

Welcome to SPASH

Stevens Point Area Senior High



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SPASH Intellectual Disabilities Programming

Our **VISION** is for each and every one of our students to graduate from SPASH equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to live independently, obtain employment, and participate in the community to the best of their abilities.

Our **MISSION** is to continually improve the programming available at SPASH to ensure an individualized, quality education that increases independence in academic, authentic, vocational and social skills to prepare all students for a successful transition to life after high school.

A note from the SPASH Team

As high school teachers, our main goal for all our students is to prepare them for their life after high school, whatever that may be. For many of our students this means that we are preparing them to be successful in the workplace and equipping them with the skills they will need to live as independently as possible. For some students, this means that we will strive to assist students in increasing their academic skills so that they will be prepared for higher education.

As parents, it's important to start thinking about plans for your son or daughter after high school. It might seem far off, but knowing your post-graduation goals will help the IEP team to create a plan that will assist your son/daughter in achieving their long term goals. We will work together as a team for the next 3+ years to reach those goals!

The main goal of this packet is to give you, as a parent, information about our programs at SPASH. We understand that transitioning from junior high to high school can be scary; we want to help make the transition as smooth as possible. Please know that we are here to help in any way that we can. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions, concerns, or comments.

For more information as well as pictures and videos, please visit our website.

<https://www.pointschools.net/Page/5964>



What's Inside:

- Graduation Options
- Class options/Registration
- Different paths students may take
- Programs that Prepare for Transition to Post-High School
 - Job Experience Training
 - Life Skills Center
 - Project Search
- Things to Consider
 - Guardianship
 - Applying for DVR
 - Support Services
- Other programs
 - Community Partners
 - Sn'L
 - Swim/Gym

Graduation Options

General Diploma vs. Certificate of Attendance

Students have the option to work towards earning a general diploma or a certificate of attendance while at SPASH; this decision is made by the IEP team.

Students who wish to obtain a general diploma must fulfill the same graduation requirements as a general education student, however, the IEP team can decide how the student will obtain the graduation requirements. For example, the IEP team could decide that a student will earn 1 of the required science credits through taking agriculture classes instead of traditional science classes. Your student's IEP manager will discuss the options with you so that we can make the best class choices for your son or daughter.

There are no credit requirements for students who are earning a certificate of attendance. Students will enroll in classes that will help them work towards meeting their IEP goals as well as general education classes that interest them.

General Graduation Ceremony vs. Small Graduation Celebration

SPASH holds a graduation ceremony every spring. We also hold a smaller, special graduation celebration every spring (unless no students are graduating in a given year). All students have the option to participate in either ceremony; students cannot participate in both ceremonies.

Students who participate in the general graduation ceremony can either choose to participate with their peers their senior year, or to wait until they are done with their high school career (if the student stays beyond their senior year). Most students choose to participate with their peers their senior year even if they plan to return to SPASH for an additional year or years. Students who participate in the graduation ceremony, but return to SPASH, receive their diploma/certificate of attendance when they complete their high school career.

Students who choose to participate in the small graduation celebration typically do so at the end of their high school career (not when they are seniors). Our Intellectual Disabilities department hosts this celebration; we do our best to mirror the general graduation ceremony. Students wear their cap and gown and sit on the stage in the auditorium. We invite staff members, school administration and school board members to attend and participate in the celebration. Parents are able to invite any family members or friends as well. We have a short program (typically about 25 minutes) including music performed by a SPASH choir, speeches given by teachers and administrators and then students walk across the stage to receive their diploma/certificate of attendance.

Paths Students Take

Any students who has an IEP has the option to stay at SPASH after their senior year until they turn 21 years old. The years after a students senior year are called their “transition years”. The purpose of remaining at SPASH for these additional years is to allow time for your son or daughter to learn additional skills that they will need as they transition to life after high school. As an IEP team, we strive to create the best path for each individual student. We work with parents to help decide if a student would benefit from staying at SPASH for an additional year or years after their senior year. We are continually working to improve the programs that we offer and strive to create a plan that is in the best interest of each individual student.

The following are several options that students and their parents typically choose; just to give you an idea. Please keep in mind that these are very general, there are many variations of each option. We truly view each child as an individual and do our very best to create a unique plan that best fits their strengths and needs.

- Students attend classes (mixture of general and special education classes) at SPASH for 3 years and graduate after their senior year
- Students attend classes (mixture of general and special education classes) at SPASH for 2 years and then participate in our transition programs during their senior year; student graduates their senior year.
- Students attend classes (mixture of general and special education classes) at SPASH for 3 years and then return for one, two or three additional years to participate in our transition programs.

Registration Process and Classes

The Registration Process

Every year in January students start the process of registering for classes to take the following year. Our students are given a registration form that is filled out by the student's case manager, with input from the student and their parents. Many of the classes that our students register for are determined by the students IEP and/or graduation requirements; students are also encouraged to explore general education classes that they would enjoy taking.

In January, you will receive a form from your student's case manager outlining possible classes for your son/daughter to take. After completing the form, you return it to us and we turn them into the Counseling Office. The guidance counselors and/or IEP managers manually enter each students class choices into the computer data base so that schedules can be created.

Class Options

At SPASH, we have a wide range of classes both in special and general education. The pace and depth of general education courses at the high school level requires students to fulfill high social and academic expectations. When our students take a general education course, we work together with the general education teacher to make appropriate modifications and adaptations to help the student be successful. General education classes may not be appropriate for all students, but we do our best to think outside the box and create opportunities for all students to have meaningful experiences with their general education peers.

The following page includes a list and short description of classes currently offered within our special education programs at SPASH.

Academic Classes

- **Living Skills Math**
Students who take this course are typically at an instructional level of approximately 3rd-6th grade. Students work towards increasing skills in the areas such as time, money, measuring, addition/subtraction/multiplication/division.
- **Functional Skills Math**
Students who take this course are typically at an instructional level of approximately Kindergarten-3rd grade. Students work towards increasing skills in the areas such as time, money, measuring, counting, etc.
- **Living Skills Reading and Writing**
Students who take this course are typically at an instructional level of approximately 3rd-6th grade. Students work towards increasing their skills in reading comprehension, reading/writing fluency, summarizing, etc.
- **Functional Skills Reading and Writing**
Students who take this course are typically at an instructional level of approximately kindergarten-3rd grade. Students work towards increasing their skills in reading comprehension, reading/writing fluency, summarizing, etc.
- **Career Education (1 and 2)**
Students who take these courses will participate in job exploration activities and learn the process of finding, and being successful at, a job. These courses also count as a social studies credit; the class curriculum includes topics from Civics and US History.
- **Basic Science**
This class is designed to give students a general understanding of a wide variety of science topics. Basic science prepares students for vocabulary and topics that will be covered in general education science and agriculture classes.
- **Academic Awareness**
Students who take this course are typically at an instructional level of an awareness-kindergarten level. Students participate in math, reading/writing and science activities while working to increase comprehension skills as well as other functional communication skills.

Functional Skills Classes

- **Community Awareness**
This class is designed to get students ready for their day and teaches social skills. Students discuss activities going on in the school and community, the lunch menu, important community signs, learn different forms of communication (such as sign language) and practice social skills.
- **Residential Skills**
Students taking this class practice functional skills needed for cooking and cleaning while learning about topics such as kitchen safety, budgeting and nutrition.
- **Individual Activities**
This class is designed to be as individualized as possible. Students are able to work on homework from other classes, work towards their individual goals, personal/medical care needs, and experience activities such as physical activity, art, etc.
- **Vocational Skills**
This class is designed to be very hands-on. Everyday, students are assigned 1-3 jobs or tasks that they complete with the assistance of an adult (if needed). All the jobs and tasks are designed to improve work skills as well as fine and gross motor skills related to possible job opportunities. Jobs and tasks are within the classroom as well as out in the school building. Examples of some jobs include dusting the library and cleaning in the fitness center, assembling small items such as nuts and bolts, or washing the dishes.

Programs that prepare for transition to post-high school

For most of our students, their last year(s) at SPASH, after their senior year, are considered the transition years. This means that students participate in programs that facilitate the transition from life as a SPASH student to life post high school. We are very fortunate to have fabulous programs that are designed to help students transition into the “real world”.

Life Skills Center

The Life Skills Center is an off-site authentic classroom located in a small building west of SPASH’s main building. The building, which houses a handicap accessible apartment style setting, was built by the school district and is used specifically for our unique program. Students who participate in the program attend school at the apartment for the first 4 hours of the normal school day and then attend other classes or programs at SPASH in the afternoon.

The purpose of the Life Skills Center is to prepare students to function as effectively and independently as possible in the adult community as they prepare to leave high school. Students in the program participate in community based, authentic instruction in the domains of independent living, employability skills, community participation, recreation and leisure and social development. Students are given the opportunity to increase their independence in a less restrictive environment while generalizing the functional academic and living skills they learned in school to an environment in which the skills will ultimately be used.

Job Experience Training (J.E.T.)

The Job Experience Training Program gives students the opportunity to gain real work experience during their high school career. The program is designed to assist students in learning and practicing hands-on skills in addition to soft skills and expected work behaviors required to obtain and keep a job. Participation in the JET program will give students a variety of work experiences and will also serve as a transition to life post high-school.

Project Search

Sentry Insurance and the Stevens Point School Districts partnered together in 2014 to become a Project Search site. Project Search is a year long internship program in which students learn and utilize valuable job skills. Students who are accepted into the program will complete three unique internships at the businesses within the Sentry Insurance complex. Students can apply to participate in Project Search during their last year of school services. The employment success rate for students who participate in this program is above 80%!

Important things to Consider: Turning 18

- **Portage County Health and Human Services**

If you aren't already enrolled in services through Portage County Health and Human Services (PCHHS), you may want to consider it. You will be assigned a case manager through PCHHS who will work with your family until your son or daughter turns 18. They are a great resource for obtaining services and helping you through the transition into adulthood.

- **Legal Guardianship**

It might seem like a long way off, but your son or daughter's 18th birthday is approaching faster than you might think. When an individual turns 18, all legal rights are transferred to that individual. However, as a parent, you have the option to apply for full or partial guardianship of your son or daughter upon their 18th birthday.

- **Applying for DVR Services**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will help determine if your son or daughter is eligible for short-term assistance with vocational education and training. We recommend enrolling DVR when your son or daughter is a sophomore, although you can enroll for DVR services earlier! DVR has many services that will help your son or daughter obtain employment such as job coaching services, a benefit analysis, or soft skills training. DVR also provides vocational options during the summer while your son or daughter is still in high school as well as options for employment after graduation.

- **Support Services**

When your son or daughter is nearing the age of 18, it's important to start thinking about plans for post-high school. We recommend that you start by contacting the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC). They will help with the process of applying legal guardianship, for social security and Medicaid, and other adult services.

The ADRC website has information and resources including a Community Resource Directory full of information about services and organizations in Portage County. Their website is: <http://www.co.portage.wi.us/adrc/>

Please see the flow chart attached for more information regarding the transition to adulthood.

Other Programs and Activities

- **Sn'L (SPASH and Literacy)**

Sn'L is a volunteer activity to promote reading and build new relationships for students. Sn'L will pair students in general education and students with Intellectual Disabilities for read-alouds and other related activities. Both the reader and the listener will benefit by learning new authors and subject matter that each enjoy. While building relationships, students will engage in a variety of texts and create lifelong memories for everyone.

- **Swim/Gym**

Every spring, students who have Adaptive Physical Education are invited to participate in the Swim/Gym program at UWSP. This program is every Friday afternoon for approximately 10 weeks; our students take a school bus to UWSP at the beginning of 7th hour and return to SPASH in time to ride their normal bus home. Our students are paired with UWSP students who are working to earn their Adaptive Physical Education certification; they spend 5 weeks together working in the swimming pool and 5 weeks together in the gymnasium. UWSP students prepare activities that are modified and adapted to fit the abilities and interests of each of our students.

- **Community Partners**

Community Partners is a United Way program designed to help students within our program develop meaningful friendships with their general education peers. Students in the program spend time together during the school day about once per month and also participate in a large group lunch party each quarter. Students help to run a "coffee shop" monthly; students make treats and coffee to sell during the school day in the North Commons.