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ABSTRACT

This report examines the need for alternative education programs in Virginia, submits a plan and an estimate for funding, and reports findings and recommendations. The project team developed an implementation plan that identified five major objectives: (1) provide budget recommendations and estimates for Alternative Education at the state and local levels; (2) ascertain the status of Alternative Education in the nation and in Virginia; (3) review, with an option to change, the State Board of Education's regulations governing Alternative Education; (4) develop guidelines for the operation of alternative education programs; and (5) compile a technical assistance package for the development and/or restructuring of alternative education programs. Findings and recommendations are presented for each objective. Data were obtained from a national survey of 35 states' alternative education programs, a state survey that received 107 responses, and visits to 11 alternative education program sites. The first chapter presents an overview of alternative education budget considerations. The second chapter describes the status of Alternative Education in the Nation and in Virginia. The State's Alternative Education regulations and proposed guidelines are discussed in the third chapter. The final chapter presents suggestions for Alternative Education Technical Assistance. Appendices contain state regulations and resolutions, summaries of the Alternative Education National Survey and the State Alternative Education Questionnaire, and a profile for effective state alternative education programs. Seven tables are included. (LMI)

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ED 376 571

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON**

**A STUDY OF
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
IN VIRGINIA**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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RICHMOND 23216-2060

JOSEPH A. SPAGNOLO, JR., Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction


December 16, 1993

The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder
Governor of Virginia, and
The General Assembly of Virginia
3rd Floor, State Capitol
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Wilder and Members of the General Assembly:

The report transmitted herewith is pursuant to House Joint Resolution 619 of the 1993 General Assembly of Virginia. This resolution requested the Department of Education to examine the need for Alternative Education Programs, submit a plan and an estimate for funding, and report its findings and recommendations to the 1994 session of the General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,


Joseph A. Spagnolo, Jr.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

JASJr:hf

PREFACE

During the early spring of 1992, the Virginia Department of Education's Management Council issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the area of alternative education - RFP #92-24. This RFP asked for a review of the Virginia Board of Education's approved revision of the Regulations Governing Alternative Education. Since these revised regulations were written in the spring of 1991, while the Department of Education was being restructured, the Management Council wanted them reviewed for consistency with the mission and goals of the Department's programs prior to advancing them through the Administrative Process Act procedures.

In May 1992, in a proposal responding to RFP # 92-24, Dr. Dallas M. Johnson, Division Chief, Program Support, and Dr. Stephen A. Nunes, Lead Specialist for Adult Education, suggested expanding the scope of the RFP specification beyond the review of the proposed regulations. This proposal was subsequently accepted by the Management Council (Appendix A).

The 1993 session of the Virginia General Assembly added further direction to the project by passing House Joint Resolution (HJR) No. 619 (Appendix B). HJR 619 requested the Department of Education to study the need for alternative education programs, submit a plan, and develop an estimate for funding.

The project team for RFP #92-24, included the following members:

Team Leader: Lillian Shearin, Program Support

Team Members: Steve Ball, New River Valley Detention Center; Barry Buchanan, Hampton City public schools; Reamous Gunn, Jr., Danville City public schools; Chuck Hutto, Franklin County public schools; Bud Walls, Rockingham County public schools; Helen Williams, Department of Correctional Education

Department of Education: Philip Bellefleur, Pre and Early Adolescence; Patricia Catlett, Pre and Early Adolescence; Timothy Cotman, Pre and Early Adolescence; Raymond Griffin, Program Support; Stephen Nunes, Program Support; Emmett Ridley, Research and Development; Brenda Spencer, Program Support; Vivian Sullivan, Adolescent Education; Patricia Ta'ani, Program Support; Ava Thomas, Program Support; Irene Walker-Bolton, Pre and Early Adolescence; Mary Parsons, Program Support

The successful completion of this alternative education project is enhanced by the interest, support, and commitment of many people in the Department of Education, local education agencies, other state and local agencies, the business community, and citizens groups throughout the Commonwealth and the nation (Appendix G).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
Preface	i
Executive Summary	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter I. Alternative Education Budget Considerations	4
A. Background on Funding	4
B. Funding Requirements and Levels	4
C. Budget Recommendations	6
Chapter II. Status of Alternative Education in the Nation and the Commonwealth	7
A. Summary of National Practice	7
B. Summary of Virginia Practice	10
Chapter III. Virginia's Alternative Education Regulations and Proposed Guidelines	13
A. Virginia's Regulations for Alternative Education	13
B. Proposed Guidelines for the Operation of Alternative Education Programs in Virginia	14
Chapter IV. Alternative Education Technical Assistance	19
A. Models of Alternative Education Programs	20
B. Planning Alternative Education Programs	26
C. Attributes of Alternative Education Programs in Virginia	32
D. Annotated Bibliography	33
Appendices:	
Appendix A. RFP 92-24 - Alternative Education	A-1
Appendix B. House Joint Resolution No. 619	B-1
Appendix C. Alternative Education National Survey	C-1
Appendix D. State Alternative Education Questionnaire	D-1
Appendix E. Virginia Board of Education's <u>Regulations Governing Alternative Education</u> , Authority-Code of Virginia §22.1-16 and §22.1-253,13:1	E-1
Appendix F. <u>A Profile for Effective Alternative Education Programs in Virginia</u>	F-1
Appendix G. Acknowledgements	G-1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Board of Education defines alternative education in Virginia as:

"...learning experiences that offer educational choices which meet the needs of students with varying interests and abilities. Alternative education offers choices in terms of time, location, staffing, and programs. Alternative education may include programs for drop-out prevention, for employment under the regular supervision of designated school personnel, and for the reduction of illiteracy. Regular programs of general, vocational or college preparatory education, and required educational programs for gifted or handicapped students are not programs of alternative education."

The Department of Education's Management Council accepted the proposal submitted by the Division of Program Support to study Alternative Education in Virginia beyond the scope of reviewing the the State Board's regulations. The project team for RFP #92-24 - Alternative Education was composed of professional staff, representing regular education, correctional education, detention centers, alternative education, and the Department of Education. The implementation plan delineated five (5) major objectives for the project. A statement of each objective, the findings, and the recommendations follow:

OBJECTIVE 1:

To provide budget recommendations and estimates for Alternative Education at the state and local levels.

Findings from a review of the State Board of Education Regulations, State Survey, and Site Visits:

- The State Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education Programs in Virginia stipulate that "full-time equivalent per pupil cost of the alternative program shall equal or exceed the amount required by the Appropriations Act for students counted in average daily membership" (ADM).
- Data are not available to assess the extent to which the Board of Education's regulation on funding is followed.
- Data are not available to determine how current funding levels for local alternative education programs are derived.
- Data are not available to assess, with accuracy and consistency, the start-up and/or maintenance costs of all alternative education programs in Virginia.

- According to state records, the average per pupil expenditure for regular school operations in 1991-92 was \$4,995.
- According to alternative education state survey respondents, the 1991-92 average per pupil expenditure for 85% of the students in alternative education was under \$2000.

On the basis of all information reviewed, the project team makes the following recommendations:

- Local school divisions should be required to demonstrate that programs are funded based on the Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education.
- A study of the costs of alternative education (start-up and maintenance) should be conducted by the Department of Education during the 1994-96 biennium. The study should determine the actual costs to operate these programs. A mechanism to collect and manage funding data should be established.
- State funds should be made available by the General Assembly to enable local school divisions to meet the teacher/pupil ratio of 1:10 (or 1:12 with an aide) that is proposed in this report for alternative education programs in Virginia.
- A model program should be established in each of the eight (8) superintendents study regions to implement the proposed alternative education guidelines that appear in **Chapter III**, pages 15-18. Each program, determined through competitive proposals, should be funded by the General Assembly at \$50,000.
- Approximately \$5,000 should be allotted by the General Assembly to establish a stand alone computer system for the electronic database described in **Chapter IV. Alternative Education Technical Assistance**, pages 32-33.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To ascertain the status of Alternative Education in the nation and in Virginia.

Findings from the National Survey:

- Of the thirty-five states responding to the Virginia survey, Georgia, Oregon, Hawaii, and New Jersey are in the forefront in providing guidelines, recommendations, and formalized technical assistance to localities.

- Students served in alternative programs include those who are gifted, those with special needs, low achievers, drop-outs, truants, and children who are at-risk or who have behavioral problems.
- Obstacles to effective alternative education programs cited most frequently were:
 - ◆ insufficient funding and space allocations;
 - ◆ inadequately prepared staff;
 - ◆ inability of administrators and the public to see the need for alternative education; and
 - ◆ the unwillingness of administrators, teachers, and communities to adapt traditional classroom operations to accommodate these students in the regular educational environment.

Findings in Virginia from State Survey and Site Visits:

- Accurate figures on the number of students attending alternative education programs were unobtainable because recordkeeping procedures are inconsistent in many local school divisions.
- Programs exist to serve students who are at-risk of dropping out of school, to offer remediation to students whose behavior precludes their attendance in regular classrooms, and to expedite occupational/vocational training.
- Numerous, independent programs serve the population of students who need alternative education. These programs are not coordinated at the state level, fostering duplication of effort and taxing limited state and federal resources.
- The program models most frequently used are school-within-a school and a separate school program.
- The teacher/pupil ratio is usually 1:15, and it decreases to 1:12 or 1:10 for vocational programs.
- Alternative education programs generally serve students, 13-18 years old.
- In 1991-92, most programs operated on \$200,000 or less. The most common range was \$50,000 to \$100,000, followed closely by programs costing less than \$25,000.

- Inadequate funding, staffing, staff certification, and staff development were the obstacles to effective alternative education programs most often cited in the state surveys and site visits.

On the basis of all information reviewed, the project team makes the following recommendations:

- The proposed Guidelines for Operation of Effective Alternative Education Programs in Virginia should be adopted by the Board of Education.
- Alternative education programs should be coordinated under the leadership of the Virginia Department of Education to facilitate consistency in program development, implementation, evaluation, and recordkeeping.
- On-going staff development activities should be provided by local school divisions for alternative education teachers and administrators.
- Adequate funding to support and expand alternative education programs should be provided on a shared basis by the state and local school divisions.
- Statewide, standardized data collection and management procedures for alternative education programs should be implemented by the Department of Education.

OBJECTIVE 3:

To review, with an option to change, the State Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education and the revised regulations written in 1991.

Findings from the State Survey and Site Visits:

- Responses concerning new or revised regulations for alternative education ranged from mildly to adamantly opposed, while attitudes toward guidelines ranged from generally favorable to strongly supportive.
- Program personnel felt that self-regulation would increase their flexibility in implementing changes quickly and their ability to take advantage of state and local resources.

On the basis of all information reviewed, the project team makes the following recommendation:

- The current State Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education, Authority - Code of Virginia §22.1-16 and §22.1-253, 13:1, should be maintained without revision.

OBJECTIVE 4:

To develop guidelines for the operation of alternative education programs.

Findings from the DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) Process, expert consultants, and the Stakeholders' Special Project:

- The DACUM participants, made up of twelve alternative education practitioners in Virginia, developed A Profile For Effective Alternative Education Programs in Virginia, identifying categories, definitions, and characteristics that describe effective programs.
- The expert consultants reviewed and validated the profile developed by the DACUM process.
- The Stakeholders' Special Project participants used the profile to develop guidelines for planning, implementing, and enhancing alternative education programs in Virginia.

On the basis of all information reviewed, the project team makes the following recommendation:

- The proposed Guidelines for the Operation of Alternative Education Programs in Virginia, contained in this document, should be adopted by the Board of Education.

OBJECTIVE 5:

To compile a technical assistance package for the development and/or restructuring of alternative education programs.

Findings from the State Survey and Site Visits:

- Currently no formal mechanism exists to provide technical assistance to school divisions that are developing or restructuring alternative education programs in Virginia.
- Coordination, administration, evaluation, and data collection and management procedures for alternative education programs in Virginia are inconsistent.

On the basis of all information reviewed, the project team makes the following recommendations:

- The proposed Technical Assistance Guide for Alternative Education Programs in Virginia, contained in this document, should be adopted by the Department of Education.

- A mechanism should be established at the Department of Education to facilitate the identification, coordination, administration, evaluation, and data collection and management of alternative education programs in Virginia.

INTRODUCTION

America's diverse and rapidly changing society demands that schools prepare students to be educated, productive, and employable citizens. For young people to attain these essential educational goals, schools must be supportive institutions that facilitate learning for all students.

According to Dr. James P. Comer, Director of the School Development Program at Yale University's Child Study Center:

"When children come to school prepared to learn in the style of the school, they are perceived as 'Good.' When they do not, they are perceived as 'Bad.' Children need to gain control. They can gain control by not engaging themselves and/or through disruptive behavior. They may deliberately not learn things as a way of establishing control. This is not simply bad behavior, but underdeveloped, modifiable behavior."

Alternative education, like traditional education, is founded on the belief that all children can learn. Students will develop the skills and acquire the education they need to be successful citizens and lead productive, self-sufficient lives if educational programs are designed to meet their needs. Providing learning opportunities that complement the needs of students, rather than the teacher's or administrator's desire for conformity, should be the goal of all education programs. Alternative education, personalized to meet the unique needs of each student, embodies that goal. Alternative education should offer students options for educational success by providing a wide range of teaching strategies, methodologies, and settings. It should support the belief that the school is a community of learners acquiring critical literacy, knowledge, and skills.

The alternative education project team developed and implemented a multi-faceted approach to address the needs of alternative education programs in Virginia:

- Procedures were implemented to determine the status of alternative education, including budget information.
- Regulations affecting alternative education were reviewed to determine if revisions are needed.
- Activities were conducted to develop guidelines for planning, implementing, and maintaining effective alternative education programs, and
- A technical assistance package was compiled to help school divisions develop, restructure, and enhance their alternative education programs.

Budget

The 1993 session of the Virginia General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution (HJR) No. 619 which requested that the Department of Education develop an estimate of funding for alternative education programs in Virginia. To accomplish this, budget questions were included in the national and state alternative education surveys to ascertain the current funding level of programs and the degree to which that funding is adequate.

Determination of the Status of Alternative Education

The project team developed separate surveys to gather information on the status of alternative education programs in the nation and in Virginia. The national survey was distributed to departments of education in all fifty states and to many professional education organizations in the nation.

The state survey was mailed to 107 alternative education programs in the Commonwealth, and follow-up site visits were made to 11 of the respondents. The visiting team was usually comprised of two alternative education project members; however, in one instance, the entire project team visited a facility. These site visits were conducted to ascertain professional attitudes toward alternative education regulations and guidelines, the regional alternative education centers established by the 1993 Virginia General Assembly, and the role of the Department of Education in local alternative education programs. In addition, alternative education implementation strategies at the local level were reviewed.

Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education

The project team studied the current Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education, Authority - Code of Virginia, §22.1-16 and §22.1-253.13:1, (Appendix E), to determine the need for revisions. The team also reviewed the draft of the proposed regulations written in 1991.

Guidelines for Alternative Education

To establish guidelines for alternative education in Virginia, the team conducted the following activities:

- a literature search and review;
- a study of existing regulations and policies;
- a review of data and information on alternative education models found in the national and state surveys and site visits;

- the utilization of the DACUM process. The DACUM process is a research tool that employs the knowledge, skills, and abilities of practitioners and professionals in the field of alternative education to develop A Profile For Effective Alternative Education Programs in Virginia (Appendix F);
- the review of the DACUM by expert consultants. The DACUM was distributed to selected practitioners and higher education professionals in the field of alternative education for review and comments; and
- a Stakeholders' Special Project meeting.

Technical Assistance

To assist schools and school divisions develop, restructure, and enhance alternative education programs, the team developed a technical assistance package with the following components:

- Models of Alternative Education Programs,
- Planning Alternative Education Programs,
- Attributes of Alternative Education Programs in Virginia, and
- Annotated Bibliography.

Chapter I. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

A. Background on Funding

Alternative education programs are generally more expensive to operate than regular education programs. The main reason for the higher operating cost is the lower teacher/pupil ratio found in most alternative education programs. As noted in this report, the recommended teacher/pupil ratio for alternative education programs in Virginia is 1:10 (or 1:12 with an aide). This ratio is two and a half times lower than the 1:25 required by the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for all middle and secondary schools in Virginia. Other items contributing to a higher operating cost include extensive staff development requirements, facility costs, and pupil transportation.

When determining the cost of an alternative education program, consideration must be given to whether the program is newly developed, has an improvement component, or whether the program already exists and is being restructured or redesigned. A newly developed program, or one that is restructured or redesigned, will usually have start-up costs that will not appear in future budgets. Second year programs often reflect costs related to maintaining operations only.

B. Funding Requirements and Levels

The Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education Programs in Virginia stipulate that "full-time equivalent per pupil cost of the alternative program shall equal or exceed the amount required by the Appropriations Act for students counted in average daily membership."

- Data are not available to determine how local funding levels are derived.
- Data are not available to assess the extent to which the Board of Education's regulation on funding is followed.
- Data provided by respondents to the state survey suggest that alternative education programs were funded below the per pupil expenditure allotment of \$4995 for regular school operations in 1991-92. The per pupil expenditure average for programs serving 85% of the students was under \$2000. (See 1991-92 Per Pupil Expenditure Information, page 5.)

1991-92 PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE INFORMATION

The following tables describe per pupil expenditure information for 1991-92 alternative education programs reported by 66% or 71 respondents to the State Alternative Education Questionnaire:

TABLE 1. BASIC PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE INFORMATION	
STUDENTS SERVED	24,927
AMOUNT OF FUNDING	\$51,215,862
AVERAGE PER PUPIL COST	\$ 2,055
ACTUAL PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE RANGE	\$23 TO \$14,000

TABLE 2. PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (PPE) RANGE ANALYSIS				
PPE DOLLAR RANGE	# PROGRAMS	# STUDENTS	ACTUAL COSTS	PPE AVERAGE
0-99	4	2,831	\$154,600	\$55
100-999	21	16,098	\$7,833,237	\$487
1000-2999	28	2,251	\$4,014,092	\$1,783
3000-5999	13	1,021	\$4,339,341	\$4,270
6000-9999	2	136	1,054,592	\$7,754
10,000 UP	3	2,590	\$33,800,000	13,050
TOTAL	71	24,927	\$51,215,862	

- According to state records, the average per pupil expenditure for regular school operations in 1991-92 was \$4,995.
- According to alternative education state survey respondents, the 1991-92 average per pupil expenditure for 85% of the students was under \$2000.

C. Budget Recommendations

Data are not available to assess, with accuracy and consistency, the start-up and/or maintenance costs of all alternative education programs in Virginia. It is equally difficult to determine how current funding levels for local alternative education programs are derived. Therefore, the following recommendations are made regarding alternative education funding at the state and local levels:

- Local school divisions should be required to demonstrate that programs are funded based on the Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education.
- A study of the costs of alternative education (start-up and maintenance) should be conducted by the Department of Education during the 1994-96 biennium. The study should determine the actual costs to operate these programs. A mechanism to collect and manage funding data should be established.
- State funds should be made available by the General Assembly to enable school divisions to meet the teacher/pupil ratio of 1:10 (or 1:12 with an aide) that is proposed in this report for alternative education programs in Virginia.
- A model program should be established in each of the eight (8) superintendents study regions to implement the proposed alternative education guidelines that appear in Chapter III, pages 15-18. Each program, determined through competitive proposals, should be funded by the General Assembly at \$50,000.
- Approximately \$5,000 should be allotted by the General Assembly to establish a stand alone computer system for the electronic database described in Chapter IV. **Alternative Education Technical Assistance**, pages 32-33.

Chapter II. STATUS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN THE NATION AND THE COMMONWEALTH

A. Summary of National Practice

The national survey (Appendix C) on alternative education was sent to departments of education in all fifty states and to organizations of professional educators interested in alternative education. Thirty-eight states acknowledged the survey. Departments of education and/or other educational entities from thirty-five states either returned the completed survey, or they returned the completed survey along with printed material on their state's alternative education programs. Several school districts in other states also returned the surveys.

Information gathered from the national survey indicated that while alternative education programs exist in a majority of states, local school divisions in a state are responsible for establishing needs, developing programs, and carrying out administrative responsibilities. In most cases, the state education agency's principal role is to serve as advisor or technical assistant to the localities. Georgia, Oregon, Hawaii, and New Jersey indicated that they provide guidelines, recommendations, and formalized technical assistance to localities.

Definition of Alternative Education

While many states said they have established definitions for alternative education and alternative education programs, fourteen states indicated they have no definition. The definitions presented were both conceptual and operational. One state, Connecticut, offered no definition and presented its conceptual rationale for the decision not to develop a definition for alternative education. Other states said that they had no state-adopted definition for alternative education, or they did not respond to the question. Some definitions were extracted from guidelines and program descriptions when they were not included in survey responses. A summary of common concepts as well as a goal for alternative education programs were compiled from the definitions provided. The concepts include: intervention, individualized programs, programs for the gifted, special education, at-risk, truants, and disruptive students. The goal is: to help students develop academic, work, study, physical, life, social, communication, and employability skills.

Regulations and/or Policies

Seventeen of the states responding to the survey indicated that no state-implemented policies or regulations had been generated for alternative education. Sixteen states had some type of policy, regulations or statutes for

implementing alternative education programs. While a few states have governing regulations based in statutes, most regulations are promulgated by action of the state education agencies. It may be inferred that in states with no regulations, the local education agencies control the implementation of alternative programs, unless specifically prohibited by other state regulations.

Program Descriptions

While a wide range of alternative education programs was described by the responding departments of education, most programs focused on students perceived to be at-risk of failing academically and dropping-out of school. All state departments of education responding to the survey had programs consistent with the following models:

- school-within-a-school,
- alternative school,
- after school,
- cooperative (other agencies and organizations),
- magnet,
- privately-administered,
- independent study, and
- programs for parents.

Population Served

The populations served by alternative education programs included the gifted, students with special needs, low achievers, drop-outs, truants, at-risk, and those with behavioral problems.

Exit Options

Exit options among the states included graduation with a regular diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma and certificates of high school completion. Combinations of these options were frequently reported.

Best Practices

Program descriptions were catalogued by the project team and listed in Supplemental Notebook Number One, "Compiled Responses". Additional information is included in Supplemental Notebook Number Two, "Directories."

These programs have common characteristics which can be construed as characteristics associated with successful programs:

- well-defined goals and objectives,
- community understanding and support,
- knowledgeable and committed leadership,
- committed, and properly-prepared professional staff,
- positive communication with the public,
- emphasis on occupational or vocational preparation,
- positive and effective human relations,
- individualized attention to student needs,
- programs established to meet a documented need, and
- parental involvement.

Obstacles to Implementing Alternative Education Programs

Obstacles mentioned most frequently that affected alternative education programs included the following:

- inadequate funding,
- inadequate space,
- inadequately prepared personnel,
- difficulty in conveying alternative education needs to school administrators and the public, and
- resistance to change in traditional instructional methods by teachers, administrators, and communities.

Many respondents indicated that the obstacles had not been overcome. States that described methods for overcoming these obstacles emphasized the "common characteristics," stated above, as essential to success.

Evaluation

Evaluation requirements and methods of evaluation vary considerably among states. Four of the states indicated that evaluation is a local responsibility, while twelve states indicated that some type of evaluation of alternative programs is made at the state level.

Additional Information

The data collected from the national survey of alternative education is available in the following series of notebooks:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Supplemental Notebook #1: | Compiled Survey Responses |
| Supplemental Notebook #2: | Directories and Correspondence |
| Supplemental Notebook #3: | Program Manuals, Guidelines and Recommendations |

Supplemental Notebook #4:	Study Reports
Supplemental Notebook #5:	Regulatory and Legal
Supplemental Notebook #6:	Alternative Education Program Descriptions

B. Summary of Virginia Practice

There were 107 respondents to the State Alternative Education Questionnaire. The state survey (Appendix D) responses reveal that alternative education programs in Virginia serve three main purposes:

- to offer students who are identified educationally "at-risk" another opportunity to stay in school,
- to offer remediation to students whose behavior does not permit them to remain in the regular high school classroom, or
- to offer occupational or vocational training.

Most alternative education programs in Virginia have been in operation six years or less, and typically are housed at an existing high school facility using the school-within-a-school model. If an alternative education program is not part of the regular high school, it is conducted as an off-site program in a renovated facility. Most of the teachers and administrators, working in alternative programs, state that their buildings, furnishings, equipment, and materials are adequate.

The majority of alternative programs operate from 4-7 hours per day, five days per week, four weeks per month, and nine or ten months per year. The curriculum concentrates on traditional high school subjects and includes courses in social skills, health and physical education, and English. Completion of most programs involves obtaining a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or a regular high school diploma, or returning to the regular high school program. Fewer than half the students in an alternative education program elect to seek the GED, and less than half of that number are successful.

Typically, programs use individualized instruction, small group, computer-based instruction, and hands-on experiences to teach alternative education students. The usual teacher/pupil ratio is 1:15, decreasing to 1:12 or 1:10 for vocational programs. Teacher-made tests and standardized tests are the most frequently used assessment instruments. Programs also rely on traditional measures of high school success such as attendance, grades, and class participation. Schools often coordinate their alternative

education programs with the Department of Social Services, and many work closely with the court system.

Student Profile

The typical alternative education program serves students, ages 13-18 years, who are referred to the program by school principals, guidance counselors, teachers, or their own parents. A screening committee, the school administration, or the guidance department accepts students into the program. Reasons for placement include frequent absences from school, previous suspensions or expulsions, and social and behavioral problems that cannot be addressed in the traditional school program.

Program Staffing

About one third of the programs are small, serving 25 students or less. Some programs have a full-time administrator and/or a full-time guidance counselor, and most programs have part-time administrative and guidance staff. Programs serving over 125 students accounted for one third of the programs surveyed. These larger programs frequently have full-time administrative and guidance staff, with very large programs having as many as five or more people in both categories. Some programs had no staff of their own, and personnel were borrowed from regular education programs.

Professional personnel working in alternative education programs were virtually unanimous in their opinion that teachers should meet certification requirements. Staff qualifications were often listed as an "inadequate" feature of alternative education programs.

Operation Costs

Nearly half of the respondents indicated they did not have capital funds designated for their use. (See 1991-92 Per Pupil Expenditure Information, page 5, for additional operating cost information.) Most programs provided transportation for their students and did not charge fees. Financial support was listed most often as an "inadequate" aspect of the program.

Site Visits

Alternative education project members visited eleven program sites. Members were in teams of two, except in one instance, when the entire project team visited a site. The site visits were conducted to ascertain the attitudes of alternative education professional staff regarding program regulations and guidelines, the regional alternative education

centers established by the 1993 Virginia General Assembly, and the role of the Department of Education in local alternative education programs. In addition, alternative education implementation strategies at the local level were reviewed.

Responses concerning new regulations for alternative education ranged from mildly to adamantly opposed, while attitudes favoring guidelines ranged from generally favorable to strongly supportive. Program personnel felt that self-regulation would increase their flexibility in implementing changes quickly and their ability to take advantage of state and local resources. Self-regulation, they believed, would enable a school division to do a better job of matching programs to student needs, altering programs when necessary, stimulating innovation, and serving local needs more effectively.

With reference to the alternative education centers established by the General Assembly, most respondents felt that the eligibility criteria for the centers are too restrictive and that funds could have been better used in the existing alternative education programs. Fear was expressed that the Department of Education might accept these centers as the model for all alternative education programs, and that future emphasis by the General Assembly might be on this type of behavioral program. Respondents felt that such programs encourage the removal of problem students from the school environment and exacerbate transportation and discipline problems.

Some respondents, however, felt that such centers are cost-effective and help small school divisions that cannot afford their own alternative education programs. Attention was called to the negative reaction toward the programs in some communities, and some respondents wondered why the programs were named "Alternative Education."

Alternative education personnel in school divisions felt that the Department of Education could further alternative education if the RFP team achieves its mission. General advice was to proceed very carefully with guidelines and possibly include an appeals process. Since staffing and funding were major concerns, comments received suggested that funding and staff development needs should be addressed. Further suggestions were to help establish the External Diploma Program model (a competency-based diploma program), support incentives, and disseminate information about model programs. All respondents emphasized the need to publicize the positive elements of alternative education programs and not emphasize the negative reasons for establishing the program. It was also suggested that the Carnegie unit be eliminated and subject mastery be substituted in its place.

Chapter III. VIRGINIA'S ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION REGULATIONS AND PROPOSED GUIDELINES

A. Virginia's Regulations For Alternative Education

Virginia's definition of alternative education in the Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education follows:

§1.1 Definition--The following words and terms, when used in these regulations shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Alternative education" means learning experiences that offer educational choices which meet the needs of students with varying interests and abilities. Alternative education offers choices in terms of time, location, staffing, and programs. Alternative education may include programs for drop-out prevention, for employment under the regular supervision of designated school personnel, and for the reduction of illiteracy. Regular programs of general, vocational or college preparatory education, and required educational programs for gifted or handicapped students are not programs of alternative education.

The alternative education project team for RFP 92-24 had several tasks to accomplish regarding regulations governing alternative education programs. The Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education (Authority - Code of Virginia, §22.1-16 and §22.1-253.13:1) had to be reviewed and evaluated to determine if revisions were required. Also, a draft of proposed regulations, written in 1991, while the Virginia Department of Education was being restructured, was reviewed to ascertain if the proposed regulations reflected the present needs of programs in the state and the philosophy of the new administration at the Department.

An analysis of both sets of regulations (current and proposed) was undertaken, using research data, national and state surveys, and information from site visits. The team sought to determine:

- the relevance and validity of the regulations based on research,
- the compatibility of the regulations with Virginia's Standards of Quality (SOQ) and the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) revisions,
- the need for changes in regulations to enhance existing programs and to develop new programs, and

- the recommendations to be made regarding the development of guidelines for programming and the types of technical assistance needed by alternative education programs.

After careful analysis of all the information, the project team recommended that:

- the Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education (Authority - Code of Virginia, §22.1-16 and §22.1-253.13:1) be maintained without revision (Appendix E),
- guidelines be developed to assist in the development and operation of alternation education programs, and
- a technical assistance package be developed to provide information about developmentally appropriate educational practices in alternative education.

Research and data collected during the site visits suggest that Virginia's students would receive more benefits from the development of guidelines and the availability of technical assistance than from revising or rewriting the regulations. Further analysis of the data indicated that the development of guidelines would provide the latitude needed to create innovative programs, and at the same time provide consistency and direction to alternative education programs statewide.

B. Proposed Guidelines For The Operation Of Alternative Education Programs In Virginia

At different times during the alternative education study, representatives from direct service provider organizations and interest groups were invited to assist the Department of Education in developing guidelines for planning, implementing, and monitoring alternative education programs in Virginia. The first involvement was a data-collection process called DACUM, Developing A Curriculum. Twelve alternative education practitioners in Virginia were asked to develop characteristics of effective alternative education programs. The day-and-a-half intensive work session yielded a comprehensive listing of "preferred" alternative education characteristics, arranged in nine general categories for educational effectiveness.

The second involvement of representatives from direct service provider organizations and interest groups was the expert consultation component. Several outstanding individuals from higher education, local alternative education programs, and the community were asked to review and comment on the recommendations and findings of the DACUM participants. The DACUM results were mailed to the consultants with instructions to read the information and respond, in writing, to a set of related questions. The

responses received were used to edit the DACUM items as appropriate.

The third and final involvement of representatives from alternative education agencies, organizations, and community/interest groups was through the Stakeholders Special Project. A diverse group of individuals in Virginia were brought together in this special project to complete the process that sought "public/field" input on the development of alternative education guidelines. These stakeholders were selected because of their training and/or work experience, interest, or other involvement with alternative education (e.g., parents, alternative education students). The information contributed by the stakeholders facilitated the development of Guidelines to Operate Alternative Education Programs in Virginia.

Proposed Alternative Education Guidelines

Guidelines to Operate Alternative Education Programs in Virginia was developed and organized, using nine categories for educational effectiveness. These nine categories, with their definitions and characteristics, are identified in Profile For Effective Alternative Education Programs in Virginia (Appendix F). The categories for educational effectiveness are identified in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. CATEGORIES FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

SUCCESS ORIENTED	PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY	CRITERIA FOR STUDENT ENTRY
STAFF AND STAFFING	FACILITIES	STANDARDS
EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT	COMMUNICATION	RESOURCES/SUPPORT SERVICES

Guidelines To Operate Alternative Education Programs In Virginia

Success Oriented:

Alternative education programs should:

- be designed to have challenging curricula, reflecting high expectations, standards, and multiple options for learning.

- have a system of rewards that includes frequent incentives and opportunities for recognition of all students.
- maintain appropriate procedures, strategies, and resources to provide the assistance necessary to ensure success.
- provide for its students the same opportunities for inclusion in traditional school activities, programs, and student organizations as peers in the regular program. The alternative education program should strongly encourage and promote an equal partnership with the regular school.
- have multiple, credentialed exit options with a strong placement component.
- strive to assist the student in developing his/her full potential as a student and contributing member of society.

Program Flexibility:

Alternative education programs should:

- include, when appropriate, flexible scheduling and timing.
- offer individualized options, including vocational, academic, and social components which result in transferable life-management skills.

Criteria For Student Entry:

Alternative education program entry criteria should:

- include age appropriateness, academic ability and achievement, social adjustment, level of motivation, health and medical considerations, and prior attendance patterns.
- allow referrals from all reasonable sources, i.e., school personnel, community agencies, parents, and students themselves.

Staff/Staffing:

Alternative education programs should:

- reflect staff understanding of mission and best practices for students in need of these services.
- initiate recruitment and staff development that will produce an experienced, qualified, and eclectic staff that is empathetic, challenged, flexible, and committed to students in alternative education. All staff members should demonstrate strengths in classroom management and interpersonal skills.
- provide guidance/counseling and mentorship programs that will aid in fulfilling the emotional, social, and academic needs of students.
- maintain a ratio of 10:1 (12:1 with an aide), or a lower ratio as required by the needs of the students.
- utilize resources at the state level to fulfill staff needs for technical assistance and staff development.

Facilities:

Alternative education facilities should:

- be accessible to school and community support services as well as to vocational, technical, occupational, and physical education programs.

Standards:

Alternative education programs should:

- have policies developed for the **Seven Correlates of Effective Schools** to promote educational excellence and equity. The correlates are:
 - strong administrative and instructional leadership
 - opportunity to learn and time on task
 - clear and focused mission

- a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning
- high expectations for success
- frequent monitoring of progress
- positive home-school relations

Effective Assessment:

Alternative education program and student evaluation should:

- include the nine categories/characteristics for effective alternative education programs. (See Appendix F.)
- incorporate a variety of continuous planning and assessment methods with appropriate student input.

Communication:

Alternative education programs should:

- be marketed through local, state, and national professional and lay groups, associations, and boards. Newsletters, outreach efforts, and other public relations strategies are encouraged. Technical assistance should be sought from the community and other agencies such as the Department of Education.

Resources/Support Systems:

Alternative education programs should:

- access individual and family support services for students. These may consist of community resources such as business partnerships, social services, health departments, mental health agencies, and volunteer services.
- include daily attendance outreach, youth apprenticeship programs, and student support groups. Administrative support should include staff development, private sector involvement, and local, state, and federal funding strategies as stated in the Standards of Quality.

Chapter IV. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This Technical Assistance Guide For Alternative Education Programs in Virginia (TA Guide) may be used by school divisions to plan alternative education programs. It contains four related parts that provide information on effective program models, procedures and/or steps for planning programs, resource data on programs in Virginia, and citations of effective programs found in the literature. This TA Guide is designed and organized according to the components identified in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4. COMPONENTS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE

- A. Models of Alternative Education Programs**
- B. Planning Alternative Education Programs**
- C. Attributes of Alternative Education Programs In Virginia**
- D. Annotated Bibliography**

These components are discussed in detail below.

Technical assistance may be requested from the Department of Education during the development and/or restructuring of alternative education programs.

**Technical Assistance Guide For Alternative
Education Programs in Virginia**

A. *Models of Alternative Education Programs

TABLE 5. MODELS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Model I:	The Alternative Education Classroom
Model II:	The School-Within-A-School
Model III:	The Separate Alternative Education School
Model IV:	The Continuation School
Model V:	The Magnet School

Research has identified a variety of alternative programs that differ in the way they facilitate learning for students and respond to the community's interest in freedom, equity, and school improvement. Five of the commonly accepted alternative education models that appear in Table 5 are discussed below. Alternative education program developers in Virginia are encouraged to study the goals and characteristics of these models to determine which model or combination will most effectively respond to the needs of their students.

Model I: The Alternative Education Classroom

The alternative education classroom is a self-contained classroom in a traditional school that varies from other programs in its methodology, structure, or emphasis on learning. Students benefitting from an alternative education classroom environment include those who are poorly motivated, underachievers, and behind in classwork or credits required for graduation or promotion.

* **Note.** From Alternative Education Programs: A Prescription for Success (pp. 9-14) by Rhonda Hefner-Packer, 1991, University of Georgia: College of Education. Copyright 1990 by The University of Georgia. Adapted by permission.

Goals for an alternative education classroom include:

- enhanced self-image,
- improved academic, vocational, and social skills,
- proposed alternatives to achieve graduation credits or promotion,
- identified alternatives to graduation (enrollment in adult education programs, job corps, apprenticeship programs),
- performance contracts,
- low student-teacher ratio,
- team and peer teaching,
- community-based activities, and
- individual, peer, and family counseling.

Characteristics of an alternative education classroom include:

- individualized competency-based instruction,
- extended instructional periods,
- performance contracts,
- concentration on basic and advanced skills,
- prevocational or vocational awareness activities,
- counseling and tutorial services, and
- team teaching and use of paraprofessionals.

Model II: The School-Within-a-School

The school-within-a-school is a semi-autonomous, non-traditional, or specialized educational program housed in a traditional school or in a separate facility that has strong organizational ties to the parent school. Students usually attend the program for a portion of the day and return to the traditional school for electives or special courses. Students who may benefit from the school-within-a-school environment include those who are poorly motivated, are low achievers or

underachievers, are behind in graduation credits, or are unable to adjust to traditional structure and teaching methods.

Goals for the school-within-a-school include:

- elimination of pressures and lack of personalized environment created by the traditional school setting,
- improved self-image,
- improved basic and advanced skills,
- individualized rates of progress,
- increased attendance,
- enhanced student and faculty morale, and
- improved ability to relate positively to peers and adults.

Characteristics of the school-within-a-school include:

- interrelated courses,
- individualized competency-based instruction,
- integration of academic, affective, career, and survival skills, and
- bilingual instruction.

Model III: The Separate Alternative Education School

The separate alternative school is a self-contained educational facility that uses nontraditional strategies to promote learning and social adjustment. Students who may benefit from a separate alternative environment include those who are not able to function within the traditional school setting. These may include potential drop-outs, students with average or above-average intelligence but who are deficient in basic skills, low achievers, and those who are chronically absent.

Goals for the separate alternative school include:

- elimination of academic failure,
- creation of a student support system,

- improved social, career, and academic skills,
- preparation for a return to the regular school setting or for graduation, and
- development of self-esteem, self-discovery, and self-awareness.

Characteristics of the separate alternative school include:

- individualized competency-based instruction,
- integration of academic, affective, career, and survival skills,
- small school setting,
- academic emphasis,
- day care for children of students,
- contracted independent studies,
- extended instructional periods,
- individual, peer, and family counseling, and
- flexibility.

Model IV: The Continuation School

The continuation school is an evening or in-school program that provides instruction to individuals who no longer attend a traditional school. Included in this category are drop-out centers, pregnancy-maternity centers, evening and adult high schools, street academies, and school re-entry programs.

Goals for the continuation school include:

- preparation of individuals for a high school diploma or GED certificate,
- instruction in a less competitive, less structured, more personalized atmosphere, and
- preparation of individuals for adult work experiences.

Characteristics of the continuation school include:

- assistance in completing graduation or GED requirements,
- individualized instruction for basic and advanced skills,
- vocational instruction and work experience,
- interrelated academic and work activities,
- instruction in pre-and postnatal care,
- year-round instruction,
- flexible hours,
- programmed texts and supplementary materials,
- tutorial services,
- counseling services,
- facilitation to higher education
- open-entry/open-exit programming,
- student-designed schedules and programs,
- flexible attendance policy,
- extended learning sessions,
- work-experience program, and
- credit received for work or volunteer service.

Model V: The Magnet School

The magnet school is a self-contained program offering an intensified curriculum in one or several closely related subjects or skill areas such as urban studies, the performing and creative arts, media and communications, science and mathematics, or multicultural studies. A magnet school may be structured as a separate, autonomous facility, as a school-within-a-school, or as part of a large cluster of magnet schools. Student participation is voluntary and on a first-come, first-served basis to every student in the school division. Students who may benefit from the magnet school environment include those who exhibit interest or talent in a particular subject or skill area.

Goals for the magnet school include:

- provisions for career development opportunities to college-bound, vocational-bound, and work-oriented students,
- identification and cultivation of talents,
- development of competencies needed to perform adult roles, and
- enhanced self-image and self-expression.

Characteristics of a magnet school include:

- individualized competency-based instruction,
- basic and advanced skills instruction,
- specific talent or skill development,
- communication and social skills improvement,
- bilingual instruction,
- cultural instruction,
- required core courses,
- activities that develop responsibility and reliability, and
- specialized facilities, equipment, and instruction.

B. *Planning Alternative Education Programs

TABLE 6. STEPS TO PLANNING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- | |
|---|
| <p>Step 1: Establish Planning Committee</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct A Needs Assessment</p> <p>Step 3: Determine Program Goals and Objectives</p> <p>Step 4: Determine Alternative Program Implementation</p> <p>Step 5: Determine Alternative Program Evaluation</p> <p>Step 6: Develop Proposal</p> <p>Step 7: School/Community Review of Draft Proposal</p> <p>Step 8: Develop and Submit Final Proposal</p> |
|---|

A review of the literature reveals suggestions for planning alternative programs. If used, these steps should be modified to meet local school and community needs. Planning requires that activities related to development, implementation, and evaluation of alternative programs are integral, concurrent, and continuous.

Following are useful procedures in planning an alternative education program:

Step 1: Establish Planning Committee

Establish a planning committee consisting of persons committed to educational improvement. This is the key to the success of alternative programs. The committee provides consistency in program development, implementation, and evaluation. Committee membership should be representative of the school and community, and the participants may number between 6 and 15 members as appropriate. Membership should include classroom teachers from all grade levels, administrators, school auxiliary staff, students, parents,

* Note. From Alternative Education Programs: A Prescription for Success (pp. 31-37) by Rhonda Hefner-Packer, 1991, University of Georgia: College of Education. Copyright 1990 by The University of Georgia. Adapted by permission.

and other representatives from the community, local businesses, and social service agencies. Committee members must be informed of their responsibilities and the time commitment related to developing, implementing, evaluating, and promoting alternative education programs.

The committee must develop a strategic plan of operation that includes:

- mission statement,
- goals,
- objectives,
- strategies or activities,
- description of decision-making process, and
- timeline.

After membership and direction are established, the committee should seek the approval of the local division superintendent and board of education. The ultimate responsibility of the committee is to write an alternative program proposal to meet the needs of students and submit that proposal to the superintendent and school board for review and approval.

Step 2: Conduct a Needs Assessment

The planning committee is responsible for ensuring that a needs assessment is conducted to collect data necessary for alternative education program development. A needs assessment is a formal process to determine the gaps between current status and required or desired goals. It places needs in priority order and facilitates the selection process for those that require action. (Kaufman, 1976, p.8)

According to Kaufman, a needs assessment must contain the following characteristics:

- The data must represent the world of learners in the future.
- Needs determinations are never final. Any statement of need is tentative and should be tested regularly for validity.
- Discrepancies should be identified in terms of end products or actual behaviors, not processes or means.

Major activities included in a needs assessment are:

- development of a general problem statement

A discussion of school issues is suggested as the initial activity for identifying educational concerns and focusing planning on a reasonable number of issues.

- collection and review of data or concerns identified in the general problem statement

After developing the general problem statement, the planning committee can define the statement further by reviewing data collected from resources such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, standardized test results, student records, and literature searches.

- data analysis

After developing the general problem statement and collecting and reviewing data, the planning committee must analyze the data to determine existing conditions that require attention, identify desired goals, and list causes for the differences between current status and desired goals.

The feasibility of addressing all identified needs is unlikely; therefore, the planning committee must identify needs, in priority order, for alternative education program development. Establishing priorities permits time, energy, and resources to be concentrated on the most significant needs identified.

Step 3: Determine Program Goals and Objectives

The planning committee must use needs assessment data as a basis for formulating alternative education program goals and objectives. Goals are general statements of intent. They describe what the alternative education program intends to do for students. Objectives must be measurable and specific.

Elements of an objective include:

What: the nature of the objective

When: the point in time when something is to be accomplished

Who: the individual or groups the objective affects

How much: the amount that is to be accomplished

Strategies (procedures and activities) for accomplishing each objective should be provided and listed sequentially.

Step 4: Determine Alternative Program Implementation

To be effective, implementation must be well planned and based on the results of a comprehensive needs identification process. The planning committee must address implementation concurrently with planning program goals, objectives, and evaluation. Planning helps resolve potential problems that might be encountered during actual implementation. The implementation plan should include a timeline and address issues such as:

- management,
- financing,
- personnel,
- training,
- facilities, supplies, and equipment,
- transportation,
- curriculum,
- community relations, and
- student recruitment and selection.

Step 5: Determine Alternative Program Evaluation

The planning committee must develop a systematic evaluation plan for alternative programs. Development of the evaluation plan while addressing program goals, objectives, and implementation is critical. Consideration of program evaluation during planning allows planners to determine the extent to which goals and objectives are measurable. The evaluation plan should provide a timeline and identify:

- evaluation purpose,
- evaluation criteria,
- data collection instruments and methodology,
- data collectors,
- documentation, and
- use of results.

Step 6: Develop Proposal

A proposal must be developed and submitted to the local division superintendent and school board for review and approval. The proposal, at a minimum, should include an abstract providing a brief description of the program, including:

- an explanation of why and in what manner the program is alternative,
- a description of the assessed need, target population, and instructional methodology,
- a discussion of how courses of instruction and days of actual student attendance will be affected,
- a recommended length of time for program trial,
- a recommended evaluation method for program effectiveness, and
- a discussion of local and state department of education requirements, standards, and guidelines for alternative education programs.

Needs assessment data provide a basis for discussion of the process and procedure used to identify the need for the alternative education program and describe how the proposed program will fulfill the identified need.

Goals, objectives, and strategies for alternative programs must be discussed. Objectives based on identified needs should be detailed, stated in measurable terms, and related to specific activities and evaluation plans. Proposal goals and objectives are critical in conveying the intentions of the proposed program; therefore, much attention should be devoted to their development.

A program administration plan should recommend allocations of human and fiscal resources needed to implement, maintain, and evaluate the program. It should include a list of names of school personnel who are responsible for supervising the program. Additionally, a site feasibility study should be included.

An evaluation plan must be included to provide information about assessment strategies, based on valid research methodology. This should contain sufficient evidence for administrators to make decisions regarding beginning, improving, or continuing alternative programs.

Ways in which the community is involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the alternative program should also become a part of all written plans.

Step 7: School/Community Review of Draft Proposal

School staff, parents, students, and key community leaders should have the opportunity to review and respond to the proposal before it is submitted to the superintendent and the board of education. Sufficient time must be provided for the review and revision process.

Step 8: Develop and Submit Final Proposal

The ultimate charge of the committee is the development of an alternative program proposal submitted to the superintendent and school board for review and approval. Criteria used to evaluate the proposed alternative education program should include, at a minimum, the following:

- mission of proposed alternative program,
- compatibility with school guidelines,
- effect on current policies and procedures,
- available resources (human, material, financial),
- resources required for implementation (human, material, financial),
- cost effectiveness, and
- advantages/disadvantages.

C. Attributes Of Alternative Education Programs In Virginia

An Electronic Data Base:

This electronic data base contains information on alternative education programs in Virginia. The current information is derived from the Virginia Alternative Education Survey conducted in the spring of 1993. The data base is designed so that information can be updated regularly to keep the system current.

The demographics of this data base include the school division, the alternative school, contact person, and telephone number. Table 7 below contains the attributes that are included on the database.

Table 7. Attributes Included In Database

- types of schools, programs
- times of operation
- subjects offered
- linkages with other agencies
- age ranges served
- referral process
- teacher/pupil ratio
- non-instructional staff available
- instructional strategies
- assessment instruments
- exit requirements
- typical exit options

This electronic data base facilitates flexibility in information retrieval. Program developers may access data that matches their individual needs and interests. For example, if one were interested in a school division(s) that have magnet programs with specific instructional strategies to teach math to students

between the ages of twelve and fifteen, that specific school division(s) could be identified in a matter of seconds. In another example, a complete record of entries could be available for review on any alternative program in any school division. Many options for use exist with this program. It will be housed on a system that provides access to every school division in the Commonwealth.

Instructions for Access to the Data Base:

Instructions for access will be developed after a system is identified.

D. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This annotated bibliography may be used as a resource in program development. It was compiled from programs cited in the literature as successful models for the delivery of alternative education services. The program descriptions follow:

Atlanta Public Schools, GA. Div. of Research, Evaluation, and Data Processing (1989-90). Report No. 11, Vol. 25. Atlanta Public Schools Peer Leadership Connection Report.

The effectiveness of a peer leadership program, connecting senior high school students with at-risk, new eighth-graders in seven Atlanta (Georgia) high schools is evaluated. The program trains peer leaders in leadership and group dynamics and places pairs of leaders with 10 or 12 advisees for weekly meetings. The study population includes 102 peer leaders and 498 student advisees for a total of 600 students. Study participants attended four regular high schools and three alternative high schools. In addition, for control groups, two regular and two alternative schools are included, for a total control group of 646 students. For regular high schools, the absence data and course failure data favor the peer leadership group of both advisees and peer leaders over the control group. On the other hand, the attendance data and course failure data for the alternative schools favor the control group over the program participants. Statistical data are presented in six tables.

Amin, R. (1988) Helping Pregnant Adolescents: A Case Study of an Alternative School in Baltimore.

Assess the health and educational outcomes of 1,123 expectant teenaged mothers who attended the Lawrence G. Paquin Jr.-Sr. High School for Expectant Teen Mothers in Baltimore, Maryland.

Baker, A. M. & Weinbaum, A. T. (1992). Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992). Lessons from the High School Redirection Replication, 45.

A study was done to describe the development of seven alternative schools for youth who dropped out of high school or who were at risk of doing so on the model of Brooklyn (New York) alternative school, High School Redirection. The replication demonstration took place in the 1988-89 and 1989-90 school years in Cincinnati (Ohio), Denver (Colorado), Detroit (Michigan), Los Angeles (California), Newark (New Jersey), Stockton (California), and Wichita (Kansas). Only six sites, however, were fully participating. Denver ceased participating in the documentation/technical assistance project in Year 2, and Detroit did not open its alternative school until Year 2. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to study the schools including the following: (1) site visits; (2) student opinion surveys; and (3) student data surveys. The replication of the educational content of the model was more complex and depended on several locally controlled factors. Findings on school and student outcomes indicate that schools enrolled and retained a substantial number of at-risk students, that more than 50 percent of the students persisted in all of the schools for both years, and that retention and persistence improved at all sites. Included are 2 tables, 2 appendices containing 6 tables, and 43 references.

Foley, E. (1983). Social-Policy: Alternative Schools: New Findings, 13, 44-46.

Identifies elements of effective alternative high schools for New York City's truants, drop-outs, and potential drop-outs, including (1) well-defined student populations; (2) strong academic leadership; (3) increased teacher participation in management; (4) academic innovation; (5) clear standards for conduct; and (6) small school size. Presents recommendations for further improvement of schools.

Hefner-Packer, R. (1990). University of Georgia, Athens, GA. Alternative Education Programs: A Prescription for Success.

This monograph is intended to offer suggestions and strategies for planning and implementing alternative education programs. Because school districts have substantial autonomy in the types of alternative education programs implemented, conscientious decisions made at the district level are crucial, not only to the future of local alternative

education, but to the general direction of alternative education in Georgia. Educators are invited to use this monograph as a resource to assist them in achieving their goals.

The monograph is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the alternative education concept. Chapter 2 describes five commonly accepted models, including the alternative classroom, the school-within-a-school, the separate alternative school, the continuation school, and the magnet school. Chapter 3 looks at successful programs in Georgia. Chapter 4 suggests a strategy for planning alternative programs based on local school and community needs. Chapter 5 includes a suggested strategy for effective program implementation. Chapter 6 provides conclusions related to alternative education programs.

Jambor, S. O. (1990). Paper presented at the National Dropout Prevention Conference (3rd, Nashville, TN, March 25-27, 1990). The Technical Alternative High School: A Federal Demonstration Program Using Comprehensive Programming To Support Drop-Out Prevention.

Dramatic increases in the drop-out rate, particularly among classified behavior disordered children, coupled with a decline in an Occupational Education enrollment project, led to the creation of a "failure identity" for individuals and a loss of human resources to the national work force. The need to address this problem by offering students a realistic opportunity to experience competence through occupational training is integrated with academics and supported by structured counseling activities. The goal of the program was to address the attitudes and behaviors that contribute to the drop-out problem by developing a student's sense of competence and worth through meaningful vocational and academic experiences, integrated with social skills training and counseling support. Post-test results thus far have been encouraging and have helped to achieve the award of a competitive grant for drop-out prevention. Students demonstrated improvements in the levels of on-task behavior achieved in problems with learning, unhappiness/depression, and physical symptoms/fears. The Special Education staff came to be looked upon as a resource to the larger community for assistance and advice with other problematic students on campus who were neither classified nor enrolled in the Technical Alternative High School.

Lieberman, J.E. (1989). College-Board-Review, 153, 14-19, 53.

Now in its eighteenth year, an alternative public high school in New York City located on a college campus and aimed at potential drop-outs and high-risk adolescents. Middle

College's exemplary retention rate has encouraged replication across the country.

Mei, D.M. (1988). New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn. Office of Educational Assessment. City-as-School High School National Diffusion Network.

City-as-School (CAS) is an alternative high school linking students to various out-of-school learning experiences throughout New York City. In 1985, the CAS was awarded a National Diffusion Network (NDN) four-year replication grant, given to exemplary programs to enable them to disseminate their model to other interested schools and districts throughout the country. The 1986-87 school year represented CAS's second full year of replication activities. In contrast to 1985-86, when CAS/NDN team members attended several general educational conferences, in 1986-87 initial awareness sessions took place only at alternative schools and NDN conferences, or at state governors' conferences that CAS was officially invited to attend. Eight districts around the country were selected for 1986-87 training as replicators, and will begin replication activities in fall 1987. The project's follow-up support, technical assistance, and in-service training objectives were achieved. CAS addressed the recommendations made in last year's Office of Educational Assessment report with the result that increased staffing and the addition of a full-time director have given the replication program a tighter structure with clearer objectives; also, the addition of replicator districts in New Jersey, Alaska, and Washington, D.C., has given the project a broader, more balanced geographical spread. Recommendations for next year are offered.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, DC. (1988). Research in Brief. Ten Steps to a Successful Magnet Program.

Magnet school programs require careful planning. Originally designed to achieve voluntary desegregation, magnet programs attract students of all races and backgrounds by offering special curricular themes and instructional approaches not offered in neighborhood schools. Outcomes of a successful program include the following: (1) desegregation; (2) decreased enrollment declines; (3) higher achievement levels; and (4) decrease in community concern over the general quality of education. The ten steps to developing a successful magnet program are the following: (1) decide what the program is supposed to do; (2) find out what the community wants; (3) decide themes; (4) choose strong leaders; (5) let teachers volunteer; (6) provide staff development; (7) market the

program to parents; (8) decide on selection criteria; (9) develop a practical transportation plan; and (10) identify and tap funding sources.

Willman, M.L. (1989). A Case for Alternative Schools: A Look at Students Achievement in Self-Paced Programs.

A comparison was made between student achievement in traditional and alternative schools in the Aldine Independent School District during the 1988-89 school year. Aldine Contemporary Education Center (ACE), the alternative school studied, is located in Houston, Texas, and is one of a growing number of high schools that practice adaptive education in the form of an alternative school program. The educational program at ACE provides flexibility in time scheduling, course content, and elective selection. Students work at their most efficient speeds and progress as rapidly as their regular physical abilities will allow. Students participating in this study were enrolled in a regular physical science course. All students took the same 40 item physical science test. Findings indicate that the alternative school program at Aldine's ACE was successful in improving student achievement. The highest mean scores were obtained by the students at the alternative school. A variance and a multiple classification analysis are appended.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A. A summary of RFP 92-24 - Alternative Education
- Appendix B. House Joint Resolution No. 619
- Appendix C. A summary of Alternative Education National Survey
- Appendix D. A summary of Alternative Education State Questionnaire
- Appendix E. Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Alternative Education, Authority - Code of Virginia §22.1-16 and §22.1-253, 13.1
- Appendix F. A summary of A Profile for Effective Alternative Education Programs in Virginia
- Appendix G. A summary of Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX A.

RFP 92-24 - Alternative Education

SUMMARY: This thirteen-page appendix contains the details of the Request for Proposals, issued by the Department of Education's Management Council, to study alternative education in Virginia.

50

APPENDIX B.

House Joint Resolution No. 619

(See document on the following page.)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA--1993 SESSION
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 619

Requesting the Department of Education to study the need for alternative education programs.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 3, 1993

Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 1993

WHEREAS, World Class Education, an initiative of the Board of Education to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century, constitutes a fundamental change in public education in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Common Core of Learning, the centerpiece of World Class Education, establishes certain proficiencies and focuses on the acquisition and application of concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes by all students; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Advisory Committee on Workforce Virginia 2000 noted in its report that with an already strong educational system, innovative business community, and responsive public sector, Virginia is in a position to develop a new structure for effective "partnerships for excellence" among education, business, labor, and government that will lead to higher productivity and greater prosperity for citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, many children in the schools today have multiple chronic problems which impede learning and require alternative teaching methodologies; and

WHEREAS, the need for alternative programs is even more pronounced given the growing number of students who are expelled for behaviors that would endanger others or themselves, the nature of which makes the regular classroom assignment inappropriate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Education be requested to study the need for alternative education programs which can accommodate the needs of all students who require them. The Department of Education shall submit a plan and an estimate for funding such programs to the Governor and the 1994 Session of the General Assembly by December 1, 1993, as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

APPENDIX C.

Alternative Education National Survey

SUMMARY: This is the alternative education survey which was mailed to departments of education in all 50 states and to many professional education organizations in the nation.

APPENDIX D.

State Alternative Education Questionnaire

SUMMARY: This is the alternative education questionnaire mailed to 107 programs in the Commonwealth identified as providers of alternative education services.

APPENDIX E.

Regulations Governing Alternative Education

(See regulations on the following page.)

Regulations Governing Alternative Education

§ 1.1 Definition—The following words and terms, when used in these regulations, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Alternative education" means learning experiences that offer educational choices which meet the needs of students with varying interests and abilities. Alternative education offers choices in terms of time, location, staffing, and programs. Alternative education may include programs for dropout prevention, for employment under the regular supervision of designated school personnel, and for the reduction of illiteracy. Regular programs of general, vocational or college preparatory education, and required educational programs for gifted or handicapped students are not programs of alternative education.

§ 1.2 Instruction:

A. Alternative education programs must be designed to help students acquire the knowledge and develop the skills and attitudes reflected in the goals of education for Virginia's public schools.

B. The courses offered shall be approved by the local school board in accordance with regulations of the Board of Education.

C. If regular high school credit is awarded to students in the alternative programs, regulations of the Board of Education shall be applicable.

§ 1.3 Instructional Personnel—Instructional personnel used in alternative programs shall be certified if any portion of their salaries is derived from public funds.

§ 1.4 Students:

A. Students shall satisfy age and residence eligibility requirements in accordance with Section 22.1-3 of the Code of Virginia.

B. Students shall be counted in average daily attendance (ADM).

§ 1.5 Funding:

A. The full-time equivalent per pupil cost of the alternative program shall equal or exceed the amount required by the Appropriations Act for students counted in average daily membership.

B. The local school division shall maintain pupil accounting records for students in alternative programs who are counted in average daily membership.

C. Public funds spent for alternative education programs operated in cooperation with other governmental agencies shall be approved by the local school board(s).

Authority—Code of Virginia, § 22.1-16 and 22.1-253.13:1

APPENDIX F.

**A Profile for Effective Alternative
Education Programs in Virginia**

SUMMARY: This profile identifies nine categories, definitions, and characteristics that describe effective alternative education programs.

APPENDIX G.

Acknowledgements

SUMMARY: This appendix acknowledges the many supporters on the local, state, and national levels who contributed to the successful completion of this alternative education project.