

Dear Mrs. Shields,

Thank you for the time you are taking out of your day to read this. Perry High School has a great program for kids with special needs and disabilities. Perry's P.A.V.E program is important for the kids because, it teaches them real life skills which I believe is excellent. The school also has amazing teachers that help aid and assist these students. The problem is that after these students graduate they're not allowed to do electives like choir and yearbook. They are still in the school and many people including myself say hi to them in the hallways. So that brings to question why are they not allowed to participate in electives after they graduate.

Why can't students with special needs continue doing exploratory's like choir after they graduate? From experience the students in P.A.V.E really enjoy the extra classes like choir, and so do the students outside of P.A.V.E. It is shown that “ in studies on choirs that integrated populations with special needs of various ages, that emotional well-being of all participants increased” (Branigan & Barker, 2015; Stonehouse, 2013). It gives time for everyone to form relationships in a non formal classroom environment.

Choir is a performing art, you don't just sit and learn. You actually have to get up and do what you are being taught. In that class you are using all parts of the brain and body to complete the task at hand. That's why it's so important for P.A.V.E students to experience it, they are fully involved in a task. They also will be part of an ensemble, learning teamwork and communication skills.”Choir is an activity where children work together to create music. Singers take this teamwork into the classroom and work well in groups. On top of improved teamwork, choir members are shown to increase self confidence”(Valley Youth Voices). With all these positives why cut off the students once they graduate, even when they are still at the school?

Some people may believe that having P.A.V.E students stay in highschool classes like choir will only work or be acceptable if it works towards the students transition goals for after high school. To that I would tell them that many of the electives would help them transition. For example transitioning with choir meets a lot of the goals, the students learn social skills from being in such a large class that has all different grade levels. They will get the self care skills because they will be responsible for keeping the sheet music in a binder, and bringing that binder to class everyday. From personal experiences I've seen P.A.V.E kids in choir get better at doing all these things, by the end of the first semester most of them have kids from outside of the P.A.V.E program. I've seen them struggle with remembering to take their binder to class, but I also saw them learn from it and for the next month they do bring their binder to class. High school electives shouldn't stop for these students just because they graduated, these electives help them transition even if it's considered a high school class. These electives most importantly make these students happy, because they form a bond with us and we form a bond with them.

Thanks for your consideration.