

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: COB-RA, JGA-RB

Responsible Office: Special Education and Student Services

Placement Procedures for Alternative Programs

I. PURPOSE

To identify alternative program options and describe placement procedures

II. BACKGROUND

Alternative program options are designed to provide academic and behavioral support to secondary students who have not been successful in the general education program. The goal of all the Alternative Programs is to return the student to a comprehensive school as soon as possible.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Level 1 Alternative Program* is an alternative program in each secondary school that provides direct academic, social/emotional, and behavioral support and instruction to students.
- B. *Level 2 Alternative Program* is a nonschool-based alternative program that provides academic, social/emotional, and behavioral support to students who have not been successful in a regular school program.
- C. *Level 3 Alternative Program* is a nonschool-based alternative program for middle and high school students recommended for expulsion. The superintendent of schools/designee makes these placements.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Process for Referral to a Level 1 Alternative Program
 - 1. Students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties and who are not demonstrating progress in response to prescribed instructional and/or behavioral interventions and strategies that have been provided consistently and over a measurable amount of time in the general education

classroom should be considered for referral to the school-based Level 1 Alternative Program.

2. Each secondary school has staff members dedicated to the development and implementation of a school-based Level 1 Alternative Program. The overall purpose of these programs is to provide direct academic and social/emotional instruction and behavior management strategies instruction to students. With ongoing direct instruction in these areas, as well as guidance and monitoring, students in these programs should be able to experience greater success and remain in the mainstream of school activities. The programs also are designed to support the student in his or her general education classes.
3. The Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) team or Educational Management Team (EMT) recommends a student for a Level 1 Alternative Program. When referring students to Level 1 Alternative Programs, school teams shall conduct a CPS/EMT meeting at the school to determine whether or not the student could benefit from the Level 1 Alternative Program that is available in the home school. The information for making the recommendation comes from a variety of sources, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) The parent/guardian is informed/invited to the CPS/EMT meeting and may offer information.
 - b) Information provided in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Form 272-9: *Teacher Referral*
 - c) Attendance data
 - d) Data from achievement tests
 - e) Report cards
 - f) Written or oral reports of observations
 - g) Health records
 - h) Evaluations of adaptive behaviors, including a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)
 - i) Medical, psychological, and developmental reports

j) Results of previous CPS/EMT meetings

4. Once a student has been deemed appropriate for the Level 1 Alternative Program, the services are expected to begin immediately or during a natural transitional break, such as at the end of a marking period. During the time that the student is in the Level 1 Alternative Program—

a) prescribed interventions are to be employed consistently and documented,

b) students remain in the program for a defined period of time (a minimum of one semester) in order to determine the effectiveness of the Level 1 interventions, and

c) the school CPS/EMT meets regularly to monitor and review the impact of the interventions. The team should review written documentation, such as, but not limited to, the following:

(1) MCPS Form 272-9: *Teacher Referral*

(2) Attendance

(3) Report cards

(4) Anecdotal records collected over a period of time

(5) Written or oral reports of observations

(6) FBAs and BIPs

(7) CPS/EMT data collection, intervention plans, and analysis tools

(8) Consultations between the Level 1 alternative teacher and general education teachers

B. Process for Referral to a Level 2 Alternative Program

1. Level 2 alternative programs are operated and supervised by MCPS through the Department of Student Services Alternative Programs office. These programs address the needs of students from all secondary schools, and are designed to provide academic and behavioral support to students who have

not been successful in the general education program with Level 1 support so that they will meet success when reentering a comprehensive school. The goal of Level 2 Alternative Programs is to return the student to a comprehensive school as soon as previously identified individualized goals have been met, indicating that the student is better prepared to engage in learning. The length of stay in a Level 2 Alternative Program varies, but is usually between one and three semesters.

2. There is an established process for identifying and referring students in need of alternative program support. When referring students to a Level 2 Alternative Program, members of the EMT shall—
 - a) Identify a student in need of additional alternative education supports beyond the Level 1 Alternative Program
 - b) Conduct an EMT meeting at the school to determine whether or not the student could benefit from a Level 2 Alternative Program. When considering a referral, the EMT must ensure that the following criteria are met:
 - (1) The student has participated in the school's Level 1 Alternative Program.
 - (2) The parent/guardian attends the EMT meeting.
 - (3) The pupil personnel worker (PPW) attends the EMT meeting.
 - c) In determining whether a referral to a Level 2 Alternative Program is appropriate, the team must consider the following:
 - (1) Authentic functional data/documentation that suggests that previous interventions have been implemented and progress has not been made.
 - (2) Academic and/or behavioral data/documentation.
 - (3) Interventions used and student response to interventions.
 - (4) Suggested modifications to intervention plans.
 - (5) Suggested instructional strategies, as appropriate.

3. The school team, including the parent/guardian, discusses and records the documented factors, as well as the student's response to interventions and the current level of functioning.
 4. If the student is referred to the Level 2 Alternative Program, the school team, in conjunction with the referring school PPW, is responsible for completing MCPS Form 336-55: *Referral for Alternative Program Placement*. The parent/guardian, school principal, and the PPW must sign the referral packet, which is then submitted to the supervisor, Alternative Programs, by the PPW. Once the student is accepted an intake meeting is scheduled. At this meeting, the exit criteria are agreed upon. The student will begin in the Level 2 Alternative Program as soon as transportation can be arranged.
 5. The emphasis of these programs is on returning the student to a regular school setting when appropriate academic, behavioral, and social skills have been demonstrated for a predetermined period of time. There are times, however, when Level 2 interventions do not result in the desired change in student behavior. When this happens, Alternative Programs staff will conduct an EMT meeting, including parents, staff members from the home school, central office support staff, the home school PPW, and the Level 2 Alternative Program staff to determine the most appropriate next steps.
 6. The superintendent of schools/designee may make direct placements into Level 2 Alternative Programs when deemed appropriate.
- C. Process for Referral to the Phoenix Program, a Level 2 substance abuse recovery support program
1. Students who are in a substance abuse treatment program and who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, academic performance, and behavior are eligible to enroll in the Phoenix Program.
 2. The referral may be initiated by school staff, the parent/guardian, or directly by staff members in the substance abuse treatment program.
 3. When a student is referred to the Phoenix Program, the school team, in conjunction with the PPW, is responsible for completing MCPS Form 336-55: *Referral for Alternative Program Placement*. In addition to the referral requirements for consideration for all Level 2 programs, the referral also must include written documentation of participation in a substance abuse treatment program.

4. Students referred to the Phoenix Program are not expected to have participated in a Level 1 alternative program and do not need to have authentic functional data/documentation included in the referral packet.
5. The parent/guardian, school principal, and PPW must sign the referral packet, which is then submitted to the supervisor, Alternative Programs, by the PPW.

D. Process for Referral to a Level 3 Alternative Program

The superintendent of schools/designee makes direct student placements into the Level 3 Alternative Program site.

Regulation History: New Regulation, August 2, 1996; revised September 28, 2007; revised August 13, 2009.