

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Alternative Schools**

### **What qualifications are there for a student to be considered at-risk?**

An at-risk youth is any secondary student, grade seven through twelve (7-12), who meets any three (3) of the following criteria in Section A, or any one (1) criteria in Section B.

#### **Section A:**

- Has repeated at least one (1) grade.
- Has absenteeism that is greater than ten (10%) percent during the preceding semester.
- Has an overall grade point average that is less than 1.5 (4.0 scale) prior to enrolling in an alternative secondary program.
- Has failed one (1) or more academic subjects in the past year.
- Is below proficient, based on local criteria or standardized test, or both.
- Is two (2) or more credits per year behind the rate required to graduate or for grade promotion.
- Has attended three (3) or more schools within the previous two (2) years, not including dual enrollment

#### **Section B:**

- Has a documented or pattern of substance abuse.
- Is pregnant or a parent.
- Is an emancipated youth.
- Is a previous dropout.
- Has serious personal, emotional, or medical issue(s).
- Has a court or agency referral.
- Demonstrates behavior that is detrimental to their academic progress.

### **How do I enroll my child in an alternative school?**

The first step is to talk with the counselor and administrator at your child's current school. They will help determine if your child meets the at-risk qualifiers and if there is space available.

### **Do all districts have alternative schools?**

No, many districts do not have enough at-risk students to have a separate school. However, those districts generally offer "alternative programs" to meet the needs of the students. The programs are usually operated within the existing schools.

### **What grades are served by alternative schools or programs?**

Grades six (6) through twelve (12) can be served by alternative schools. In 2015, the Idaho State Legislature changed the law to allow the enrollment of sixth grade students in alternative schools or programs. The specific grades served are a local decision, with many districts serving grades nine (9) through twelve (12).

### **What special programs or services are alternative schools required to provide?**

In addition to the main academic areas, alternative schools are required to provide instructional programs and special services to meet the needs of the at-risk population they serve. The instructional programs include:

- Core academic content
- A personal and career counseling component
- A physical fitness and personal health component
- A state approved career technical component
- A personal finance, parenting, and childcare component

Special services may include social services, i.e. officers of the court or social workers, a day care center, and all services in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program.

### **Are alternative schools accredited?**

Alternative schools are accredited independently or as part of the traditional high school. Regardless of the method for accreditation, the credits earned at an accredited alternative school can transfer to another accredited school.