

160-4-8-.12 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(a) Alternative Education Program - an educational program provided in a setting other than a student's regular classroom. These programs serve students who are eligible to remain in the regular classroom but are more likely to succeed in a nontraditional setting such as that provided in an alternative education program, as well as students who are excluded from the regular classroom because of disciplinary reasons. It is the policy of this state that it is preferable to reassign disruptive students to an alternative education program rather than suspending or expelling such students from school.

(b) Community-based Alternative Education Program – a type of alternative education program where students are engaged in educationally relevant and meaningful learning experiences in the school and larger community. The academic curriculum is infused into work-based learning and structured work experiences utilizing partnerships among business, industry, government, community, and school.

(c) CrossRoads Alternative Education Program – a type of alternative education program that provides for the educational and behavioral needs of students who have been adjudicated, have been removed from the regular school program due to disruptive or violent behavior, or are returning from placement in a Department of Juvenile Justice facility.

(d) In-School Suspension Program – a type of alternative education program that provides for continued progress on regular classroom assignments for students who have been removed from the regular classroom for disciplinary reasons.

(e) School-Community Guidance Center – a type of alternative education program that creates small, supportive, caring communities of support, while emphasizing high expectations for excellence and educational achievement. Various community agencies and organizations provide support to students and their families to address the special characteristics and unique learning needs of each student.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.

(a) The mission of alternative education programs shall be to enable students to perform at grade level.

(b) A local school system may provide an alternative education program jointly with one or more other school systems.

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(c) The alternative education program may be located on or off a regular school campus, and may provide for a student's transfer to a different campus, a school-community guidance center, or a community-based alternative education program.

(d) Upon the request of a local school system, a regional educational service agency may provide information on developing an alternative education program that takes into consideration the system's size, wealth, and existing facilities in determining the program best suited to the system.

(e) If a student placed in an alternative education program enrolls in another local school system before the expiration of the period of placement, the local board of education requiring the placement shall provide to the local school system in which the student enrolls, at the same time other records of the student are provided, a copy of the placement order. The local school system in which the student enrolls may continue the alternative education program placement under the terms of the order or may allow the student to attend regular classes without completing the period of placement, unless otherwise required by federal or state law.

(f) A local school system may provide an In-School Suspension Program, a CrossRoads Alternative Education Program, a School-Community Guidance Center, a Community-based Alternative Education Program, and/or any other alternative education program model that otherwise meets the requirements of this rule.

(g) Each local school system shall provide an alternative education program to serve students in grades 6-12 (K-5 students may be served but shall not be counted for funding purposes) that:

1. Separates disruptive students from non-disruptive students who are assigned to the program.
2. Provides for students' educational and behavioral needs.
3. Includes the objectives of the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC).
4. Provides instruction that will enable students to return to a general or career education program as quickly as possible.
5. Focuses on English, language arts, math, science, social studies, and self-discipline.
6. Provides supervision and counseling to enable students to make academic progress toward grade level while attending such a program.

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7. May be staffed by a paraprofessional for an In-School Suspension Program only, as long as the maximum class size for Alternative Education Programs is not exceeded.

(h) Each local school system shall

1. Ensure that course credit shall be earned in the same manner as in other education programs.

2. Ensure that students whose punishment includes assignment to Alternative Education Programs shall be provided with appropriate due process as established by local board of education policy.

3. Ensure that in the process of assigning a student to an Alternative Education Program for academic or non-disciplinary reasons, the school has assessed the needs of the student and options for addressing those needs, consistent with local board of education policies and procedures.

4. Allocate to an alternative education program the same expenditure for each student attending the alternative education program, including federal, state and local funds, that would be allocated to the student's school if the student were attending the student's regularly assigned education program, including a special education program.

5. Cooperate with government agencies and community organizations that provide services in the school district to students placed in alternative education programs.

(i) Alternative programs sparsity grants must be used exclusively for alternative program salaries and benefits for any certified positions and aides/paraprofessionals.

(3) REQUEST FOR WAIVERS.

(a) Local boards of education requesting to comply with the following provisions rather than the stated requirements in the specified rules shall notify the state superintendent of schools by January 10 of each year.

1. In lieu of the 150 clock hours of instruction for awarding Carnegie units of credit as specified in paragraphs (2)(c), (2)(d) and (3)(e)6.(i) of Rule 160-4-2-.06 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; paragraphs (2)(c), (2)(d) and (3)(e)6.(i) of Rule 160-4-2-.36 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS and paragraphs (2)(c), (2)(d) and (3)(e)6.(i) of Rule 160-4-2-.46 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS, the local school system shall award Carnegie units of credit based on demonstrated competency on course examination(s).

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2. In lieu of scheduling students in grades 9-12 for a minimum of five high school class periods for each day enrolled as specified in paragraph (2)(a) of Rule 160-4-2-.16 SCHEDULING FOR INSTRUCTION, the school system shall schedule students in classes as appropriate to meet the needs of the student.

3. In lieu of the requirement of a minimum daily average of 330 minutes of instructional time for grades 6-12 and that students must be present for at least half of the instructional time in order for the day to count as one of the 180 school days as specified in paragraphs (2)(d) and (2)(e) of Rule 160-5-1-.02 SCHOOL DAY FOR STUDENTS, the school system shall determine the length of time students will be in classes in the alternative program(s).

(b) The state superintendent shall submit the names of the local boards of education, types of waiver requested and their alternative program(s) to the state board for approval.

(c) A school system shall maintain and report to the department by July 30 of each year a list of all students who attended each alternative education program approved under this rule. The list shall include the FTE number, classification of the program (disciplinary/non-disciplinary), number and type(s) of disciplinary referrals for the semester prior to and following alternative education participation (for disciplinary programs only), grade point average for the semester prior to and following alternative education participation, for students who graduate from an academic alternative program, the number passing the GHSGT on the first attempt and the number passing on any number of attempts compared to the number of the sending school, passing rate for credit courses taken at the alternative school and the pass rate at the sending school, and entry and exit dates.

Authority O.C.G.A § 20-2-154.1; 20-2-240; 20-2-300.

Adopted: November 8, 2001

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