

# Growing Alternative Education... Tennessee's Story



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**Not just an ALTERNATIVE, but an OPPORTUNITY**

# Tennessee at a Glance

- Tennessee has alternative schools, programs, and classrooms as well as nontraditional schools.
- The state primarily has punitive-based schools and programs (i.e., suspension, expulsion) with some nontraditional types.
- The average length of stay in 2007-2008 was 38 days.
- During the 2007-2008 school year, 21,721 students were provided services in an alternative education setting (Up approximately 20% from the previous school year).
- For more information on Tennessee visit [Appendix 1](#).

# State Infrastructure Building (Title IV Funding)

- State Coordinator for Alternative Education
- Development of a state association (Tennessee Alternative Educator's Association or TAEA)
- Student Discipline and Alternative Education Institute (SDAE) and other professional development opportunities
- Provide services and interventions to students

# Governor's Advisory Council (2006)

## *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404*

- To consider any issue, problem, or matter related to alternative education
- To study proposed plans for alternative education programs or curricula/models
- To consider rules of governance
- To report annually to the General Assembly
- To provide the General Assembly with a Feasibility Study for the establishment of pilot sites across the state of Tennessee
- For a list of key accomplishments of the Advisory Council visit Appendix 2.
- For more information regarding state laws in Tennessee and current legislative activities visit Appendix 3 and 4.

# Redefining Alternative Education

- Currently defined as a “short term (one year or less) intervention program designed to develop academic and behavioral skills for students who have been suspended or expelled from the regular school program.”
- Advisory Council defines as “A nontraditional academic program designed to meet the student’s educational, behavioral, and social needs.”

# State Standards/ Program Model (12 Quality Indicators)

- Mission
- Program Environment
- Governance
- Transitional Planning
- Support Services
- Parent/Community Engagement
- Staffing and Professional Development
- Individualized Learner Plans
- Life Skills
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Student Assessment
- Monitoring and Program Assessment

# “Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education: Indicators of Quality Programming” (The NAEA’s Guiding Practices)

- Mission and Purpose
- Leadership
- Climate and Culture
- Staffing and Professional Development
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Student Assessment
- Transitional Planning and Support
- Parent/Guardian Involvement
- Collaboration
- Program Evaluation



# Project Atlas: Key Findings

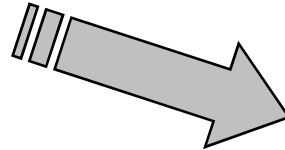
Modeled after Federal 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Grant Program

- Grant funds should be given on a per pupil, per day basis.
- All recipients should be held accountable for the recently adopted state standards and form community partnerships to meet the needs of students.
- As a condition of funding, all grantees should participate in a rigorous annual evaluation modeled after Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center's (OTAC) data triangulation methods.
- Funding should be guaranteed to grant recipients for a minimum of 3 years with the flexibility to extend the project if additional monies become available.

# Alternative Education as a Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Strategy

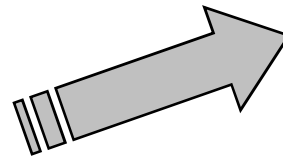
## **Alternative School**

*Punitive Placements  
(i.e., suspended/  
expelled learners, etc.)*



## **Alternative Education Program**

*Punitive Placements  
(i.e., suspended/  
expelled learners, etc.)*



For accountability purposes the school of origin is the school of record. Students are sent for punitive reasons (suspension, expulsion, etc.). Students in an alternative education program or school **MUST** be coded as ALTERNATIVE learners under student classification.

# Alternative Education as a Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Strategy

## ***ELL Newcomer Program/Center***

*(One year or less placements for English Language Learners)*



For accountability purposes the school of origin is the school of record. Students in an ELL Newcomer Program **MUST** be coded as ELL under student classification.

## ***Nontraditional School***

*(Permanent Placement for the Nontraditional Learner)*



For accountability purposes the nontraditional high school is the school of record for all students enrolled.

# Alternative Education as a Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Strategy

## Hybrid Nontraditional School Elements

### **Nontraditional Education for the Nontraditional Learner**

*(Permanent Placement for the Nontraditional Learner)*

*The Hybrid Nontraditional School is the School of Record for Accountability Purposes.*



### **English as a Second Language for the English Language Learner**

*(ELL Newcomer Program/Center)*

*The School of Origin is the School of Record for Accountability Purposes.*

### **Alternative Education for the Alternative Learner**

*Punitive Placements in an Alternative Education Program*

*(i.e., suspended/expelled learners, etc.)*

*The School of Origin is the School of Record for Accountability Purposes.*

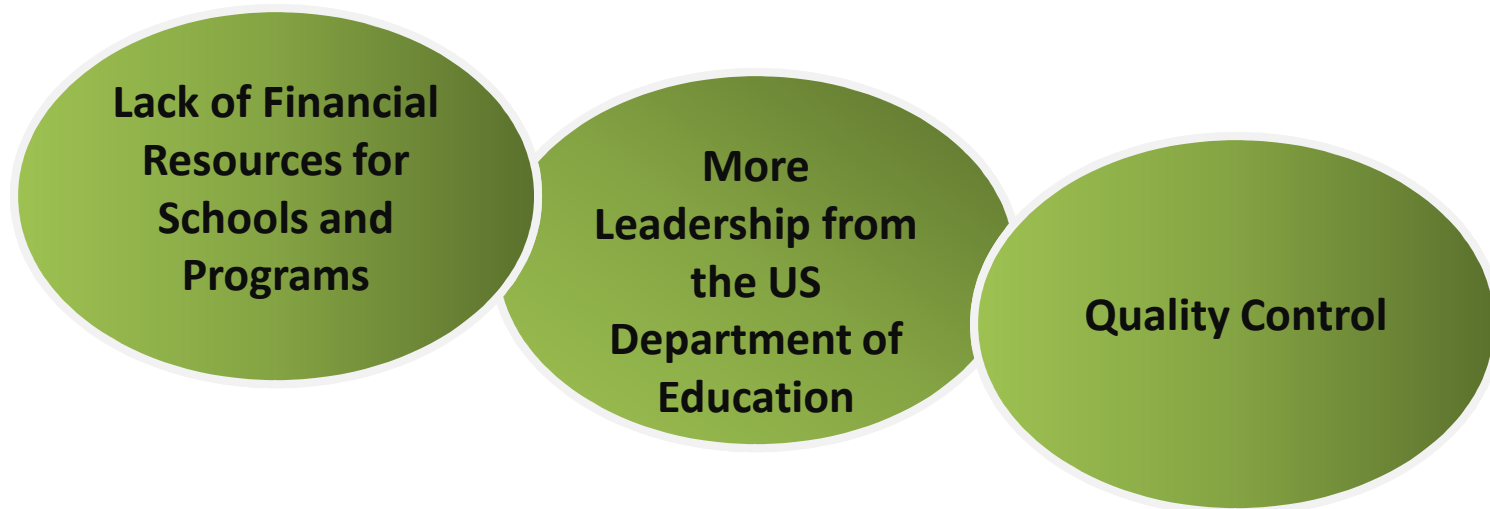
# Tennessee's Current Challenges

- Budget constraints are causing districts to downsize current alternative education services.
- New stimulus monies are not reaching alternative schools and programs.
- A state initiative such as ATLAS is not likely in the current economic climate.
- New nontraditional schools will need access to additional resources to be successful.
- Mandating and enforcing quality standards is not possible without additional funding to the LEA.

# Common Misconceptions Across the United States

- Alternative education programming is strictly limited to secondary education.
- Services are only appropriate for students who have been suspended or expelled.
- All alternative education classrooms, programs, and schools have been identified.
- All alternative schools have a school number.
- Per pupil funding follows students to the alternative education setting.
- Alternative education programming costs the same as regular education programming.
- Students should not remain in the alternative education setting.
- Alternative educators will resist the implementation of quality standards.
- One size fits all.

# The Burning Issues (Growth from the Top Down)



- For an explanation on “Growth from the Top Down” visit Appendix 5.
- For information on the NAEA’s Executive Brief for the New Administration visit Appendix 6.

# Learning From Other Initiatives

- 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC – That federal policy can push an idea to scale and move implementation down to the SEAs and LEAs
- Safe and Drug Free Schools- That states can do a lot with little and engage multiple disciplines to address wide-ranging issues
- Safe School/ Health Students- That a strong collaboration needs to exist between education, mental health, and juvenile justice

# Concluding Thoughts...

- Comes in all shapes and sizes
- Begins and ends with the needs of the student
- Is more a philosophy than a school or program
- Done well is the best thing since sliced bread
- Without the right people can be a travesty of the highest magnitude



21,721 Reasons

# (Appendix 1)

## Tennessee at a Glance

- Every dropout in Tennessee costs the state approximately \$259,090 in lost wages, taxes, and productivity over their lifetime.
- Approximately 75,263 students were suspended and 3,728 students expelled during the 2007-2008 school year.
- Identified reasons for attending an alternative setting include the following (during the 2007-2008 school year):
  1. Disruptive behaviors (66%),
  2. Zero tolerance offense (26%), and
  3. Need for an alternative education strategy (13%).

**(Appendix 2)**  
**Governor's Advisory Council:**  
**Key Accomplishments**

<b>Month and Year</b>	<b>Event/ Accomplishment</b>
<b>July 2006</b>	Creation of the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education under <i>Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404</i>
<b>July 2007</b>	Initial appointments made by the Governor
<b>August 2007</b>	First meeting of the Advisory Council
<b>January 2008</b>	Advisory Council releases the first annual Alternative Education Report (SY 2006-2007) including a recommendation to redefine alternative education
<b>March 2008</b>	Advisory Council reviews proposed standards for alternative education
<b>May 2008</b>	Symposium on Alternative Education held/ Metaevaluation conducted of proposed standards
<b>August 2008</b>	State Board of Education adopts standards for alternative education as proposed by the Advisory Council

**(Appendix 2)**  
**Governor's Advisory Council:**  
**Key Accomplishments**

<b>Month and Year</b>	<b>Event/ Accomplishment</b>
<b>October 2008</b>	In conjunction with the Department of Education, the Council hosts "Promising Practices in Alternative Education" conference based on new standards
<b>February 2009</b>	"A Feasibility Study Related to the Establishment of Alternative Education Programs in Tennessee"
<b>February 2009</b>	Advisory Council releases the second annual Alternative Education Report (SY 2007-2008) including a recommendation to establish an "Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education" award
<b>February 2009</b>	In conjunction, with the Department of Education the Council hosts the first annual "Student Discipline and Alternative Education Institute" (SDAE)

## (Appendix 3)

### Current State Laws (Abbreviated)

- *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3402* requires that at least one alternative school be established for districts serving students in grades 7-12, and allows LEAs to serve students in grades 1-6.
- *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404* established the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education.
- *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3405* requires LEAs to track alternative school success by reporting on students' academic and behavioral data.

## (Appendix 4)

# Recent Legislative Activities

- HB0868/SB0067 – Redefines alternative education based on Advisory Council's definition
- HB1647/SB719 – Memphis City School Pilot Project
- HB2258/SB2326 – Removes language from state law preventing students from graduating from an alternative high school

# (Appendix 5)

## Growth from the Top Down

- Invest in a position within the US Department of Education to support state alternative education coordinators.
- Create a task force to examine the issues states are facing relative to alternative education that also has the autonomy to develop and implement solutions for states (Much like the Governor's Advisory Council).
- Invest in alternative education by providing earmark funding. In addition, funding should allow both schools and programs to receive monies.
- Quality can be achieved by tying financial support to standards and ensuring that students have access to needed services.

## (Appendix 6)

### “Promoting High Quality Alternative Education” (NAEA Correspondence)

- Establish a multi-discipline, inter-agency Alternative Education Task Force at the Federal level
- Create an executive level position within the U.S. Department of Education and other appropriate measures to build infrastructure
- Develop a federal funding stream for alternative education
- Designate a portion of the stimulus package to specifically build or refurbish old educational facilities that will in turn serve as an alternative program/school

# Additional Resources

- Tennessee Department of Education  
[www.state.tn.us/education/learningsupport](http://www.state.tn.us/education/learningsupport)
- Tennessee General Assembly  
<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>
- Tennessee Alternative Educator's Association  
[www.taea.net](http://www.taea.net)
- National Alternative Education Association  
[www.the-naea.org](http://www.the-naea.org)
- Jobs for the Future  
[www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org)
- American Youth Policy Forum  
[www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org)
- Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center (OTAC)  
<http://otac.info/>