

Title: "The Journey of the Alternative Schools Movement:
Where It's Been and Where It's Going"
Author: Mary Anne Raywid
Source: The High School Magazine, Volume 6, Issue 2,
October 1998, p. 10-14

Raywid, the author, provides a brief historical overview of alternative schools in the United States. She claims that alternative schools, from the time of their inception, appear to be divisible into 3 types according to what they are trying to change: the student, the school, or the educational system.

Public opinion is that the point of alternative schools is to change the student and his or her performance. Some alternative programs try to change students with a punitive orientation whereas others believe a therapeutic community is the best approach. Both approaches share an important trait: they are both seen as ideally temporary assignments. However, some students prefer to remain at the alternative setting instead of returning to the traditional school.

The alternative schools that focus on changing the school are often highly innovative schools with novel curricular and instructional approaches and atypically positive school climates. These alternative schools have a far more positive record than the punitively oriented programs and the therapeutically oriented alternatives. Most of the alternative schools that are geared to changing school show positive effects in graduation rates and college environments.

Alternative schools that are aimed at changing the educational system are the small schools and schools-within-schools movement occurring in the nation's cities today, so the real test of this strategy is taking place now. It remains to be seen if these small alternatives can survive in large systems and can adapt the larger systems to be supportive of their innovation.

The author provides questions that from policy decisions that, in turn, shape alternative programs and affect the daily implementation of alternative programs. Her questions are: (1) For whom is the alternative school intended?; (2) Is the alternative school's primary purpose to education and otherwise benefit those who attend it?; (3) Should the alternative school target a particular kind of student?; (4) How many alternatives are envisioned?; (5) Do students have to "qualify" for admission to the alternative school by failing key tests, being truant, etc.?; (6) Are teachers - as well as students - assigned to the alternative or do they consist of those who have chosen to be there; (7) Are alternative schools subject to the same academic standards and expectations as are other schools?; (8) Are alternative school students subject to the same kinds of indicators for having met academic standards as are students in other schools?; (9) Is the alternative a separate small school...existing school...school-within-a-school...or one of several alternatives comprising a multiplex?; and (10) Has the alternative school the autonomy to design its own program? Raywid suggests that how these fundamental questions are decided will go far in shaping the alternative school and determining its nature. She also believes these issues will recur throughout the life of the alternative school. Raywid states that alternative schools are highly malleable, and these programs will be whatever one makes them.

Title: "Order in the Classroom: Why Alternative Placements Are Crucial to Giving All Our Students the Chance to Learn"
Author: None given/Special Report
Source: American Teacher, Volume 81, March 1997, p. 8

This article refers to Principle Three of the American Federation of Teachers Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning campaign. Principle Three of the bill states, "All students and staff have a right to learn and work in school districts that have alternative educational placements for violent or chronically disruptive students." This article shares some questions and answers regarding the issue of alternative educational placements.

One question asks if alternative educational placements alone will solve the problem. No, these placements will not solve the problem but they should be part of an overall discipline program that includes effective classroom management strategies, clear and consistently enforced discipline codes, a range of sanctions for infrequent and minor infractions of rules, and a fair and expedient appeals procedure for students placed in alternative program for an extended period of time.

The reason alternative educational placements are needed is to ensure safety, to teach students who are chronically disruptive or violent that their behavior has consequences, and to provide these students who are consistently disruptive or violent with special assistance so that they can work on their behavior problems and continue to receive academic instruction.

Alternative placements can and should take on many different forms. In-school measures such as time-out rooms to short- and long-term alternative schools or correctional institutions for criminal offenders are examples of alternative options to meet different needs. Alternative placements should have lower pupil-teacher ratios than regular classrooms so that troubled youth can get intensive help. The staff at alternative programs should be competent in academic fields and have special training in helping chronically disruptive and violent students. Alternative programs should provide supplementary counseling and supervision in addition to rigorous academic instruction. It would also be important to have psychologists, family workers, and outside service providers aid alternative school teachers with helping the students in these settings.

Alternative programs are costly, but they can also be cost effective. When one hour of instructional time per day is lost to disruption in the regular classroom, the cost is \$23,429 per class, based on the national average annual cost per student of \$5,623. Each student that an alternative program prevents from having to repeat a grade has a cost savings of \$5,623. Alternative programs may also keep students with behavioral problems from becoming incarcerated as adults. In 1993, the average cost to incarcerate an inmate in local jails was \$14,667 per year, and federal prisons cost an average of \$22,773 per inmate per year. Alternative programs may save tax payers money by helping these students avoid the criminal justice system and become productive members of society.

This article provides support for alternative educational placements. The American Federation of Teachers appear interested in adding their voice to the need for alternative programs so that regular schools can provide education in a safe and orderly classrooms.

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Title: Building Educational Alternative for At-Risk Youth: A Primer
Author: John Kellmayer
Source: The High School Magazine, Volume 6, Issue 2,
October 1998, p. 26-31

This article provides alarming statistics about the state of America's youth: more than a million students drop out of school each year, and one-third of this country's young people are entering adult society without a high school diploma. This will have staggering consequences on the economic and social well-being of America in the next century. Alternative schools may be one solution to this crisis and may help provide an education to students who otherwise quit school.

The author provides 10 key characteristics for an effective alternative educational program: (1) Size of no more than a 15 to 1 student-to-teacher ratio; (2) Site where the alternative program can be in a rich and supportive environment; (3) Voluntary participation of both students and staff; (4) Participatory decision making with the governance of the school; (5) Curriculum that is student-centered and related to students' academic and personal concerns; (6) Separate administrative unit; (7) Distinctive mission and family atmosphere that is clear and that promotes and sense of community, commitment, and shared values; (8) Flexible teacher roles and program autonomy; (9) Access to social services; and (10) Use of technology.

The author also outlines 6 steps for the planning process of an alternative program: (1) Form a program planning and management committee at least one year before the alternative school is opened; (2) Decide on the nature of the population that the program will serve; (3) Decide the process through which students will be admitted to the program; (4) The district should provide financial, personnel, logistical, and technological support that is equivalent to the level of support provided for students in the traditional schools; (5) Staff for the alternative school should be flexible, patient, autonomous, and able to function successfully in a continuously stressful environment; and (6) Curriculum should include some important components such as personal development, vocational choices, integration of social services, program strategies, and others.

Kellmayer, the author of this article, also provides a piece of advice to principals who work with at risk youth: Don't allow the pressure of working with students who can be difficult to shake your professionalism or commitment.

Title: What Is Going On At Your School?
Authors: Craig Cummings and Mark Goor
Source: Intervention in School and Clinic, Volume 33, Number 5,
May 1998, p. 304-305, 314

Craig Cummings, the Assistant Administrator for Alternative Education for the Howard County Public School System in Ellicott City, Maryland, provides some suggestions for how to deal with disruptive behavior of students in a school. He suggests four vital components that a plan for addressing disruptive student behavior must have.

The first component is to have a school-wide discipline plan. The plan needs to be aligned with the district's code of discipline for all schools to avoid any inconsistencies, and there must be a process for communicating this plan to all teachers, administrators, parents, students, and any other people who are concerned about the well-being of the school.

The second component is to have a system of strategic supports available for all students. These supports serve two functions: they reinforce the appropriate behavior of students who adhere to the school's behavioral expectations, and they provide additional support for students who continue to display inappropriate behaviors. These supports will include a system of rewards and interventions.

These strategic supports will not be sufficient for some students, so the third component is to have personalized behavior plans for these students. These behavior plans should include: (a) a description of the problem behavior and a present level of performance statement; (b) measurable goals for performance; (c) hypothesis statements and intervention strategies; (d) evaluation procedures, and (e) a description of the supports required by the implementers of the plan.

Cummings suggests that 1% to 3% of the student body requires some type of alternative education programming in order to meet success in school. Therefore, the fourth component is to have alternative education available for these students in both short-term and long-term programs.

The issue of special education students is also addressed by Cummings, and he suggest that behavioral expectations should be the same for all students but a different process to determine consequences needs to take place when students with disabilities are involved.

Title: Why Alternative Education Works
Author: Dora A. De La Rosa
Source: The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81,
Number 4, p. 268-272

The author begins this article with a brief discussion of the staggering numbers of students who are dropping out of school and the social and economic costs for this dilemma. She then moves into a succinct description of a model alternative program, the New Directions Academy, which is located on the Del Valle High School campus in El Paso, Texas.

The New Directions Academy serves students who are 17 to 21 years of age. Some of the students fit a typical at risk profile, having experienced academic and discipline problems, whereas other students left their home school due to family problems, medical conditions, or pregnancy. This alternative setting allows flexibility in attendance because it enables students to attend a minimum of two hours daily supplemented by two to three hours daily of independent studies at school or at home. The two-hour sessions are available from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. year round. The graduation requirements are the same as for students at traditional schools. However, the students at New Directions Academy follow a college-style syllabus with textbook assignments and on-line assignments via the NovaNET computer network. Students work on no more than two courses at a time at their own pace, and they are better able to concentrate on and complete each required course. Students have a weekly conference with their instructor, and the students are responsible for requesting help, test results, and additional assignments. Assertiveness and responsibility are encouraged by the faculty, and students are continually praised for taking responsibility.

The author found that the nurturing climate and individualized attention that is provided for these students re-engages them in the learning experience and gives them a sense of belonging. In addition, support services such as a social worker, a job developer, and a pregnancy education program, assists the students in being successful with the challenges they face socially. The ultimate support, however, is provided by the students' parents, guardians, spouses, or other relatives who are encouraged to participate in the students' progress at school.

There are several characteristics that makes New Directions Academy, as well as other alternative schools, successful. Flexibility and choice are key elements. Different methods of instructional delivery is important. Support services that are innovative and integrated into the program are helpful. Caring teachers are a vital component, and genuine concern about the students is a necessary for a successful program. Also, the small ratio of students to teachers helps the students receive the individualized instruction they need. The sense of community and of belonging also generates academic and social success on the part of the students.

The author provides support for the need to create non-traditional options to meet the needs of students who do not fit into the traditional molds of public education. Her study of the New Directions Academy shows the some of the characteristics that can benefit an alternative program.

Title: An Evaluation of a Successful Alternative High School
Authors: Janice M. Dugger and Chester W. Dugger, Ed.D.
Source: The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81,
Number 4, p. 218-228

The purpose of this study was to evaluate an alternative high school that has been successful in encouraging dropouts to return to school and stay until graduation. The researchers first determined the components of the school that make it unique. They found the following 17 characteristics that were salient to this particular high school:

(1) Teachers selected for the program consistently maintained high expectations for students, routinely employed positive discipline techniques, and primarily established rapport with students and peers. (2) The location for the school was purposely selected to be away from other high schools, in neutral territory, close to public transportation. (3) The curriculum for the school is highly individualized and includes a high degree of hands-on activities. (4) All students go to school a half day and work at a paying or volunteer job a half day. (5) Enrollment at the school is limited to 100 students. Class sizes are seldom over 15 students. The teacher/student ratio is 1 to 12. (6) All staff members consider student counseling to be a part of their job. (7) Staff members work very hard to create a family atmosphere at the school. (8) Goal setting is a regular part of every academic curriculum. (9) Formative, summative, and self evaluation are noticeably apparent to an observer. (10) The alternative school staff works closely with other community agencies to remove barriers to students' success in school; for example, day care program is available. (11) Daily follow-up is made on all students who are absent or tardy. (12) An extensive extrinsic reward system is in place to promote attendance and academic achievement. (13) Staff development for teachers is on-going and comprehensive as is staff team building. (14) An individualized process of transitioning from school to work and from high school to post-high school training is in place for each student. (15) Staff members express the personal belief that it is their responsibility to model for students the kind of behaviors they are trying to elicit from students. (16) The alternative school program is both highly structured and extremely flexible. (17) All students must apply for acceptance into the school, take part in an interview, and complete a battery of tests and questionnaires.

The researchers also examined measures of achievement to see if statistically significant increases occurred during students' first semester at the school. The students who entered the school in the spring improved significantly in all 3 areas of academic achievement that were examined, reading, mathematics, and English. The fall group showed no significant changes in academic achievement. The control group, which consisted of students who were on a waiting list to enter the school, improved significantly in reading and math and somewhat in English. The researchers contribute the differences between the students who entered in the spring and those who entered in the fall to the attitudes of the students at the times their tests were taken. The researchers also suggest that extrinsic motivation may have played a part in the achievement score increases for the students in the control group since they were wanting to enter the school but were still on a waiting list.

Self-esteem was examined as well at the end of the semester. Both the spring and the fall groups recorded significant increases in their self-esteem. In contrast, no significant differences were found in self-esteem for the control group.

Title: **Characteristics of Alternative Schools and Programs Serving At-Risk Students**
Author: **Cheryl M. Lange**
Source: **The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81, Number 4, p. 183-198**

This study was designed to examine the characteristics of Minnesota's High School Graduation Incentives Program which consists of alternative schools and Area Learning Centers (ALCs). ALCs offer personalized education programs year round, day and evening, to accommodate the needs of learners. A wide variety of courses, leading to diplomas, are taught using alternative methods of instruction. Alternative programs personalize the education of learners at risk of not completing high school. Classes are taught using alternative methods and scheduling, and these programs are offered during the typical school day and year. The characteristics this study investigated were program characteristics, admission/exit policies, special education issues, curriculum and student progress, student tracking and follow-up, student and staff characteristics, and organization and decision-making. Directors and teachers from 38 ALCs, 11 private alternative schools, and 20 public alternative schools in Minnesota were surveyed.

Findings revealed that these schools are small and the directors and staff have control over major curriculum and program decisions. Teachers choose to teach in the schools and the students choose to attend the schools. There are few support services within the school but community resources are used to support the curriculum. Central district administrators have little input in the day-to-day decisions of the school. However, central administrators provide more input into decisions about funding, transportation, special education services, hiring of staff, and building improvements. Directors report more control over the number of students enrolled in the school with staff having more control over the courses offered, instructional methods, grading and evaluation standards, choice of curriculum and texts, and student behavior standards. Schools have considerable autonomy from the district in most programmatic areas but still depend upon central administration for funding and building space.

Teachers report more freedom at the alternative schools and most of them also report a higher level of job satisfaction than when teaching at a traditional school. Findings revealed that teachers at the alternative schools used activities such as small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, field trips, student employment, computerized instruction, emotional counseling, career counseling, academic counseling, and socializing with students more than teachers at conventional schools. Teachers at the alternative schools tended to use standardized tests and homework less than teachers at conventional schools.

In terms of students with disabilities, data from this study suggest these students are accessing the alternative programs, though many programs do not formally identify students with disabilities, and the participation is likely underrepresented in this study. However, the characteristics described by the respondents suggest an environment conducive to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

This study provides the foundation for evaluating alternative education programs such as the High School Graduation Incentives Program in Minnesota. The distinctive characteristics of this program may need to be considered for other alternative education programs in other states.

Title: **Reinventing the Alternative School:
From Juvenile Detention to Academic Alternative**

Authors: **Leslie King, Megan Silvey, Rick Holliday,
and Bill J. Johnston**

Source: **The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81, Number 4, p.
229-243**

The purpose of this report is to describe the transformation of a "last chance" alternative school, Lakeside School, located in southeastern North Carolina. During the 1995-96 school year, Lakeside changed its mission from a last-chance type detention center to an innovative academic alternative setting that serves socially and academically at-risk students. The reason for this change in focus at Lakeside was that the effectiveness of the detention center approach was minimal; instead, Lakeside was serving as a "dumping ground" for discipline problems and juvenile offenders. The academic effectiveness of the school was as were graduation and promotion rates, and the recidivism rate was high.

The restructuring plan at Lakeside included: (a) limiting admission to secondary students and changing the name to Lakeside High School; (b) adopting a student admissions policy which prohibited assignment based primarily on behavioral factors; and (c) approving an academically focused program grounded in a philosophy of student assistance. The student assistance program includes a 4-day instructional week, 3x3 block scheduling, regular Friday staff meetings (which include interagency collaboration among social services agencies), and emphasis upon student learning styles to guide instructional planning.

Review of the 1995-96 school year indicates that Lakeside is emerging as a school with a clear mission, an early record of success, and a cohesive and committed faculty. The principal and dean of students handle student discipline, and students that are admitted to Lakeside have to sign a contract agreeing to meet academic and behavioral expectations for remaining at Lakeside. Students who violate this contract are informed once that they are in violation, and a second violation leads to removal from Lakeside. Police are present in the school to enforce these procedures, and the message to both students and faculty is clear that disruption will not be tolerated. This approach to discipline as well as the consistency between organizational structure, implementation strategy and goal accomplishment that is explicitly enforced by the principal has caused a dramatic improvement in the climate of the school. Discipline problems have decreased and the dropout rate has declined.

The results from the findings of the case study that was conducted at Lakeside during the 1995-96 school year are encouraging. At least one-third of the student population achieved district-wide honor roll status. Faculty found the students to be more focused on academics and the students were more likely to graduate at levels which exceeded the faculty's expectations.

Average daily attendance increased from an average of 65 percent to 80 percent. Students were shown more respect and given more responsibility by the school staff; students were allowed to go outside the building during lunch with the expectation that they would be back in class on time, and students were issued textbooks whereas in the past they were not allowed to remove

textbooks from the class. Students were also allowed, to produce a yearbook and to have a senior prom. Students responded positively to the new leadership and the transformation of expectations at Lakeside. The Friday Staffings also helped both teachers and students solve students' problems that impeded their social and academic development. The results of the case study discussed in this article suggest that Lakeside appears to be a school that other alternative schools may consider duplicating.

Title: **Second Chance Before Heading to High School**
Author: **Linda Jacobson**
Source: **Education Week, August 5, 1998, Volume 17, Number 43, p. 7**

This article focuses on the experimental alternative program at Long Beach Preparatory Academy that finished its first year in June of 1998. The mission of this school is to take students who have failed the 8th grade and place them in this school for a year to prepare them for high school. Students who fail 8th grade are not allowed to continue on to a district high school and cannot repeat the grade in middle school. Long Beach Prep offers small classes with no more than 20 students per class, a full-time school psychologist, and a school social worker. The curriculum focuses on the basics, and students have to complete an end-of-the year project. Despite a variety of first-year obstacles, the program is better prepared to serve the next batch of students in the fall.

The school appears to be successful because many of the students have indicated that they do not want to leave Long Beach Prep, even though they have earned the right to go to high school. Also, many parents whose children are not doing well in regular 8th grade classes have asked the principal if their children can attend the school. The assistant principal emphasizes the importance of trusting relationships between the teachers and the students, and she hopes to add service learning projects to give the students a chance to learn more about responsibility.

Title: Finding Experts in Unexpected Places: Learning From Those Who Have Failed
Author: Amy Bauman
Source: The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81, Number 4, p. 258-267

This article begins with a brief history of alternative schools. It then moves to sharing perceptions of The Jackson School, an alternative program that was examined as part of a state-wide evaluation of alternative schools in North Carolina. The Jackson School serves 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in and around a moderate sized southern city. The students come to The Jackson School because they can no longer function successfully in a traditional classroom, mainly due to behavior problems. The goal of The Jackson School is to provide behavior modification to its students so that they can return to their home schools.

The students who attend The Jackson School range in age from 10 to 15. Most of them have been suspended for carrying weapons, getting into fights, attacking authority figures, or have some connection with drugs. This alternative school is the last place for them to go before permanent expulsion. The school must accept all students referred to them except for students who are already labeled behaviorally or emotionally handicapped. Academics is not the focus at this school, and most students do remedial and catch up work while they are there. The Jackson School views discipline as the way to achieve behavioral changes, and the staff at the school are committed to helping the students develop the skills necessary to survive in an educational system that has denied them access. Also, the entire faculty is unwilling to label the students as "problem children"; instead, their goal is to increase the children's self-esteem and improve the children's self-control.

Most children stay at Jackson for six to eight weeks. Each school day is rigorously structured, and behavior is monitored and assessed daily. Infractions of any rules are met with immediate consequences. The classes usually consist of no more than ten children which promotes individual attention around academic and emotional needs as well as careful behavioral monitoring. Although the focus at Jackson is on behavior, the classrooms are traditionally set up with desks and blackboards. However, each classroom has a wall that is built to create a small hallway-like space close to the door where children can be sent for any in-class isolation when he or she is having difficulty moderating their own behavior.

Students' behavior is monitored on a daily basis, and there are a series of levels that the children must work through to complete the program and return to their home school. Often the home school makes the transition back very difficult. The challenges for both The Jackson School and the individual child related to the transition back to the home school are numerous and complex; often the home school is a breeding ground for further infractions or crises for the child because of the social temptations and the stigma attached to the child. Jackson, like most alternative schools, is stereotyped as a "dumping ground" for problem children, and both the staff and the students suffer the consequences of this negative image.

Despite external and systemic problems, the faculty at Jackson view the program as successful. They measure this success by the children who successfully return to their home schools, and

who move on to high school and graduate or get a GED. The author states that the commitment of reciprocal respect between the children and the staff may cause the cycle of destruction to be broken.

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Title: The Exploration Alternative School: A Case Study
Author: Joseph M. Rayle
Source: The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81,
Number 4, p. 244-250

This paper is a case study of The Exploration Alternative High School which is located in a small western North Carolina town. The school serves 15-20 at risk high school students who are experiencing academic or other difficulties in their regular high school. These students have experienced issues such as abandonment, neglect, drug abuse, violent acting out, absenteeism, or learning disabilities. Students voluntarily participate in the program and they have to apply for admission. This paper explores the match between at risk issues and the services provided by this alternative learning program.

The Exploration Alternative High School focuses upon creating a community spirit among the students that facilitates the growth of social skills and academic success. The students that attend Exploration are in grades 9-12 at the local high school. Seventy-five percent of the students are from poverty backgrounds and 50 percent have no residing parent. The key policies of this alternative program are "low tolerance, high expectations, and an individualized environment." The highly individualized environment makes the students responsible for obtaining credit for the courses they need to graduate and then provides them with the support they need to succeed. The classrooms are unconventional in that they are set up so that a variety of simultaneous activities are possible. Classroom academics, activities, and field trips are organized in a way that allow the students to have hands-on learning experiences that are relevant to the subjects that they are studying. Students are expected to complete their course work and they are required to make good grades to stay in the program. In terms of behavioral expectations, fighting is absolutely not tolerated, absences are limited to no more than five days per semester, and discipline problems are generally handled by the group. There is more of a focus on positive reinforcement and an effort toward excellence.

The program is perceived as effective and successful by people associated with the school, parents, and students. The author concludes that The Exploration program can be seen as successful at what it does, which is to prevent its students from leaving the school system and providing them with the social and academic skills necessary to continue functioning in that system and in society. However, the author also points out that The Exploration program does not meet the needs of a wide spectrum of at risk students. Instead, this particular alternative program seems to do a good job of helping students who were having trouble with the conventional school system but still wanted to go to college or had similar middle class aspirations. The program seemed unable to serve students who had a need to work during the day, students who were parents, and students who were unable to function effectively within the structure of The Exploration program.

Title: Meeting the Needs of "At Risk" Students:
The Day and Night School

Author: Paula Groves

Source: The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81,
Number 4, p. 251-257

This case study examines The Day and Night School, an alternative program in southeastern North Carolina designed for students who are having difficulty in the standard comprehensive high schools. This alternative setting is intended as a transitional program, and it strives to help students rectify academic and behavioral problems so they can return to their original home school. Most students are required to apply to this school by writing a rationale for attending this program; other students are court-ordered or attend because they are pregnant.

The Day and Night School philosophy is that it is their duty to meet the needs of each individual student. Characteristics of the students include poor, pregnant or teen mothers, on juvenile probation, or they have day jobs which requires night schooling. A small number of students are prospective graduating seniors who attend regular day schools but need credits for graduation. Enrollment and attendance at The Day and Night School fluctuates almost every day. Students are expected to attend classes and complete assignments, but the program does not refuse an education to students who miss more than six days because the staff understands that absences may be due to extenuating circumstances due to parenting, work, and other reasons. Students attend classes Mondays through Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Fridays are make-up days for students to spend individualized time with teachers in the case of an absence. Teachers also have staff development meetings and planning time on Fridays. Students have a strictly academic curriculum on a modified block schedule of 90 minute classes with a thirty minute dinner break. The sporadic attendance of students creates a classroom climate that is unpredictable, so teachers have to be flexible to adapt lesson based on the temperament of the class and the population that is present in any given day. Class sizes are small, and there is time for individualized one-on-one instruction as well as cooperative learning and group work. Despite the daily challenges, the outdated textbooks, and the fact that the teachers often have to furnish materials out of pocket for the students, the teachers all agree that the benefit of helping students and seeing them mature and progress academically is the gratification that keeps them teaching.

There is a sense of family at The Day and Night School as well. Each staff member is assigned six students for which they keep close contact. This "buddy system" instills a sense of accountability and ownership for the school and students because all of the school staff is involved and responsible for the students.

Teachers and students agree that the students who attend The Day and Night School voluntarily are the ones who benefit the most from the program. Teachers at the Day and Night School report that they have had less discipline problems with students at this alternative school than with the students they have taught at the conventional high schools. The school has many success stories, but despite its successes the community's perceptions stigmatize the students and view the school as a dumping ground for problem children. The author reports that this alternative

school meets the needs of students that cannot succeed in conventional schools, and that the community needs to overcome its negative image of this program because the service it provides is imperative to society as a whole.

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Title: Regime to Reclaim Truants of the Mind
Author: Reva Klein
Source: The Times Educational Supplement, October 30, 1998,
Number 4296, p. 19

Boyce Campus Middle College high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the focus of this article. This school offers a fresh start to 170 10th to 12th graders who have socially alienated and disaffected with their previous schools and who have a track record of high absenteeism or "truancy of the mind" (total withdrawal). The students are very creative, of average or above average intelligence and at risk of falling through the cracks. The teachers have strong interpersonal skills and they develop close relationships with the students so that students know the teachers care about them. Students share problems with a member of the teaching staff at a daily focus group. Also, teachers do not refer students to the principal to solve problems nor do they ignore students' problems; instead, teachers have pledged a commitment to solve all problems.

Boyce Campus is located on the grounds of a community college because the facilities at the community college are appropriate to high school needs. Also, the community college students are generally mature, and this means that the Boyce Campus students, often unconventional in their appearance, are spared from harassment.

The curriculum at Boyce Campus offers more than the traditional high school curriculum, and students are able to take community college courses in addition to their high school courses so that they can get credits towards college. The community college courses these students take are paid for by the school districts.

An evaluation of Boyce Campus Middle College high school is currently under way. Marked improvements in grades and in social adjustment outside of school are noted in the preliminary findings. The family atmosphere of this school and the sense of caring, creativity and responsibility that it conveys to the students seems to be putting this school on the cutting edge of innovation in secondary education.

Title: **From High School to Middle School:
An Alternative School Program for Both**

Author: **David L. Lloyd, Jr.**

Source: **Education Digest, March 1997, Volume 62, p. 32-35**

This article discusses the Inverness Center located in Baltimore, Maryland. The Inverness Center was established in 1993 and its mission is to provide students with the necessary skills and coping mechanisms to allow them to return to their home schools and be successful. The Center strives to enable the students to see themselves as citizens of a multicultural world and to bring together all their resources, both intellectual and social, to solve problems creatively and efficiently. This alternative program also helps students identify and expand their strengths, realize their weaknesses, and understand and appreciate their own potential as productive individuals.

The Inverness Center serves students from five middle-level schools. Most students come from middle- and lower-income families and diverse racial and ethnic groups. Students come to the school because they have been expelled or transferred from their home schools due to behavior problems. The Center has a staff of 14 professionals, an administrative secretary, and a principal. The ratio of adults to students is approximately 8:1. Emphasis is based on counseling and therapeutic services, and efforts are underway to involve other agency personnel such as representatives from the Department of Juvenile Services, the Office of Social Services, and the county health department to offer students and their families a variety of services. Students receive academic instruction in English, social studies, math, science, physical education, health, art and technology education; however, there is an emphasis on basic skills because many of the students need remediation. Students received individualized instruction based on their needs. Personal development is promoted through the health class, group counseling, and skills-for-success class. Students are also provided opportunities to build their self-esteem through environmental projects, service learning, art, and volunteer projects. Behavior modification is used with a system of points and levels, and students receive privileges based on their levels and accumulated points.

This article provides information about the Inverness Center and specific details about what has made this alternative program successful for at-risk youth in Baltimore, Maryland.

Title: **Academic Persistence and Alternative High Schools: Student and Site Characteristics**
Authors: **Holly E. May and Ellis P. Copeland, Ph.D.**
Source: **The High School Journal, April-May 1998, Volume 81, Number 4, p. 199-208**

This study sought to differentiate student placement on variables at the student level because information about students who attend alternative high schools and the site characteristics is limited. The variables examined through quantitative techniques were gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, reported coping strategies, and health status. Qualitative analyses were used to explore student and site characteristics that influenced persistence at the alternative site. The sample was comprised of 264 high school students from 3 mid-western communities, with an equal number of students from the alternative and traditional settings. Students were between 15 and 19 years old; 126 were male and 138 were female; 33% of the students were Hispanic and 67% were White.

A demographic questionnaire, the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A COPE), and The Behavior Health Inventory Adolescent Symptom Checklist (BHI A) were the quantitative measures used. Focus group sessions and individual interviews were conducted to provide qualitative information on the interaction of individual and site characteristics on the students' persistence within the alternative site.

Results indicate that approximately 70% of the stress reported by alternative high school students is accounted for by: school (graduation, grades, attendance, school work); family (conflict with parents, parent laid off of job, death of a family member, divorce of parents, alcoholic parents); employment (finding and keeping a job, school/work scheduling, working nights); parenting issues (pregnancy, child support, daycare, "parenting - trying to do the right thing"); and intimate relationships (dating, fighting with boyfriend/girlfriend, "breaking up", marriage, sex).

Alternative students also reported academic persistence to be more related to site factors rather than personal characteristics. Site characteristics that positively influenced students' academic persistence include a high perception of teacher commitment and involvement with students, school policies that discourage avoidant behaviors, counseling services, peer mediators, support groups for adolescent issues, individual academic assistance, and a sense of belonging. Results also show that alternative high school students report utilizing avoidant coping strategies, such as using drugs or alcohol or staying away from home, to a greater degree than those students enrolled at the traditional high school sites. Alternative school students reported more use of avoidant coping strategies and less engagement in demanding activities as compared to traditional high school students. Despite these findings, alternative school students did not report the expected greater number of health concerns. Students at the alternative sites were more likely to be Hispanic, and female enrollment at alternative sites was significantly greater than male enrollment.

This study substantiates the role of effective coping strategies in maintaining school attendance both at the traditional and alternative high school sites. This study also provides greater support

for innovations at the building level which promote a more active learning and teaching approach.

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Title: **A Second Chance: Alternative High Schools Take Different Approaches**
Author: **Juli Knutson**
Source: **Educational Horizons, Volume 76, Issue 4, Summer 1998, p. 199-202**

The author discussed two alternative programs, Renaissance School in suburban Indianapolis, Indiana and Richard Milburn High School, a for-profit program operating in several states. The author talked with the director of Renaissance School and the chief executive office of Richard Milburn High School about the schools' philosophies and operational tactics, and she shares her informal comparison of these two schools in this article.

Both directors provided the same basic definition of alternative schooling: providing educational opportunities for any student failing to succeed in the regular public school environment. Most of the students in both of these programs had conduct or truancy problems. Both schools emphasize small class size, nurturing teachers, and innovative programs to reach students who are turned off to school. Renaissance School focuses on different targeted programs such as work-study, service learning, personal development, and severely emotionally handicapped programs. Richard Milburn High School gives its students choices such as what time of day they want to attend school and school-to-work programs.

Renaissance School has a counseling program that includes a dean of student services as well as a school counselor. Group sessions are offered on topics such as smoking, drugs, anger management, and gangs. Special speakers are brought in from the community to talk with students. Students are referred to the groups by teachers, parents, or themselves. The school also tries to stay away from suspensions as a form of discipline. Instead, there is an intervention room and an after-school program in which the offending students stay late. Lots of counseling is provided to students, and behavioral contracts are used for all students entering Renaissance. In contrast, Richard Milburn High School uses behavior control, and a life skills course teaches students how to control their own behavior. There are no formal counseling programs at this school; instead, teachers are the counselors and are told when hired that they will be expected to perform counseling for students.

Neither Renaissance or Richard Milburn requires teachers to have any special training beyond the regular certification to work with the students; however, teachers do need to have a commitment and drive to help the students. Renaissance School looks for teachers who are creative and flexible and who can use different approaches to teaching. Richard Milburn High School focuses on the teachers' mindset; if the teachers believe that the kids are not bad kids and that they can be helped, then the teacher will work well with the program at Richard Milburn. The author states that both these programs are picking up the pieces for students who cannot cope with the traditional school setting. This informal discussion about two different alternative programs provides some thoughts about effective interventions in an alternative educational setting.

Title: **Alternative School Students' Concepts of Success**
Authors: **Sue E. Castleberry and John M. Enger**
Source: **NASSP Bulletin, December 1998, Volume 82, Issue 602,**
 p. 105-111

One hundred and seventy-three high school students from 21 Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) programs throughout the state of Arkansas were asked their perceptions of success in an ALE. In terms of the demographic characteristics of the students: 58 percent were male and 42 percent were female; 67 percent were White, 27 percent were Black, and 6 percent were of another race; 94 percent were in grades 9-12; and 91 percent were 15-18 years old. Forty-four percent of these students were at least one year older than their grade peers. Two-thirds of the students had attended the ALE more than a semester. Eighty-two percent of those interviewed were working toward graduation or a GED. Ten percent of the students were part-time ALE students and part-time regular school students. Eight percent had graduated or returned to their regular school.

Students were asked open-ended questions during interviews about their thoughts regarding success, their regular school, and the ALE. The authors summarized the students' responses in regard to their lack of success in the regular school program, their perceptions of the ALE, and their views of success. When asked if they were successful in their regular school program, 95 percent of the ALE students replied, "No." The most frequent reason cited for failure in school was their attitude. Other factors that inhibited the students' success were: pace in the classroom was seen as too fast; teachers did not provide the help the students needed; there were too many students in class and too many distractions; the teachers did not teach in a way that the students could learn; absenteeism; and personal problems. When student were asked what they were going to do to make sure they would be successful at the ALE their responses generally included attendance and studying; some students also said they would pay attention, behave, improve their attitude, and obey the rules.

Students were asked to compare the characteristics of the ALE and their regular school program. The students favored many characteristics of the ALE program over the regular program; examples of these characteristics included the one-to-one interaction they had with the ALE teachers and the smaller number of students in the classrooms. Students indicated that the ALE expected the best from them, and 84 percent of the students felt the ALE had a positive effect on their lives.

The students were asked how they would know when they had been successful in the alternative school. Most responded that measures such as grades, diploma, GED, credits, and returning to their regular school would indicate success. Other responses to this question included improved personal behavior, teachers telling them they were successful, and going to college. Students were asked what they, as ALE students, had to do to be viewed as being successful by students and staff at their regular school. Some students replied that their actions, working hard, getting good grades, graduating or getting a GED, or their attitude would help them be viewed as successful.

This study shows that ALE students in Arkansas benefit from alternative education. Most students in this study place much of the blame for their lack of success at their regular school on themselves. However, students also reported other factors that contributed to their problems at their regular school. The students had positive perceptions of the ALE. The ALE seemed to be a good alternative for these students, and it provided them with a means to be successful.

Title: An Alternative Learning Program: Effects on Student Motivation and Self-Esteem
Authors: Joe D. Nichols and William E. Utesch
Source: The Journal of Educational Research, May/June 1998, Volume 91, Issue 5, p. 272-278

The researchers in this study examined the effects of an alternative learning program and its impact on student motivation and self-esteem in a large urban school district in the Midwest. The dependent variables of interest were student motivation, goal orientation, efficacy, and self-esteem. The goal of the project was to determine if this specific alternative learning program could have a positive effect on students, as measured by the variables described above. This project was also intended to provide quantitative feedback to the local school system regarding the effectiveness of their program.

The alternative learning program under investigation strives to develop academic skills while focusing on issues of self-esteem and social skills in at-risk youth so they become productive citizens and provides a short-term alternative instructional program for those students in grades 6-12 who have lost the privilege of attending their home school. The program is divided into two levels of both middle school and high school learning areas. Students progress from Level 1 to Level 2 by displaying appropriate behavior choices, attending all counseling classes, and passing all academic classes. The program also provides classes that teach prosocial skills such as planning and study skills, skills for dealing with feelings, alternatives to aggression, and managing daily stress. Each student receives special attention to address his or her specific needs through individual conferences and group counseling sessions which are presented by program staff and community consultants.

The researchers developed a 66-item Likert-type questionnaire to assess various aspects of student motivation and self-esteem. Sixty-five students completed the pretest questionnaire upon entry into the program in Spring 1995, and 39 of these students completed the motivation questionnaire as they exited the program.

Reliabilities on the pretest and posttest questionnaire ranged from .57 to .87, and the correlations among variables were consistent with theoretical predictions. There were significant correlations between intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, persistence and self-efficacy, self-regulation and learning goals, and school self-esteem and home self-esteem. Pre- and posttest analyses indicated significant increases in extrinsic motivation, persistence, home self-esteem, peer self-esteem, and school self-esteem. Comparisons between pretest scores of students who did not complete the alternative learning program and students who did complete the program revealed higher levels of extrinsic motivation and peer self-esteem for those students not completing the program.

The results indicate support for the effectiveness of this alternative learning program. The results also support the major emphasis this alternative program has on prosocial skills and self-esteem issues because the students who completed the program experienced a significant increase in the three subcategories of self-esteem the researchers explored. The authors state that the increases in student motivation and persistence are perhaps an added benefit of the program and, hypothetically, could eventually have a positive effect on future student academic achievement.

Title: One Last Chance
Author: Susan Black
Source: The American School Board Journal, May 1997,
Volume 184, p. 40-42

This article gives an overview of the various missions, characteristics, and costs of some alternative schools in New York, Kansas, Indiana, Texas, Alabama, Georgia, and Kentucky. The author states that although alternative schools come with a high price tag many educators believe these schools are worth their costs. The best alternative schools believe in their students, and the staff at these schools promote this belief through higher standards and expectations. Researchers believe that the students in alternative schools succeed because the teachers and other staff at these schools respect the students as individuals.

Alternative schools can vary as to if they are operated by the school district or by an outside contractor. However, these schools often depart from tradition by giving students choices in setting their daily schedule, allowing them to work at their own pace, and providing advising and counseling. Researchers have found that successful alternative education programs share many common characteristics. These characteristics include small student population, individualized instruction, flexible scheduling, peer counseling, an interesting and relevant curriculum and a home-like atmosphere. Other researchers examined at-risk students in Texas and found that these students shared the following characteristics: attended large schools where they were placed in a low or nonacademic track; they associated with dropouts; they saw teachers and principals as unsupportive; did not participate in extracurricular activities; generally got low grades; were habitually absent, were suspended from school; had negative attitudes toward learning; failed a grade; and got into trouble both in and out of school. Alternative schools have been found to turn these students around in a positive way by providing individualized instruction, support, genuine care, and clear rules that demand regular attendance and continuous academic progress.

Different school districts have different policies regarding which students are candidates for alternative education. State law may be a factor in these policies. For some districts, placement in an alternative school can be used as a threat, and some districts are turning to alternative programs to keep their regular schools safe. Researchers have found that alternative schools that have a clear purpose and mission stand a better chance of succeeding, and it has been found that alternative programs that target delinquents specifically are more likely to produce larger effects than programs with open admissions.

The cost of operating alternative education schools is high; the author shares information regarding these costs. However, she concludes that although the research evidence is sketchy, some studies show that alternative education does keep students in school through graduation. She states that only time will tell if the investment in alternative education pays off for the long term.

Title: A National Survey of State Initiatives on Alternative Education
Authors: Antonis Katsiyannis and Brenda Williams
Source: Remedial and Special Education, September/October 1998, Volume 19, Number 5, p. 276-284

The purpose of this study was to examine the availability and nature of state legislative and policy mandates regarding alternative education. The researchers mailed a survey to all 50 state coordinators of alternative education and the District of Columbia. The survey requested information on how state agencies define, plan, implement, and evaluate alternative education programs. Responses were received from 38 states, resulting in a 76% return rate.

Twenty of the 38 respondents indicated that their states had a state-adopted definition of alternative education. Definitions included several common components such as: location and/or setting for services; student-centered or nontraditional curriculum; instructional methodologies; and desired outcomes of alternative education. Nineteen of the states reported that student groups listed on the survey could possibly receive alternative education depending on the needs of local education agencies and service delivery options. The list on the survey identified students who were: expelled, suspended, pregnant, homeless, migrant, delinquent, disruptive, dangerous to self or others, in need of remedial education, or released from a correctional facility. Twenty-two states reported that passage of legislation to address alternative education. Of the 22, 11 shared copies of such legislation, and it was found that each state's legislation included the presence of two components across all states: a state definition of alternative education and a listing of who is eligible to receive services within the context of that definition.

Thirty states indicated that they provide technical assistance to local school divisions in developing and implementing alternative education programs. The most frequent forms of support included consultants from state education agencies or consultants contracted from colleges or universities or private agencies, in-service training, on-site visits, and resource manuals. Thirty-four of the states reported using local funds as a primary source of financing alternative education programs, and 25 states indicated the use of federal funds to the extent that the federal initiative matched the state and/or local target population needs. Twelve states reported the existence of procedures for program evaluation and/or monitoring compliance. North Carolina implemented an evaluation project that includes both process and outcome evaluation to assess the services and effectiveness of alternative education programs.

The major strength cited by 28 states was that alternative education programs were locally initiated and could be flexible enough, even with state regulations, to respond to local needs. Inadequate funding was cited by 36 states as a barrier that needs to be overcome to ensure the success of alternative education programs. North Carolina is mentioned as a state that has encouraged expanded interagency approaches, at the local level, for planning alternative education programs. North Carolina was also cited for its identification of training needs and technical assistance through their survey of professional and support staff at alternative schools. Based upon their findings from the states that responded to their survey, the authors of this article provide guidelines to establish and refine alternative education programs. The authors also give an informative background of the alternative education movement.

Title: **Fight Back: How Texas Handles Violence in Its Schools**
Author: **Janet Heimlich**
Source: **Texas Monthly, October 1998, Volume 26, Issue 10, p. 24**

Since 1995, Texas has responded to the serious problem of school violence by requiring more than one thousand school districts to set up or provide access to a second, segregated learning environment for students who display disruptive behavior. A student is enrolled in an Alternative Education Program (AEP) when he or she commits a simple assault, a minor drug crime, or a similar violation of rules. There were nearly 73,000 students in AEPs during the 1996-97 school year in Texas. Each AEP is accountable to the Texas Education Authority. For more serious crimes, such as a drug-related felony or an aggravated assault, a student is sent to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP). During the 1997-98 school year, 4,500 students were in JJAEPs. The Texas Juvenile Probation Commission monitor the JJAEPs and the juvenile courts run these programs in more than twenty Texas counties.

Each AEP is different; some are located on a campus that is separate from the home school whereas others are in another classroom in the home school building. Some AEPs use traditional styles of teaching whereas others may have therapy or a boot camp approach. Most AEPs, however, offer greater attention to each individual student. Smaller classes, a lower student-to-teacher ratio and staffers who want to make a difference in the students' lives have proven to decrease problems and improve students' behavior.

There are problems with the progress of Texas' AEPs. School districts wrestle with how to exactly set up AEPs because legislation does not offer clear guidelines, and compliance with the law has been an issue for many AEPs, too. Standards for AEPs are set at the local level, and the Texas Education Authority is collecting data to see where they can provide necessary assistance.

Title: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of Delinquency-Related Outcomes of Alternative Education Programs
Authors: Stephen M. Cox, William S. Davidson, and Timothy S. Bynum
Source: Crime & Delinquency, April 1995, Volume 41, Number 2, p. 219-234

This study used meta-analysis to quantitatively summarize prior empirical research on alternative schools. The meta-analytic procedures involved effect size, or an estimate of the magnitude of the program impact, and an estimate of errors that may be due to sampling or measurement artifacts. The researchers found 241 citations referring to alternative education programs, but a review of these yielded 57 studies of alternative schools that provided adequate statistics necessary for inclusion in the meta-analysis. The following characteristics of the research studies found for this meta-analysis had to be included in the specific study: the alternative program had to meet a general definition; the study had to have empirical evaluations; the alternative program had to consist of a separate curriculum; the alternative program had to be housed outside of the conventional school; and the study had to statistically assess at least one type of outcome such as student attitudes toward school, school performance, self-esteem, or delinquency; and the study had to make reference to statistical results. Coding was used to obtain as much information as possible regarding the study characteristics. Program effects were assessed with an overall effectiveness rating and standardized effect size scores. The vote counting method and the calculation of effect sizes were used to determine the overall effect of the program as well as the programs' ability to change delinquent behavior, school performance, school attitude, and self-esteem.

The results suggest that alternative education programs can have a small positive effect on school performance, school attitude, and self-esteem - regardless of research design. The main negative finding of this meta-analysis was that alternative schools have been unable to affect delinquent behavior. The researchers speculate that even though alternative schools promote positive school attitudes, their effect on school performance and self-esteem is not large enough to influence delinquent behavior. Another finding regarding the relationships between the moderator variables and the overall effect sizes suggest that alternative schools with specific target populations have more impact than do undefined alternative schools. This study also found that research design played a major role in the conclusions reached by these studies. Both the vote counting method and the effect size method show that per-post research designs more often turn up positive results than do comparison group designs.

The researchers found poor reporting practices and lack of follow-up studies hindered the usefulness of alternative education literature. They provide suggestions to improve the literature and research on alternative education programs. The researchers also provide a helpful summary of literature regarding the characteristics of successful alternative schools.

Title: For-Profit Alternative Schools Are Hot Commodities
Author: Jessica Portner
Source: Education Week, July 8, 1998, Volume 17, Number 42, p. 1, 18

This article discusses the growing demand for private, for-profit alternative schools. These schools are helping fill the void left by states with insufficient funds or political will to set up public alternative schools for the increasing number of students expelled for carrying weapons or drugs on campus. Many parents are relieved to find places where their children can finish school and receive psychological counseling; they are also willing to pay a price for this care and make serious financial investments in this type of care and education for their children. This article quotes tuition prices at some for-profit schools ranging from \$2,990 a month to \$40,000 a year for tuition, room, and board. Educators are more skeptical of these schools and are concerned that these costly enterprises may be putting profit before academic quality. Some educators worry that the "packet learning" in which students are handed curriculum materials to study on their own is not providing the education students should be receiving. "Many [people who run for-profit alternative schools] are business people and are not educators, and they don't understand the importance of education principles," states Connie Love Amos, an educational specialist with the Utah education department who routinely reviews such schools' accreditation status.

An exact tally of for-profit alternative schools cannot be pinpointed, but education market analysts report that the growth of this industry is impressive, constituting a multibillion-dollar industry that is expanding at an annual rate of 25 percent. Day programs and residential schools that advertise a broader array of mental health services for drug dependent and violence-prone teenagers are both multiplying. Many school districts have been very willing to give these schools a try due to the increase in the number of violent and disruptive youths. For-profit alternative schools have also seen a significant increase in business since the federal government required states to pass zero-tolerance laws by 1996 requiring districts to expel students who brought weapons to school.

This article provides information about the philosophy of some for-profit alternative schools, and it also offers conflicting opinions of students who attend these types of institutions. Some parents and students feel these schools are "lifesavers" whereas other students are frustrated with the independent study and self-help approach. One main focus these alternative schools have is not academics but to teach troubled youth tools for life; this may be an on-going debate between educators at traditional schools and those who support alternative education.