

What School Board Members can do to improve Alternative Education

Get the big picture...

- Start with a district-wide needs assessment. Use district data to determine what your alternative program should look like.
- Review current research to learn what is effective with similar populations.
- Create well-defined goals for the program focused on district *and* student needs.
- Visit the alternative school at every opportunity. Stay abreast of their needs and accomplishments.
- Be aware of the increase in attendance that alternative programs create and how that translates into increased dollars for your district. When you consider that many students who are served by alternative programs were likely to be truant or dropouts from the regular school, your alternative program actually recoups lost money! Dispel the myth that it is “us versus them” for education resources.

Stay involved...

- Hold at least one board meeting a year at the alternative school. Invite students and staff to present about their activities.
- Promote and solicit community involvement. Adult mentors, service learning, job shadowing and community service projects help students form positive links to their communities while learning skills that will take them into adulthood.
- Speak positively about your alternative program and market it’s success in your district and community. Do your part to change any negative stereotypes that may exist.
- Encourage district and referring school personnel (teachers, staff and administration) to understand the focus and capabilities of the alternative school through school visits and appropriate professional development. Foster the philosophy that all students in a district are “our kids.”

Ensure success...

- Hold schools accountable for positive successes with each student. Require measurable outcomes be reported including changes in attendance, discipline referrals, and academic achievement.
- Hire creative, enthusiastic teachers that have a strong desire to work with at-risk students.
- Provide adequate resources to your alternative program. All students need high quality facilities and materials to reach their highest potential.
- Encourage all staff to use innovative and creative instructional methods to engage students and promote success.



***For more information contact the Kentucky Center for School Safety Clearinghouse
877-805-4277 or visit their website at www.kysafeschools.org***