

## **Instruction**

### **Alternative Education Programs**

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the need for alternative education programs for some District students.

The Board of Education (Board) is dedicated to providing educational options for all students within available financial constraints. It is recognized there will be students in the District whose needs and interests are best served by participation in an alternative education program. The Board believes alternative education is a student focused perspective based on a respect for students, the belief that all students can learn given the right environment, and participation in an alternative setting is an informed choice made by students and their families.

**“Alternative education”** means a school or program maintained and operated by the Board that is offered to students in a nontraditional educational setting and addresses the social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs of such students. Alternative education does not for purposes of this policy and Connecticut State Board of Education (CSDE) guidelines include private schools, home schooling, *“School Choice,”* adult education, approved private special education programs, gifted and talented programs, and schools or programs within the Connecticut Technical High School System.

The Board shall provide alternative education to students in accordance and compliance with the *“Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings,”* established by the State Board of Education. Such guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, a description of the purpose and expectation of alternative education, criteria for student eligibility, and criteria for how and when a student may enter or exit alternative education. The philosophy of alternative education utilizes a whole student approach. This approach promotes individualized programming to address the personal, emotional, social, intellectual, work skills, safety and security needs of students in addition to academic achievement. The Board views enrollment in an alternative setting not as punishment but as a learning opportunity.

In providing alternative education to students, the Board may use space in an existing school or establish a new school or be a program affiliated with one or more schools or districts. Programs must be affiliated with at least one district with a code previously assigned by CSDE. Such programs must comply with state laws pertaining to the number and length of school days in an academic year and shall be subject to all other federal and state laws governing public schools.

The Board may form a cooperative arrangement with other boards of education, to provide alternative education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-158a.

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### **Alternative Education Programs (continued)**

A list of alternative programs will be approved by the Board annually. The Superintendent may/shall provide for the involvement of staff, parents and the community in recommending alternative education programs for Board approval. The alternative education program, subject to Board approval, must have a transparent and defined purpose, which includes a description of the types of students that may benefit most from the program/school environment. Clear and objective admission criteria, consistent with stated program guidelines must be evident. Also to be a part of the alternative education program are clear and explicit criteria and procedural exit criteria frameworks to address a student's return to the traditional school setting. There shall be an annual evaluation of alternative education programs.

The Board, as required, will post on its website information about any alternative education offered, including purpose, location, contact information, staff directory and enrollment criteria. Determination of enrollment shall be made by the student support team which includes, but is not limited to, parent or family representative, student (if in secondary school), appropriate representative of the alternative environment, student's teachers, school administrator and if the student is identified as disabled, a special education teacher or PPT/504 Team representative. In addition, the Board recognizes its responsibility to give all children in the District who receive alternative education as nearly equal advantages as may be practicable compared to other children in the District. In addition, the Board shall annually submit to the Commissioner of Education a strategic school profile report for each alternative school or program under its jurisdiction.

All students in an alternative education program shall receive instruction based on a curriculum aligned to the Connecticut Core State Standards, unless modified as indicated by the goals and objectives of an IEP, in particular curricular areas.

Alternative education programs implemented by the District are to maintain learning options that are flexible with regard to environment, structure and pedagogy. Such programs include, but are not limited to, a separate school, tutorial instruction, small group instruction, large group instruction, counseling and guidance, computer-assisted instruction, cooperative work experience, supervised community service activities and supervised independent study. Prior to consideration of an alternative placement, a review of the student's academic, health and behavioral records, including any PPT and Section 504 records, Student Success Plans and other history of interventions must take place.

Students, upon parent request, may be placed in an alternative education program within available financial resources if the District determines that the placement serves the student's educational needs and interests and assists the student in achieving district and state academic content standards. Families shall have a right of appeal if there is disagreement with the District's placement decisions.

The implementation of this policy and any Board approval of an alternative education program are subject to the requirements and procedures enumerated in the administrative regulation.

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### **Alternative Education Programs** (continued)

(cf. 6172.11 – Relations with Charter Schools)  
(cf. 6172.12 – Magnet Schools)  
(cf. 6172.41 – Title I Program)  
(cf. 6172.6 – Virtual/Online Courses)

Legal Reference      Connecticut General Statutes

10-4p(b) Implementation plan to achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity. Assessment. Reports. (as amended by PA 15-133)

10-15 Towns to maintain schools.

10-16 Length of school year.

10-158a Cooperative arrangements among towns. School building projects. Student transportation.

10-220 Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-133)

10-223h(c) Commissioner’s network of schools. Turnaround committees. Operations and instructional audit. Turnaround plans. Report. (as amended by PA 15-133)

PA 15-133 An Act Concerning Alternative Education

Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings, State Department of Education, approved by CT State Board of Education, Oct. 5, 2016.

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REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 14  
Bethlehem and Woodbury, Connecticut