



Burlington County Alternative High School Burlington County Special Services School District FAQs

BCAS is a proficiency-based program for students who have experienced difficulty achieving their potential at their traditional high school and middle school. Students at BCAS meet and exceed state and local graduation requirements through highly individualized programs provided by state certified teachers and/or college instructors. Instruction encourages experiential learning and student-driven projects. Credits are awarded as proficiencies are demonstrated, rather than on the basis of performing satisfactorily over an arbitrary period of time. In addition to the academic component, students are provided opportunities for individual and group counseling, as well as vocational training and counseling.

BCAS Frequently Asked Questions

General Program Questions:

What is the typical BCAS student like? *Our students have experienced significant challenges in their home schools for various reasons. Students may have difficulties with their academics, medical issues, mental health, social, or behavioral issues. Our students benefit from the support we provide in a smaller program setting.*

What do students like best about BCAS? *Our students enjoy working at their own pace. Students will be given extra time in challenging subject areas when necessary. Also, if a student misses school he/she doesn't fall behind.*

BCAS staff make the time to get to know each student on a personal level. Many students will say they feel important, recognized and understood here. The small classroom and school design provides a family-like learning atmosphere.

Will I earn a high school diploma? *Yes, you will earn a high school diploma issued by your sending school.*

How does graduation work? *You are invited to participate in your home school's graduation and you are invited to the BCAS graduation. Some students choose to attend both.**

What will I miss out on if attending BCAS? *Students can still participate in after-school activities at their home school, including extra-curricular activities and special events such as proms and graduation activities.**

**Students with significant disciplinary or attendance issues might not be permitted to participate in school activities.*

Questions about Academics:

How does individualized learning work, and are there classes to attend? *Students meet with their counselors to determine what courses they need. Students then seek out the subject area teachers who counsel them and give class assignments. Students work independently on site, and submit their work once completed. Students are briefed daily in their morning meeting with a listing of the day's classes. Students then sign up for classes daily. Occasionally students require guidance from staff on whether they are eligible for certain subjects and classes being offered.*

What are the field trips like? BCAS places tremendous value on getting out and seeing the world. We offer approximately two trips per month; trips relate to a lesson or project from school. Students earn credits by attending trips and completing the class meetings and/or follow-up work involved. Examples of our trips involve: Washington DC, Philadelphia, NYC, museums, playhouses, landmarks, etc. We also offer outdoor activities such as backpacking, camping, and rock climbing. All trips are optional.

Is it true that students can accelerate and/or graduate early? Yes, but that is entirely up to the student. Motivation, performance, and individual progress will determine how quickly the student will move along. Many of our students do accelerate in their courses.

How will I know how I'm doing in school? Students receive a report every Monday to track their progress. Also, parents and guardians are contacted by our staff who make weekly contact to provide updates. The focus is always to support your goals and help keep you on track.

Is there extra help available? Yes, during regular school hours there is always an opportunity to receive extra help from teachers. Our teachers provide one-on-one and small group instruction. Counselors can also help with goal setting and time management.

Is it true I can take college courses for high school credit? Yes, some BCAS students enroll in college coursework through Rowan College at Burlington County (formerly BCC) and attend class right here on the Mt. Laurel campus as part of their regular school day. Students must apply for this opportunity and will be evaluated based on their performance at BCAS (attendance, academic progress, behavior, etc.). Additionally, students will need to acquire their home district's approval.

Do I have to go to gym class? No, we realize that some students do not enjoy gym class. While you need to earn four years total of Health & PE; at BCAS, you can earn PE credits in other ways. You can earn credit in the following ways:

- attend school trips
- a part-time job
- physical activities at home
- activities in your home school
- community activities

If you do like gym class, we offer physical education class every day at school.

Questions about the counseling support:

How often will I see my counselor? Approximately every other week your counselor will check-in with you. You may request to see your counselor as needed.

What types of things can my counselor help me with? Anything. If your counselor can't help you with your problem, they will find someone who can. All conversations are kept confidential (exception: if someone's life is in danger).

What is the reason behind the group counseling? Group counseling is where students learn important life topics, discuss relevant issues, share ideas, and learn about one another. Students get to choose their group and credits are earned through participation.



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