ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PLANS

A. Purpose

Alternative learning plans are designed to address the needs of individual students or groups of students that might be different from the needs of the general student population and includes delivery of learning opportunities through individualization, personalization, and differential methods. Such plans may be designed for students who might otherwise be at risk for dropping out of school, or who require a more rigorous course of studies than otherwise offered by the District. The District, through its Teachers, Administrators, and School Counselors, will endeavor to identify students who may be at risk of dropping out of high school, or who may otherwise benefit from an alternative learning plan or program.

Alternative learning programs and plans under this policy may include, but are not limited to, independent study, extended learning opportunities (ELOs), private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships, remote learning, or other opportunities approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee, in conjunction with Board policies. If such a plan or program requires special expenditures beyond $5,000, the Superintendent will present the plan to the School Board for approval.

The purposes of alternative learning plans are to provide students with educational experiences that are meaningful, to provide students with opportunities to explore and achieve at high levels, and to meet State and District requirements to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent. In order to maximize student achievement, this policy permits students to employ alternative learning plans that fulfill or exceed the expectations set forth by State minimum standards and applicable Board policy.

Alternative learning plans may include ELOs taken to achieve competencies and earn full or partial ~~for~~ credits or taken to supplement regular academic courses. If the alternative learning plan includes ELOs to achieve identified competencies and earn full or partial high school credits, the provisions of Policies IK, Earning of High School Credit and IHBH, Extended Learning Opportunities, will apply.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

Alternative learning plan components shall have specific instructional objectives aligned with the State minimum standards and District curriculum and competency standards. All alternative learning plans will comply with applicable laws and regulations, including child labor laws and regulations governing occupational safety.

Teachers, School Counselors and Administrators should inform students of the District's promotion of alternative learning plans and similar programs. District employees who believe a student may be at risk for dropping out of high school, or who would otherwise benefit from an alternative learning plan/program, should inform either the Principal or the School Counselor of the employee's concerns. The Principal will then schedule a meeting with the student, the Principal, the School Counselor, and the student's parent/guardian to discuss the student's participation in an alternative learning program. Students expressing interest in pursuing such a plan or program should be referred to the School Counselor, Principal, or the Principal's designee.

The School Counselor or Principal's designee is responsible for assisting students and their parents/guardians in preparing application forms and other necessary paperwork for alternative learning plans. The alternative learning plan components will be determined through a team consisting of the student, school personnel, parent/guardian and other appropriate people based on the individual student need.

The Principal or Principal's designee and the designated team will have primary responsibility and authority for initial approval of alternative learning plans. If the alternative learning plan is approved by the Superintendent, or if required, the School Board, the Principal will have responsibility for overseeing implementation of the plan. The Principal will be responsible for reviewing and approving determinations that District competencies have been

achieved and related credits awarded toward the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Students approved for alternative learning plans must have parent/guardian permission to participate in such a program. Such permission will be granted through a Memorandum of Understanding for Educational Services signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to the district before beginning the program. For alternative learning plans that require off-campus attendance, the District will require a signed agreement among the school, the student, and a designated agent of the third-party host. The agreement should specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.

Students engaged in alternative learning plans will remain as enrolled students of the District. Alternative learning plans that are approved by the District become the responsibility of the District to facilitate implementation.

C. Approval Process

1. The student and parent/guardian shall meet with the School Counselor or Principal to discuss alternative learning plan options and initiate the formation of an alternative learning plan team. The team, including the student and parent/guardian, will meet to design the alternative learning plan. In order to be approved, the alternative learning plan must comply with and address the applicable elements included in Ed 306.17.

2. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will review the paperwork and will determine whether or not to approve the alternative learning plan. Ideally, the Superintendent or designee's decision will be made within ten (10) days of receipt of the paperwork. AS indicated above, however, if the plan will require District expenditures exceeding the dollar limit specified above, then the Superintendent will present the plan with a recommendation to the School Board at the next scheduled meeting of the Board (unless an extension is requested by the parent). The parent/guardian will be permitted to address the Board, and the matter will be in public or non-public at the election of the parent/guardian. The student and parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the decision. If additional information is requested, the information must be submitted within ten (10) days of receipt of the request.

3. It is the student's responsibility to complete the approved program. Any failure to complete an approved program may jeopardize the student's ability to remain in the program, achieve the identified competencies, and if applicable, receive credit towards obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent. The student and parent/guardian recognize that in the event the student withdraws from an approved program, the District cannot guarantee placement in an equivalent District-offered course or program.

4. The District reserves the right to determine competencies to be recognized, and, if applicable, the number of credits to be awarded. The course name and actual grade earned will be noted on the student's official transcript.

D. Evaluation Criteria

The Superintendent or designee will evaluate all applications of students wishing to participate in an alternative learning plan or program. At a minimum, any alternative learning plans must meet the following criteria:

1. Provides for proper administration and supervision of the program or plan,
2. Provides that certified school personnel oversee and monitor the program,
3. Includes age-appropriate academic rigor and the flexibility to incorporate the student’s interests and manner of learning, and
4. Are developed and amended, if necessary, in consultation with the student, a School Counselor, the school Principal and at least one parent/guardian of the student.

Program Integrity

In order to insure the integrity of the learning experience approved under this program, the student will be required periodically or upon demand to provide evidence of progress. The Principal will be responsible for certifying completion of the plan and ensure that proper assessments are administered for determining achievement of competencies, and, if applicable, the awarding of credits, consistent with the District's policies (see, e.g., Board policy IK).

If a student is unable to complete the alternative learning plan for valid reasons, the Principal will evaluate the experience completed to date and make a determination for the recognition of achievement of competencies and, if applicable, award of full or partial credits. The Principal will determine the validity of such reasons on a case-by-case basis, and when appropriate, may recommend an alternative experience.

If a student ceases to attend or is unable to complete alternative learning plan for insufficient reason (lack of effort, failure to follow through, indecision, etc.), the Principal may determine that the student's transcript be adjusted to reflect the experience as a failure.

Legal References:
RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Student
Ed 306.04(a)(13), Alternative Means of Earning Credit Toward A High School Diploma
Ed 306.04(a)(14), Alternative Means of Demonstrating Achievement of Competencies
Ed 306.21, Alternative Programs

Legal References Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

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