



Autism Collier Charter School Frequently Asked Questions

What is a charter school?

A charter school is a public school that is operated independently of the school district. More information about charter schools can be found fldoe.org.

Where is ACCS located?

We are currently in the final stages of securing a location and are on target to announce the final location prior to the end of 2024. The location will be centrally located in Naples.

Do students have to live in Collier County to attend ACCS?

No. ACCS is open to all students, regardless of county of residence.

What is the ACCS school calendar?

ACCS school calendar will closely follow the CCPS school calendar. There will likely be some adjustments to decrease the number of non-student days and early release days. The ACCS school calendar will be published to the school website in January 2025.

Is ACCS an appropriate setting for my child if they are considered “high functioning”?

At Autism Collier Charter School (ACCS), we prefer not to classify students as “high” or “low” functioning. Autism is a spectrum, and many children possess a unique combination of strengths and challenges. Some may excel in certain areas and need significant support in others.

Currently, ACCS is designed to serve students with autism who also have a significant cognitive disability, following the Florida Department of Education’s guidelines, which include specific requirements for teacher certification, state standards, and assessments for students with these needs.

However, it is our goal to expand services to all students on the autism spectrum by our third year of operation, if not sooner. Additionally, we are actively exploring options for



supplementary programs and home-school connections for students who do not have a significant cognitive disability.

If you're interested in learning more or staying informed about these developments, please feel free to email info@autismcolliercharter.org.

How can I find out if my child is eligible to apply at ACCS?

To be eligible to attend ACCS, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Have a medical or educational diagnosis of autism
 - Sample documentation for verification: IEP, Medical Report, Physician Diagnosis
- Have a significant cognitive disability as defined by the Florida Department of Education
 - Sample documentation for verification: School District Educational Evaluation, Private Evaluation, Medical Evaluation

The best way to determine eligibility is to complete the enrollment application process. To get started, complete the student interest form on the school website [here](#).

What is meant by “significant cognitive disability?”

Prior to 2021, the definition of a significant cognitive disability allowed for more flexibility, with IEP teams having the ability to use professional judgment in determining eligibility. However, as of 2021, Florida Statute defines a significant cognitive disability as an IQ score of 67 or below.

(f) “Most significant cognitive disability” means a global cognitive impairment that adversely impacts multiple areas of functioning across many settings and is a result of a congenital, acquired or traumatic brain injury or syndrome and is verified by either:

1. A statistically significant below average global cognitive score that falls within the first percentile rank (i.e., a standard, full-scale score of sixty-seven (67) or under); or
2. In the extraordinary circumstance when a global, full-scale intelligent quotient score is unattainable, a school district-determined procedure that has been approved by the Florida Department of Education under paragraph (5)(e) of this rule.

The full statute can be found [here](#).

What standards are taught at ACCS?

Students at ACCS are instructed on the Florida Standards Access Points. Access points are state standards developed for students with a significant cognitive disability. They reflect the core intent of the Florida B.E.S.T. standards with a reduced level of complexity.



To be eligible for enrollment at ACCS, the IEP for students in grades 1-12 should indicate modified curriculum in the accommodations/modifications section of the IEP (modified curriculum/access points are not available for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten).

You can read more about the Florida Standards Access points [here](#).

Do students at ACCS take state assessments?

Yes. Students at ACCS take the state assessment indicated in their IEP. Since ACCS currently serves students with autism and a significant cognitive disability, students at ACCS will take the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA)- performance based or datafolio.

Additional information on the Florida Alternate Assessment can be found [here](#).

Will students graduate ACCS with a standard diploma?

Yes. Students instructed in the Florida Standards Access Points will graduate with a standard high school diploma.

Historically, Florida issued a special diploma for students instructed on access points and assessed using the state alternate assessment. However, in 2015 the Florida legislature repealed use of the special diploma option because it did not require the same standards as the regular diploma and could limit post-school outcomes for students.

Additional information about graduation requirements can be found [here](#).

What background, training, and certification do staff at ACCS have?

As in a traditional public school, all teachers meet the highly qualified requirements as set forth by the Florida Department of Education.

Educational Assistants must have an associate's degree OR completed two years of study at an institution of higher education OR earned a passing score on the ParaPro Assessment.

All staff at ACCS receive annual and ongoing training in the methodology of Applied Behavior Analysis. Additionally, the school schedule and calendar are designed strategically so that staff members receive two full weeks of professional learning each summer, one full day each quarter, and time is built into the daily schedule to facilitate ongoing professional learning. Training topics include but are not limited to the following:

Emotion regulation strategies	Assistive Technology
Social skills training	Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports
Facilitating effective communication	De-escalation