



**Policy: 9.44**

**SUBJECT:                    ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

**Supersedes:**            IGCA  
**Effective:**                September 8, 2008  
**Page:**                      1 of 6  
**Approved by:**         Detroit Board of Education

## **1.0    Policy**

Alternative education programs will be designed to meet the needs of students who are not served well enough by the regular program and to stimulate instructional and curricular improvements throughout the schools.

### Guidelines

The following six criteria will serve as guidelines for the development of alternative programs and their support by the Board:

1.    Student self-direction in learning will be developed through increased opportunities for a student to set educational goals, select courses, design and direct learning experience, and evaluate progress.
2.    Full use of community resources will occur by holding some classes at business, cultural, and civic centers and/or by using persons from all parts of the community in the program.
3.    A large variety of learning content and teaching methods will be used. Flexibility in the use of time and materials will be encouraged. Cross-disciplinary courses, participation in community affairs, independent study contracts, and group projects are examples.
4.    Smaller learning units will be used for some alternative programs. New, small schools or learning centers may be established outside of the regular schools; “schools within schools” may be developed at existing school sites.
5.    Balance by race, sex, socio-economic level, and ethnic heritage will be sought in alternative programs in order to enrich the learning experiences for all participants.

## Minimum Competencies and Graduation Requirements

Students in alternative education programs, as all students, must demonstrate minimum competencies in reading, mathematics, and other basic skills and meet all Board and state-established requirements for graduation.

### Options for All Students

Some alternative educational programs across the country are designed in a way that they appear to serve misfits or elitists. The Detroit public schools will provide options for all students in a way that honors and respects each student and each option.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The plan has three components: (1) a community high school program, (2) within-school alternative programs at all levels, and (3) off-site alternative schools.

### 1. Community High School Program

The Community High School Program will offer new and specialized courses for students from all high schools in the city. The students will have the opportunity to take one or more courses in this program while attending the home high school for other courses. Regardless of the number of classes taken in the Community High School Program, students will be considered part of the membership of the home school.

### 2. Within-School Alternative Programs

The purpose of the within-school alternative component is not the establishment of a set of optional classes, but to establish several alternative learning environments for students. The traditional program will continue to be an option.

The open school and free school are models which may be used for alternative programs. New combinations of subject matter may be the organizing theme. Community work and community study may serve as a program focus. Group or individual projects or student contracts may be used.

Each school faculty, under the leadership of the principal, with staff support and input from its students and community, will plan alternatives including the traditional program.

### 3. Off-Site Alternative Schools

Off-site alternative learning centers (schools) may be established. This program differs from the first two components in that participating students

will leave their present schools and be enrolled full-time in the alternative schools of their choice.

A feature common to off-site alternative schools will be a nontraditional approach to education. However, it is also possible that an off-site alternative school could be established that would focus totally on the basic skills and have a tightly-structured, teacher-directed curriculum.

*Note: Alternative education has been expanded in response to a court order desegregating schools and requiring addition and strengthening of certain programs. Various documents are available in area office G on alternative education plans. The policies below implement or refine portions of the plan that is summarized in the above policy.*

### Community High School

The Board approves plans for the curriculum and organization of the Community High School.

The Community High School will be centrally located on the campus of Wayne State University. It may also offer courses and classes at other sites.

Two types of programs will be offered: (1) thematic area courses and (2) citywide classes. Thematic area courses, meeting for an equivalent of a double period daily, will center for the most part on areas of urban living. The citywide classes, meeting for the equivalent of one period daily, will offer a variety of subjects that all students do not have opportunity to take in their home high schools – such as calculus, advanced and/or conversational foreign language, psychology, public speaking, computer language and programs, photography, speed reading, and leadership skills.

The courses and classes will be open to all high school students regardless of academic achievement except for prerequisites for advanced academic courses. Students may be dismissed from the program, after counseling, if they do not abide by the Uniform Code of Student Conduct.

*Note: The Community High School plan is set forth in “A Proposal to Establish a Community High School” (9/76). The program began operation in the fall of 1977.*

### Burton International School

The Board approves recommendations for the establishment and development of the Burton International School to serve, particularly, the many different ethnic groups residing in the Cass corridor.

The school will be designed for a K-8 structure. Enrollment will be open citywide when such enrollment contributes to a racial mix of students.

The school will have a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual program. It will:

- Respect and support the ethnic, racial, and cultural heritage of all students and plan programs to meet their needs.
- Offer a balanced academic program in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, performing arts, arts and crafts, music, and languages.
- Use of the community with its variety of ethnic and economic groups as learning resources for the children.
- Expect children and adults to function in a democratic and peaceful manner and encourage mutual respect and understanding among all people.
- Provide a multilingual and multicultural center for the children, adults, and community groups.
- Service the local attendance area plus attract children citywide.
- Move toward a complete community school for all ages and groups, with a cooperative and collaborative spirit between parents, teachers, and the community.
- Expect all children, whatever their background, to operate at their highest potential, to develop an ethos of excellence.

The school will utilize English as the basic language of instruction and expect all students to acquire, practice, and master skills in oral and written language. It will also maintain and extend a strong reading program and will provide supportive teaching in any area at any level whenever a student needs it.

#### School-Within-A-School Concept

The Board approved a plan whereby schools may develop a “school within a school” to provide alternative education. Such plans may be developed by a single school, two or more schools working together, by the schools of a single area, or by those of two or more areas working together.

School and area plans for these alternative education arrangements will be submitted to the General Superintendent and General Superintendent’s staff for review before presentation to the Board for approval.

Renaissance High School-Admissions

Renaissance High School will offer a special curriculum for academically oriented students.

Admissions will be based on students' academic ability and on a balance of enrollments as to city area, sex, and race.

1. Academic achievement will be determined on the basis of the students' grades in academic subjects, which will count 30% and on achievement tests in reading and mathematics, which will count 70%.
2. To qualify for possible admission, a student must:
  - a. Have a grade of "B" in mathematics, an overall average of "B" in other subjects, and no grades below "C."
  - b. Rank at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in standardized reading and mathematics tests.
3. Each area of the city will have a specified number of students selected for admission. An applicant's area will be the school administrative area of his or her residence. The freshman class admitted each year will have no more than 60 percent of either sex. For each race, the class will be within 15 percent of the racial makeup of the total district student population as indicated on the annual fourth Friday count.

No application will be processed without the required standardized test scores and transcripts of grades for the periods specified.

Parochial and private school students: Academic records and scores of tests administered by the particular school will be evaluated on the basis of Detroit Board of Education standards.

Advanced Academic Preparation Program (A2p2)

To enhance academic opportunities for students, the Board of Education will jointly sponsor with Wayne State University an advanced academic preparation program (A2p2). This program will consist of optional college preparatory classes which will prepare students for advanced placement, academic internship, and other accelerated learning opportunities during their high school years.

The classes will be taught by Wayne State University faculty on the university campus. The following policies and procedures will also be implemented:

1. Textbooks and other learning supplies and materials will be provided free of charge.
2. Transportation costs and arrangements will be the responsibility of each student.
3. A student will receive a grade and course credit for any course successfully completed.

*Note: Other educational options available to some or all students include vocational and technical education, special programs for the academically talented), programs designed for nature Americans, military training, a program for expectant mothers, and, for a limited number of children at K-7 level, a laboratory school operated jointly by Wayne State University's College of Education and the Detroit Public Schools (see LEA).*

*For administrative purposes, alternative schools and programs at high school level, or that extend into high school are administered by the General Superintendent.*

**Attachments to Policy 9.44:** None

**See also:** None

**Legal References:** 20 USC § 6318  
20 USC § 6316

**Labor Contract References:** None