



2012 Agenda

FAIR OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY CHILD

FACT SHEET: Improve Alternative Education Programs

Kentucky children need a quality education to succeed in today's economy. Alternative education programs can provide an excellent learning environment in a nontraditional classroom setting, but some alternative education programs do little to help students complete high school and prepare them to become productive members of our communities. At times, students are permanently placed into alternative programs rather than being given a chance to attend a regular school.

Alternative programs in Kentucky serve more than 60,000 students, which would make the second largest school district. They are currently classified in administrative regulations as either "A5" programs, operated by the district where students are assigned for behavioral or academic issues or when the traditional classroom setting does not work, or as "A6" programs, for children in state custody.

FACTS:

The Kentucky Department of Education and Board of Education are taking action on some issues that were identified by the Blueprint for Kentucky's Children with changes to administrative regulations impacting A5 programs. The regulatory amendments would define alternative programs; track data to have an accurate account of the number of students; require school districts to adopt policies regarding entry and exit into programs; require classroom instruction to be aligned with the Kentucky Board of Education's curriculum standards; allow the parents/guardians of the student to participate on the placement plan; and allow students to participate in extracurricular activities at their home school.

Work remains to ensure all alternative programs meet quality standards.

- **Alternative programs are often staffed with teachers not appropriately certified or placed there due to poor performance.**

SOLUTION: Require teachers to meet grade-level certification, meet the ratio for students with special needs, and prohibit assignment of teachers or staff to an alternative program as the result of a disciplinary action.

- **Funding is not tracked to ensure SEEK (Support Education Excellence in Kentucky) and other funds follow students.**

SOLUTION: Track allocations for students so that funding, including funds for students with special needs, follows the student upon placement in an alternative program.

- **A5 programs have minimal reporting or accountability requirements for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to monitor them, and responsibility for A6 programs has been delegated to an outside agency.**

SOLUTION: Ensure KDE has sufficient information to monitor alternative programs and report to the legislature, and require the A6 oversight agency to report to KDE as do local education administration units.