

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PLANS

Purpose

In an effort to reduce the number of students who do not complete the requirements to complete high school and earn a diploma, the Laconia School Board establishes alternative learning plans. Alternative learning plans may provide all students with rigorous educational experiences to explore and achieve at high levels, and to meet State and District requirements to obtain a high school diploma. In order to maximize student achievement alternative learning plans must fulfill or exceed the grade-level expectations set forth by State minimum standards and applicable School Board policy.

Alternative learning plan activities may include, extended learning opportunities, independent study, private instruction, charter school enrollment, internships, apprenticeships, adult education coursework, or online courses/distance education and college courses approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee, in conjunction with School Board policies. Upon completion and review of the alternative learning plan activities by the building principal credit may be awarded.

If the alternative learning plan includes extended learning opportunities taken for credit, the provisions of Policies IMBC – Alternative Credit Options and Policy IHBH – Extended Learning Opportunities, will apply. The granting of credit shall be based on a student's mastery of course competencies, as defined by Policy ILBA – Assessment of Educational Programs and Policy ILBAA – High School Competency Assessments. The Principal must authorize the granting of credit for learning accomplished through extended learning opportunities.

Roles and Responsibilities

District employees who believe a student may benefit from an alternative learning plan should inform either the Principal or the Guidance Counselor. Students may also express their interest in pursuing such a plan or program. The Principal, guidance counselor, student and the student's parent/guardian will meet to discuss the student's participation in an alternative learning program.

The Guidance Counselor is responsible for assisting students and their parents/guardians in preparing the necessary paperwork for alternative learning plans. The alternative learning plan components will be determined through a team consisting of the student, school personnel, parent/guardian and other appropriate people based on the individual student need. The Principal and the designated team will have primary responsibility and authority for approval and implementation of alternative learning plans and will oversee all aspects of such programs. The Principal will be responsible for

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reviewing and approving alternative learning plans and credits awarded toward the attainment of a high school diploma.

Parents or guardians are required to participate in the program on behalf of their children in at least the following ways, or their children may be excluded or removed from the program. This requirement may be waived by the Building Principal on an individual case basis.

- a. Students approved for alternative learning plans must have parent/guardian permission to participate in such a program. Such permission will be granted through a Memorandum of Understanding for Educational Services signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the district before beginning the program. For alternative learning plans that require off-campus attendance, the District will require a signed agreement among the school, the student, and a designated agent of the third-party host. The agreement should specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- b. The parent or guardian must provide or implement those portions of their child's plan for alternative learning experiences that are identified in the plan under supervision of certificated instructional staff; and
- c. The parent or guardian must meet with certificated instructional staff as prescribed in their child's plan for purposes of evaluating their child's performance and/or receiving instructions on assisting with their child's alternative learning experience.

Students and/or parents/guardians may appeal decisions rendered by the Principal (see Appeal Process).

Students engaged in alternative learning plans will remain as enrolled students in their district.

All alternative learning plans will comply with applicable laws and regulations, including child labor laws and regulations governing occupational safety.

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Approval Process

1. The student/parent/guardian seeking an alternative learning plan shall meet with the Guidance Counselor or Principal to discuss alternative learning plan options and initiate the formation of an alternative learning plan team. The team, including the student and parent/guardian, will meet to design the alternative learning plan designed to enable the student to remain enrolled in school and complete educational requirements.
2. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will review the paperwork and will determine whether or not to approve the alternative learning plan. The Superintendent or designee's decision will be made within ten (10) days of receipt of the paperwork. The student and parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the decision. If additional information is requested, the information must be submitted within ten (10) days of receipt of the request.
3. It is the student's responsibility to maintain academic standing and enrollment in the approved program. Any failure to complete an approved program will jeopardize the student's ability to remain in the program and receive credit towards obtaining a high school diploma. The student and parent/guardian recognize that in the event the student withdraws from an approved program, the District will not guarantee placement in an equivalent course.
4. The District reserves the right to determine the number of credits to be awarded. The course name and actual grade earned will be noted on the student's official transcript.

Evaluation Criteria

The plan must be approved by the school principal. Certified instructional staff must oversee and monitor the plan.

The student learning plan must meet the following minimum criteria:

- include a schedule of the duration of the program, including the beginning and ending dates;
- describe the specific learning goals and performance objectives of the alternative learning experience. This requirement may be met through course syllabi or other detailed descriptions of learning requirements;

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- describe the average number of hours per week that the student will engage in learning activities to accomplish the objectives of the plan;
- identify whether the alternative learning experience meets one or more of the state's essential academic learning requirements defined by the district. High school alternative learning plans must identify whether the experience meets state and district graduation requirements.

Each student's educational progress will be reviewed at least monthly. The results of the reviews shall be shared with the student and with the parent or guardian of students. If a student does not make satisfactory progress in the activities identified in his or her plan, a revised plan may be implemented.

District Supervision

The Principal shall be responsible for approving specific alternative learning plans monitoring compliance with State laws and reporting at the end of each school year to the Laconia School Board. The annual report should contain:

- a. The alternative learning experience student headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment claimed for basic education funding.
- b. A description of how certificated staff are assigned program management and instructional responsibilities that maximize student learning; including the ratio of certificated instructional staff to full time equivalent students.
- c. A description of how the written student learning plan is developed and student performance supervised and evaluated by certificated staff.
- d. A description of how the alternative learning experience program supports the District's overall goals for academic achievement

The district alternative learning program shall satisfy the State Board of Education requirements for courses of study and grade-level equivalencies; and if the program offers credit or a high school diploma, the alternative learning program must meet the minimum high school graduation requirements.

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Appeal Process

If the submitted plan is rejected, the Superintendent or designee will provide the student/parent/guardian with a rationale as to why the proposal was rejected. Students whose application has been denied by the Superintendent may appeal that decision to the Laconia School Board. The School Board will place the item on its agenda for its next regularly scheduled meeting. Alternatively, if scheduling and time constraints do

not allow for the matter to be placed on the agenda at the Board's next meeting, the Board may hold a separate meeting to hear the matter. The matter will be discussed in non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II, unless the parent/guardian requests that the Board hear the matter in public session, in which case the request will be honored. If the Laconia School Board upholds the Superintendent's determination, the decision of the School Board may be appealed to the State Board of Education, consistent with applicable law. The Laconia School Board will inform the student/parent/guardian of their appeal rights.

Program Integrity

In order to insure the integrity of the learning experience approved under this program, the student will be required periodically or upon demand to provide evidence of progress. The Principal will be responsible for certifying completion of the plan or program and the award of credits, consistent with the District's policies on graduation.

If a student ceases to attend or is unable to complete the alternative learning plan for lack of effort, failure to follow through, indecision, etc., the Principal will direct that the student's transcript be adjusted to reflect the experience as a failure.

In order to certify completion of curricular programs and activities based upon specific instructional objectives aligned to the standards, the Principal will develop appropriate mechanisms to document student progress and program completion on student personnel records.

Adopted: March 17, 2009