

## **Polaris Academy Becomes a Certified Autism Center™, Enhancing Services for All Students**

MESA, Ariz. (February 10, 2025) - The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) proudly awards the Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) designation to Polaris Academy, recognizing its efforts to best welcome and assist autistic and sensory-sensitive students. To earn the CAC designation, staff completed a specialized training and certification process, equipping them with the skills, resources, and knowledge of best practices to support every student at the academy.

“As a school we believe not only in educating our students, but also our parents, teachers, and community. Recognizing Polaris Academy as an IBCCES Certified Autism Center™ demonstrates our commitment to delivering on that vision and providing an environment and service to our students that is unmatched,” says Nathan Palmer, Polaris Academy CEO.

Polaris Academy was designed to serve autistic and neurodivergent students. The building itself incorporates architectural supports specifically for a sensory-conscious population, such as: adaptive lighting, sound-dampening finishes, acoustic sensory nooks, transom windows, and muted finishes.

The Polaris academic model uniquely combines traditional teaching methods with support from ABA, speech, and other therapy trained staff providing its students with a holistic approach to education and development. The academy has also designed areas for students to experience real world application of academic concepts in its STEM Discovery Center, Culinary Lab, Student Business Store, and Intentional Play Gym so students can experience education in a fun and hands-on way.

“IBCCES is proud to partner with Polaris Academy and designate them as a Certified Autism Center™,” says Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. “This certification is a testament to their dedication to creating an environment where every student can thrive, and we look forward to seeing the impact it will have on the academy’s staff, students, and their families.”

The certification also contributes to Mesa’s designation as an Autism Certified City™ (ACC). This designation ensures that both visitors and residents have access to a wide range of organizations that are trained and certified to better welcome and assist autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals across the healthcare, public safety, education, hospitality, entertainment, and recreation industries. Mesa was the first city to earn the ACC designation.

Since 2001, IBCCES has been a leader in autism, neurodiversity, and cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education, and corporate professionals globally. IBCCES is the only credentialing board offering these types of programs, which include training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, as well as long-term support and renewal requirements to ensure there is continued learning and a lasting impact.

IBCCES also manages AutismTravel.com and CertifiedAutismCenter.com, free online resources for families and autistic individuals that list certified destinations, organizations and resources. Each organization listed on the sites has met the Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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### **About Polaris Academy**

Polaris Academy is a private K-12 school for autistic and neurodivergent children. Our mission is to empower parents and students by creating academic and social resources to Navigate children towards a more purposeful, independent, and fulfilling future. Our flexible education model combines grade level standards with experiential learning through our STEM Discovery Center, Culinary Lab, Student Business Store, and Intentional Play Gym supported by ABA, speech, and other trained professionals providing a truly integrated academic system with integrated behavior supports.

### **About IBCCES**

Delivering the global standard for training and certification in the fields of autism, neurodiversity, and accessibility – IBCCES provides a series of certification programs that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. For over two decades, IBCCES has been a global leader, setting the industry standard in autism and cognitive differences training. IBCCES works in over 111 countries and provides training in 8 languages, and its programs have been recognized around the world as the leading benchmark in training and certification.

In addition to individual certification programs, IBCCES partners with cities, destinations, and organizations on initiatives like the Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD) and Autism Certified City™ (ACC), ensuring autistic and sensory-sensitive residents and visitors feel welcomed and safe. Destinations that achieve the CAD designation have completed a specialized program that ensures a multitude of recreation, hospitality and entertainment organizations have completed an autism and sensory-sensitivity training, certification and IBCCES facilities review process. The ACC designation expands on that program and includes IBCCES training and certification for the public safety, education, healthcare and workplace sectors.

IBCCES also created the Accessibility App, AutismTravel.com, and CertifiedAutismCenter.com – free resources for individuals with a variety of neurodiversities and disabilities, listing certified locations and connecting individuals to other resources and each other.

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