



## Alternative High Schools in Rural Areas

### Background

“Alternative schools and programs are designed to address the needs of students that typically cannot be met in regular schools.” (Carver, Lewis, & Tice, 2010, p. 1). Many of these students are at risk of dropping out or being “pushed out” of school for a variety of reasons (Cable, Plucker, & Spradlin, 2009). For those who have already dropped out, the alternative educational programs (AEPs) can be a means of reconnecting and completing their education (Aron, 2006).

In their survey for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Carver et al. (2010) reported that during the 2007–2008 school year, 64% of U.S. school districts had at least one AEP in operation, administered either by the district or another entity. This is up from 39% reported by NCES for the 2000–2001 school year (Gilson, 2006). The 2010 report indicated that 10,300 district-administered schools or programs enrolled approximately 86% of the 646,500 students served by AEPs during 2007–2008. The remaining 14% attended programs administered by another public entity (such as a regional program or cooperative), a postsecondary institution, or a private entity.

The same report revealed that 56% of rural districts had at least one AEP in operation, with 2,900 district-administered programs serving 81% of the 101,400 students enrolled in AEPs. Between 57% and 74% of the placements in AEPs were influenced by recommendations from a district-level administrator; regular school staff; or a committee or teachers, counselors, and administrators. Other placements were requested by a student or parent, were referred by the criminal justice system, or resulted from a functional behavioral assessment.

Over half of the rural districts with AEPs cited the following as reasons for which they could refer students to district-administered programs:

- Disruptive verbal behavior (65% of districts)
- Physical attacks or fights (64%)
- Possession, distribution, or use of alcohol or drugs (57%)
- Continual academic failure (56%)
- Possession or use of a weapon other than a firearm (52%)
- Chronic truancy (52%)

### QUESTION:

What research or promising practices should an individual district or a cooperative among several districts consider with regard to the establishment of an alternative high school in a rural area?

### Summary

Rigorous research on alternative high schools for at-risk students is extremely limited, especially for rural areas. There are case studies and descriptive reports of successful programs for rural students whose needs are not met in traditional schools. In general, these programs share the same characteristics as those found in urban areas. Some programs and schools are profiled in two appendices included in this report.

### Key Points

Successful alternative high schools, whether rural or urban, have many characteristics in common, including

- small class size, with strong individual supports, both academic and social;
- self-paced curriculum, with flexible scheduling;
- parental involvement; and
- more autonomous management.



Fewer than half of the districts listed the following reasons:

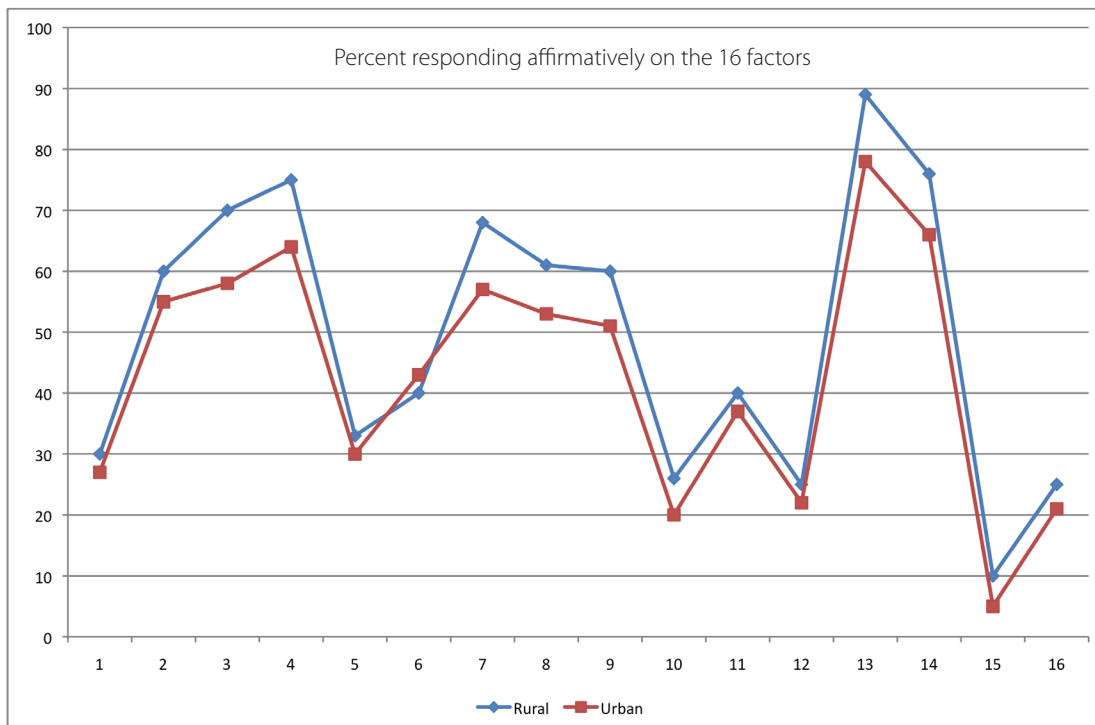
- Arrest or involvement with the criminal justice system (44%)
- Possession or use of a firearm (42%)
- Pregnancy/teen parenthood (30%)
- Mental health needs (26%)

Carver et al. (2010) reported that virtually all of the rural district policies allow some or all of the students to return to regular school, based on improved grades or behavior, approval of the regular school, or other factors. However, only a third of the districts have databases to track students after they leave the AEP. Overall, while actual statistics may vary, the findings reported by Carver et al. for rural districts reflect trends similar to those observed in town, suburban, and urban districts.

## Research on Alternative Education Programs

Although AEPs have been in operation for several decades and continue to expand in scope and numbers, limited empirical research is available on developing or implementing effective intervention approaches for at-risk students (Aron, 2006; Carswell, Hanlon, O’Grady, Watts, & Pothong, 2009; Gilson, 2006). Research on alternative education in rural areas is even more limited. However, based on her case study, Bates (1993) stated that “the four characteristics of successful urban schools for at-risk students can also be found in rural communities as well.” The factors she listed were size, a caring staff, school as a community, and flexibility.

The similarity between urban and rural programs can also be seen in Hosley, Hosley, and Their’s (2009) survey of school administrators and teachers from alternative education programs. As part of a project sponsored by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, the researchers asked whether participants agreed or disagreed with 16 statements related to differences between alternative and regular education classrooms; they presented their findings in a chart disaggregated by rural versus urban respondents. The responses are graphed in the chart below, which is followed by a list of the 16 factors. While the values are higher for rural on several factors, the percentages shown are not so important as is the overall shape of the two lines—they show the similarities between rural and urban responses.





Factors:

1. Minimal differences between regular education and alternative education curriculum.
2. Curriculum is adapted individually in alternative education
3. Age and grade differences in alternative education make it necessary to implement varied curriculum within the same classroom
4. There is more latitude in the alternative education classroom to change, adapt, or create curriculum
5. Alternative education has the same or more curriculum resources available as the regular education classroom
6. Alternative education has fewer curriculum resources available than the regular education classroom
7. There is more emphasis on social skills training in the alternative education classroom
8. There is more emphasis on discussion or working on personal issues in the alternative education classroom
9. There is more emphasis on discipline in the alternative education classroom
10. Students in alternative education have curriculum options available that are not ordinarily available in regular education
11. Students in alternative education are excluded from participation in some parts of the curriculum that are ordinarily available to regular education students
12. Every alternative education student participates in transition programming
13. The teacher-to-student ratio is smaller in the alternative education classroom
14. In general, students seem to maintain current academic levels or make academic gains after participation in alternative education
15. In general students seem to lose ground academically after participation in alternative education
16. Entry and exit academic levels are assessed in the alternative education program

(Hosley, Hosley, & Thein, 2009, p. 14)

## Characteristics of Alternative Education Programs in General

Raywid (1994) identified three categories of programs that have been widely cited in the literature on AEPs:

Type I—schools of choice, such as magnet schools, schools-within-a-school, experiential schools, and other models that offer flexibility, autonomy, small classes, and personalized instruction

Type II—programs for students who have been disruptive in traditional schools, with a focus on discipline and segregation from general classrooms

Type III—programs with rehabilitation or remediation emphasis for students with social and emotional problems that impede learning

(Aron, 2006; Foley & Pang, 2006)

Aron's overview of alternative education, however, reported that the distinctions between Raywid's types are beginning to blur as Types II and III have blended into a category focused on "changing the student" and Type I is characterized as "changing the school"; a new third group is focused on "changing the system."

Aron (2006) also referenced a typology that focuses on the educational problems or challenges presented rather than demographic or risk factors. In this paradigm, students sort into four groups: 1) those who have fallen "off track" because they have gotten into trouble and need short-term intervention to get them back into regular schools; 2) those who have "prematurely transitioned into adulthood" because of existing or imminent parenthood or personal situations that prevent regular school attendance; 3) those who are older but need only a few credits to graduate; and 4) those who are substantially behind educationally because of low-reading levels or other learning challenges. Aron reasons that because of the wide range of issues to be addressed, alternative programs are often characterized by flexible schedules, smaller student-teacher ratios, and modified curricula.

The research that does exist on AEPs shows some additional characteristics of successful programs:

- Academic instruction based on high standards and engaging, creative instruction
- High expectations for all students, in terms of performance, attendance, and behavior
- Personalized, self-paced academic programs
- Instructors who choose to be part of the program, are committed, receive ongoing professional development, and have a role in governance
- Site-based, autonomous management
- Student voice in school operations
- Safe learning environment and a sense of community



- Meaningful, caring relationships between students and teachers
- Student supports to meet social and emotional needs, as well as academic needs
- Clear rules of behavior that are fairly and consistently enforced
- Links to community organizations
- Work readiness
- Parent involvement

(Aron, 2006; Bates, 1993; Cable et al., 2009; Foley & Pang, 2006; Gilson, 2006; Johnston, Cooch, & Pollard, 2004; Pollard & Thorne, 2003)

For additional characterization of alternative programs, Aron (2006) provides an appendix charting AEP attributes mentioned in nine published studies. A second appendix describes 10 promising models of AEPs: Career Academies, Job Corps, YouthBuild USA, Gateway to College, ISUS (Improved Solutions for Urban Systems), Open Meadow Alternative School, Center for Employment and Training, Youth Service and Conservation Corps, Early and Middle College High Schools, and Twilight Academies. The majority of these programs are targeted to students who have already dropped out of school. None are specifically targeted to rural areas.

## Rural Alternative Education Programs

For some time, rural areas were not faced with the same challenges as urban and suburban districts, but the problems causing students to be at risk of dropping out are now becoming increasingly common among rural communities (Hernandez, 2002; Linton, 2000). Eugene Linton, superintendent of Mercer County Educational Service Center in Ohio, expressed his opinion on a program implemented in Mercer County. He indicated that the program has brought the dropout rate at the alternative school down from nearly 100% to less than 30%. Focal points of the program include individualized instruction, a safe school environment, parent and agency support, mandatory drug testing, and flexibility.

Hernandez (2002) cited the erosion of tribal culture and growing exposure to urban environments as factors in increased gang activity on Native American reservations. His case study of "Lorenzo," a member of the Pima-Maricopa tribe, reveals successful strategies by the tribe to deal with at-risk youth. The tribe built a high school, an alternative school for students with a history of delinquency, and a juvenile detention facility with a special education program. The tribal school principal, school counselor, and directors of the alternative and detention programs met with "Lorenzo" and his parents to establish a plan for his academic and personal development after two expulsions and probation from off-reservation schools by the ninth grade. After an incident caused Lorenzo to be sent to the detention facility for a period of time, administrators and his parents planned for him to enroll in the alternative school upon his release. Because of his gang involvement, opposing gang members were present at his entry meeting at the school. "(They) were invited in order to get written and verbal understandings that there would be no conflict when Lorenzo returned to campus. Because several gangs are represented and study together in the alternative school, transitional meetings address this issue openly and firmly" (Hernandez, p. 5). The case study ended at this point, but while in the school, Lorenzo's parents were to be called every day to check on his progress and discuss any problems, and he was to receive regular counseling and attention to learning and emotional disabilities.

The chart in Appendix A provides information gleaned from case studies of rural AEPs. The name of the school/program (if available), source of information, program's reported evidence of effectiveness, and characteristics of the program are listed for each.

The National Dropout Prevention Center maintains a database of model programs at [http://ndpc-web.clemson.edu/modelprograms/get\\_programs.php?effstrat=10](http://ndpc-web.clemson.edu/modelprograms/get_programs.php?effstrat=10). Profiles of the programs include name, address, and contact information; description; emphasis (dropout prevention, intervention, or recovery/retrieval); rating (based on number of years in existence, evaluation design, and empirical evidence demonstrating success); number of students served; cost for one year; staff, materials used, and partners; risk factors addressed; and protective factors the program promotes (in the categories of relationships, independence, competence, creativity, and optimism). Appendix B is a chart with descriptions of the programs targeted to rural populations; also included is a list of names of the programs targeting both rural and at least one other population.



## Additional Studies

A search for literature on the topic of alternative high schools in rural areas produced some additional articles that address rural at-risk students, though not in alternative schools. Brief descriptions of these studies are provided here for the reader to pursue if so desired. Pauline Hodges (1994) described her strategy for teaching writing to at-risk students in a rural high school—she focused on reading and writing topics that were relevant to the students' lives and communities. Bursuck, Robbins, and Lazaroff (2010) used focus groups and a statewide survey to explore what schools in an unnamed southeastern state were doing to help students struggling with reading in rural high schools. While over 60% of the rural schools had no reading program designed to assist these students, the schools that did reported that their programs included separate reading classes or a combination of reading classes plus reading instruction embedded within content-area instruction.

Linda Thurston (2002) described a study of a life-skills management program, *Survival Skills for Youth*, that was implemented with groups of youths in rural Tennessee and Missouri. The program in each setting was carried out with the assistance of at least two organizations, such as universities, school districts, juvenile justice programs, and state human services or workforce agencies. The study indicated that interagency partnerships could provide an effective means for changing attitudes and behaviors of rural at-risk students.

Laible and Harrington (1998) reported on values and beliefs of leaders serving two rural schools with extremely poor student populations. The students in these schools, one in Texas and one in Alabama, performed better and had lower dropout rates than many more affluent, suburban students. The researchers concluded that leadership skills played an important role in student achievement at the two schools. Maintaining high expectations for all students; having courage to do the right thing, regardless of political consequences; developing a collaborative, responsible school community focused on student learning; and showing a personal interest in students, including family background and problems they may be facing, were major components of leadership at both schools.

Finally, a study by Marris, Hemmert, and Jansen (2007) examined the concept of school engagement in a rural school in the Midwest. The researchers interviewed students identified for an intervention plan to determine the level of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement of each student. They concluded, "Effective interventions are likely holistic, offering not only academic support to increase cognitive engagement, but also assistance in developing positive relationships and encouragement to become involved in positive activities" (Marris et al., p. 34).



## Appendix A

This chart provides information from case studies of rural alternative education programs. The name of the school/program (if available), source of information, program's reported evidence of effectiveness, and characteristics of the program are listed for each.

<p>Bear Lodge High School Sundance, WY</p>	<p>Johnston, C., Cooch, G., &amp; Pollard, C. (2004). A rural alternative school and its effectiveness for preventing dropouts. <i>Rural Educator</i>, 25(3), 25–29.</p>
<p>83% graduation rate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary enrollment, for a minimum of one semester</li> <li>• Transportation is provided for all students</li> <li>• Students earn privileges using a four-level Phase System based on behavior and attendance.</li> <li>• Characterized by small student/teacher ratio; committed school staff; high expectations and standards for behavior, attendance, and performance; flexible schedule; students work at their own pace; caring relationships between students and staff; safe environment</li> </ul>
<p>Westwood High School Gillette, WY</p>	<p>Pollard, C. J., &amp; Thorne, T. (2003). Student centered policies and practices help students “at risk” earn high school diploma. <i>Rural Educator</i>, 24(3), 27–33.</p>
<p>85% graduation rate (state rate is 81%) Significantly lowered rate of teenage pregnancies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal attention from teachers—teachers learn about each student’s personal life and design a “person-fit” plan for his/her high school completion</li> <li>• Innovation and flexibility in program planning; students can carry over partial course credit from one year to the next</li> <li>• Tutoring and study hall time available before and after school</li> <li>• Community partnerships and school-based business enterprises</li> <li>• Remedial education, work-study, and special interest programs such as community service</li> <li>• Counseling and guidance programs, support groups for students with relationship, parent communication, substance abuse problems</li> <li>• Services for teenage parents, including cost-free day care and training in child development, parenting skills, prenatal care, and childbirth classes</li> <li>• Parental involvement</li> <li>• Schoolwide celebration of graduation, including Senior Celebration Dinner for students and their families, teachers, and staff</li> <li>• Announcement over intercom when a student completes graduation requirement, followed by the graduate “walking the hall”—staff and students line the hallways and cheer as the student walks through</li> </ul>
<p>Cooperative Alternative Program (CAP) Coleman, TX</p>	<p>Rossi, R. J., Vergun, P. B., &amp; Weise, L. J. (1997). Serving rural youth at risk: A portrait of collaboration and community. <i>Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk</i>, 2(3), 213–227.</p>
<p>Has kept at-risk students in school longer than area sites with similar students Raised grades of students Designated as a model at-risk and drop-out recovery program by TEA Strategies have been replicated in other rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pooled material resources from several jurisdictions</li> <li>• Ambition vision</li> <li>• Site-based decision-making opportunity and authority</li> <li>• Strong sense of community among administrators, teachers, and students; teachers and principal care about students on a personal and academic level</li> <li>• Innovation and risk-taking in planning and delivering program activities</li> <li>• Serves students from eight districts in four counties; superintendents of the districts make up governing board</li> <li>• Principal has authority for day-to-day planning and implementation of program; door always open to students, staff</li> <li>• Transportation provided for all students</li> <li>• Staff came with open minds and understood the challenge and the opportunity of working at the school; hiring decisions shared by entire staff; all teachers certified in their fields</li> <li>• State-licensed day care center</li> <li>• Seclusion of campus maintains safe, supportive environment for learning</li> <li>• Small classes, individualized instruction, school-to-work link, flexible scheduling, individual and group counseling, vocational training, paid work experience, innovative educational practices</li> </ul>



<p>Central Kansas Dropout Recovery Centers Counties of Barton, Rice, Harvey, Marion, Reno, and McPherson</p>	<p>Bland, P., Church, E., Neill, S., &amp; Terry, P. (2008). Lessons from successful alternative education: A guide for secondary school reform. <i>Eastern Education Journal</i>, 37(1), 29–42.</p>
<p>Students surveyed had all been former dropouts from regular schools who had since graduated from one of the centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring atmosphere</li> <li>• Mutual respect, teamwork, responsibility for learning</li> <li>• Lack of competition</li> <li>• Individual student support, small class size</li> <li>• New start in neutral environment</li> <li>• Independent learning, self-paced; self-motivation</li> <li>• Flexible, expanded hours</li> <li>• Study one subject for extended period of time</li> <li>• Technology allowed accommodation of different learning rates, immediate feedback</li> </ul>
<p>Mat-Su Alternative School Wasilla, AK</p>	<p>Paglin, C., &amp; Fager, J. (1997). <i>Alternative schools: Approaches for students at risk</i>. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Lab.</p>
<p>80% graduation rate 90% are employed one year after graduation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students attend by choice</li> <li>• School operates year-round, from 7:00 A.M. to 9:30 P.M. to accommodate work schedules</li> <li>• Services include day care, good bank, clothing bank, AA support group</li> <li>• Networks with more than 59 local, state, and federal agencies</li> <li>• Students must attend at least 3 hours a day on campus; any time missed must be made up</li> <li>• Small classes, self-directed studies, tutor always available</li> <li>• Online tutorial program for remote and homebound students</li> <li>• Heavy school-to-work emphasis; high school students must work at least 15 hours a week; middle school students must do community service</li> <li>• Teen parents must take life skills and parenting classes</li> <li>• All teachers serve as advisors and call students who do not show up for class</li> </ul>
<p>Black Canyon Alternative School Emmett, ID</p>	<p>Paglin, C., &amp; Fager, J. (1997). <i>Alternative schools: Approaches for students at risk</i>. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Lab.</p>
<p>Most students do not want to return to the mainstream high school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire teachers who are patient, tolerant, consistent, humane</li> <li>• Students have a voice in school policies</li> <li>• Located separately from the regular high school</li> <li>• Students study one subject at a time for 70 class hours and work at their own pace</li> <li>• Small classes, flexible scheduling, closed campus</li> <li>• Junior high students do not mix with older students</li> <li>• Parents involved in some of the disciplinary strategies</li> </ul>
<p>Eastern High School Beaver, OH</p>	<p>Schomburg, G., &amp; Rippeth, M. (2009). Rethinking virtual school. <i>Principal Leadership</i>, 10(4), 32–36.</p>
<p>All virtual lab students earned credits toward graduation, compared to 30% of students who attempted to earn credits working from home or the library Student rating of the virtual lab was 93% positive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time provided within the school schedule to work in the virtual lab</li> <li>• Counselor and aide in the room provided motivation and support</li> <li>• Subject-area specialists (regular education teachers) available throughout the day</li> <li>• Intervention teachers available to help with IEP students</li> <li>• Provided seniors with a last chance to make up credits for graduation</li> <li>• Students work at their own pace</li> </ul>



Tonasket Alternative High School Tonasket, WA	Paglin, C., & Fager, J. (1997). <i>Alternative schools: Approaches for students at risk</i> . Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Lab.
Attendance is good Program grew from 9 students first year to 34 the second year Students have matured, gained social skills, and have better self-image and self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located in separate building</li> <li>• Students choose to attend; a student with a behavior problem must maintain 4–6 weeks of acceptable behavior to demonstrate motivation to attend the school</li> <li>• Active, hands-on approach; reliance on community resources; credit may be earned through independent study program</li> <li>• Feeling of family identity and community</li> <li>• Group discussions and individual counseling</li> <li>• High expectations</li> <li>• Hire staff who love working with teenagers</li> </ul>
(Undisclosed school) South Carolina	Bates, J. T. (1993). Portrait of a successful rural alternative school. <i>Rural Educator</i> , 14(3), 20–24.
Improved attendance and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually fewer than 15 students per class</li> <li>• Focal point is on academic achievement</li> <li>• Counselor calls or goes to home of students who are absent; parents required to come in if there is any kind of problem</li> <li>• Students have access to counselor at all times; immediate and long range plans developed to ameliorate difficulties</li> <li>• Principal is pivotal force; has had training in counseling and administration; maintains open channels of communication with parents, students, and staff</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment of students and program</li> <li>• Professional development for staff based on individual/group needs</li> <li>• Discipline and respect integral part of the program; dress code enforced</li> <li>• Parents required to accompany student to entry interview and must agree to remain involved</li> <li>• Representative from business, industry, and community serve as mentors (includes mayor, college faculty, school board members, industry executives, others)</li> <li>• Diagnostic program helps individualize student reading plans</li> <li>• School board, superintendent show support through funding and mentoring; many businesses support financially</li> <li>• On Fridays, school ends after lunch for students who have been productive during the week</li> <li>• Field trips to museums, zoo, cultural and historic sites</li> <li>• "Gotcha Cards" for outstanding performance; recipients are taken to lunch at school's expense</li> </ul>





## Appendix B

### Model Alternative School Programs Targeting Rural Settings (from National Dropout Prevention Center)

‡ NDPC Rating for Program Effectiveness: \* Limited Evidence; \*\* Moderate Evidence; \*\*\* Strong Evidence

Name	NDPC Rating	Contact Information	Description
Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center	***	2750 Notaiiah Road Estes Park, CO 80517 970.586.0600 <a href="http://www.eaglerockschool.org">http://www.eaglerockschool.org</a>	An initiative of the American Honda Education Corporation, a 501(c)3, a nonprofit subsidiary of the American Honda Motor Company. A full-scholarship high school for students and a low-cost professional development center for adults. Located in the mountain resort community of Estes Park, Colorado, gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. Opened in the fall of 1993. Admits and graduates students three times a year. Year-round (three trimesters) and residential. Purposefully small, capacity of 96 students, who have not experienced success in traditional academic programs, did not expect to graduate from high school, are passionate about changing their lives. Students are admitted between the ages of 15 and 17; graduate when they can demonstrate mastery of Eagle Rock's requirements; choose to enroll and choose to stay; come from Colorado (50 percent) and the nation (50 percent); are equally represented, male and female; and comprise a purposefully diverse community.
Foxfire High School	***	2805 Pinkerton Road Zanesville, OH 43701 740.453.4509 <a href="http://www.foxfire.schoolwires.com">http://www.foxfire.schoolwires.com</a>	We are a drop out recovery school that serves at-risk youth for 5 surrounding counties. We serve ages 16-22 in a non traditional setting. We have several embedded wrap around services including: social worker, drug/alcohol counselor, nurse, sro, outreach coordinator, wellness coordinator, mental health counselor, 21st Century Director
Gateway Academy High School	**	100 East Lockridge St. Mayfield, KY 42066 270.328.4979 <a href="http://www.graves.kyschools.us/schools/gateway">http://www.graves.kyschools.us/schools/gateway</a>	Gateway Academy is a voluntary alternative school that provides opportunities toward academic completion of a high school diploma. GAHS serves students of the Mayfield City and Graves County School Districts and qualified candidates of Western Kentucky. Our goal is to work with students and their families to create opportunities for success, which in turn will increase the number of graduates and lead to community improvement. Gateway has a Workforce Investment Act grant that allows us to help students find paid and unpaid work experiences as well as training in occupational skills, basic skills, character building skills and leadership development; mentoring; counseling; and community involvement.



Name	NDPC Rating	Contact Information	Description
Douglas High School D-PASS (Dropout Prevention, AIMS and School Success)	**	1500 15th Street Douglas, AZ 85607 520.364.3462 <a href="https://www10.ade.az.gov/AIMS DP Toolkit/ExemplaryPrograms/2009/DouglasHigh2009.aspx">https://www10.ade.az.gov/AIMS DP Toolkit/ExemplaryPrograms/2009/DouglasHigh2009.aspx</a>	Having begun as alternative school and credit recovery programs in the Fall of 2007, our initiative has expanded to a school-wide reform effort. Our school-wide efforts include Intervention embedded within the school day for all students who are struggling with low grades in current classes or have failed to demonstrate mastery of the Arizona standards on Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards.
PACE Personal Alternative Choices in Education	**	6064 Slab Landing Rd Cope, SC 29038 803.533.1783	The PACE program is designed to meet the needs of students who are not finding success in the regular classroom by offering alternative pathways for graduation. It targets those students who are at a high risk of dropping out of regular school due to such things as attendance, pregnancy, poor performance, problems at home, the need to work, and loss of credits due to transfers. The program gives hope to students and parents who have been struggling with "the school issue". It gives students, administrators, parents, and teachers another safety net to catch students before they become a statistic. It has proven results to push students forward and gives them an obtainable goal which most at-risk students have lost.
Alee Academy Alternative Charter School	*	1705 County Road 44 Eustis, FL 32726 352.357.9426 <a href="http://www.aleeacademy.org">http://www.aleeacademy.org</a>	n.a.
Bath County Graduation Success Academy	*	645 Chenault Drive Owingsville, KY 40360 606.674.2788	The Bath County Graduation Success Academy, GSA, is a program developed by Superintendent, DPP, and the Bath County Board of Education. The program was developed to target at-risk students in the Bath County School District in grades 7-12. In the 2007-08 school year Bath County had upwards of 30 students that dropped out of high school. To combat this problem, the GSA was implemented with the hard work of the staff, and has had a successful year. The program is designed to service 30 students; 15 from the middle school level and 15 from the high school level. There is an application process that is presented to the Admissions Committee. Through the GSA, 9 students graduated from high school this year. All the students who were able to graduate were faced with serious personal obstacles. Thanks to their hard work and the hard work of the faculty of the GSA, they were able to overcome those challenges to become successful. The school is staffed with one dedicated principal and 2 wonderful classroom teachers.



Name	NDPC Rating	Contact Information	Description
Clarke Learning Center	*	802 N. Jackson Osceola, IA 50213 641.342.2804	This is an alternative high school separate from the traditional high school, but on the high school/middle school campus. It serves predominately students from Clarke Community (95% +) which has a total enrollment of about 350 at-risk students in grades 9-12. There are the equivalent of two full-time staff (1 full, 2 half), who serve a total of 36 students at any one time. Instruction is given in all subject areas in an independent, work at your own pace environment. The program offers a separate, lower credit diploma option, in addition to the traditional home-school diploma. Students attend a three hour shift in either the AM or PM with some exceptions (a few students attend all day, attend only during open periods in their HS schedule, or attend as drop-in). Students must attend 80% of the time, maintain minimum productivity, and adhere to behavior policies to remain in the program. Students may take classes at both the CLC and the traditional HS, and may be involved in extra-curricular activities as well as events such as prom and commencement ceremonies.
Chamberlain High School	*	PO Box 119 Chamberlain, SD 57325 605.234.4467 <a href="http://www.chamberlain.k12.sd.us/c hs">http://www.chamberlain.k12.sd.us/c hs</a>	The study assist program allows students who have demonstrated the need for additional academic help based on lack of credits, low GPA, history of attendance issues, etc to be placed in a one period per day class that provides support for their academic needs. Students earn a half credit each semester for their work and are graded daily using a rubric grading system.

‡ The NDPC rating is based on three factors:

- The number of years program in existence
- The evaluation design
- The empirical evidence demonstrating the prevention or reduction of dropouts or the improvement in graduation rates and/or significant impact on dropout-related risk factors.



Model programs targeting rural and at least one additional setting:

Rating	Name	Location
***	A+ Anywhere Learning System	Oklahoma City, OK
*	Academic Alternatives	Palatka, FL
**	Acellus Learning System	Independence, MO
*	Alternative Diploma Partnership	Arlington, VA
*	Alternatives Unlimited - Palm Beach Drop Back in Academy	W. Palm Beach, FL
*	Apex Learning	Seattle, WA
**	Big Picture Learning	Providence, RI
**	Buena Alternative Learning Center	Sierra Vista, AZ
**	Chugach Voyage To Excellence Program	Anchorage, AK
***	Communities and Schools For Success (CS-Squared)	Boston, MA
***	Communities In Schools of Georgia - Performance Learning Centers	Atlanta, GA
**	Computer Based Instruction	Arlington, VA
***	Coping and Support Training (CAST)	Redmond, WA
**	Education 2020	Scottsdale, AZ
**	EnterprisePrep	Harvey Cedars, NJ
*	Internship Quest	Centerville, MA
***	Job Corps	Washington, DC
**	Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)	Alexandria, VA
*	Kanawha County Schools	Charleston, WV
**	Kane County Regional Office of Education	Geneva, IL
*	Longevity of Success	Colorado Springs, CO
**	Migrant Education Advisor Program (MEAP)	Rohnert Park, CA
**	Mountain Education Center High School	Toccoa, GA
*	Mountaineer Challenge Academy	Arlington, VA
**	NovaNET	Scottsdale, AZ
***	Odyssey	Austin, TX
***	Oklahoma Statewide Alternative Academy Program	Oklahoma City, OK
***	Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center	Cushing, OK
**	Opportunity School	Wooster, OH
*	Pace Learning Systems	Tuscaloosa, AL
**	PASS (Portable Assisted Study Sequence)	Mt. Morris, NY
***	PHASE 4 Learning Center, Inc.	West Mifflin, PA
**	PLATO Learning, Inc.	Bloomington, MN
***	Positive Action	Twin Falls, ID
**	Positive Behavior Facilitation	Silver Spring, MD



*	Primavera Online High School	Chandler, AZ
**	Prince William Regional Technology Academy	Manassas, VA
***	Process Communications, Inc.	Potomac, MD
*	Process Teaching	Potomac, MD
*	Project Discovery	Louisville, KY
*	Project Reconnect	Warner Robins, GA
***	Read Right	Shelton, WA
***	Reconnecting Youth	Seattle, WA
*	RENEW (Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education and Work)	Concord, NH
***	Ripple Effects Whole Spectrum Intervention System	San Francisco, CA
***	Simon Youth Foundation Education Resource Centers	Indianapolis, IN
***	Star Academy Program	Pittsburg, KS
***	Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)	Raleigh, NC
***	Success Highways	Denver, CO
*	Tawan Perry Unlimited	Raleigh, NC

**Source:**

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## References and Additional Resources

Listed below are references used in preparing this report and additional resources that can be consulted for more information on this topic.

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