Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth

Recommended Parameters and Best Practices
for Effective Programs

January 2005

Introduction & Purpose

This document was prepared to serve as an aid in the planning, design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Programs in Pennsylvania. Many of the School Codes and Public Laws are cited here for guidance on mandatory issues. The suggestions and implementation strategies provided in this document are not requirements for Pennsylvania's Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Programs. They should be used as a tool for new program development and for program staff that desire assistance in creating new programs or modifying existing programs that are flexible and effective in helping all students overcome their difficulties, address their "disruptive" conduct, so that they can learn, graduate, and become productive members of our society.

List of Standards and Assessment Committee Members

The report is provided below in HTML format for on-line viewing. You will be able to print the entire technical assistance document (110 pages) by clicking on the link below:

Document in PDF format (requires Adobe Acrobat Reader).

Approved Private Providers

Budget Design
--Cost Projections and Categorization
--Identifying Funding Sources (Federal, State, and Local Foundation Funding)
--Grant Writing

Site Selection

Transportation

Food Services

Health Services

School Climate and Environment
--Environment and Physical Plant
--Learning Climate
--Safe and Drug Free School Environment/Crisis Management

Parental Involvement
--Ongoing Communication
--Parent Training, Counseling and Community Resources

Community Partnerships
--Mentors and Volunteers
--Guest Presenters
--Post-Secondary Education Institutions
--Local Businesses

Student Eligibility and Entrance Criteria

Student Resources and Services (PDF???)
--Pro-social Skills Development and Behavior Counseling
--Student Assistance Programs and Behavioral Health Resources
--Career, Vocational, and Academic Counseling
--Preparation for Employment
--Service Learning and Citizenship
--Community Service Projects

Curriculum Development
--Chapter 4 Standards and Local Curriculum Alignment
--Life Skills/Reality Based Learning
--Character Education

Staffing
--Certification
--Qualifications and Experience
--Professional Code of Conduct
--Ongoing Professional Development/Evaluation
--Contracted Services and Partnerships

Instructional Practices
--Teaching Strategies
--Positive Classroom/Behavior Management
--Technology Integration
--Cultural Diversity Awareness

Student Assessment
--Academic Assessment System
--Behavioral Assessment System
--Attendance

Exit Criteria and Transition
--Post Exit Review Data

Annual End-of-Year Report

Self-Assessment and Monitoring

Recordkeeping Requirements

Background of Alternative Education in Pennsylvania

Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Programs are designed to provide a combination of individualized academic instruction in addition to addressing non-educational needs such as behavior modification and personal difficulties through counseling and other effective means, so that these students can eventually return to the regular classroom and be successful in their educational endeavors.

The size and character of permissible programs can vary greatly. While some effective programs can serve one student, others can serve several hundred students. The programs are provided in county jails and detention centers, area vocational-technical schools, intermediate unit buildings, charter schools, middle schools, high schools, at off-site schools and group homes, or any other building where instruction and counseling can safely take place. They can be provided by a public school or the public school may choose to contract with an approved private alternative education institution (private provider).

Alternative education programs are not in-school suspension programs but a separate classroom, building or educational environment where students can be provided assistance to work on their individual needs. They should not be designed as punitive programs, where placement is a punishment, but as an additional resource to help students most at-risk and in need so that they too can succeed in school and later on in their communities.

Alternative education is more of a perspective than a title of a program. Alternative education is based on the belief that not all students learn in the same structured way, that each student has individual strengths, talents, and interests that can be built upon. There are many methods that can be used to educate, and there are different environments in which education may occur successfully.

The needs of the individual student, whether they are behavioral, social, or academic should always be carefully considered when placing them into a particular program, so that their individual needs are adequately addressed making success more probable.

Alternative education programs have been approved by the Department of Education since the 1995/1996 school year. Grant funding is available for programs that meet the requirements under Act 30.

How to Use This Document

This document is divided into topic areas, with introductory paragraphs. The document begins with basic program design, which is a global overview of the necessary components of the program. Next, each component is further discussed with clear concise program goals and objectives provided to reach desired outcome program levels. Strategies for implementation are provided as a starting point to help program staff in achieving the goals and objectives. The strategies are not meant to be all-inclusive ideas but a starting ground to create and later evaluate the present condition of the program.

The intention of the members of the Standards and Assessment Committee, who wrote this document, is for it to continue as a living document that will change and grow as new ideas and resources are developed. This document will not be mailed in hard copy but will be provided online so that links and additional information can be included where in a hard copy it would become too cumbersome of a document and overpowering in its length. You are able to print the entire document from the web site in a PDF format.

In addition, each section has a list of schools that have implemented the particular type of goals and objectives into their program and are successfully reaching them. Contact information is provided and you are encouraged to communicate with other school personnel and to visit their programs to obtain more information and see the successful components in action.

A simple self-assessment model is included that can be used to measure each topic area and assist program staff in improving their programs.

Finally, this document is not intended to be the only way to successfully provide an alternative education program. It is provided only as a tool to help teachers and administrators think through the large complex process we call alternative education.

Self-Assessment Guide

The simple levels below were designed as benchmarks to see where a program may need improvement. The committee began with individualized levels for each goal and objective only to find that keeping it simple worked best.

These levels can be used as a measure of what components or strategies may be missing. The levels should be used as a quick evaluation tool after reviewing each section of the document.

The committee did not include a negative level since all programs change according to the needs of the students and hopefully with this self-evaluation will continually move toward improvement for all students.

The reviewer must be honest in his/her own assessment of the program in order for the self-assessment to be helpful.

The program levels are:

Accomplished – Level 3:
All goals and objectives have been met.
****

Proficient - Level 2:
Most objectives have been met.
****

Developmental - Level 1:
Some objectives have been met.
****

Program Design Overview

Whether you want to start an alternative education program in a public school or are an approved private provider contracting your services to one, you must take into account the program's goals and the student population and needs as you design the alternative education program. Once this mission is finalized, this technical assistance document can be used to guide you with helpful strategies that fulfills objectives and meets program goals. A self-assessment guide is provided to engage you in ongoing evaluation of what you have done and highlight what can be improved upon.

There is a broad range of alternative education programs and designs. Programs exist in public school buildings, off-site at private facilities, in leased houses, church basements, barns, county jails and detention centers, or any other physical place

where education can safely take place. They can be small programs of one or two students or very large programs. They can occur during the regular school day, in the evening, or during any part of the day.

Looking at the Table of Contents you will first encounter **Needs Assessment and Identification of Target Population**. This section allows you to focus on the students that are most in need of alternative education services while considering what resources you have or can be made available to them.

The next part of the document includes **Legal Considerations**, **Facility Compliance**, and **Special Education** . These sections are provided in a checklist form to help you ensure legal compliance with your program, your physical site, and special education.

The document discusses considerations when choosing an **Approved Private Provider** and **Budget Design** by identifying funding sources, using cost projections and grant writing.

The next sections take you through **Site Selection**, **Transportation**, **Food Services** and **Health Services**. Advice here will help you as you contemplate site selection pitfalls and what additional services you will provide within your program.

The following group of topics emphasizes **Safe Climate and Environment**, **Parental Involvement**, and **Community Partnerships** . Listed are approaches to consider to strengthen and enhance the program.

Critical requirements of **Student Eligibility and Entrance Criteria**, **Student Resources and Services**, **Curriculum Development**, and **Staffing, and Instructional Practices** are presented next with clear strategies for implementation.

Measurement of students' success in the program by using academics, behavior, and attendance data are presented in the **Student Assessment** section. The materials also provide guidance on **Exit Criteria and Transition** successfully back to the regular program.

Finally, there are sections on the **Annual End-of-Year Reports** , **Self-Assessment and Monitoring**, and **Recordkeeping Requirements**.

It is the hope of the Standards and Assessment Committee members that you will use this document to help you design a program that complies with state requirements and allows you to individualize the program for your specific needs and those of your students.

Needs Assessment/Identification of Target Population

Goal: An effective alternative education program will complete a specific needs assessment surveying students, parents, teachers and administrators, community agencies and private providers (if applicable).

Objective 1: To identify a targeted population of at-risk students to be serviced in a pro-active approach focusing on successful educational, behavioral and counseling outcomes.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Contact existing committees such as Safe and Drug Free Advisory Committee, Regional Student Assistance Advisory Councils, existing alternative education advisory councils, Truancy Reduction Council, Safe Schools Initiative Committee, Instructional Support Team, Intermediate Unit Advisory Council, student council and other student leadership groups, Communities that Care, and various parent support groups to gather information already existing.
2. Utilize existing data or conduct a local needs assessment survey with written documentation.
3. Analyze and report findings according to public school procedures.

Objective 2: To develop a written plan for student entrance criteria based on greatest need of service, appropriate resources and procedures for a steering committee.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Consult with counselors, principals, and other staff.
2. Analyze Violence and Weapon Data (PDE-360).
3. Review student assistance program referral data.
4. Evaluate detention, suspension and expulsion data.
5. Analyze Safe and Drug Free School and Community needs.
6. Consult Act 211 Community Council (Drug Free Schools).
7. Review school attendance data.
8. Review other data particular to student needs.

Best Practices/Model Program Contacts:

Dr. Joseph Macharola
Altoona Area School District
William P. Kimmel Alternative School
(814) 946-8244

Legal Considerations

The following brief overview of applicable laws and checklists were created to make compliance with the law more efficient. Please note that these summaries are not the entire statute or regulation, which should be reviewed. A copy of each law or regulation can be reviewed by clicking on the underlined title of the law and finding the specific citation on the linked page.

FACILITY COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

24 P.S. 1-111 Background checks of prospective employees: conviction of employees of certain offenses This law requires that public and private schools maintain criminal history information on every employee that has direct contact with children (with some exceptions). The criminal history information shall be received from the Pennsylvania State Police or when not in Pennsylvania residence, a Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history record. Further, no person may be employed who has been convicted of certain crimes outlined in the statute.

To obtain a copy of Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Check, you may click on this link to go to the Pennsylvania State Police's Patch system at https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp .The FBI Criminal History Check Form (fingerprint card) may be requested from PDE or from your local police station.

Note: Act 70 requires that anyone who has not lived in Pennsylvania for two years must provide an FBI fingerprint card with their application.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a procedure in place to review original criminal history background checks of all required employees?   ___yes   ___no

2. Does the facility have a procedure to review each criminal history check for convictions that would prohibit employment?   ___yes   ___no

3. Does the facility have on file, a copy of every required employee's Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Check or FBI Criminal History Check?   ___yes   ___no

4. Does the facility have a procedure in place for the 30-day and 90 day waiting period?
___yes   ___no

5. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 1-111: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 3-325 Offering bribes; penalty This law prohibits the offering of bribes to any school director for the purpose of influencing, appointment, or to obtain an increased salary and the criminal penalties for bribes.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a policy in place outlining the definitions and penalties for bribes and strictly prohibiting such activity?   ___yes   ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 3-325?   ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 3-326 Receiving bribes; penalty This law outlines the prohibited activity of accepting bribes for personal gain and the criminal penalties for accepting bribes for school directors.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a policy in place outlining the definitions and penalties for accepting bribes and strictly prohibiting such activity?   ___yes   ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 3-326: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 3-327 Demanding gratuities from teachers of supervisors This law outlines the prohibited activity of any board of directors to accept any gift or donation from a teacher or supervisor in its employ. This law also outlines the powers of the Secretary of Education in this situation to withhold state appropriations.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a policy in place outlining the illegal activities of board members regarding demanding or receiving gratuities from teachers or supervisors in their employ? ___yes   ___no

2. Has the policy been provided to each and every board member?
   ___yes   ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 3-327: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 4-431 Bond requirement for secretary of board This law outlines the requirements and steps for the secretary of the school board to be bonded.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the secretary of the school board furnished a bond, which may be paid for by the school district, in connection with his duties?   ___yes   ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 4-431: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 4-436 Bond requirement for treasurer of board This law provides the requirements for the treasurer of the school board to be bonded.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a policy in place outlining the bond procedures for the treasurer of their board of directors?   ___yes   ___no

2. Is there written documentation that the treasurer is bonded appropriately?   ___yes   ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 4-436: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 4-437 Audit requirements This law provides for annual auditing of the school board treasurer's financial records and accounts.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the accounts of the school board treasurer's been audited within the last year?   ___yes   ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 4-437: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 4-443 Embezzlement by school treasurer and penalty This law defines and outlines the penalties for embezzlement by a school treasurer.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a policy in place outlining the definitions and penalties regarding embezzlement and use of school funds by the board treasurer?   ___yes   ___no

2. Has the school treasurer been given a copy of the law and policy? ___yes   ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 4-443: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 5-518 Retention of records This law defines the documents and requirements for record retention.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have every school board minute book or notes on file? ___yes   ___no

2. Does the facility have every annual audit report?   ___yes   ___no

3. Does the facility have every annual financial report on file?   ___yes   ___no

4. Does the facility have on file all other financial documents for at least six years?   ___yes   ___no

5. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 5-518: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24. P.S. 5-527 – Drug Law Convictions Allows termination of an employee who is convicted of delivery or possession with intent to deliver of a controlled substance.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Have you terminated an employee who was convicted of delivery or possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance? (If applicable) ____yes   ____no _____n/a

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 5-527: ____yes   ____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-736 Classroom and School Safety This law outlines the prohibited activity of using a common heating method, such as a stove, fireplace, kerosene heater, space heater, to heat any school room unless such device is designed in such a way to protect all pupils while seated at their desks from direct rays of heat.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the facility have a central heating system? ____yes   ____no

2. Does the facility have any alternative heating method that has the potential to cast direct rays of heat upon any given student in a classroom? ____yes ____no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-736: ____yes   ____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-737 Temperature and Ventilation – School Building This law requires that every schoolroom has a temperature gauge and that each room is ventilated properly to insure adequate airflow ventilation and functioning windows.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does each room in the facility have a temperature gauge?   ___yes   ____no

2. Is there any room in the facility that does not have windows that open and close properly? ___yes   ___no

3. Is there any room in the facility that is not ventilated, or where the temperature is not adjustable, by means of an HVAC system, opening or closing of functioning windows, or otherwise? ___yes   ___no

4. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-737: ___yes   ____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-738 Fireproof Construction – School Building This law requires that every school building that is two or more stories high in a First Class School Districts, or three or more stories high in a Second Class School District, whether purchased or leased, shall be of fireproof construction.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Is the building in a First Class School District and more than one story high? If so, has it been constructed in a fireproof manner?   ___yes   ____no

2. Is the building in a Second Class School District and more than two stories high? If so, has it been constructed in a fireproof manner? ___yes   ____no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-738: ___yes   ____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-739 Facility – Doors and Fire Escapes This law requires that every

school building have entrance doors that open outward and are equipped with all required and needed fire escape methods to specific standards.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Was the building constructed before January 1, 1973?   ___yes   ___no

2. If yes, do all entrance doors open outward? ___yes ___no

3. Is the building constructed after January 1, 1973? ___yes ___no

4. If yes, if the building does not have emergency exits from each classroom, is it equipped with escape windows of such type and at such locations as may be approved by the Department of Labor and Industry? ___yes   ___no

5. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-739: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-740 Facility – Bathrooms This law requires that every school building have a suitable number of bathrooms for both males and females, not less than two per building that are properly clean, secure and sanitized.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the building have a separate men's and ladies bathroom? ___yes ___no

2. If yes, are they properly cleaned and sanitized?   ___yes ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-740: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-741 School Building Construction – Land Evaluation This law requires that every school building that is being constructed by a school district or authority that is located in an area certified to be subject to mine subsidence have a formal evaluation of the substrata of land upon which it will be situated from the Department of Environmental Resources.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Is the School District or Authority planning to construct a building upon an area that is certified to be subject to mine subsidence? ___yes   ___no

2. If yes, has the School District or Authority secured a formal land evaluation of the substrata from the Department of Environmental Resources? ___yes ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-741: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-751 7-755 School Building Construction This law requires that every school building that is being constructed by a School District or authority be properly and legally bid, awarded to competent workmen, authorize specified minimum wages and prohibit discrimination.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Is the School District or Authority planning to construct a building? ___yes   ___no

2. If yes, has the School District or Authority properly bid the contract, drafted the same and awarded the same in compliance with 24 P.S. 7-751, 7-751.1, 7-752, 7-753, 7-754 and 7-755? ___yes ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-751, 7-751.1, 7-752, 7-753, 7-754 and 7-755: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 7-771 Display of United States Flag This law requires that the Board of Directors for every School District acquire a United States flag, flagstaff and the necessary appliances therefore, which shall be displayed upon or near each public school building in clement weather during school hours. The law requires that all parochial schools or other educational institutions shall display the United Stated flag not less then three feet in length with all school buildings under their control during each day such schools are in session. The law further requires daily or weekly sessions where allegiance to and respect for the United States flag and the "American way of life" is promoted.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the School Building, if public, have an outside flagpole and flag that is displayed each day, or, if private or parochial, a flag not less then three feet in length inside the school?   ___yes   ___no

2. If yes, have the schools properly implemented a daily or weekly allegiance session to the United States flag and the "American way of life"? ___yes ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 7-771: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 8-809 and 8-810 Prohibition on giving or offering bribes This law prohibits the giving or promising any sum of money or property to any school director, board member, teacher or other person, in order to secure, procure, or influence the recommendation, adoption, rejection or purchase of any books, furniture or supplies.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the school certified to the State, and otherwise complied with 24 P.S. 8-809 and 8-810, in writing upon request, subject to the penalties of perjury, duly notarized, that no bribe or offer of any kind was made by anyone to anyone regarding the acquisition of books, furniture or supplies?   ___yes ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 8-809 AND 8-810: ___yes ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 11-1112 Prohibition on wearing any dress, mark, emblem or insignia indicating the fact that such teacher is a member or adherent of any religious order, sect or denomination This law prohibits any teacher in any public school from wearing any dress, mark, emblem or insignia that indicates the fact that such teacher is a member or adherent of any religious order, sect or denomination.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the public school authorized and implemented a policy to enforce 24 P.S. 11-1112 by precluding all teachers from wearing any dress, mark, emblem or insignia indicating any religious order, sect or denomination, and is this policy enforced? ___yes ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 11-1112: ___yes ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1301-A, et seq. Requirements for Safe Schools This law was designed to establish the Office of Safe Schools within the Department of Education and a Safe School Advocate in each First Class School District, who, among other things, are charged with the responsibility to coordinate antiviolence efforts, collect relevant information, provide and guide training programs, promote policies to combat school violence throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The law enumerates the programs that will be offered, the reporting methods to be utilized, the recordation, retention and transfer of records among public school districts and to other non-school entity educational providers.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the entity complied with the reporting, retention, recordation requirements for all violent incidents and related student records, and further, has the entity complied with any regulations issued by the Office of Safe Schools?
___yes ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1301-A: ___yes ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1303-A Reporting of acts of violence, possession of weapons or use or sale of controlled substances This law mandates that school report acts of violence, possession of weapons, or use or sale of controlled substances to the state on an annual basis.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Was the annual report submitted timely?   ____yes   ____no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1303-A: ____yes   ____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1317.1 Prohibition of telephone paging devices, commonly referred to as beepers This law prohibits any student from possessing any telephone paging device on school grounds or at school sponsored activities and on buses or other vehicles provided by the school district, except when the student is a member of a volunteer fire, ambulance or rescue company or in need of a beeper due to the medical condition of an immediate family member.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the public school authorized and implemented a policy to enforce 24 P.S. 13-1317.1 precluding all students from possessing a telephone paging device, except where permitted under the law? ____yes   ____no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1317.1: ____yes   ____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1317.2 Prohibition of weapons This law prohibits any student from possessing any weapons and provides for strict enforcement of this prohibition. The law requires that every school district or vocational technical school expel, for a period of not less than one (1) year who is determined to have brought onto or is in possession of a weapon on any school property or at any school related activity.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the public school authorized and implemented a policy to enforce 24 P.S. 13-1317.2 precluding all students from possessing weapons and enforcing the mandatory suspension requirements? ___yes   ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1317.2: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1327 Compulsory School Attendance This law deals with compulsory school attendance for students who have a legal residence in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or are migratory children. Also provides for area vocational-technical education, requirements of subjects taught and hours of instruction.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the public school authorized and implemented a policy to enforce 24 P.S. 13-1327 that tracks daily attendance of pupils? ___yes   ___no

2. Has the public school district authorized and implemented a policy in compliance with   24 P.S. 13-1327 to insure that all students are attending school, and that once attendance problems are identified, proper follow up and tracking is implemented and enforced regarding said students, by way of sending student to an alternative education provider or otherwise.   ___yes ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1327: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1332 Enrollment and Attendance Reporting This law requires that every school, public or private, track daily student enrollment, matriculation, withdrawal and attendance and issue reports regarding the same.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the school authorized and implemented a policy to track daily attendance of pupils, enrollment, matriculation and withdrawal of students? ___yes ___no

2. Does the school have the ability to formulate and issue reports regarding the daily enrollment, matriculation, withdrawal and attendance of students? ___yes ___no

3. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1332: ___yes ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 13-1361 and 13-1366 Student Transportation This law authorizes the board of school directors in any school district to provide for free transportation of any resident pupil to and from the school in which the student is enrolled not exceeding ten miles in distance from the home to the school, except that such ten mile limit shall not apply to area vocational technical schools which regularly serve eligible district pupils or to special school and classes approved by the Department of Education. Once authorized, specific provisions and regulations pertain to the provision of transportation and the services provided there under, including without limitation qualification of bus drivers and utilization of common carrier mass transportation authorities.

**See 24 P.S. §1366 for computation of distance provisions.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the school authorized transportation for its students? ___yes ___no

2. Does the school insure compliance with the mandates and requirements of 24 PS 1361 and the regulations pertaining thereto? ___yes ___no

3. Does the school monitor the bus driver qualifications and screening to insure proper student safety? ___yes ___no

4. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 13-1361 and 13-1366: ___yes ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 14-1401, et seq. School Health Services This law was designed to establish an overall scheme for the collection, maintenance and implementation of health care and health care related data to each and every public school student. The requirements in this section must be adhered to regarding each and every student, wherever enrolled. The law charges the public school district of assignment (the district with current responsibility for the student) with compliance. The law enumerates the programs, services, confidentiality, examinations, staffing, reporting and parental and guardian involvement requirements. The law further adjusts attendance requirements due to documented medical conditions and dictates medical screening requirements for all school personnel, facility screening for health related issues and outlines the powers and duties of the Secretary of Health and related organizations.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Has the entity complied with the facility, screening, reporting, retention, recordation and service requirements for all school facilities, programs and services and further, has the entity complied with any regulations issued by the Secretary of Health? ___yes   ___no

2. Does program comply with 24 P.S. 14-1401: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 15-1501 Minimum School Days in Session This law requires that all public kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools shall be kept open each school year for at least one hundred eighty (180) days.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Is the school program in session at least one hundred eighty (180) days? ___yes   ___no

2. Does school comply with 24 P.S. 15-1501: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 15-1513—Instructional reference to alcohol, stimulants, and narcotics This law requires instruction to all students regarding physiology and hygiene, which will include specific instruction as to the effects of alcoholic drinks, stimulants, and narcotics upon the human system and its prevention.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does your curriculum include specific instruction to the effects of alcohol and drugs upon the human body? ___yes   ___no

2. Does school comply with 24 P.S. 15-1513: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 15-1517—Instruction of fire dangers and conduction of drills This law requires the maintenance of all means to extinguish fire and exits in case of fire or panic, the conduction of fire drills on a monthly basis. All staff and students are to be instructed in and made thoroughly familiar with the use of fire escapes, appliances and exits. The drill will require the actual removal of all pupils and teachers in an expeditious and orderly manner from all escapes and exits to a place of safety on the grounds outside of the facility. This includes two emergency evacuation drills to be conducted yearly on all transportation used or contracted for the transport of students to and from the facility (the first to be conducted the first week of the school term and the second to be conducted during the month of March).

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Are all fire extinguishers routinely maintained by the facility? ___yes ___no

2. Are all fire escape routes maintained and free of obstructions? ___yes ___no

3. Are all fire escape routes posted in visible places throughout the facility? ___yes ___no

4. Does the facility conduct monthly fire drills and is there a record of fire drills (including date and time) available for review?   ___yes ___no

5. Does the facility conduct two emergency evacuation drills for all means of transportation used to transport students?   ___yes ___no

6. Is there a record of the evacuation drills for transportation?   ___yes ___no

7. Are the faculty and bus drivers provided with the proper training and instruction to enable them carry out these procedures?   ___yes ___no

8. Does school comply with 24 P.S. 15-1517: ____yes _____no

Comments:

24 P.S. 15-1518—Textbooks and instruction on fire dangers and prevention drills This law requires that the school provide literature on instruction regarding the dangers of fire and the prevention of fire that is provided continuously throughout the school year.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does the school have some form of written material that is used to teach or instruct students regarding the dangers of fire and fire prevention? ___yes ___no

2. Does school comply with 24 P.S. 15-1518: ___yes ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 15-1546—Release of students for religious instruction This law requires that schools, upon parental/guardian request, excuse students from attendance for a total of not more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order

to attend classes for religious instruction. This request must be in writing and specify details of dates and times for instruction.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Are records available (if applicable) that provides assurance that your school does release students for religious instruction upon request?   ___yes ___no

2. Does school comply with 24 P.S. 15-1546: ___yes   ___no

Comments:

24 P.S. 15-15-1547—Instruction in alcohol, chemical, and tobacco abuse
This law requires the mandatory instruction in alcohol, chemical and tobacco abuse in every year in every grade from kindergarten through grade twelve. The instruction is to be integrated into the health course of study or other means of study where appropriate and is to be age appropriate, sequential, discouraging the use of and to communicate that the use of illicit drugs and the improper use of legally obtained drugs is wrong.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Does your curriculum include instruction, for students in from K-12 grades, discouraging use of illicit drugs or improper use of legally obtained drugs? ___yes   ___no

2. Does school comply with 24 P.S. 15-1547: ___yes ___no

Comments:

Compliance, Safety, Security, and Welfare of Students

1. Does each and every classroom have an accessible fire exit or window IN ADDITION to the door leading to and from an interior hallway?   ___yes ___no

2. Does the facility have a current and valid Certificate of Occupancy from the Township, City or Municipality in which the facility is located?   ___yes ___no

3. Does each floor of the facility have two doorway exits that are free from obstruction to enable a quick exit in case of fire or emergency? ___yes   ___no

4. Does each emergency exit have clear and conspicuous signage stating "exit" that is free from obstruction?   ___yes   ___no

5. Does each floor of the facility have accessible fire extinguishers that have proper tags and certifications showing that they were inspected within the past year?   ___yes   ___no

6. Does the facility have working bathrooms for both men and women that are sanitary and functional?   ___yes   ___no

7. After an inspection, did you notice any condition that would pose an unreasonable danger to the occupants and students of the facility, such as loose or exposed electrical wiring, electrical switches or outlets without proper protection plates, or other generally hazardous condition?   ___yes   ___no

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SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

Link to Chapter 14 (state Law) (PDF-requires Acrobat Reader)
Link to IDEA (Federal Law)
Note: Updates and any needed revisions from PL 108-446, The Individuals with Disabilities Education *Improvement* Act (IDE *I*A) will be added later.

Chapter 14 was designed to establish an overall scheme for the alignment of Pennsylvania's "Special Education" laws to comply with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.) and to further supplement those requirements with requirements for the identification, screening, evaluation and re-evaluation of students with disabilities; the development of Individualized Education Plans ("IEP") for said students, requirements for providing extended school year ("ESY") services and behavioral services for said students. Both public school districts and the alternative education provider, public or private, must comply with these sections since they are the entity delivering educational instruction and related services to the student.   It should be noted that the I.D.E.A. provides augmented legal rights to students, parents and guardians to enforce compliance, and makes the educational entities liable for attorney's fees if compliance is secured through means of litigation.

Checklist for legal compliance -

1. Do the program's entrance forms have a place for communicating if a student has been identified as being a student with special needs? ___yes   ___no

2. Does an identified student have the following mandated documents when entering the program:

    A. a current evaluation report (within 3 years or within 2 years for students identified as mentally retarded) signed by a school psychologist, parent(s)/guardian, regular education teacher, special education teacher and LEA (local education agent)? ___yes   ___no

    B. a signed permission to reevaluate, if the team determined more data is needed? Is the reevaluation completed within 60 school days? ___yes ___no

    C. an invitation to participate in the IEP or Other meeting? Is it signed by the parent? Were the following people invited: parent/guardian, regular education teacher, special education teacher, LEA, transition support teacher (student 16 years of age or older), and a vo-tech representative (if the student plans to attend a vo-tech). Did the Procedural Safeguards accompany the invitation? ___yes   ___no

    D. a current IEP (needs to be reviewed yearly) or as requested? ___yes ___no

    E. a NOREP (notice of recommended educational placement) signed and dated by the parent/guardian and superintendent? ___yes   ___no

3. Is there a procedure in place of obtaining the mandated documents? ___yes ___no

4. Are the goals and objectives driven by the transition section of the IEP, along with the data indicating present levels of educational performance? ___yes ___no

5. Are the goals and objectives written in measurable terms and in conjunction with the assessment anchors? ___yes ___no

6. Does the IEP reflect the student's current educational placement? ___yes ___no

7. Has the student been suspended for ten days? Is there a pattern to the student's behavior that results in the suspensions? If so, has a functional behavioral assessment FBA) been completed? ___yes ___no

8. Have educational arrangements been made for a student suspended days 11-15? ___yes ___no

9. Has a manifestation determination been completed for students who demonstrate a pattern of behaviors, including weapon and/or drug violations? ___yes ___no
   Note: If the student is mentally retarded, any exclusion is considered a change of placement. In addition, a NOREP needs to be signed explaining the need for removal to another placement and agreement to the change of placement by the parent/guardian.

10. Is a special needs teacher in a self-contained classroom teaching the students? If so, is the room in compliance regarding space per student? Is a special needs teacher available in a resource room or does the special needs teacher go in to the general education classroom? ___yes ___no

11. Is there a procedure in place for identifying students suspected of needing specially designed instruction? ___yes ___no

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ARTICULATION AGREEMENT FOR CREDITS - SAMPLE (will be posted at a later date)

Objective: To create an articulation agreement for promotion and graduation credits from neighboring school districts.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Review sample provided and revise as needed for your own program needs.

Approved Private Providers

A public school may contract with a PDE-approved private alternative educational institution (private provider) under Act 48 for educational and/or counseling services. A listing of all approved private providers is available by clicking here and hitting "search."

GOAL: An effective alternative education program that chooses to find and contract with an approved private provider will address the needs of the student from placement until final evaluation.

Objective: To identify an approved private providers that has expertise in the specific program components needed by the public school.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Visit the alternative education website for a list of proved providers.

2. Contact the private provider contact person directly.

3. Match local student programmatic needs with potentional contracted agency services.

4. Conduct an on-site visit to provider and talk with other public schools that have contracted with them.

5. Make selection and complete contracts containing all applicable requirements.

6. Continue ongoing communication and evaluation between the public school and the approved private provider.

7. Conduct an annual review and/or evaluation of services provided and make a decision on renewal.

8. Complete the contract (sample) between the public school and the approved private provider that must be included with the public school's application.

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Budget Design

Cost Projections and Categorization

Goal: An effective alternative education program will submit an annual budget and operate within the established budgetary guidelines.

Objective: To annually create a budget, which accounts for programmatic needs, projected costs, in-kind contributions and identify sources of revenue/funding to support the program.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Identify similar programs and obtain information concerning their needs assessment and budgetary process including their final budgetary projections.
2. Compare your program with the example received from other places and determine similar needs.

3. Conduct a formal needs assessment annually, which is to be used to produce a line item budget proposal.
4. Items to be considered:
    - Staffing (instructional, administrative, support)
    - Salaries, benefits
    - Site costs (utilities)
    - Equipment
    - Location
    - Curriculum
    - Material and Supplies
    - Transportation
    - Health Care
    - Counseling
    - Staff Development
    - Transition
    - Off-site Education Experience / Field Trip
5. Research potential sources of funding
    - Federal Grant
    - State Grant
    - O55 DP
    - Community Organizations

    Sample Budget Worksheet :

100 / 200	Salaries and Benefits
	  - Administrative
	  - Professional
	  - Counseling
	  - Support
		$
		$
		$
		$

300	Contracted Services	$

400	Operational Cost
	  - Site
	  - Miscellaneous
		$
		$

500	Staff Training / In-Service	$

600	Materials
	  - Books
	  - Resources
	  - Supplies
	  - Miscellaneous
		$

700	Equipment
	  -
	  -
		$

Identifying Funding Sources (Federal, State, Local)

It is critical to a program to search out funding from Federal and local sources as well as state funding through alternative education. Foundations and private funding can enhance further the depth and scope of services for the program and the students.

Goal: An effective alternative program has a plan that incorporates a variety of funding sources to sustain the program.

Objective 1: To search out sources of federal funds to help integrate and collaborate on services and programs.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. To look at Federal Programs (Title I, Title VI, Safe and Drug Free Schools, No Child Left Behind Funding, etc.) for possible support for the alternative education program.
2. Talk to the Federal Program Coordinator to see how integration can occur.
3. Agree to the integration of the funds for budget items on the federal budget.

Grant Writing

Goal: Secure additional grants to provide funding for alternative school programs and supplemental services.

Objective: To identify funding sources and write grants to provide additional funding for alternative education programs and supplemental services.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Identify areas of need for alternative school programs and services.
2. Identify funding sources and obtain grant information (Request for Proposals or Applications, Guidelines).
3. Search websites for Federal, State, and Foundation grants that are available.
4. Meet with team to develop best use of grants and strategies for implementation.
5. Write grant and submit before established deadline.
6. When grant is received, implement grant as written or apply for modification.
7. Adhere to all requirements and evaluation needs of grant.

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Site Selection

The physical location of an alternative education program can be on-site at the school, off-site at a private provider, off-site in another building or facility, or in any environment that instruction can take place safely. The site selected needs to comply with all Labor and Industry regulations and any applicable local law or code.

Goal: An effective alternative education will select an environment that is conducive to education goals of the program as well as the health safety and comfort of students and staff.

Objective: To select a site that is structurally sound, considering capacity, programming, technology, accessibility, location, electric, and plumbing needs.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Conduct an on-site visit of the facility with a knowledgeable person, preferably a professional, that is able to assess the facility.

2. Ask for a copy of the blueprints of the structure.

3. Obtain copies of all local regulars and building codes including zoning regulations.

4. Prepare a cost estimate.

5. Review the site selection with the planning committee.

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Transportation

The location of the alternative education program selected should be accessible to all students. Consideration should be given to available public transportation, district busing, leased vans, or safe pedestrian traffic to and from the program, including community service projects or any other program related activities, when making a decision about program location.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will address safe method of transportation to and from the program and other related activities.

Objective: To develop a comprehensive plan so that students are able to attend the program.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Review options such as district busing, public transportation, leasing vehicles, carpooling, parent provided transportation, student drivers, or safety concerns for pedestrian traffic.

2. Consider cost of options in relationship to budget.

3. Develop plan for transportation for the different group needs.

4. Obtain final approval to implement plan.

5. Communicate to parents/legal guardians the transportation policies.

6. Hire staff and finalize. Obtain background checks, complete contracts.

See also House Bill No. 2644 of 2002 Section 1726-A regarding transportation of charter school students.

Food Services

Considerations for meals and snacks during program hours and related activities (if applicable) must be made. The Planning Committee should review sanitation, storage capacity, etc. if food is provided.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will address access to nutritious meals and snacks if needed.

Objective: To determine which meals would be provided based on the hours of the program.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Determine meal(s) needed.

2. Determine how they will be provided looking at options including on-site preparation (student or staff), satellite delivery, catering, or student provided.

3. Communicate plan to parents/legal guardians and students.

4. Implement plan.

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Health Services

Mandated health screenings must be provided to all alternative education students. Prescribed medicines, first aid services, and emergency care will be provided as needed.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will provide mandated health services.

Objective: To ensure that necessary health services are provided to students.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Review mandated regulations and policies, especially for medication distribution.

2. Secure area for medications and records, including a quiet area for sick students.

3. Assess student needs.

4. Develop a plan, including personnel, physical plant, and procedures that will be followed.

5. Communicate policy and procedures to parents and students.

6. Program coordinator must ensure plan is followed.

7. Keep accurate records in a safe, secure file.

School Climate and Environment

School climate includes how well a school is equipped to maintain a positive and safe environment and the school's overall effect on the students and staff. It includes both physical plant and human resources. Teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students contribute to the school climate. The purpose of this section is to identify some of these resources and strategies to ensure a positive and safe climate.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will have a written plan to create and maintain a positive school climate and environment and motivate safe and drug free learning.

Objective 1: To create and maintain a school environment that is clean, safe, and a welcoming place for the staff, parents, members of the community, and students.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. A written plan is in place and regularly monitored to ensure that facility is thoroughly cleaned daily.

2. The building is secure with outside doors locked and monitors placed throughout the building.

3. Visitors are required to sign in and display an official visitor badge or pass.

4. Bathrooms are checked by custodial staff for cleanliness at least twice per day; papers are picked up from floor; outside doors are checked routinely throughout the day by assigned staff.

5. There are visible welcome signs and signs that provide room and staff locations.

6. Visitors are able to maneuver the facility with ease and interaction with staff is positive.

7. Surveys are periodically given out to visitors to respond to these issues.

Objective 2: To create a climate focusing on personal responsibility and respect where students know they can learn, feel that they belong, where they are responsible for their own education, where students understand their own learning styles, and differentiated instruction is provided.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Respect for all is modeled and encouraged by the staff.

2. School breakfast and lunch programs are provided.

3. Students are included in extra-curricular activities.

4. Teachers understand different learning styles and differentiated instruction is provided to students.

5. Students are actively involved in writing their personal education plans.

6. Students/parents/guardians/community members are continuously informed of the program to encourage and support student progress.

7. Students are given choices instead of mandates.

8. Students help write classroom procedures and/or rules and sign behavioral agreements.

9. Student led parent conferences are held.

Objective 3: To provide drug use prevention education consistent with Pennsylvania Act 211.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Staff are aware of the Act 211 requirements, i.e. instruction in drug and alcohol prevention education is required in all grades K-12.

2. A written planned course of action is implemented including legal aspects of use and abuse of substances.

3. Implement a parent education program on signs of drug and alcohol usage.

4. Create an ongoing professional development program so teachers and staff can recognize drug use.

5. Supply necessary resources, including counseling and support services through the local Student Assistance Team (SAP).

Objective 4: To provide mental health and drug screening with referral services.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Develop written policies that establish screening and referral services through the Student Assistance Team (SAP).

2. Develop an assessment process for mental health needs.

3. Develop an assessment process and written policy for drug screening.

4. Develop a network of referral services to address mental health needs and drug screening issues.

Objective 5: To provide situational student crisis intervention services.

Strategies for Implementation:

Identify and implement appropriate support groups or individuals to address student crisis situations. Define, implement, and monitor a behavior management program for each student.

1. Assess the program on an ongoing basis and make necessary improvements.

2. Utilize resource networks, internal, and external when necessary.

3. Provide professional development on related topics for all staff.

Objective 6:   Develop a verbal intervention strategy such as "Life Space Crisis Intervention" using incidents that escalate into conflict between students and others as an optimal time for learning if appropriate to the student.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Staff is trained in a verbal intervention strategy. This strategy should focus on teaching students appropriate alternative behaviors and developing a plan to be used in the future.

2. Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) or other postvention actions should take place immediately after an incident until tension reduction has occurred.

3. Document the incident and individualized plan.

Objective 7:   To develop pro-active strategies that address potential student crisis.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Identify setting events and antecedent that precipitates student crisis.

2. Identify functions and reinforces that maintain student crisis.

3. Identify alternative pro-social skills (anger management, relaxation training, copying mechanisms, self-talk, etc.) student needs to learn.

4. Develop a plan to reinforce use of pro-social alternative skills.

5. Develop a plan to reduce or modify setting events and decrease the likelihood of reoccurrences.

6. Implement plans including professional development.

7. Collect data on both 1) staff implementation of plan and 2) effectiveness of plan.

8. Review and evaluation data periodically and make appropriate modifications to improve effectiveness.

Objective 8: Develop intervention strategies that address student crisis on a situational basis.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Staff is trained in verbal and physical intervention strategies. These strategies should focus on teaching students appropriate behaviors. Incident and plan should be documented.

2. Provide professional development in specific strategies such as "Life Space Crisis Intervention", Proper Physical Restraints, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, and/or the Deverex Model.

3. Incident, interventions, and individualized plan should be documented.

Objective 9: Develop and implement clear policies regarding weapons, terrorist threats and violent or endangering behavior.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Inform students and families of behavioral policies and consequences.
2. Refer to school policy regarding drugs and weapons and to state and federal guidelines regarding students with disabilities.

3. Make recommendations to decision maker (superintendent,executive director, CEO, etc.) concerning consequences.

4. Develop and implement a policy to educate students regarding drugs and alcohol use and weapons (Example: Heads Up).

5. For violations not covered under the school policy:
   a. Complete #1 and 4 above.
   b. Develop a plan following the strategies in Objective 6.
   c. Develop appropriate consequences that effectively reduce the incidences of the behaviors and re-evaluate plan.

Link to Safe and Drug Free Schools

Goal 2: An effective alternative education program will help students understand safety and
will provide a safe learning environment.

Objective: To integrate verbal intervention strategies (such as Life Space Crisis Intervention) that reinforces the safety and well-being of all students and staff by focusing on appropriate pro-social skills.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Offer conflict resolution activities.

2. Develop peer mediation strategies.

3. Create and enforce consistent Code of Conduct.

4. Maintain Classroom Management Plans.

5. Review building safety requirements, include OSHA, MSDS, etc. reporting.

6. Integrate safety education and practices.

7. Review student rights and responsibilities.

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Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a key component to making alternative education programs successful. It is important to provide parents with a positive, safe, welcoming environment, to provide positive communication about their child, and to honestly welcome their input into the design of the programs so that ongoing communication and support can occur. Even families in crisis have strengths, and program staff should continue to provide options to parents so that they can be part of the decision-making team for their child's needs.

Ongoing Communication

Goal: An effective alternative education program will promote parental/guardian partnerships and enhance involvement that encourages the social, emotional, and academic growth of the student.

Objective 1: To create a positive school climate that facilitates parent and student involvement.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Present a welcoming atmosphere in the school building and classroom.

2. Train staff to interact diplomatically, yet sensitively, to the individual needs of students and parents.

3. Create a schoolwide procedure to welcome and to escort visitors.

4. Provide opportunities for parental input as school policies and procedures are created or revised.

Objective 2: To promote ongoing communication with parents.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Mail an informational package outlining the program and requirements to every parent once a year, document when sent, and keep a supply on hand for future requests.

2. Prepare telephone and correspondence logs to document ongoing communication, both positive and negative, with parents/guardians.

3. Keep records of attendance for parent meetings, as well as reasons why a parent can not attend. This will provide good feedback for when meetings need changed to accommodate parent schedules.

4. Implement policies so that all telephone calls and correspondence are responded to within two days of receipt.

5. Schedule parent/teacher meetings and open houses monthly at varied times and locations.

6. Create a 24-hour hotline to leave messages for their children's teachers and/or building administrators.

7. Create and maintain a website for ongoing communication.

8. Prepare written invitations to extend a special welcome to parents at school functions.

9. Keep parents/guardians apprised of mental health services that are available to them and their family members.

10. Include parents with an evaluation to complete at the end of the program and an opportunity for further input into the next year's program design.

11. Hold open houses, parent nights, dinner, etc. at least twice a year.

12. Extend written invitations to parents/guardians to attend special school functions in Spanish as well as English.

13. Assist parents to secure college loan applications and funding.

Parent Training, Counseling, and Community Resources

Goal: An effective alternative education program will promote the ongoing training of parents and guardians to support every student.

Objective: To provide parents and guardians with the education and tools they need to be an active participant in their child's social, academic, and emotional life.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Notices should be sent to parents regarding adult classes and workshops.

2. Data is kept on the number of parents attending and completing classes.

3. Provide parenting workshops are available for parents at varied times of the day and week.

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Community Partnerships

Agreements that create functional community partnerships are an essential
component of the effective alternative education program. These partnerships will
enable the provider to obtain resources that cannot be achieved from within one's
own system. Examples of various partnerships can be found in the section below.

Mentors and Volunteers

Goal: An effective alternative education program will establish a program that
incorporates community volunteers who provide informational (i.e., career speakers,
post-secondary education options), motivational (i.e. mentors, motivational

speakers, role models), and recreational programs and/or services from the community.

Objective: To create and maintain a program that allows students to become more confident, self-directed and focused on both avocation and vocational pursuits. The program would include a component that screens and orients community volunteers on a regular basis.

Strategies for Implementation:

A written program, with a clear mission and goals, is in place outlining the screening, recruitment, support, training and monitoring process is in place.

1. A network of screened and trained community volunteers is established that provide student informational, motivational, and recreational programs and services.

2. Monthly student updates and program evaluations are completed by the volunteers and are available upon request.

Guest Presenters

Goal: An effective alternative education program will establish a program that incorporates informational, motivational, and recreational programs for the school community.

Objective: To create and maintain a program that allows students to become more confident and self-directed. The program would include a component, which screens and orients participants on a regular basis.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. A written program outlining the screening and orienting process is in place.

2. A network of screened and oriented speakers from the community is established.

3. One hundred percent (100%) of the student body participates in at least two presentations or activities annually.

4. Annual student updates and program evaluations are completed by the presenters and school staff.

Post-Secondary Education Institutions

Goal: An effective alternative education program will establish a program that encourages individual participation of a variety of college and technical schools.

Objective: To create and maintain a program that incorporates a wide range of post-secondary education institutions, which introduces and/or broadens educational opportunities for all students.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. A written program is in place, which incorporates visitations to, and speakers from, institutions and programs sponsored by those institutions.

2. Program evaluations are completed by all participants including the presenters, the school staff and student body.

Local Businesses

Goal: An effective alternative education program will establish a program that encourages a partnership between local business owners and the school community.

Objective: To create and maintain a program that fosters the growth of job-related skills, which individuals need for success in post-secondary entry-level positions. The program would include a component, which screens, trains and monitors participants on a regular basis.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. A written program outlining the screening, training, student portfolios, and monitoring process is in place.

2. A network of screened business owners is established.

3. A student portfolio is maintained, which includes career interest surveys, a resume, a list of references, and other job-skill related information.

4. Annual student updates and program evaluations are completed by the business members and school staff.

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Student Eligibility and Entrance Criteria

Students who participate in an alternative education program must meet the eligibility criteria set forth in Act 30 (PDF-Requires Acrobat Reader). Students may not be placed in the program and be counted for reimbursement purposes for academic deficiencies, teen pregnancy, teen parenting concerns, or other non-behavior related issues.

Goal: An effective alternative education program creates a good match between the student and the program and meets eligibility criteria under Act 30 and Act 48.

Objective 1:   To review student records to ensure they fall within the scope of Act 30 and Act 48.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Communicate with referral school or agency.

2. Review individual student records and files for previous behavior and past discipline or interventions used.

3. Discuss possible placement options with review team prioritizing by student need.

Objective 2: To develop a prescriptive approach to each student based on his/her needs.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Conduct an in-take interview/meeting including parents, student, probation officer, instructional staff, counselors, etc.

2. Have student and parent read the rules of the program and the acceptable code of conduct.

3. Have parents and student sign off on entrance form, making sure they understand all behavior expectations.

4. Set individual student goals for academics, attendance, and behavior.

5. Transition the student into the program with an orientation.

6. Review the progress and the needs of the student on an ongoing basis.

Student Resources and Services

Successful alternative education programs provide a wide array of resources and services designed to assess student needs and promote holistic development. In addition to career and academic counseling and preparation for employment, comprehensive programs maintain a safe and drug-free school environment, build student resiliency and strengthen pro-social skills, facilitate meaningful relationships with the community, identify barriers to learning, and if necessary, encourage and support participation in behavioral health treatment/services.

Pro-social Skills Development and Behavior Counseling

Goal: Provide a variety of behavior modification programs that focus on improving student's behavior and increasing student's ability to succeed in appropriate school, home, and community settings.

Objective 1: To help students develop decision-making strategies.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Provide group discussion, role-playing scenarios, and engage in variety of activities and opportunities for effective decision-making opportunities in an organized curriculum.
2. Provide individual student counseling geared toward effective and pro-active decision-making.
3. Utilize written processes and models for developing positive specific decision-making skills (Ex. Stop, Think, Act)

Objective 2: To help students develop verbal and non-verbal pro-social skills, e.g., communication, handshaking, expressing an opinion, handling someone else's anger, etc.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Conduct a planning session for development on pro-social skills.
2. Staff members are trained in the implementation of a pro-social skills curriculum such as "Skill Streaming."

3. Classes are conducted regularly and students are tested and graded as any academic class. (Skill Streaming focuses on a variety of topics that include such skills "Handling Your Anger," "Handling Someone Else's Anger," "How to Make a Complaint", etc.)

Objective 3: To help students develop emotional skills, e.g., stress management, anger management, etc.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Train staff to assess and assist students to recognize and manage effectively stressful situations.
2. Implement instruction and assessment practices in the classroom and throughout the entire school (Ex: Restorative Justice, Role-playing, LEAP Program at Temple University).
3. Provide individualized student and family counseling.
4. Provide outreach opportunities for parents and families to explore, if further assistance is warranted.

Goal 2: An effective alternative education program will establish expectations regarding student conduct and will provide related counseling and supportive services.

Objective 1: To identify core expectations related to student conduct and to clearly communicate these to the educational community that shall include but not be limited to students, parents, professional staff, and support staff.

Objective 2: To create an individualized student plan that identifies the needs of the student and sets up a counseling plan in order to provide clear expectations and goals for exiting the program.

Objective 3: To provide appropriate counseling services to address each individual's student needs.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Conduct guidelines should be written and posted specific to the program's target population.
2. Individualized planning to address unique needs of students to improve behavior. (counseling, behavioral intervention plans, treatment programs, etc.).
3. Provide ongoing professional staff development.
4. Monitor individual student for continuous improvement or need for restructuring of behavior modification plan.

Student Assistance Programs and Behavioral Health Resources

Act 211 of 1990 required that the Secretary of Education recommend to the General Assembly a plan to require and assist each school district to establish and maintain a program to provide appropriate counseling and support services to students. In 1991, the Secretary of Education recommended the Commonwealth's Student Assistance Program to fulfill that requirement. The objectives of the program are to

identify high-risk students who are having school problems due to alcohol or drug use, depression or other mental health problems and to intervene and refer these students to appropriate community services. The heart of the program is the Student Assistance Core Team, which is a group of school and community personnel who are specially trained to work with these students. If possible, alternative education programs should attempt to have a student assistance core team as an integral part of their program. To the extent that students referred to Alternative Education Programs have already been referred through a student assistance process in the public school, there needs to be close collaboration with the student assistance core team in the public school as well as community behavioral health agencies to coordinate recommended services, whether in-school or in the community.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will provide a process to remove barriers to learning that may include the identification of mental health and/or alcohol and other drug issues, or the opportunity for already identified students to access a variety of behavioral health resources from the community.

Objective 1: For full-day programs, to provide a student assistance process including a core team with community liaisons from mental health and drug and alcohol agencies for consultation and assessment services.

Objective 2: For part-day programs, to provide a process for linkage to the student assistance team from the public school for coordination in identifying appropriate in-school or community supports.

Objective 3: For students already identified as being in need of behavioral health resources, to provide regular collaboration with local behavioral health agencies in order to determine the most appropriate services.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Program collaborates with local behavioral health treatment resources through a Student Assistance Program.
2. Liaison from the community agency is on site on a regular basis to provide consultation to the SAP team, to conduct student assessments, and to recommend appropriate services in collaboration with the student's family.

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Career, Vocational, and Academic Counseling

Goal 1: An effective alternative education program will support students through the effective use of career, vocational, and academic counseling services and experiences, including actual necessary skills to gain employment using practical techniques.

Objective 1: To help students explore and expose them to career and local job opportunities and the job skills necessary to obtain them.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Develop and distribute a career interest survey (Ex: Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) or use a guide such as Career Choices: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults: Who Am I?, What Do I Want?, How Do I Get It?
2. Organize a career day for all students and families.
3. Invite students and parents to a "college night."

4. Take advantage of available library sources.
5. Provide student tours at vocational-technical schools and/or provide audit opportunities.
6. Invite community and local business representatives to explore local career opportunities with the students.
7. Provide students with opportunities for job shadowing.
8. Provide students experiential learning opportunities.
9. Allow students to explore career options including postsecondary educational alternatives, business, industry, government and/or military careers, and vocational education and training.
10. Provide service learning, volunteerism, or work-study programs.
11. Provide students with life-skill experience completing job applications, conducting research activities (Help Wanted ads), review interpersonal communication techniques for job interviews, and post-interview communication.

Objective 2: To advise, monitor, and assist students in academic achievement.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Have guidance counselor meet with each student to review grades, attendance, course selection, and discuss interests.
2. Have the counselor establish an individual career plan for each student.
3. Provide a periodic assessment of progress toward meeting career and academic standards, which should be completed as specified in the student's individual career plan.

Objective 3: All students are have met or are working toward career and work standards under Chapter 4.

Goal 2: An effective alternative education program will provide students with an opportunity to explore career options and vocational education opportunities including postsecondary educational alternatives, business, industry, and government careers, vocational education and training, and military careers.

Objective: To implement a curriculum addressing vocational and postsecondary educational opportunities and career exploration.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. A written curriculum exists which provides a wide range of career options and vocational education opportunities.
2. Efforts should be made to incorporate a K-12 developmental career education curriculum into the total school wide program for secondary alternative education programs.
3. Attempts should be made to maintain earlier career education efforts or to develop an introductory program.

Preparation for Employment

Goal 1: To create a specific program that engages the student to prepare for work.

Objective 1:   Assist students to identify their career path.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Develop career awareness and exploration survey tools.
2. Use career software programs.
3. Establish realistic goals and expectations for students.
4. Recognize and use best practices and models.
5. Integrate counseling, mentoring, parenting support groups and services.
6. Provide career awareness opportunities, such as job shadowing, employment fairs, group and individual career related activities.
7. Create a post-secondary education awareness program.
8. Test students for aptitudes, behaviors, and academic abilities upon entering program.

Objective 2: Assist students to prepare for the social aspects of a work environment.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Encourage student to job shadow in their chosen area.
2. Use Work Study Programs.
3. Make available School-to-Work Programs.
4. Use volunteerism.
5. Implement Service Learning Programs.
6. Use mentors who are already in the field.
7. Use job shadowing.
8. Engage students in experiential learning activities.

Service Learning and Citizenship
Service learning is different from community service and volunteerism. It is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning. Quality service learning projects improves academic achievement, enhances the school climate, expands school pride, broadens interpersonal skills, increases self-esteem, provides work/volunteer experience for the student, increases individual responsibility, and develops empathy for others. Note: It is understandable that service learning may not be possible or financially feasible for some programs because of geographic restrictions.

Goal: Every alternative education program will have a community partnership program designed to provide students with work and service related experience.

Objective 1: To create a program plan that establishes, maintains, and develops community partnerships.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Survey staff and students to determine opportunities for service learning.
2. Provide staff with teaching strategies to incorporate service learning into the curriculum and in conjunction with student's career goals.

3. Contact community members, advisory and other organizations that complement the expressed student's interests and match student with service learning partner.
4. Create a database for future opportunities to build capacity for service learning.
5. Provide a survey to students and service learning partners.
6. Provide ongoing evaluation of the program.

Objective 2: To provide a program plan that is developed to provide co-op experience and/or work study in the workplace.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Encourage a certified staff member to become a work coordinator.
2. Review state guidelines for co-op education or work-study program.
3. Develop an approved plan.
4. Provide ongoing evaluation.

Community Service Projects

Goal: An effective alternative program will create a meaningful community service component, which meet the individual needs of each student.

Objective 1: To create community service projects which will meet individual needs of the students.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Conduct a community needs assessment.
2. Conduct a student interest survey.
3. Plan for each student based on community needs and student interests and student abilities.
4. Establish a connection between the students' community project and the state standards.

Objective 2: To create a positive connection between the student and the community in which he lives.

Strategies for implementation:

1. Conduct a professional development for the teachers regarding the community and the community resources.
2. Obtain background/historical information from community members and organizations.
3. Facilitate student initiate research project of the community.

Objective 3: To create a positive connection between the community and the students.

Strategies for implementation:

1. Ensure that all students are prepared to participate in the community project by conducting orientation sessions, which focus on personal appearance and manners.
2. Conduct orientation sessions, which focus on the individual requirements of the business environment including safety and sanitary aspects.
3. Conduct workshops, which develop student interpersonal skills.
4. Utilize community project personnel to assist in the orientations to identify specific population and its needs.

Objective 4:   To create a direct connection between community service projects and the expected academic achievement within the state standards.

Strategies for implementation:

1. Conduct pre- and post-survey of student skills and attitudes and connection to the community project.
2. Conduct professional development workshops on expectations of state standards and on evaluation of students' skills as they apply to those standards.
3. Align the student strengths with proposed community projects by placing students based on academic, social and emotional strengths.
4. Create a climate, which accepts students' differences as strengths rather than weaknesses.

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Curriculum Development

In Pennsylvania, Chapter 4 outlines the basic curriculum standards that must be met in areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science. However, we also strive to incorporate a more global curriculum including life skills, physical education, world languages, etc. The key is to look at the individual student needs for promotion and graduation. The Goal would be for students to meet the standards incorporated under Chapter 4. In addition, programs must work towards strengthening PSSA performance for meeting requirements under No Child Left Behind.

Core Requirements
Curriculum, instruction, and assessment should be aligned, standards-based and promote high levels of student behavioral development, social competency, vocational skill proficiency and academic achievement.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will meet Chapter 4 curriculum requirements or IEP academic objectives and address individualized student needs including life skills and character education.

Objective 1: To align approved curriculum with Chapter 4 standards.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Review state board approved requirements under Chapter 4.

2. Have staff review current curriculum for alignment by subject and grade.

3. Adopt or modify requirements to meet alternative program curriculum needs consistent with Chapter 4 requirements and program goals.

4. Use the same curriculum guides for subjects that are in place for the district programs and collaborate on lesson plans, chapter outlines, reviews, etc.

5. Seek appropriate approvals.

Objective 2: Review local district requirements for promotion and graduation.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Secure copies of local requirements for each student.

2. Identify in your curriculum where the district requirements are addressed.

3. Either modify curriculum or have district address any deficiencies.

Life Skills/Reality-Based Learning

Objective: To prepare students to be productive citizens by utilizing a variety of strategies and hands-on learning experiences.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Train staff in concepts and strategies that will enable the student to cope with everyday living.

2. Have students role-play different experiences (marriage, divorce, raising children, unemployment).

3. Include on-site visits and guest speakers as part of the curriculum.

4. Use real-life examples and forms as instructional tools.

5. Assess effectiveness of instruction. (Ex. TABE Test)

Character Education

Objective: To include character education in the local curriculum.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Incorporate value development in the daily program.

2. Use additional resources to reinforce positive values. (Ex. "Teach with Movies")

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Staffing

Staff involvement with the students in the alternative education program is critical in creating a successful program. Staff must exhibit qualities that include patience, empathy, consistent discipline, core content knowledge, and flexibility. They must be role models for their students and at the same time provide a nurturing environment.

Certification

Goal: An effective alternative education program will have properly certified staff. For public school operated programs this means that every teacher will hold either a Level I or Level II Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Professional Certificate. In addition, when necessary special education certification will be held to comply with all Individual Education Plans (IEPs) according to IDEA and Chapter 14. Support staff will be properly trained and provided orientation.

Objective: To ensure minimum certification requirements are met, each school administration will maintain on file a copy (photocopied from the original document) of the current teacher's Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Professional Certificate.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Every school administration will have a copy of each teacher's Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Professional Certificate on file. The original document must be used to photocopy the certificate and the copy shall be initialed and dated.

2. A tickler file should be maintained by the school administrative staff to notify any teacher of possible expiration of an Instructional I certificate.

3. Support staff should given proper orientation and ongoing professional development.

NOTE: Additional information will be provided here on NCLB "Highly Qualified" and the PA Bridge Certificate Intern Program at a later date.

Qualifications and Experience

Goal: An effective alternative education program will maintain a high standard of qualifications for its professional and paraprofessional teaching staff.

Objective: To ensure that the alternative education classroom is provided with professional and paraprofessional staff with qualifications and experience that match or exceed the needs of the disruptive student.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Written policies and requirements, delineating mandatory training and experience for teachers should be created and maintained.

2. School administrators should strive to hire teachers with the skills that enable them to cope with this demographic type student.

3. On-going professional development will be provided to assist the professional and paraprofessionals to provide students with tools to modify behaviors and to provide instruction in multi-level classrooms and differentiated learning strategies.

4. Additional collaboration with regular classroom teachers is provided weekly.

5. Support networks for the professionals and paraprofessionals and planning periods are provided.

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Professional Code of Conduct

A professional code of conduct, approved by the Professional Standards and Practices Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, governs all school personnel. Failure to comply with the Code may lead to loss of a professional teaching certificate.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will ensure that all staff abides by the Professional Code of Conduct approved by The Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC).

Objective: To provide every staff member with a copy of the Professional Code of Conduct and conduct professional development sessions yearly to review behavior.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Provide a copy of the Professional Code of Conduct to each new employee with his/her orientation.

2. Provide extra copies of the Professional Code of Conduct and discussion groups at professional development events at least yearly.

3. Discuss inappropriate behavior when it occurs with staff and take measures to ensure a corrective action plan is in place.

4. Report any misconduct on the appropriate state forms.

5. Create a written policy that all reports of sexual misconduct with a student is reported to the state so that the incident(s) is investigated and the educator is not permitted to quietly resign.

Ongoing Professional Development/Evaluation

Goal: An effective alternative education program will provide ongoing professional development based on periodic evaluation.

Objective: To improve student instruction by maximizing each teacher's or support staff's potential, job skills, instructional practices, and knowledge.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Evaluate teacher performance and proficiency of instruction. Staff to be observed and evaluated on a regular basis and an improvement plan developed for any weaknesses and to reinforcement of successful teaching strategies.

2. Develop professional development plans for each staff member to provide growth, reinforcement of ideas used, and provide access to new information. Substitutes to be provided so staff can attend conferences, workshops, and seminars from outside agencies as well as in-house training.

3. Provide technology hardware for further learning, use cooperative training plans, and provide reimbursement and incentives for continuing education credits and courses.

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Contracted Services/Partnerships

Goal: An effective alternative education program will provide services, training, and resources to off-site staff.

Objective: To widen the network and improve and expand services to students and/or staff.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Assess needs for contracted staff or partnerships, which would include a self-assessment.

2. Develop and implement an action plan.

3. Evaluate the action plan at regular intervals.

4. Reference third party legal considerations.

Instructional Practices

This section cites different delivery strategies that an instructor may use to engage students.

Teaching Strategies

Goal: An effective alternative education program will include best instructional practices that address the needs of the targeted student population.

Objective 1: To Identify and implement effective teaching, strategies for the population that is being served.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Students learn more when they are actively engaged during an instructional task and all students can master a subject given sufficient time and appropriate instruction. Use effective teaching strategies such as:

     * Hands-on modeling
     * Technology to teach (tracking progress, drill and practice, and presentation

of new material)
* Content Organization Tools (Descriptive Time Sequence, Cause and

    Effect, Episode, and Concept Patterns, Inductive and Deductive

    Reasoning, Problem Solving, and Perspective Analysis.)
* Individualized instruction (being directly taught with immediate feedback)
* Differential learning
* Experiential learning
* Peer teaching
* Scaffolded instruction
* Organized knowledge learning
* Applied techniques for problem solving
* Active participation
* Motivate to use strategy instruction
* Didactic model (explicit instruction)
* Teaching sameness (linking ideas)

2. Keep lower student to teacher ratios. (Maximum 15 students)

3. Introduce lesson, state objectives, teach to the objectives, illustrate or model the concept, check for student understanding, provide guided practice, and review or restate objectives.

4. Use praise and encouragement.

Objective 2: To take into account individual student characteristics and needs and to rely on flexible instructional practices in organizing the learning environment.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Use of an interactive learning environment, diagnosis of relevant student learning characteristics, flexible scheduling and pacing, and authentic assessments.

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Positive Classroom/Behavioral Management

Goal: An effective alternative education program will include a positive classroom behavior management component.

Objective 1: To identify and implement a comprehensive behavior management strategy/plan that supports teaching and learning throughout the educational entity.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Provide professional development to all staff that includes:
   * Research studies on behavior management techniques
   * Social skill development
   * Development of Progressive Discipline Plan
   * Identification of consequences to address designated inappropriate actions
   * Effective deterrence discipline
   * Safe physical management

2. All staff role model and practice the model plan on a consistent basis.
3. Post expectations and positive reinforcers.

4. Create a student handbook with rules and polices.

5. Give students a voice.

6. Provide opportunities for students to participate in school and community related activities.

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Technology Integration

Goal: An effective alternative education program will develop a plan to integrate technology into the classroom.

Objective 1: To incorporate technology into the classroom setting as an integral part of the education/curriculum process.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Determine hardware and software necessary to run an effective alternative education program.

2. Design a technology action plan for phase-in of technology into the program.

3. Training of staff to use technology (including computers) to enhance and augment their regular program.

4. Provide technological support for teaching staff.

5. Continual Professional Development to address:

   * Technology (tracking progress, drill and practice, and presentation of new material)

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Cultural Diversity Awareness

Goal: Every alternative education program develops an awareness of cultural diversity.

Objective 1: To provide opportunities for identification, understanding and tolerance of cultural diversity.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Complete a needs assessment to determine high profile issues concerning culture, race, etc. within the identified population.

2. Identify community support programs that would promote instruction on a variety of cultural issues.

3. Implement team-building activities that promote acceptance of individual differences.

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Student Assessment

To measure improvement or progress of a student, a pre and post assessment should be given. Evaluations should be ongoing and varied. Multiple measurements should be used. It is important to know where the student was academically, his/her feelings about school, and what behavioral weaknesses existed prior to time in the alternative education program in order to determine if the strategies used within the program were successful in helping the student. Hard data is needed to show the success of the program.

Goal 1: An effective alternative education program will provide a comprehensive system of student assessment.

Objective 1: To make decisions based on assessment progress and growth in student data.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Use both formative and summative assessment strategies.

2. Assess students using PSSAs or PASAs as required.

3. Assess students with school selected nationally-normed tests.

4. Assess students using a variety of local assessments such as portfolios, graduation projects, and serving learning projects.

Objective 2: To facilitate transition by providing curriculum that is aligned with "feeders" program scope and sequence to the fullest extent possible.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Utilize "feeder" program course nomenclature and sequence.

2. Align alternative program curricula with Chapter 4 standards.

3. Involve "feeder" program teachers in alternative program curriculum development.

Sampling of Methods to Assess Student Progress
Student surveys
Student progress reports
Functional Behavior Assessments
Norms-referenced tests
Informal testing
Standardized testing (including PSSA)
Student self-evaluation
Student portfolios
Report cards
Parent surveys

Employer surveys
Staff surveys
Community surveys
District-served surveys
Exhibitions of student work
Treatment goals
Positive behavior reports

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
An academic assessment system is a method to evaluate individual student growth in the core academic subjects in relationship to Chapter 4 Academic Standards.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will use various assessment techniques to determine academic growth.

Objective: To measure individual academic progress based on pre and post data related to the curriculum.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Use norms-based, standardized (PSSA, PASA), and or curriculum-based test devices to measure growth.

2. Compile individual student credit acquisition.

3. Review progress monitoring on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals.

4. Use a variety of measures to measure academic achievement.

Achievement Tests are used to measure academic progress - what the student already knows and has retained from the curriculum. They assess the level of competence, diagnose strengths and weaknesses, and can be used to assign grade levels.

Examples:
Gates McGinity
Terra Nova
Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Woodcock-Johnson Psychol-Educational Battery
Peabody Individual Achievement Test
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test
Wide Range Achievement Test

Aptitude Tests are designed to measure strength, talent, or ability in a particular area.

Examples:
Key Math
Group Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test

Screening Tests are broad-based that sample a few items across the curriculum.

Examples:
Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
Arlin Test of Formal Reasoning
Personal Style Inventory-Personal Development Survey
Scholastic Achievement Test for Adults (SATA)
Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI)

Diagnostic Tests are designed to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in a specific subject area.

Examples:
Brigance
Sanford Diagnostic (math and reading)
Stanford - Binet Intelligence Test
Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Ability

Norms-Referenced Tests are designed to compare individual students with national averages.

Neuropsych Tests are objective tests to evaluate brain function.

Examples:
Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery
Kaufman Short Neuropsychological Assessment
California Verbal Learning Test
Ammons Quick Test
Beck Depression or Anxiety Scales

BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
Behavioral analysis is the behavior and the variables that control it. Behaviors are functionally related to an intervention if the behavior can be systematically changed. Behavior modification interventions should be derived from a functional behavioral analysis, which would determine the observable and measurable components of the target behavior to be changed. Progressive behavioral assessment is used to show the process and increase in positive behavior and choices of the student.

Goal 1:   An effective alternative education program will have regular behavioral assessments to provide feedback to students, to determine success of goals, to modify curriculum, instruction, and methodology in order to benefit the students.

Objective 1: To provide assessments and behavioral progress of the student toward meeting behavioral goals.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Perform Functional Behavioral Assessments at regular intervals to determine student progress.

2. Employ a team approach to document, monitor, and assess student progress toward meeting goals. Include parents, staff, counselors, outside agencies, home district representative, and student.

3. Develop a standard tool to measure student progress versus peer or normed groups.

4. Use student surveys to measure a student's change in perception of the value of education.

5. Use student, parent, and community survey to measure community involvement and level of participation.

Goal 2: An effective alternative program will have a progressive behavior system in place for the monitoring and evaluation of student behavior.

Objective 1: To provide a progressive behavior system for the monitoring and evaluation of student behavior with a focus on helping students to develop good decision making skills and a periodic review of the progress made by students with respect to accepting responsibility and holding themselves accountable for decisions they make will be an essential element of the behavior system.

A progressive behavior system is characterized by:

1. A clear, concise written explanation of conduct expectations for students.

2. Explanations of consequences that are leveled and designed to promote increased acceptance of responsibility for the decisions students make.

3. Communication of behavior system elements to all program constituents, including the posting of these elements in several prominent locations within the facility.

4. The inclusion of a process for reviewing student progress at regular intervals.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Develop or identify an effective behavior management program, which includes the following components:

   a. Monitoring/feedback system (point system).
   b. Step or level system that increases student responsibilities and privileges based on student progress.
   c. Individual behavior goals, which provide opportunities for student socialization and success.
   d. Social skills training
   e. Individualized interventions (contract, checklist, etc.) based on a comprehensive assessment to include a functional behavioral assessment (FBA).
   f. Meaningful instruction resulting in high levels of academic engagement and student success.
   g. Rules and expectations are clearly communicated to students and parents and posted in room.

2. Develop a data collection and analysis system that includes data collection and data analysis of student progress.

3. Develop a periodic review process.

4. Include student in individual review of his/her program at least every 6-8 weeks.

Behavior Measure Examples:
Parent questionnaire
Student self-assessment
Functional Behavioral Assessment
Norms-referenced behavioral assessment
Locally designed system
Discipline records
Direct Observation
The Child Behavior Checklist
Critical Events Index
Likert Scale
The School Archival Records Search
The Early Screening Project
The Social Skills Rating System
Sociometric Assessment

Goal 3: An effective alternative education program will assess students' behavior while enrolled in the alternative education program.

Objective 1: To develop a method of tracking of student behavior.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Develop a system in which students' behavior is scored on a daily basis to target behaviors and triggers. Scoring should be as frequent as structure will allow.

2. Communicate the scores and behavior to the parent/guardian on a regular basis.

3. Use the data from these scores to identify behaviors that need further improvement and ongoing review.

Objective 2: To develop a "Service Plan" upon intake of student.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Students, parents, sending school, and staff will develop a specific plan for each student that clearly states student's goals and objectives as well as any interventions that will be utilized to reach these goals.

2. Student progress is reviewed quarterly with parents and sending school.

Objective 3: To develop individual and group incentive programs.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Develop a system that can accumulate data on specific behaviors and use this data to develop incentive programs that reinforce positive behavior and decrease negative behavior.

2. Document program progress. Program should be used as a means for students to recognize areas in which they need improvement and develop a plan with the aid of a counselor.

ATTENDANCE
Students who participate in alternative education programs may have been placed due to habitual truancy. Even if their placement was based on other behaviors, most students have some attendance problems due to their frustration with school whether it is due to lack of academic knowledge, bullying, sickness, drug abuse, or home neglect.

Goal: To improve each individual student's attendance rate.

Objective: To maintain and report student attendance records to show increased attendance rate based on a percentage.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Identify student attendance data for previous academic year.
2. Calculate the number of possible student attendance days.
3. Calculate the number of days students were in attendance.
4. Calculate the percentage difference in student attendance in previous year and present year.
5. Use data to determine strategies to determine improvement.

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Exit Criteria and Transition

A written plan that includes exit criteria that are data driven, developed prior to student placement in the alternative program, and are subject to periodic review via an evaluation process clearly defined within the plan. The exit criterion includes a transitional component for monitoring continued success of the student in the new setting. All students must be reviewed for return to the regular classroom at least at the end of every semester. Exit criteria should be reviewed in multiple areas such as behavior and pro-social skills, academics, and attendance.

Goal: An effective alternative education plan will review individual student readiness to return to the regular classroom.

Objective: To conduct a review of each student's progress prior to the end of each semester or at pre-determined intervals.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Expectations of next environment are assessed and quantified.

2. Expectations of progress in alternative program (pilot system, level system, goals mastered, etc.) are clearly communicated to and understood by the students and their families. Criteria used are to be data driven.

3. Plan is developed with the student to achieve these expectations.

4. Student progress is monitored and plan revised as needed.

5. Plan modifications are implemented periodically and progress is continually monitored.

6. When student is nearing transition to next environment, a transition plan is developed to insure that student can successfully meet the criteria of the new environment.

7. If all expectations cannot be met, a plan to meet these criteria will be developed and monitored.

8. Transition/Support plan is implemented in receiving school to provide student support and monitoring.

9. A case manager/contact person assigned to the student and school to facilitate successful transition and provide follow-up services.

Goal 2: An effective alternative education program will re-evaluate the needs of any student who need to be retained for further prescriptive measures.

Objective 1: To develop another approach for the student who needs to continue in the alternative education program.

Objective 2: To create and implement an individual transition plan that supports the student, both academically and behaviorally, to success in the return placement.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. Review individual student records including behavior, attendance, and academic progress to determine if student has met exit criteria established by the student support team.

2. Discuss with staff to determine if individual student is ready for transition and return.

3. Meet with all members of student support team to plan and document the actual transition requirements or progress.

4. Implement written plan.

5. Re-evaluate the strategies, both programmatic and individual to determine what needs changed or enhanced.

6. Possible transition components will include credit transfer, special education requirements, continuance of required services, alt ed staff communicating successful strategies used with the student, and ongoing support from alternative education staff.

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Annual End-of-Year Report for Public Schools and Approved Private Providers

Annually, every public school that had an approved alternative education program and every approved private provider that contracted with a public school will need to complete an annual end-of-year report.

For the 2004/2005 sy, this report is being revised and placed on the web site for completion on-line. There will be a link here that will take you to the page where the reports are compiled.

Additionally, training will occur for every public school and every approved private provider in the spring of 2005.

Self-Assessment and Monitoring

Recordkeeping Requirements

Recordkeeping is an important part of the responsibility of receiving a grant award. Every program should designate a staff person who is responsible to keep copies of

grant award letters, program approvals, quarterly invoices, student records, and all related corresponding documentation.

Goal: An effective alternative education program will maintain annual records on grants, contracts, programs, individual student placements, evaluation, and end-of-year reports.

Objective: To maintain appropriate records for the program and future audits.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. All correspondence relating to grants and significant due dates to PDE should be mailed certified so there is proof of an item being sent on time.

2. Maintain a copy of all program and fiscal information including applications, contracts, end-of-year reports, budgets, and student records.

3. Keep individual student records at least 100 years in a secure area. They may be microfilmed. Program and fiscal records must be maintained for a minimum of six years.

4. Retention of special education records must comply with IDEA/IDE*I*A, which includes a clause for notifying parents before records are destroyed.

(22 PA Code 12.33, IDEA 34 CFR 300.573, FERPA 34 CFR 99-1 to 99.38, and EDGAR 34 CFR 80.42)

In addition, because of on-site monitoring, it is a best practice to keep on site at every school copies of files dealing with health and safety, mandatory inspections, licenses, and insurances.

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