. During this course students engage in supervised individual physical activity and recreational team sport activities.

**Consumer/Functional Math**

**Credits TBD\***

This course is intended to help students identify, understand, and study the practical applications of mathematics in daily life. Students receive direct instruction in concepts such as balancing checkbooks, managing bank accounts, credit and debt, household budgeting, and managing day-to-day expenses and personal finances.

For More Information, Please Contact:

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