Merchantville Board of Education 130 South Centre Street Merchantville, NJ 08109	File Code : 6172 Adopted : 08/27/1988 Revised : 10/25/2016 Reviewed : 07/15/2024

Alternative Educational Programs

The board endeavors to provide an education program adjusted to the needs of the individual child within the financial means of the district. Grouping enables a more efficient use of staff in meeting these needs. Program adaptations provide another means of using staff efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of many children.

The board of education recognizes that the active engagement of each pupil is a primary requisite for sound teaching and learning to take place. When a child is unable to benefit from the educational program the board shall make a determination of the student's risk for school failure and a decision regarding the student's placement in an alternative education program. For general education students the determination shall be based on the following, including but not limited to:

A. The student's academic, health and behavioral records, including the student's IPP, if one has been developed and the results of available testing, assessment or evaluation of the student;

B. Consultation with and notice to the student's parent/guardian; and

C. Information provided by the school-based multidisciplinary team responsible to provide intervention and referral services (see board policy6164.1 Intervention and Referral Services),

Decisions regarding the placement of a student with a disability in an alternative education program, shall be based on the recommendation of the child study team and consistent with the student's individualized education program (IEP).

Alternative Education Programs

Alternative education programs shall be approved by the Commissioner of Education. Each alternative education program shall fulfill the program criteria that are specified in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.2 including but not limited to:

A. A maximum student-teacher ratio of 12:1 for high school programs;

B. A maximum student-teacher ratio of 10:1 for middle school programs;

C. An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) shall be developed for each general education student enrolled in the program; and

D. For students with disabilities the alternate education program shall be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Individualized Program Plan (IPP)

The IPP shall be developed in consultation with the student's parent and the receiving school district, or an alternative education program within a State agency, public college operated program or department-approved school approved by the Commissioner of Education. as appropriate. The IPP shall:

A. Be developed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals with knowledge of the student's educational, behavioral, emotional, social and health needs;

B. Identify the appropriate instructional and support services for addressing the student's identified needs;

C. Be developed in accordance with the format prescribed by the Commissioner of Education and implemented within 30 calendar days of the student's placement in the alternative education program but need not, be developed prior to the student's placement.

The multidisciplinary team that reviews the IPP shall include district staff and staff from the alternative education program who have knowledge of the student's educational, behavioral, emotional, social and health needs.

The multidisciplinary team shall review and, as appropriate, revise the IPP prior to the completion of the student's anticipated enrollment in the alternative education program or prior to the end of the school year, whichever occurs first. Additionally the multidisciplinary team may review and revise the IPP, as needed, at any time during the student's enrollment in the alternative education program.

The student's parent shall be advised of revisions to the IPP.

Home Schooling

The board acknowledges the right of parents/guardians to educate their children at home. The board is not required by law to allow a resident child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in the regular school curriculum or in extracurricular or sports activities. The board may:

A. Allow a child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities or sports activities;

B. Loan books or materials to a child educated elsewhere than at school.

Required Services to Home Schooled Students

When a student of this district is home schooled, the district shall:

A. Provide payment for tuition when a student is enrolled in a shared-time vocational school program. Once a resident student is enrolled in a shared-time vocational school program the student becomes a public school student;

B. Review any written request for a special education evaluation and if warranted conduct an evaluation as described in board policy 6171.4 Special Education and in accordance with the federal special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 108-446 §612).

If the child is eligible for special education and related services, the district shall make a free, appropriate public education available only if the child enrolls in the district. If the child does not enroll in the district, but the district chooses to provide services, the district will develop a plan for the services to be provided.

Removal for Weapons Offenses or Assault

Any pupil who is convicted or found to be delinquent for the following offenses shall be immediately removed by the principal from the district's regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year and placed in an alternative education school or program pending a hearing before the board of education to remove the pupil:

A. Possessing a firearm on any school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function; or

B. Committing a crime while possessing a firearm.

The chief school administrator shall determine at the end of the year whether the pupil is to return to the district's regular education program, in accordance with procedures established by the Commissioner of Education.

Any pupil who assaults a pupil, teacher, administrator, board member, or other district employee with a weapon other than a firearm on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function must be immediately removed from the school's regular education program and placed in an alternative school or program, pending a hearing before the board. The chief school administrator shall determine when the child shall return to the regular education program.

Key Words

Alternative Educational Programs, Home Schooling, Dropouts, Disruptive Pupils, Disruptive Students, Disaffected Pupils, Disaffected Students, At-risk Pupils

Legal References:

N.J.S.A. 18A 11-1: General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A 37-1 Submission of pupils to authority
N.J.S.A. 18A 37-2.2 Offense by pupil involving assault, removal from school's regular education program
N.J.S.A. 18A 38-1 Attendance at school free of charge
N.J.S.A. 18A 38-25 Attendance required of children between six and 16; exceptions
N.J.S.A. 18A 38-31 Failure to comply with provisions of article; fine
N.J.S.A. 18A 54-20: Powers of board
N.J.A.C. 6A 14-1.1 General requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A 16-10.1 Home or out-of-school instruction due to a temporary or chronic health condition
N.J.A.C. 6A 16-1.3 Definitions
N.J.A.C. 6A 16-5.5 Removal of students for firearms offenses
N.J.A.C. 6A 16-5.6 Removal of students for assaults with weapons offenses
N.J.A.C. 6A 16-9.1 et seq Establishment of alternative education programs
N.J.A.C. 6A 30-3.2 District Performance Review
N.J.A.C. 6A 32-12.1 Student attendance
N.J.A.C. 6A 32-12.2 Guidance and counseling
20 U.S.C. 1401 et seq Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Cross References

5113 - Sample Policy: Attendance, Absences and Excuses
5114 - Sample Policy: Suspension and Expulsion
5131 - Sample Policy: Conduct and Discipline
5131.7 - Sample Policy: Weapons and Dangerous Instruments
5134 - Sample Policy: Married Pregnant Students
6142. 2 - Sample Policy: English as a Second Language, Bilingual Programs
6142.12 - Sample Policy: Career and Technical Education
6164.1 - Sample Policy: Intervention and Referral Services for General education Pupils
6164.2 - Sample Policy: Guidance Services
6164.4 - Sample Policy: Child Study Team
6171.4 - Sample Policy: Special Education
6173 - Sample Policy: Home Instruction