

# The PAT Academy

Our Journey to an 18-21 year old program.

Peoria Public Schools District #150, Peoria, IL

# District Overview

- ▶ We are a large urban district in central Illinois.
- ▶ Per the 2017 school report card, we have over 13,000 students.
- ▶ 72% of our students are low income.
- ▶ 16% of our students have an IEP.
- ▶ We have 3 high schools, each with a special needs program, plus R. A. Jamieson School - which houses all special education students. We have 2 severe/profound programs at the Developmental Center and Manual Academy.

# Spring 2014

- ▶ Select individuals went and visited 18-21 programs in Morton and Chicago area (Community 218 and Rich East). Each Chicago program had a PAES lab component.
- ▶ Upon return discussed with special education director about starting our own 18-21 program with a PAES lab component.
- ▶ 2014-15 school year - planning for PAT Academy to open fall 2015. Weekly meetings, with a small core group of interested individuals, focusing on all aspects of the program.
- ▶ Prospective students, curriculum, daily schedules, grading, acceptance requirements, brochure, meetings with staff, building construction via IDEA grant, hiring principal/teachers, PAES lab.

- ▶ Prospective students - class lists were obtained for all of the middle school and high school special needs classes throughout the district. Looked at the numbers in each classroom and projected who was coming to high school and who would be finishing their 4 years of high school. We also considered students who are in our 'core' level of classes (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade reading levels) to determine who would benefit from the functional skills curriculum. Some of our high school special needs classes had kids staying until they were 21, others ended their enrollment after 4 years. Eventually, students will level out and not stay in any program too long. This is a continual process that the Transition Specialist works on each school year, projecting enrollment.
- ▶ Originally planned to bring in out of district students, realized we had high enough numbers with our own students.
- ▶ Acceptance requirements - Students complete 4 years of high school (with diploma/certificate on hold) and they demonstrate a need for the functional curriculum. Each student will exit the program with a job or volunteer opportunity. Not all students are independent enough to benefit from either of those activities. We do not take students who have behavioral difficulties, as the PAT students are out in the community at least twice a week.

- ▶ Initially, used a rating scale to figure out how to group the students. Now TS compiles reading/math data on each prospective student.
- ▶ Enrollment decreases during the school year, as students reach age 22. That data is projected as well.
- ▶ Pre-Pat room/Autism classroom
- ▶ Spring open house/fall open house/TS at IEP meetings
- ▶ Brochure
- ▶ Meetings with district special education coordinators and special education teachers tell them of the plans and get their support for the program. Special education director must keep superintendent updated.

- ▶ Where to house this program?
  - ▶ Preferred to house in a regular education building, to lower our 04 EE codes.
  - ▶ No space at Woodruff Career & Technical Center (WCTC).
  - ▶ No funds to purchase a building.
  - ▶ Decided to house the program at R. A. Jamieson School. It is a K-21 special education building for lower functioning students. Met with district maintenance and architects to formulate plans to remodel part of the building.
  - ▶ Moved the K-1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom to Valeska Early Childhood Center.
  - ▶ Parent forum meeting to discuss program.
  - ▶ Regular construction meetings/figuring out how much IDEA grant money could spend.
  - ▶ Construction started before school was out May 2015 and finished after school started in August 2015, with finishing touches.

- ▶ Hiring a principal/teachers
  - ▶ Based on projected enrollment of 30+ students, planned to hire 3 academic teachers (math, reading, vocational) and a teacher for the PAES Lab.
  - ▶ Needed a new building principal.
- ▶ PAES Lab Component
  - ▶ Certified teacher vs teacher aid.
  - ▶ All PAT teachers went through PAES Lab training, along with speech/OT/PT/principal.
  - ▶ We utilize the PAES lab component as a pull out supplement. 3's go 3 times a week, 2's go 2 times, and 1's go once, using job boxes from the vocational classroom.
- ▶ Curriculum
  - ▶ Functional reading/math/vocational
  - ▶ Divided the students into 3 groups - 1, 2, 3, based on rating scales
  - ▶ Weekly: cooking/speakers/grocery shopping/volunteering
  - ▶ Cooking activities are geared to the levels of the students
  - ▶ STEP purchased job box components for vocational classroom, laptops for reading classes, salad bar/serving supplies for Eagle Eatery, t-shirts, commercial refrigerator and freezer.
  - ▶ Grading - It wasn't our intention to give grades. Haven't been able to change it...

▶ 2015-16 School Year

First year - started with 31 students/ended with 24

- ❖ Weekly schedule
- ❖ Several principals...
- ❖ Fall open house for current students/spring for prospective students
- ❖ Students make crafts to sell and make money for special outings
- ❖ Cookie sales at Jamieson and Administration building
- ❖ Greenhouse at Jamieson
- ❖ Newsletters

▶ 2016-17 School Year

2<sup>nd</sup> year - Started the year with 30 students/ended with 24

- ❖ New principal
- ❖ Opening of the Eagle Eatery
- ❖ Opening of the PAT Jolt Express Café
- ❖ CBI's
- ❖ Newsletters



## ▶ 2017-18 School Year

- ▶ Started with 32 students ended with 24
- ▶ Changing the Eagle Eatery and CBI/Volunteering days
  - ▶ Having the students interview for Eagle Eatery jobs
- ▶ New work coordinator
- ▶ T-Shirt business
- ▶ 6 students returning with employer paid jobs
- ▶ 2 students age out fall semester/6 students age out spring semester

## ▶ 2018-19 School year

- ▶ Started with 35 students
- ▶ 1 student will age out in the fall and 4 students will age out in the spring
- ▶ New PAES lab teacher who will have an IEP caseload
- ▶ Students will earn their food handler certificate

## ➤ Struggles

Transportation

No curriculum

New team working together

Morning meetings were vital (2x month)/common plan

Mixed levels in homeroom ended up being negative

Needed to get a 'buy in' from the high schools/Jamieson staff/higher functioning students

Scheduling CBI's - when to do academics?

Coffee shop struggles at times - need to work on a better plan...

► Successes!!!

Behavior of Jamieson students improved - held to higher standard

Staff acceptance at Jamieson improved

All PAT students are paid to work, either employer paid or DRS paid (DOL)

Eagle Eatery - community members are supportive/district department head have come for a meal/school board members too.

Students are proud!

Adopt-A-School partner - Curves/I've Decided - has brought in exercise programs - chair yoga and Zumba

Eagle Eatery has also served dinner at some Parent Forum meetings  
Where are the kids working??

► Employer Paid: Peoria Public Schools (cafeterias, crossing guards, 1:1 attendants), Peoria Production Shop, Walmart, Principal Property Management, Panera Bread, Cornerstone Rehabilitation & Healthcare, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Great Harvest Bread

► DRS Paid Training Sites: Red Lobster, Longhorn Steakhouse, Mission Mart, PPS custodial, Susan G. Komen, Benevolent Center

► Thank you for coming to our presentation!

Questions??

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