

IDDM-R Alternative Education Programs

1/16/25

GSBA Reference: IDDM (Alternative School Programs)

RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:

The Cobb County School District (District) provides an Alternative Education Program (AEP) for middle and high school students who display chronic behavioral and/or academic difficulties in the traditional classroom setting or who have been suspended or expelled from their middle or high school. The District also provides an Alternative Education School (AES) for high school students in need of an alternative path to obtaining academic credits toward graduation. Administration will establish District procedures for admittance/enrollment consistent with local and state guidelines.

RULE:**I. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM****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 assignment 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. A student may attend the alternative education program during his/her long-term suspension/expulsion. Upon a recommendation from the student's home school and with a final 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 to attend 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's Director of Alternative Education;
 - (3) Students dismissed from the AEP are not allowed to return to any District campus or school-sponsored event during the time of suspension/expulsion; or
 - (4) Students dismissed from the AEP may:
 - (a) Apply to the State Department of Education's homeschool office if the parent/guardian determines to homeschool the student;
 - (b) Apply to complete their GED through the District's adult education program (See Administrative Rule IDC-R [Extended Programs]);
 - (c) Attend a private school of the parent's/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 6-12 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. 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.
3. The parent's/guardian's request must be approved by the Principal of his/her home school before the AEP application may be submitted to the District's Director of Alternative Education.
4. 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.
5. To refer a special education student to the AEP, the parent's/guardian's request must be approved by the Principal of his/her home school before the AEP application may be submitted. Subsequent to approval of the application, the IEP team and the District's Director of Alternative Education will convene to affirm if the AEP determination 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.
 - 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 home school will submit a Direct Referral application to the District's Director of Alternative Education, and the application will be reviewed by the District's Director of Alternative Education 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 District's Director of Alternative Education upon its receipt:
 - (a) The referring school will 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 District's Director of Alternative Education.

D. ACADEMIC/BEHAVIOR COMPONENTS:

1. The AEP focuses on English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Social Skills. Course credit is earned according to Administrative Rule IHA-R;
2. The services provided include the Cobb Teaching and Learning Standards in alignment to current state standards;
3. Students currently enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) or world languages (Spanish, French, German) may be eligible to continue in the AEP curriculum for said classes. Student's home school counselor will need to contact the CCSD Alternative Education Director.

E. STANDARDIZED TESTING:

All State and/or District required testing for students in the AEP will be conducted by the Alternative Education Program staff.

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 AEP contract in order to be accepted into the program.
2. Parents/guardians are critical partners in their children's academic achievement and social development. Prior to a student attending the Alternative Education Program, the parent/guardian and student are required to:
 - a. Attend an orientation session at the Alternative Education Center; and
 - b. Commit to the requirements of the District's Alternative Education Program in order to enroll the student.
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 zoned school at the end of their minimum assignment period if they have fulfilled the requirements of their disciplinary hearing decision, waived disciplinary hearing decision, or conclusion of the Direct Referral decision.
2. When the student is approved to return to his/her home school, the home school in collaboration with the District's Director of Alternative Education will schedule a conference for the student and the parent/guardian to discuss re-entry issues.
3. **Notification/Records Exchange:**
 - a. The AEP will provide to the home school all necessary information, including attendance and grades, for all returning students.
 - b. 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.

II. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SCHOOL

A. AES ENROLLMENT VIA APPLICATION:

1. Students may apply to attend the AES instead of their designated District high school if they are in need of a different path to obtain enough credits to earn a high school diploma.
2. **To enroll, a student must:**
 - a. Eligible to attend a District high school;
 - b. Be at least 16 years of age;
 - c. Have previously earned a minimum of five (5) credits;

- d. Have reliable transportation to and from the AES daily; and
- e. Attend an informational session prior to enrollment.

3. Applications/Admissions:

- a. Admission will be granted to students who are closest to meeting graduation requirements with priority placement going to juniors and seniors.
- b. Applications remain on file for one semester from the date of submission.
- c. Students will be notified when space is available.
- d. After an initial interview, a student's file will be reviewed by the admissions committee and applicant will be notified of his/her acceptance status.
- e. A student is not guaranteed admission merely because he or she submits an application or has an interview.
- f. Following the interview, a student's file will be reviewed by the admissions committee and applicant will be notified of his/her acceptance status.

B. AES DIRECT ENROLLMENT:

- 1. Students enrolling/re-enrolling at their zoned high school will be evaluated to determine academic status.
- 2. Students who are determined to be two years or more behind their 9th grade enrollment class will be assigned to attend the AES high school.
- 3. Students seeking a transfer under the District's transfer programs (see Administrative Rule JBCD-R) may be assigned to attend the AES based on academic status.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS:

Nothing in this Rule shall be interpreted to infringe on any right provided to students by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Revision Timeline*:

Adopted: 8/25/05

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

Revised and re-coded: 9/27/12 (Previously coded as Administrative Rule IHBHA)

Revised: 10/14/15; 7/1/18; 1/16/25

**Administrative Rules and Board Policies are reviewed on a regular basis. Dates indicate when revisions were made, not the dates of document review.*

Division: Alternative Education (Strategy and Accountability)

Legal Reference

O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4	Policies prohibiting bullying; assignment to alternative school; notice
O.C.G.A. 20-2-150	Eligibility for enrollment
O.C.G.A. 20-2-154.1	Alternative education programs; intent; description; funding
O.C.G.A. 20-2-300	Implementation and funding authorized
O.C.G.A. 20-2-768	Expulsion/suspension for commission of a felony; alternative education system
O.C.G.A. 50-27-2	Legislative findings and declarations
O.C.G.A. 50-27-3	Georgia Lottery for Education Act; definitions
Rule 160-4-7-.10	Discipline
Rule 160-4-7-.19	Services for Agency-Placed Students
Rule 160-4-8-.12	Alternative Education Programs
Rule 160-5-1-.28	Student Enrollment and Withdrawal