

# Desert Choice Schools Syllabus

## Our Programs

[Desert Choice Schools](#) utilizes a highly structured Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system along with scientifically-based instructional programs. Our programs are designed to teach personal responsibility and social skills, while maintaining a strong academic focus.

Our PBIS programs and its integrity are maintained by the following elements:

- Common Language
- Level System
- Positive Reinforcement
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Behavior Interventions
- Consistency

The Arizona College and Career Ready Standards (AZCCRS) are the foundation for all DCS instructional planning. Instructional resources are researched based, highly motivational, and aligned with grade level outcomes and objectives.

DCS teachers use a variety of instructional methods and strategies in order to meet the individual student needs. Direct instruction, small group, and experiential learning are a few examples of instructional models implemented by DCS staff.

In addition, DCS uses a supplemental academic curriculum to meet the academic needs of the students as indicated on their Individual Education Program (IEP). Due to the diverse needs of our student population, we utilize an array of learning strategies which includes, but is not limited to direct instruction, computer-based instruction, blended learning, hands on activities and community based instruction. We implement all of the accommodations, modifications and assistive technology in every student's IEP, ensuring that they have adequate access to the general curriculum and FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education).

*Remedial programming is based on individual student needs.*

## Social/Emotional and Behavioral Program

Our programs enable students to succeed at school, home, and in the community by building responsible decision-making skills, a genuine enthusiasm for learning, and a positive self-image. Accordingly, the implementation of our PBIS methodology fosters the necessary academic skills that students need in order to return to a less restrictive environment as soon as possible.

# Alternative Classroom Settings

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Our program enables students to succeed at school, home, and in the community by building responsible decision-making skills and fostering a genuine enthusiasm for learning. We firmly believe that most students' need for our programs is only temporary. Accordingly, our staff works each day to enhance the functional and academic skills necessary to return to the general education environment.

The Desert Choice Schools Alternative Education Program provides support to students that have been unsuccessful in a traditional academic setting due to social/emotional, behavioral and/or academic issues. Students are typically enrolled in the program due to ongoing disruptive behavior stemming from academic challenges or unresolved social/emotional issues. To support growth in these areas, the program is focused on providing a safe and individualized approach to increasing each student's prosocial, adaptive, problem solving and academic survival skills.

In addition to providing targeted student support, the Alternative Education Program is designed to provide the Local Education Agency (LEA) with the opportunity to improve their school climate and culture. Chronically disruptive students who fail to respond to school based consequences often impact a school's ability to function effectively. School climate can become negative, resulting in poor overall academic performance and unnecessary removals or suspensions. School administrators can become overly focused on disruptive behavior leading to processes and systems congested with behavior management rather than student learning. Ultimately, partnering with Desert Choice Schools provides districts and families in need with a positive outcomes based alternative.

## ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION (ATS)

The Alternative to Suspension Program currently operated by Desert Choices Schools provides districts and charter schools with an educational option that ensures Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students who have been removed from their home school campus for severe or chronic behavioral infractions. The students in the program typically have an IEP and the ATS option is utilized in lieu of an "off campus suspension", which would otherwise result in a change of placement for the student. The ATS program provides a highly structured environment where students have limited privileges and must meet the daily behavioral expectations prior to returning to their homeschool campus. The number of days in the program is determined by the district or school administrators and the student's IEP team members. DCS works closely with districts to ensure that all IEP and related services are provided during the suspension and that the specified components of the students Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) are implemented.