

## **Policy**

Eastern School Board will provide transitional alternate settings for students identified as having severe behavioral and emotional difficulties. The continuum of behavioral and academic supports for these students will have proven insufficient to meet their needs in the regular school setting. The focus of the alternate setting will be on developing behavioral and social skills and on transitioning the students back to their neighbourhood schools, to post-secondary or to work. While academic content will be taught, it will be of secondary importance to meeting students' behavioral, emotional and social needs.

## **Rationale**

Eastern School Board believes that every student has a fundamental right to an equitable educational opportunity. For some students equity necessitates additional supports and services to ensure that they reach their maximum potential as members of society.

Tremendous expertise and resources have been dedicated to enabling each teacher in Eastern School District to effectively meet the diverse needs of the student population. However, despite exhausting all its resources at district and school levels, a small number of students who have severe behavioral and emotional needs require intensive programs and services that cannot be provided in "traditional" classrooms

Students with severe behavioral and emotional needs require temporary transition to alternate school environments for intense behavioral training and skill development.

The education of this target population has been interrupted because of numerous suspensions in the school setting and/or placements in closed custody at the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Center. It is anticipated that alternate school settings would help prevent students' disruption of their education, would improve the quality of their education and increase the likelihood of completion of high school.

## **Scope**

All Eastern School personnel will be guided by the principles contained herein regarding students who may require alternate school settings.

## **Procedures**

1. *Establishment of an Advisory Committee for Alternate School Settings.*
  - i. The Director of Education will establish an Advisory Committee for Alternate School Settings whose membership should be reviewed each year.
  
2. *Referral and Admission*
  - i. Referral procedures to the transitional alternate school settings include confirmation by the student's ISSP team that the student is not able to be educated within the regular school setting. This means that all school and district resources including counselling, in-school suspensions, behavioral management plans, and alternate behavioral courses have been exhausted without desired results. Referral is made to the Advisory Committee. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the ISSP team's decision regarding placement at the alternate school setting, parents can appeal to the Director of Education or his/her designate.
  - ii. Stringent criteria for admission is required to prevent inappropriate placement of students in alternate schools. Comprehensive assessment by the guidance counselor, school psychologist and/or other agencies must confirm severe behavioral, emotional and social difficulties.
  
3. *Transitioning to Neighbourhood Schools*
  - i. Ongoing collaboration between teachers of the referring schools and the alternate school setting must occur in order to ensure the student's smooth transition back to his/her neighbourhood school.
  
4. *Content and Delivery*
  - i. Content and delivery of the curriculum of alternate school settings is of a non-traditional and flexible nature. Active and experiential learning opportunities include involvement of students in developing and choosing their curriculum, self-monitoring their behavioral goals, unscheduled study time, transitional planning and intense career development.

- ii. Intensive, individualized support services plans (ISSPs) are delivered in a caring, supportive and secure environment. The primary focus is on meeting students' individual behavioral and emotional needs with secondary focus on their academic needs.
  - iii. Students are assisted in accessing the provincial curriculum as much as possible with Pathway 2, 3 and 4 supports provided as necessary. Distance education and/or e-learning opportunities may be utilized.
  - iv. Behavioral interventions and skills are taught through separate courses and are also infused into the curriculum.
  - v. Students' individualized plans are delivered through flexible scheduling, shortened instructional and lunch periods and partnerships with home and community agencies.
5. *Duration*
- i. Length of enrollment for students attending alternate school settings will be determined on an individual basis, but should not normally go beyond 2 years.
6. *Organization*
- i. Should it occur that the student-teacher ratio at an alternate school setting does not warrant one (1) full teaching unit, the teacher will be assigned itinerant duties for students with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Duties could include helping students who are transitioning from the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Center, assisting teachers with review and implementation of behavioral management plans and delivering alternate courses in behaviour and social skills.
  - ii. The transitional alternate school setting will be over-seen by the Advisory Committee responsible for admissions, monthly curriculum review and annual evaluation of the schools. The Advisory Committee will report to the Director of Education and his/her designate.

7. *Evaluation of the Schools*

- i. The Advisory Committee is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and reporting the achievements and needs of the alternate school setting on an annual basis.
- ii. The alternate school setting will be held to the same accountability standards as other schools in the district.
- iii. Evaluation will include analysis of results of students' individual evaluations, summary of incident reports, number of suspensions, dropout statistics, ongoing activity log for each student and family input.

8. *Evaluation of the Students*

- i. Assessment strategies would include traditional assessment, personal and student learning portfolios, student self-evaluation and incident reports.
- ii. Academic evaluation will be the responsibility of the referring schools, but will occur at the alternate school setting.

9. *Location of the Schools*

- i. While the preferred option would be for the transitional alternate school setting to not be attached to or part of existing school buildings, the Board will make use of the most appropriate usable space, that may or may not be attached to another school.
- ii. Alternate school settings will be strategically located within Eastern School District, where possible, so that students are within a reasonable distance from their homes.

10. *Transportation*

- i. Students will access regular school transportation where possible.