

# ACCEL & MESD's Partnership



## The Situation

Community is one of Murphy Elementary School District's (MESD) primary focuses as it is directly related to its mission statement: to "passionately mak[e] the difference by inspiring, engaging, and supporting students to excel in school and in life." This is best achieved by creating a supportive, unified community.

When reviewing their students who were in private placement, Dr. Christina Gilbert (director of student support services at MESD) realized that this aspect of supporting their community could be improved. MESD decided that they wanted their students to be educated within their district, not placed in a private school. However, *when transitioning students back to MESD, Dr. Gilbert was disappointed by the lack of communication. They felt they were bending to fit the mold of what was already there.* At this same time, Dr. Gilbert was tasked with significantly reducing her budget: they were paying almost \$700,000 in private placement fees.

MESD needed something different. Something that would help fill the district's needs and reach their important goals. They needed a partner who would add to their community, not detract from it.



## The Solution

ACCEL reached out to MESD to talk about a potential partnership. We explained our own goal of helping districts in whatever way best suits a district's plans. *We emphasized that we are willing and ready to develop solutions that go beyond the typical. After discussing their vision with us, Dr. Gilbert and MESD decided to partner with ACCEL.*

Initially, some parents were worried about moving their child to a new school—especially in the middle of the school year. However, after touring our facility and meeting ACCEL's

wonderful staff, they recognized the benefits of working with ACCEL and were supportive of the transition.

From the beginning of this partnership, ACCEL has sought to understand what MESD wants and strategize how we can best help them fulfill their goals. Talking about their partnership with ACCEL, Dr. Gilbert said, *"I can honestly say this was an excellent move."*

## The Outcome

MESD provided a list of their outplaced students which our academic, behavioral, and therapeutic departments then reviewed. *Through that collaboration ACCEL identified seven students that were ready to return to MESD's schools with support from our innovative BCBAs.*

However, sometimes the best placement for a student is in a Level D school. ACCEL's K-12 schools try to provide a home away from home. We view our schools as an extension of our students' families and their districts. Eight students from MESD attended ACCEL last year, and two of those students are close to meeting their exit criteria in order to return to their home school. Here are some of the successes MESD's students achieved after two short months of attending ACCEL:

- One student decreased her behaviors by 35%
- A parent reported that her child "comes home and knows how to make a snack now"
- Upon entering ACCEL, one student was unable to complete morning routines with his peers. After two weeks, he was able to complete all tasks with his peers
- One student would not write words at all. Now, with proper prompts, he writes three sentences at a time
- Another teacher commented that their student from MESD is "always happy being at school and has shown this by his beautiful smile! He has enjoyed experiencing the spa for aquatic therapy"



Dr. Gilbert has commented on this community by saying, *"We have received very positive remarks from our parents who have expressed their child is learning life skills, likes going to school, and comes home happy."*

In addition to the services listed above, ACCEL is currently providing school consultation services to MESD on a case by case basis. Our BCBAs are working with MESD's staff to create environments in their classrooms that help prevent a student ever needing to be outplaced to a Level D school.

*ACCEL has helped MESD save \$300,000 in private placement fees—a total savings of more than 40%.* MESD has also received assistance from ACCEL as MESD starts to bill for Medicaid.

Different situations require different approaches, and ultimately, *we want to help you achieve your district's vision.* We are dedicated to customizing our program to fit your district's needs and wants because we want to be true partners with every district we work with.

# 34

WE CURRENTLY SERVE 34  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- We serve 14 areas of disability
- From the time a student enrolls at ACCEL, exit criteria are identified through the IEP process to support each student's ability to return to their home school
- District partners have 24/7 access to documents that report their students' daily progress

- We have 214 staff members, including full-time on-campus nursing staff
- 100% of parents interviewed said that they always feel connected and informed
- Our curriculum is designed for collaboration between our academic, behavioral, therapeutic, vocational, and life-skill programs

# 1,693

1,693 OF IEP GOALS WERE  
MASTERED IN THE  
2019/2020 SCHOOL YEAR

# 500

WE SERVE 500  
INDIVIDUALS EACH YEAR,  
ALL WITH UNIQUE  
COMBINATIONS OF  
CHALLENGES

- We provide more than 33,000 hours a year of therapy to our students
- Aggressive behaviors decreased by 74% across the same population & four-year period
- ACCEL is the only Arizona special education school program to achieve accreditation from the National Commission for Accreditation of Special Education Services (NCASES)

