

INSTRUCTION

615.01 Alternative Education Program (AEP)

A. Authority

The Alternative Education Program (AEP) is established in accordance with the state code and with state and county board policies. The AEP is part of the Mingo County School System and is subject to the policies, rules, and regulations of the Mingo County Board of Education. The Board of Education will implement an alternative education program for disruptive students.

B. Definition

Alternative Education Program - An alternative education program is a temporary authorized departure from the regular school program designed to provide educational and social development for students whose disruptive behavior places them at risk of not succeeding in the traditional school structures and in adult life without interventions.

C. Goals

The goals of AEP are as follows:

- a. Provide a safe and orderly learning environment for the education of all students in the public schools of Mingo County,
- b. Provide an alternative means of education for those students who are not finding success in the traditional education program,
- c. Meet the educational needs of disruptive students through the development of alternative education programs; and
- d. Provide instructional programming for students suspended or expelled from school.

D. Program Options:

- PHASE I Phase I Option is a consultative support program at the local school level with students, staff, and parents. Consultative support may include social skill strategies, academic strategies, and behavior strategies designed through the Student Assistance Team (SAT) Progress.
- PHASE II Phase II Option is a collaborative service at the local school level with students, parents and staff. Collaborative services may include direct academic interventions, behavioral counseling interventions, positive behavioral support and behavioral interventions, social skills interventions, and parental support program(s).
- PHASE III Phase III Option is an alternative education classroom for eligible students who cannot be successful at Phase II in the traditional school setting, or have committed a Level III or IV violation of the student code of conduct, suspended, or expelled from school.

A. AEP Team(s)

1. Phase I and Phase II Program Options will be operated through the School Assistance Teams (SAT). SAT memberships for the eligibility, planning, and implementation of the Phase I and Phase II Option(s) may be the following members:
 - School Level Administrator
 - SAT Chairperson
 - Regular Education Teacher(s)
 - Behavior Specialist
 - Alternative Education Teacher
 - Social Worker
 - Counselor
 - Parents
 - Students

2. Phase III Option Team may consist of the following as appropriate for eligibility, program planning, and program administration:

- Alternative Education Director
- Alternative Education Teacher
- School Level Principal(s)
- School Counselor
- Social Worker
- Special Education Director or designee
- Secondary Curriculum Coordinator
- SAT Chairperson
- Behavior Specialist
- Parent/Guardian
- Student

F: Eligibility Criteria

The AEP shall provide educational options and interventions for students identified as at-risk in accordance with some or all of the criteria listed below:

1. Violations of the Safe Schools Act (WV Code § 18A-5-1) in accordance with the provisions of the act;
2. Violations (Level III & IV) of the Mingo County Discipline and Student Code of Conduct, Policy 1102.01;
3. Repeated violations of the county's discipline policy following documented multiple behavioral interventions by the Student Assistance Team at the referring school;
4. Continuation of educational services during periods of suspension or expulsion.
5. Student must be at least twelve years of age for placement in Phase III alternative setting.

The Alternative Education Program is for students who cannot function in the regular school environment because of some or all of the above criteria and should not be confused with the Behavior Disorders Program, which is for students who cannot control their behavior and require specialized instruction.

G. Placement Process

The appropriate referral form(s) shall be completed by the referring Student Assistance Team (SAT), by an Individual Education Committee (IEP), or by the referring agency and submitted to the Alternative Education Director.

1. The Director or designee shall provide a copy of the referral to the AEP Team.
2. Designated AEP Team members shall review the student's records, interview the student, conduct a home contact to schedule interview with the parent/guardian, and request additional information from relevant school staff, agencies, and law enforcement, as needed.
3. The AEP Team shall meet on the date scheduled by the Director or designee to review the referral information and to determine eligibility. Additional information or assessment may be requested. Parental consent shall be obtained prior to any student assessment(s).
4. If the student is eligible, the Director or designee shall schedule a placement meeting. Parent(s) or legal guardian shall be contacted before a student is placed in an alternative education setting. Attendance at this meeting by the parent(s) or legal guardian is mandatory. Referring school staff, agency representatives, and law enforcement representatives may participate in the meeting. During the meeting, an Alternative Education Contract and Student Behavior Contract shall be completed by the AEP Team, student, and parent(s).
5. If the student is not eligible for an alternative education placement, the AEP Team may make intervention recommendations for use in the school setting.
6. The contract shall be reviewed at least annually by the team.

H. Program Components

Curriculum – AEP students shall be required to successfully complete the state mandated programs of study except as modified in the AEP contract or by the IEP committee.

Instruction – The academic program and instruction will be consistent with the written curriculum for the core subjects and appropriate for the student's developmental level.

1. Instructional materials shall be age appropriate, functionally appropriate, and of high interest level for students. Sufficient instructional materials, supplies, and equipment shall be available to deliver the instructional program. To the extent of funding available, computerized instruction, utilizing comprehensive software designed to meet the individual needs of Phase III students, shall be utilized to support delivery of the standards.
2. The program shall provide for individualized instruction and accommodate the entry and exit of students.
3. Curricular and instructional practices shall reflect high expectations for students. The instructional program shall be delivered in a climate conducive to learning.
4. Graduation Credits – AEP students shall be granted graduation credit for work satisfactorily completed during assignment to the AEP. Students shall be expected to obtain the number of credits required for graduation as specified in graduation policy. Performance criteria specified in the alternative education contract may be granted as an alternative to the standard required unit(s) of credit.
5. Students may exit the program by: a) by meeting the guidelines outlined in the behavioral/educational contract developed for the student; b) completion of high school graduation requirements as specified in the alternative education contract.
6. Prior to re-entry into the traditional school setting, a transition plan shall be required.

I. Attendance

Any Phase III student who has more than the agreed upon unexcused absences designed by the AEP Committee may be brought up for review by the Phase III AEP Team and may be dropped from the program.

J. Special Education

The AEP is not a special education program. Program flexibility does not extend to modifying the provisions of Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students in providing AEP for students with exceptionalities or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or 1973. The team for all students with disabilities shall be the IEP team and the written plan shall be the IEP.

K. Staffing and Caseload

Appropriate staff shall be assigned for the implementation of the AEP. Counseling and/or social services shall be provided as appropriate. Other support services shall be provided as needed. Class size is to be determined by student needs and not to exceed fifteen (15) students.

L. Personnel / Licensure

The AEP classroom teacher(s) shall be selected on the basis of the teacher's demonstration of competency in meeting the following standards:

1. West Virginia professional teaching certificate;
2. Ability to effect positive behavior in disruptive students;
3. Effective leadership and/or mentoring skills in working with youth;
4. Successful experience in providing education to troubled or disruptive youth;
5. Specialized training and experience in non-traditional programs; and
6. Specialized training in behavior management skills.

M. Program Evaluation

Annually the Director shall evaluate the effectiveness of the AEP. Criteria to be used in the evaluation include but are not limited to:

- Number of students successfully returned to the referring school
- Improvement of academic standing of students
- Reduction in incidences of disruptive action
- Improvement in attendance rates

LEGAL REFERENCES: West Virginia Constitution, Article XII
West Virginia Code 18-2-6; 18-5-13; 18-5-19
WV Board of Education Policy 2418

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