



Alternative Education Program	IHBHA	7/23/09
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RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:

The Cobb County School District (District) provides an Alternative Education Program (AEP) for disruptive students to receive educational services in a setting other than their home school. Administration will establish District procedures consistent with local and state guidelines.

RULE:

A. AEP ASSIGNMENT VIA THE DISCIPLINE PROCESS:

1. Students from Outside the District:

- a. If a student placed in an alternative educational program in another school district enrolls in the District before the expiration of the period of assignment, the District may continue the student's alternative educational program under the terms of the former school district's order;
- b. If the former district's dismissal period from their alternative program does not coincide with the District's grading period, the student must complete a grading period in the District's AEP;
- c. Students who enroll from outside the District must present certified documentation of the previous district's discipline decision. This documentation must be sent to the District Hearing Officer for verification.

2. Students from Inside the District:

- a. Schools may recommend that a student attend the alternative school during his/her long-term suspension/expulsion. Upon this recommendation or a decision of the District Hearing Officer/Tribunal, expelled/long-term suspended students may apply to attend AEP pursuant to a contract;
- b. The student will remain eligible at the AEP for the time period of assignment recommended in the suspension letter or as ordered by the District's Hearing Officer/Tribunal or as agreed upon in a parent/guardian waiver;

c. Dismissal:

- (1) If the student violates the terms of the contract, he/she may forfeit the opportunity to attend the AEP during the remainder of his/her expulsion or long-term suspension, pursuant to the Order of the Hearing Officer/Tribunal and/or the terms of the contract;
- (2) The student may appeal his/her dismissal from the AEP to the District administrator responsible for the supervision of the AEP;
- (3) Students dismissed from the AEP will be withdrawn from the home school;
- (4) Students dismissed from the AEP are not allowed to return to any District campus or school sponsored event during the time of suspension/expulsion;
- (5) Students dismissed from the AEP may:
 - (a) Apply to the District's home school office if the parent/guardian determines to home school the student (See Administrative [Rule IHBG](#) [Home Study Program]);
 - (b) Apply to complete their GED through the District's adult education program (See Administrative [Rule IHC](#) [Extended Instructional Programs]);
 - (c) Attend a private school of the parent/guardian's choice.

3. If there are discipline violations while enrolled in the AEP, the student may also receive further discipline, in addition to the reinstatement of his/her expulsion or long-term suspension.
4. Students with disabilities attending the AEP as a result of a manifestation determination who are removed from the AEP will continue to receive educational programming consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

B. PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUEST TO ATTEND THE AEP:

1. If a student in grades 6-10 has demonstrated difficulty with discipline at his/her home school, the parent/guardian may request that the student be allowed to apply to the AEP for a specific grading period or periods;
2. The parent/guardian's request must be approved by the Principal of his/her home school before the AEP application may be submitted;
3. If accepted into the AEP, the student must complete the agreed upon grading period. If the parent/guardian withdraws the student from AEP, the student may be required to wait until the next grading period before re-enrolling in his/her home school unless the student is under the age of 16 (See [Form JE-1](#) [Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law]);
4. To refer a special education student to the AEP, the special education supervisor must request a referral packet from the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Special Student Services. The Assistant Superintendent or designee will review the referral packet. Subsequent to this review, the IEP team will determine if the AEP is the appropriate location for the student.

C. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECT REFERRAL PROCESS:

The following procedures apply to students who, as the result of a long-term pattern of behaviors, are referred directly to the AEP for assignment consideration.

1. Entrance Procedures:

- a. Prior to submitting a direct referral for a student to the AEP, the home school should have assessed the needs of the student and implemented strategies for addressing those needs, consistent with District Administrative Rules. The home school will provide the AEP with documentation of the strategies it has utilized at the time of the referral;
- b. Prior to the referral for the student to apply to the AEP, the home school administrator will schedule a conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian to inform them:
 - (1) That the school desires to refer the student to the AEP and the reasons for the referral;
 - (2) If the parent/guardian does not agree with the referral, the student remains at the home school;
 - (3) If the parent/guardian agrees with the school recommendation, the recommendation will be reviewed by the AEP Director and District Alternative Program administration to determine if the referral is within guidelines for application to the AEP;
 - (4) The decision of the AEP Assignment Review regarding a student's application to the AEP is final;
 - (5) Transportation to the AEP is to be provided by the parent/guardian or student.

c. The Referral Packet (Packet):

- (1) Contains all requested information, including documentation of strategies and interventions utilized by the referring school;
- (2) Is reviewed by AEP staff upon its receipt:
 - (a) The referring school should be notified of any missing information. This notice will provide sufficient opportunity for the referring school to respond in time to permit the AEP Assignment Review to occur as scheduled.
 - (b) The referring school will be notified if the student has been accepted to apply.

2. A student may not attend the AEP until the referral process and the AEP application is complete and approved.
3. **Minimum Length of Attendance:**
 - a. Students must attend the AEP for a minimum of one semester. Students who enter the program within two weeks of the end of a semester, will remain until the end of the next semester.
 - b. The minimum length of assignment may be extended by the AEP Director in collaboration with the District's AEP administrator.

D. ACADEMIC/BEHAVIOR COMPONENTS:

1. The AEP focuses on English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Social Skills. Course credit is earned in the same manner as other programs;
2. The services provided include the Georgia Performance Standards Curriculum;
3. Foreign language, honors and advanced placement (AP) classes are not offered through the AEP program.

E. STANDARDIZED TESTING:

1. All State and/or District required testing for students in the AEP will be conducted by the Alternative Education Center;
2. Students who are dismissed from the AEP may take Georgia and/or District required testing at the discretion of the Principal of the student's home school.

F. PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT:

1. The District's Alternative Education Program requires the parent/guardian and the student to agree to the conditions of the Ombudsman contract in order to be accepted into the program;
2. Parents/guardians are critical partners in their children's academic achievement and social development. The parent/guardian and student are required to:
 - a. Attend an intake session at the Alternative Education Center prior to attendance; and
 - b. Commit to the requirements of the program to enroll.
3. **Grade Reporting:**
 - a. Progress reports are provided by the AEP;
 - b. Report cards are issued by the home school from grades reported from the AEP.

G. EXIT PROCEDURES:

1. Students are recommended to return to their home schools at the end of their minimum assignment period if they have fulfilled the requirements of their AEP contract.
2. If the student is approved to apply to attend the AEP as a result of a disciplinary hearing, or a waived disciplinary hearing, the AEP will abide by that recommendation.
3. When the student is approved to return to his/her home school, the home school will schedule a conference for the student and the parent/guardian to discuss re-entry issues.
4. **Notification/Records Exchange:**
 - a. **Home Schools:**
 - (1) The AEP will provide to the home school all necessary information, including attendance and grades, for all returning students.
 - (2) If a student's home school has changed during his/her assignment at the AEP, the AEP should also provide the new home school a copy of the packet that resulted in the student's assignment.
 - b. The AEP should send a letter to the parent/guardian of students who are returning to their home school which should include the procedures they are to follow when re-enrolling students. This letter should be mailed with sufficient time for the parent/guardian to receive it prior to the student's withdrawal from the AEP.

H. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS:

Nothing in this Rule shall be interpreted to infringe on any right provided to students by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, or the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

Adopted: 8/25/05

Revised: 7/1/06; 8/8/07; 7/1/08; 7/23/09