Practical Strategies for Working with Chronically Disruptive and Disturbed Youth

PA Department of Education

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Potential dropout/problem student?

Learning Objectives

Individuals attending this session will identify the following strategies:

- How to identify and develop a student treatment plan.

- How to monitor and modify the plan throughout the student's tenure as well as transition to a traditional school setting

Types of Alternative Programs

- Type I programs: seek to make school challenging and fulfilling for all involved
- Type II programs: students are sentenced – usually as one last chance prior to expulsion
- Type III programs: who are presumed to need remediation or rehabilitation – academic, social/emotional, or both"

Raywid, 1994

Description of XXXX

- ❑ Mission
- ❑ Belief and Purpose of the Program
- ❑ Description of Program
- ❑ Staff and resources
- ❑ Curriculum and Instruction
- ❑ Placement Grades and students

XXXXX Mission

The XXX XXXX Alternative Education Program exists to serve the needs of the middle and high school students who cannot remain in a traditional school setting.

Comment: decrease in dropout rates

Beliefs and Purpose

- The educational environment must be safe, secure, orderly and comfortable.
- Education must be developed with an accountable individualized study plan for each student.
- The educational environment must have clearly defined rules with consistent enforcement.

Beliefs and Purpose

- Students should be given the opportunity and assistance to transition back to the traditional school setting.

- Effective communication within the school, and among the school, parents, and community is essential to education and the success of this program.

Beliefs and Purpose

- Teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community share in the responsibility for providing a supportive environment within our school.

- Ongoing self-evaluation and continuous improvement are imperative for the development of confident, self-directed, life-long learners.

Description of Program
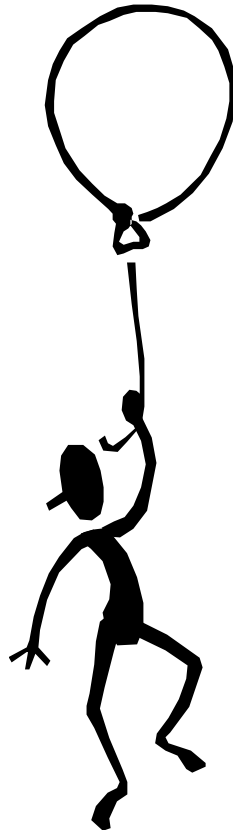
Criteria for Placement

- Chronically disruptive status
- Students who have been expelled or are on long term suspension from their base school
- Students returning from incarceration
- Some "special" cases

Expectations

- **Entrance:** Parent(s) and student will attend an entrance interview to determine if this innovative program can help the student address his/her needs. Each student must successfully complete the intake interview process. Once the student is admitted, parent and student agree to a plan of study, an attendance contract, a behavior contract and a parent responsibility contract.

Expectations

- **Academics:** A plan of individualized study will be determined for each student. This plan will direct the student toward his/her appropriate grade level. The Alternative Program uses many of the same instructional modules and course guides currently used in Fayette County traditional school. Presently, the Alternative Program cannot offer all of the courses available in the regular schools.

Expectations

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to be at school every day. If a student is absent, his/her parent is expected to call the Alternative School office. This ensures that the parents, students and administrators are working together to help the student achieve his/her goals.

Personnel

- Principal
- Administrative Assistant
- Six regular education teachers
- One special education teacher with parapro
- One school psychologist/counselor
- One school secretary
- One student information specialist
- Two paraprofessionals
- One half/time custodian

Supports

- Police Officer
- Probation Officer
- Wraparound services personnel
- Community/individual/pastoral counseling
- DFACS
- DJJ and community mental health services
- Mentors
- C.A.R.E. Program

Other supports as needed

- Translation services
- Social Worker
- Curriculum directors
- Local businesses

Identification and Plan Development

- Intake with parent(s) and student
- All aspects of the program are reviewed and identified
- Students and parents review and sign contracts regarding attendance, behavior, educational requirements, discipline and any questions either party has.
- Educational plan is developed with School Psychologist/Counselor, classroom teacher and parent

Student Teacher Assignment

- Grade
- Age
- Academic needs
- Special education
- DJJ status
- Mental health indices/needs
- Teen pregnancy
- SST (Tiering)

Academic and Behavioral Monitoring

- Weekly academic progress
- Weekly behavioral progress-behavior plans
- Classroom monitoring
- Arrival, bathroom breaks, lunch room, and departure monitoring
- Probation officer monitoring
- Drug testing (PO and/or DFACS)
- Gang activity monitoring (Gang task force)

Curriculum and Instruction

- Students placed by grade and/or age
- Grades 6 – 12
- Independent, self-paced curriculum
- Highly qualified teachers in all grades and subjects
- Instruction "packets"
- Computerized subjects
- Special education services
- Career center

Programs/Supports Used

Academic

- Read 180
- Odessyware
- Mentoring
- Individual instruction as requested

Social/Emot/Behav

- Components of Project Achieve and PBS
- In-school suspension
- On-site Individual counseling, time focused

What do I do?

- Review relevant research with principal and teachers
- Serve on SST/RTI/504 teams
- Identify potential student problems
- Coordinate information with principal, etc.

What do I do?

- Summarize information from needs assessment
- Team with other professionals to develop and implement small (max 5 students) groups
- Basics of self-management with students, parents and teachers
- Meet individually with students as requested by student, parent, teacher, me and/or other professionals

Individual Meetings

- Review educational plan
- Develop first draft of behavioral plan
- Develop goals, behavioral guidelines, meet with teachers/parents/probation officer/etc.
- monitor student behavior
- Review and modify as needed
- Maintain contact with parents, teachers and administrators

Group Meetings

- Assist group leader with development of group content and selection of students
- Follow up with students regarding group tasks, skills, maintenance, etc.
- Keep teachers/parents informed as necessary

Outcome for students

- Be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally aware of themselves and others;

- Demonstrate successful interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and social-emotional coping and behavioral skills; and

- Effectively control their own emotions and behavior.

Knoff, H. , 2010, Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Interventions , in press.

Expectations 1

- We need to teach the social, emotional, and behavioral skills, and the classroom and building routines that we expect students to demonstrate. To accomplish this, students need to learn how to maintain physical and cognitive self-control—that is, control over their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and physiology. Concurrently, students need to learn the steps or "scripts" that help them to demonstrate specific skills and their associated behaviors. This instruction is most successful when specific skills are explicitly taught and modeled by the teacher, behaviorally practiced (through role-plays) by students with explicit teacher feedback, and transferred (or applied) and infused into real-life situations.

Expectation 2

- When teaching social, emotional, and behavioral skills, we need to simulate "conditions of emotionality" and guide students through positive practices of their skills. This will increase the probability that students will successfully use and demonstrate these skills when real emotional situations occur.

Expectation 3

- We need to continually give students opportunities to practice and apply their social, emotional, and behavioral skills. These skills are never fully mastered—students just progress to the "next level" of development and maturation.

Expectation 4

- Positive responses and incentives best motivate students to learn, master, and use their social, emotional, and behavioral skills. In effective classrooms, all students experience five positive interactions (collectively from the adults, the peer group, and themselves) for every negative interaction (if a negative interaction even exists). Incentives can be tangible or symbolic, verbal or nonverbal, immediate or delayed, student-specific or activity-oriented. They also can be extrinsic—coming from another person or from the environment, or intrinsic—coming from the student him or herself.

Expectation 5

□ Social, emotional, and behavioral skills need to be taught and learned by students before incentives and consequences can work to motivate their use or demonstration in the future. Clearly, if a student has never learned and mastered a skill, no amount of motivation is going to "teach" it to him or her.

Expectation 6

- When students make bad choices, meaningful consequences should be used, first, to communicate to them that they have made a bad choice and, then, to motivate them to make a good choice the next time.

  Beyond this, we need to understand that effective consequences simply increase the probability that a student will make a better choice or demonstrate the appropriate behavior the next time. Consequences do not assure or guarantee expected or desired behavior.

Expectation 7

- When using consequences across different students, teachers need to know each student well enough such that they choose the consequence that has the most meaning and impact for the individual student. Teachers need to strategically select consequences for each individual student based on the consequence's potential for the quickest and most successful change toward appropriate or desired behavior. While consequences need to be matched to the intensity or severity of the inappropriate behavior, this means that some students will receive different consequences for the same inappropriate behavior.

Expectation 8

- Accountability
- Consequence
- Consistency

Sample of Students Individual Plans

- Student with "imaginary friend"
- Student with "explosive behavior"
- Parent with severe depression, students is embarrassed when parent comes to school
- Student with multiple contacts with DJJ
- Older middle school student (16 yr old, male in 7th grade)

Transition to Traditional Settings

- Pre-exit interview with students and parents
- Pre-exit conference with home school counselor and other school personnel as needed
- Assistance with developing student schedule at home school
- Transition with any mental health, DJJ and/or mental health personnel

Care and You!

- Take care of yourself.
- At the end of the day, you are drained…
- Leave the work at work
- Recognize that you cannot save EVERY child, others will step up to the plate and carry the load with you as a team OR not!
- Unfortunately, you will not ALWAYS be successful, redefine success

There is good news
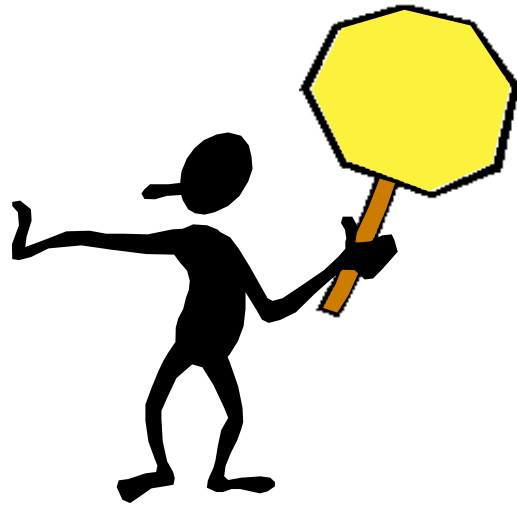
Success…

- 97% of FCAEP students pass all sections of the GHSGT the first time
- 12 of 14, 8th grade students pass the CRCT.
- Students who successfully exited in the past two years only 4 of 178 have returned.

2009-10 Graduates

5 of 7 students eligible to graduate completed this requirement !

Questions

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