

## **Calo Academics Overview of Information**

### **Is Calo's school accredited?**

Yes. Change Academy Lake of the Ozarks (Calo) has met the requirements established by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and is accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. AdvancED not only accredits private schools, but many of the public schools in Missouri and other Midwestern states.

### **Do credits earned at Calo transfer to other schools?**

Yes. Because Calo is accredited by a recognized regional association, credits earned here transfer to a student's home school district or to other private schools. When a student transitions from Calo to a public or private school at home, an updated transcript is produced for the student to inform the home district or school of the student's earned credits.

### **How does Calo ensure that students have the particular credits that a home district requires?**

Calo currently has students from more than 30 states, so we are practiced at working with state and local curricular requirements. When students are admitted to Calo, our Registrar analyzes their transcripts and interviews a local school administrator to clarify local requirements. For example, some years ago, we were able to provide an Alaska History course for two students from Alaska.

### **What is the school's mission?**

Our mission is to create lifelong academically and socially competent interdependent learners. For Calo, the social aspects of learning underline its interdependent nature. Learning is an inherently social activity in which students learn to trust that teachers have their best interests at heart. As such our baseline goals for our students are that they (1) turn in and complete their work on time, (2) come to class and maintain appropriate behaviors and boundaries, (3) achieve knowledge of, and practice in, executive functioning skills, and (4) understand the importance of self-advocacy. Most of our students will be returning home to traditional public and private schools, and we believe that if we can instill the above skills and habits in our students, they will be served well at home.

### **What is the range of academic skills in Calo's students?**

The skill range is wide among our students. At any given time, 40%-50% of our students arrive with IEPs and 10%-15% of our students are funded by their local school districts. Most of our students come to us with full-scale IQ scores in the normal range, but variation among one or more subscores compromises that full-scale score. As a result, most of our students have struggled with school, whether that is due to executive function difficulties, school refusal, or emotional dysfunction. At the same time, about 20% of our students are capable of honors-level courses and have the capacity to attend college. It is for this reason that we ask parents to add their own goals to CALO's goals, when appropriate.

### **How is school organized?**

Just as Calo really has two programs—a boys' program and a girls' program—so the school educates genders separately. Monday through Thursday boys are at school from 8:20 in the morning until 12:20 in the afternoon; girls are in school Monday through Thursday from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Friday is a catch-up day for our students, Extra School Time (EST). Students who need extra help or need to finish a week's assignments use this time on Fridays. Currently, classes meet in blocks of 50 minutes, with 10-minute breaks between for exercise and working with dogs. Boys and girls each attend 4 blocks during the 4 hours that they are in school.

### **What is the school curriculum?**

Our curriculum is based upon the Common Core, to which the state of Missouri subscribes as well. Students take the four core subjects of English, Math, Science and Social Studies, each taught by a certified teacher. Classes meet twice a week on Mondays/Wednesdays and Tuesdays/Thursdays, for six classes per week per term. In addition to the core subjects, students take electives such as Psychology, Economics, and Study Skills.

### **What instructional methods do teachers use?**

Teachers employ a range of methods. We use technology extensively in classrooms—from our computer lab to smart boards to DVDs. Because of the range of our students, teachers are mindful to differentiate curriculum and instruction as much as possible. **We do this by focusing on the process of learning more than the content of learning.** That is, we stress literacy and study skills across the curriculum, meeting the student where she is. For example, in an English class students might not be reading the same text at the same time; more capable students may be reading more sophisticated texts and writing essays, while other students might be reading simpler texts and focusing explicitly on various interpretive strategies.

### **Do students have homework?**

Calo has not traditionally assigned much homework to students. We are in the process of changing that. Since the shift from computer-based instruction to teacher-led classrooms, we have begun to focus on homework in regards to test preparation. Students are given study guides the nights before an exam and coaches are alerted to work with students in their team homes to study. For more capable students, home work may be more regular. For example, a recent girls' honors English class, featured regular homework reading assignments of *Pride and Prejudice*, and writing assignments drawn from AP English essay prompts.

### **How is the school integrated into the larger boys' and girls' programs?**

The school administrators and teachers work closely with the boys' and girls' therapists and coaches. Because of past school experiences, many of our students don't initially trust teachers. Indeed, students with trauma and attachment issues have trouble trusting in general, which often leads to emotional dysregulation. For that reason, coaches attend school with students, as canines attend school with students. Moreover, teachers attend treatment team meetings, and may attend therapy sessions with students to work on some school-related issues.

### **What qualifications do CALO teachers have?**

All teachers at Calo are certified by the state of Missouri; three instructors have additional certification in Special Education. Additionally, CALO employs tutors that hold Missouri substitute certificates. The school director has a PhD, and is retired from a Midwestern research university, where he taught teachers for 15 years as a tenured professor.