

1.0 Purpose of Educational Options

- 1.1 The purpose of educational options is to offer students and their families' meaningful choices that meet the different learning needs and educational interests of all students. Students and their families are the primary decision makers about their choice of options; the district may assist students and their families in making appropriate choices.

2.0 Definitions. These definitions apply to all district operations.

- 2.1 *School.* An institution with a separate organizational structure that has an assigned administrator or administrative oversight and a governing body. It has a teaching staff, budget, a curriculum that meets state content standards, educational programs that lead to students earning a high school diploma, and a school improvement process. A school may share the facilities, personnel, and support services of another school or program, or it may be located in more than one facility. A school meets all state standards and other district policies.
- 2.2 *Program.* An educational component of a school offering specialized instruction, a focus on a particular theme or instructional approach or other ways to meet student needs. Students participating in the program are considered enrolled in the school with which the program is affected.
- 2.3 *Neighborhood School.* A school serving a designated attendance area. In addition to providing high quality educational opportunities, neighborhood schools offer students and their families the opportunity to build lasting friendships and a sense of community within their neighborhood. As a center for many community activities, neighborhood schools are also important to the neighborhood as a whole.
- 2.4 *Magnet School.* A separate school or program structured around a unique curriculum or particular theme. Magnet schools may be part of or co-located in the same facility as a neighborhood school or other Magnet Schools. Magnet Schools serve students district-wide, bringing students and their families together to take part in an educational experience that may not be offered through their neighborhood school. Like neighborhood schools, Magnet Schools actively seek to create a sense of community in which racial, economic, and cultural isolation are reduced.
- 2.5 *Contracted Alternative Education Option.* A school separate or individualized program designed to meet the academic, social, and behavioral needs of an identified group of students. Alternative education options can be either public or private and are designed as such under Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 336.
- 2.6 *Public Charter School.* An elementary or secondary school that offers a comprehensive instructional program, operating under a written agreement entered into between a sponsor and an applicant. The establishment and operation of charter schools are governed by Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 338 and Division 20 of the Oregon Administrative Rules.

3.0 Approval Process

3.1 The Board shall have final approval of:

3.1.1 All proposals for the establishment of new educational options.

3.1.2 The renewal or termination of and changes to the mission of an educational option.

3.2 The approval process shall be consistent with the following criteria:

3.2.1 Furthers the mission, core values, and strategic objectives of the district.

3.2.2 Meets district identified budget priorities.

3.2.3 Enhances the district's educational program and the Student Achievement Policy.

3.2.4 Minimizes barriers to equal access to the option to meet the needs of all students in the district.

3.2.5 Demonstrates an achievable program, including realistic space and staffing requirements and program needs with a budget appropriate to the proposed option, and the capability to implement the option.

3.2.6 Demonstrates sustainable support by educators, students, their families and the community.

3.2.7 Develops a written operations plan.

3.3 Approval of educational options shall be contingent on funding availability.

4.0 District Administrative Support and Evaluation

4.1 The district shall assist students and families to make appropriate choices with centralized coordination of accessible, comprehensive, and accurate outreach and information about educational options and for assistance with admissions and transfers.

4.2 The district shall evaluate educational options on an established cycle, consistent with district objectives, other district policies, and statutory requirements.

4.3 The district shall facilitate the siting of educational options to maximize the potential for cooperation and sharing of resources among different educational options throughout the district.

4.4 The district shall establish guidelines for governance of educational options, consistent with other district policies.

- 4.5 The district shall minimize consolidated budget inequities among educational options with similar needs.
- 4.6 The district shall collaborate with educational options to assess their ongoing assistance needs and determine their future status, including renewal, modification, termination, replication, or transition from program to school.
- 4.7 The Board shall have final approval whether an educational option is designated as a school. The district shall develop a process for making a recommendation to the Board.
- 4.8 The district shall support educational options when staffing, recognizing the unique skills, preparation, and experience that staff may need for the characteristics of a particular option.

5.0 Admission to Education Options

- 5.1 This section is based on the Board's commitment to families and students as the primary decision-makers for their choice of educational options. The district has the responsibility, through its centralized coordination of information, outreach, and support services, to provide families and students with information and advice that will enable families and students to make informed decisions about their choice of educational options.
- 5.2 Placement of a student in a public or private alternative education program shall be made only if the program has been determined by the district, according to district policy, to best serve the student's educational needs, interests, within state and academic standards. Placement shall be consistent with current Oregon Revised Statutes.
 - 5.2.1 Placement into Contracted Alternative Education Options shall be consistent with ORS Chapter 336, section 336.631 (3).
 - 5.2.2 Placement into District Sponsored Public Charter Schools shall be consistent with ORS Chapter 338.125 (1)
 - 5.2.3 Placement into District operated Education Options Programs and Magnet Schools shall be consistent with established District procedures.
- 5.3 The Board's goal is to provide equal access for all students through an open, fair and accessible admissions process, to promote equity and diversity in student admissions, and to eliminate barriers to educational attainment.

6.0 Parameters

- 6.1 An alternative education program may be a school within a school and share facilities, support services and administration of another school, or it may be an autonomous unit.
- 6.2 Alternative education programs shall include a service delivery model that is student-centered, supported by teachers, parents and community-based programs and services; and shall provide a student-centered curriculum and use a variety of research-based instructional strategies.

- 6.3 If an alternative education program requires a waiver or waivers of state mandates, including those that govern curriculum, the responsibility for seeking such waivers rests with the alternative education program, subsequent to School Board approval.
- 6.4 Alternative education programs may differ from other schools in ways that include, but are not limited to the following:
- 6.4.1 Emphasis of a specified element of the school district's curriculum;
 - 6.4.2 Presenting curriculum in a different manner or sequence;
 - 6.4.3 A different decision-making process for school governance;
 - 6.4.4 Unique groupings of students for instruction; or,
 - 6.4.5 Emphasis on a specific, research-based instructional strategy.
- 6.5 Alternative education programs shall be designed to benefit all participating students and shall maintain a learning environment that is flexible with regard to environment, time, structure and pedagogy.
- 6.6 The selection and referral of students to alternative education programs shall be a responsibility of the school district; however, the school district may consider recommendations from the alternative education programs.
- 6.7 All private alternative education programs authorized by the school district and approved for placement of district students at school district cost shall be implemented to comply with ORS 336.615 - 336.635.
- 6.8 The school district shall recognize work completed and grant credit where applicable to students in its alternative programs and in private alternative education programs defined in ORS 336.615 - 336.625.

7.0 Program Evaluation

- 7.1 By June 30 of each year, the superintendent shall provide an evaluation of each alternative education program for the prior school year. The evaluation shall primarily focus upon the performance of enrolled students, how the program can better serve the diverse needs of students and how it constitutes an efficient use of school districts resources. Based upon the evaluation of student needs and the specific requirements of the Oregon Department of Education for alternative education programs, the Superintendent shall adjust, eliminate or expand these programs in scope and number. If the program is to be utilized by the school district in the ensuing year, evaluation of students for placement in that ensuing year shall be consistent with this policy.

8.0 Alternative Program Proposals

- 8.1 Parents or staff shall follow a procedure adopted by the school district to request establishment of alternative education programs within the school district. Proposals shall follow a format approved by the Superintendent and shall be submitted in writing to the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services for team review, evaluation and recommendation to the Superintendent. The evaluation team shall provide a written report to the Superintendent stating the reasons why the proposal should be accepted, rejected or modified. The School Board shall take action to accept, modify or reject a proposed alternative education program after considering the Superintendent's recommendation.

8.2 An application fee shall be charged to all applicants.

8.3 Private schools may only apply to be contracted, as an Alternative Learning Option with the Bend-La Pine School District, to provide a specific educational service.

8.4 The following District Standards for Alternative Programs will be used to evaluate a proposal to establish, modify or maintain an alternative education program:

8.4.1 Definition of Program: The education program must be an alternative education program as defined in this policy.

8.4.2 Goals of Program: General goals for the alternative education program must be established as set forth in this policy. These goals must take into account evidence of sufficient need among students, staff, parents and other public stakeholders to warrant establishment of the alternative education program. There must be evidence that establishing the proposed program enhances the school district's ability to achieve its mission.

8.4.3 Notification and Enrollment: The alternative education program must identify pre-established criteria for student selection, notification and enrollment. Any student referred to the alternative education program by the Bend-La Pine School District may apply for enrollment in an alternative education program. Students selected for an alternative program will be evaluated by district and alternative program staff and the student's parents for acceptance according to the student selection criteria approved by the School Board. Students enrolled in an alternative program will be evaluated annually by district and alternative program staff and the students' parents for continuation in the alternative program according to the student selection criteria approved by the School Board. Students that are recommended for continuation in an alternative program for the ensuing year will be placed before other students are referred to the alternative program.

8.4.3.1 An alternative education program may propose additional selection criteria that are consistent with these guidelines and are reasonably related to the educational goals of the program and the district.

8.4.3.2 Students who can not access an alternative program may be placed on a waiting list maintained by the school district.

8.4.3.3 The school district may contract alternative education programs operating at juvenile detention facilities and at residential facilities for neglected and delinquent youth, where the rights of access to the public are limited.

8.4.4 Cost of Program: Alternative education programs which are operated by the school district shall be included in the budget process. Per pupil expenditures of general operating funds shall not exceed the school district average for the grades operated in the alternative program, unless adopted and appropriated by the Board.

8.4.4.1 The school district shall pay private alternative education programs for each enrolled district-approved student at the actual tuition cost or at an amount equivalent to eighty percent of the school district's estimated current year's average per pupil net operating expenditure, whichever is less. This payment shall be pro-rated to the percentage of the school day the student is enrolled in the alternative program and not participating in a school district program; and

pro-rated to the percentage of the school year the student is actually in membership in the private alternative program, on an average daily membership basis. A private alternative education program must be registered with the Oregon Department of Education prior to receiving public school funds. Pupils enrolled in a private alternative program at school district cost shall be considered enrolled in the schools of the district for purposes of the distribution of the State School Fund.

8.4.4.2 Alternative program shall be accountable to the school district for the expenditures of all State School Fund and other local school support moneys, providing the school district with an annual statement of such expenditures. Alternative programs shall provide more frequent statements when requested by the school district with an annual statement of such expenses.

8.4.5 Staffing of Program: Staffing and support services of the proposed school district alternative education program must conform to applicable school district policies and collective bargaining agreements and constitute an efficient use of school district resources. Any Oregon teaching license is valid for teaching all subjects and grade levels in an alternative education program operated by the school district (ORS 336.635(5)).

8.4.5.1. A private program that is registered with the Oregon Department of Education is not required to employ licensed teachers or administrators. Teachers, Administrators and other staff of such programs shall not be considered employees of the school district.

8.4.6. Site Evaluation: Location of the proposed education program must conform to applicable district policies and state laws related to health, safety and access for physically handicapped students and staff and constitute an efficient use of school district resources. Alternative education programs used by the school district shall be located within the boundaries of the school district.

8.4.7. District Evaluation of Program: The alternative education program must comply with the school district evaluation process set forth in this policy.

8.4.8. Discrimination: The school district may not operate an educational program, nor incur cost for a private alternative program that has any vestige of discrimination in employment, assignment and promotion of personnel, in educational opportunities and services offered to students, in student enrollment and assignment to classes, in student discipline, in location and use of facilities, or in educational offerings and materials where such discrimination is based on an individual's age, race, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or parental or marital status, or because of the race, religion, gender, national origin, disability, parental or marital status, or age of any other persons with whom the individual associates.

9.0 Time Line for Alternative Program Proposals

9.1 A letter of intent to develop an alternative learning option must be submitted to the office of Instructional Services by August 15. Following a district review, a recommendation will be made by September 1 to proceed or not with a final application that is due to the district by October 1 for programs to be implemented in the ensuing school year. The district's administrative review team shall review the application and make a recommendation to the Superintendent by December 1. The Superintendent's recommendation to accept, accept with modification(s), or

reject a proposed alternative learning option will be presented for school board consideration by January 31. The School Board will vote on the recommendation regarding the alternative learning option by February 15.

9.2 The Superintendent has the authority to waive all time lines when circumstances are deemed appropriate.

10.0 Notification

10.1 The district shall annually notify students, parents or guardians of students of the availability of existing alternative learning programs, applicable law regarding alternative learning programs and the procedures to request the establishment of new alternative learning programs.

End of Regulation

Legal References:

ORS 327.006(8)
ORS 329.485
ORS 336.135 - 336.183
ORS 336.615 - 336.665 , 338.005(2)
ORS 339.030 , ORS 339.250
OAR 581-21-0045, OAR 581-23-008,
OAR 581-21-0065, OAR 581-21-0070,
OAR 581-21-0071, OAR 581-22-1350, OAR 581-23-0006

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