



Affective Needs Program

While the nature of the students we serve is complex, our mission is uncomplicated: ***To prepare students socially and academically for success in school and in the community.***

It is our purpose to provide the climate, instruction, and support necessary to meet students' emotional and behavioral needs, thereby allowing them to gain skills to successfully access school and community environments. We provide every student with a safe and positive learning environment that reveals students' potential; cultivates self-worth, respect for others, and the desire to learn; and develops the personal responsibility and accountability critical to meet the demands of life.

Affective Needs center-based programming and education focuses on a multitude of areas. Students in these programs receive specialized instruction to meet the variety of social/emotional needs that may be present. Services are provided on individualized continuums of support that align with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and current needs. Academic skill building, specialized instruction and support in communication, social skills, emotional regulation, positive behavior strategies, and safety are embedded in daily programming. Additionally, post-secondary work and learning opportunities, job coaching, independent living planning and supports, and community connections are accessible for all students.

In Poudre School District, school social workers are dedicated to providing comprehensive, school-based mental health support in our Affective Needs programs. Their work focuses on direct student services, emotional regulation, crisis intervention, supporting access to learning, and connecting students and families with community resources. They partner with Affective Needs teachers, school psychologists, and other staff to ensure an integrated, team-based approach. Every student receives personalized support tailored to both their educational and emotional development.

Other key aspects of our Affective Needs Program include:

- **Quality Instruction** – Students in our Affective Needs Programs access grade level standards and curriculum on a daily basis. AN teachers provide direct instruction which may take place within the general education setting or within the AN classroom depending on individual student needs and in accordance with their IEP.

- **Positive Behavior Support** – Affective Needs Programs within PSD utilize various positive behavior supports to increase students' behavioral and academic success within the school setting. Some examples of strategies include: daily goals setting, group contingencies, breaks, point sheets with target skills students are aiming to increase and generalize, access to a wellness space, and self-monitoring systems. The team works alongside students to design reinforcement strategies and systems that are motivating for them individually, while ensuring overall programmatic systems are in place.
- **Social and Emotional Wellness** – Students participate in instruction in Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction provided by an AN teacher, social worker, paraprofessionals, or other staff who collaborate on the student's team. Skills such as self-regulation, self-advocacy, self-management, developing and maintaining relationships, accepting responsibility for one's actions, and developing a sense of self and purpose, and safety are explicitly taught throughout the student's day. The inclusive nature of our AN programs in PSD allows students the opportunity to generalize the SEL skills and strategies across school and community settings.
- **Post-Secondary Readiness** – We believe in the power of creating opportunities for students to connect and engage with members of our community. Service Learning provides a powerful opportunity to engage students of all ages/grades in the community, create applied learning opportunities, and shift their focus to caring for others. Through these experiences, students are able to authentically practice the SEL skills taught within the school setting, necessary for post-secondary success. Additionally, student-driven conversations around transitioning from middle to high school or from high school to college, getting a job, attending a trade school, becoming a productive member of society inform high school course sequences and selections. The AN teacher works closely with each student to develop a schedule that maximizes skill-building, interest areas, interactions with general education peers and post-secondary readiness.