

Alternative Education Programs

For some students, the approaches used in a district's main schools may not be the right fit, and alternative programs in most Kentucky districts may provide a good option. In 2014-15, 28,657 Kentucky students participated in 277 alternative programs for at least part of the school year.

WHAT ARE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS?

Alternative programs “meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional classroom setting” by assigning them to classrooms, centers, or campuses designed to “remediate academic performance, improve behavior, or provide an enhanced learning experience.” Each alternative program addresses the same college and career readiness outcomes as other schools, but they use different approaches to instructional strategies, curriculum, student schedules, and other features to promote greater success for their students.

HOW DO STUDENTS ENTER ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS?

Local school boards set the eligibility requirements for their districts' alternative programs. Students who meet those requirements can enter alternative programs voluntarily based on a request from a parent or an emancipated student, or they may also be placed in an alternative program involuntarily. Involuntary placement must be to meet the student's educational needs, to transition the student to placement as a state agency child, or to ensure safety for that student, other students, or staff.

HOW DO INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN ADDENDUMS WORK IN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS?

An Individual Learning Plan Addendum (ILPA) is developed before the student enters the alternative program to address that individual student's changed educational needs. The ILPA addresses factors like:

- Academic and behavioral needs of the student,
- Provisions for regular review of the student's progress in an alternative education program,
- Criteria for the student's re-entry into the traditional program.

For a student with a disability, the ILPA must be consistent with the student's IEP.

A team develops the plan for each student, and that student's parents must be invited to participate on the team. Where appropriate, the student must also be invited. For a student with a disability, the placement decision must be made through that student's Admission and Release Committee.

HOW ARE KENTUCKY ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FUNDED?

Alternative programs draw part of their support from state funding for Safe Schools. That funding suffered major declines during the recent recession, dropping from \$10.4 million in 2008 to just \$4.2 million in 2014. The 2015 state budget restored some of those dollars, and the 2016, 2017, and 2018 budgets return to the \$10.4 million 2008 level—though without any adjustment for rising prices. Alternative programs are also supported by SEEK funding that

SEEING RESULTS

Alternative programs now have their own school report cards, sharing assessment results and other data, available at education.ky.gov by choosing the school report card link on the home page.

Individual score reports for individual students are available to their parents, students who are 18 or older, teachers, and school leaders.

LEARNING MORE

The Kentucky Center for School Safety shares information on research-based best practices in alternative education at www.kycss.org/clear/best/best.php.

Additional information, including key regulations and guidelines can be found at education.ky.gov by searching for “alternative education.”

combines state and local dollars, and students and teachers in those programs are also served by state dollars earmarked for specific needs.