

## Chapter Six: Alternate Programs and Courses

### Alternate Programs and Courses

The program planning team determines whether an individualized alternate program or course is required. Alternate programs and courses must be guided by the student's exceptionality(s), assessment results, and strengths and needs. Alternate programs and/or courses are only developed when the outcomes required are outside the scope of the student's current grade level curriculum.

**Note:** The teaching or re-teaching of prescribed curriculum outcomes is not considered an alternate program or course.

When an alternate program or course is warranted, the program planning team will designate teachers to develop the course and determine setting(s) on an outcome by outcome basis. When it has been determined that optimal learning for selected outcomes cannot occur in the classroom, a plan for review of the student's placement outside of the regular classroom will be developed. The instructional resource teacher will monitor the placement in consultation with the subject/classroom teacher. Parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to student placement.

When all or part of the instruction occurs in the classroom, responsibilities will be assigned to both the classroom/subject teacher and the instructional resource teacher. Specifically, the instructional resource teacher takes the lead in the development and evaluation of the alternate program or course and the classroom/subject teacher collaborates regarding delivery.

It is essential that students not be overloaded with alternate programs and thus be denied access to the prescribed curriculum. The long-term implications of removing students from provincially prescribed curriculum must be considered. Pull-out instruction for alternate programs should not occur during subjects which are cumulative or foundational in nature, or those that may negatively impact graduation requirements, and post-secondary options. The program planning team should problem solve with teachers of subjects impacted on how to minimize negative consequences for the student (i.e., the expectation that a student will "catch-up" on material missed). The segments of instruction from which a student is removed may be spread across several subject areas which are not cumulative or foundational in nature. By contrast, the delivery of an alternate curricular course occurs during the class's scheduled time for that particular subject area.

**An alternate course** completely replaces a prescribed subject area or high school level course. The alternate course time requirement equates with the time

requirement specified for the course/subject which it is replacing. An alternate course can be one of two types:

1. Curricular (curriculum significantly different from the student's current grade level): This would include students with a cognitive disorder who are unsuccessful on the modified prescribed curriculum, as well as students who are gifted and talented who require above grade level curricular outcomes.
2. Non-curricular (outcomes that support student skill development): These are reserved for students who require mostly alternate courses (i.e., students with cognitive disorders who do not meet the criteria for alternate curriculum). These students may pursue life skills-based courses, but these courses are not eligible for high school credit (e.g., social skills, safety, and nutrition). This is the only instance in which non-curricular is considered a course. In all other instances, it is considered a program.

An alternate course at the high school level must be 55 hours or 110 hours. Curricular alternate courses receiving high school credit must be curriculum based and contain at least high school level content. Therefore, credit for curricular alternate courses may only be applicable to students identified as gifted and talented. Alternate courses consisting of outcomes below the high school level curriculum are not eligible for credit.

**An alternate program** is shorter in frequency and/or duration than a 55 hour course. The intensity and amount of time will vary depending on the nature of the programming. It involves flexibility with regard to scheduling, grouping, and setting.

An alternate program can be one of two types:

1. Prerequisite: foundational skill outcomes required for current grade level curriculum
2. Non-curricular: outcomes that support skill-based programming

Depending on the topic, student strengths and needs, and available resources, the timeframe for an alternate program will vary. For example, one program may be offered for 15 minutes per day over a three month period. Another may be offered for 30 minutes per day for 1 or 2 weeks. Timeframes will be determined by the program planning team.

Alternate programs must contain outcomes that are achievable within the timeframe allotted. Programs are to undergo continual monitoring to gauge their success. If the program is not addressing the student's strengths and needs, it

may be revised, discontinued, or replaced. If a program is successful, there may be another program warranted to further develop the area of need.

**Note:** Alternate programs are not eligible for high school credit.

### **Developing an Alternate Program or Course**

An alternate program or course must include the following components:

- type of program or course
- rationale - developed by the program planning team and based on the student's strengths and needs, previous interventions and assessment results
- general learning outcomes - broad statements which identify the key components of the program or course
- specific learning outcomes - what the student is expected to know and be able to do as he or she works toward the general learning outcome
- learning environment in which each outcome will be delivered
- personnel responsible for the delivery of each outcome
- instructional strategies
- learning resources
- assessment and evaluation strategies
- progress notes
- timeline (including frequency and duration for alternate programs)

If it has been determined that selected outcomes of an alternate program or course are to be delivered in a setting outside of the student's classroom, the program/course description must also include:

- a plan to address material missed (\*\* for alternate programs only)
- a plan for the review of the student's placement outside of the classroom

These components are contained in a completed Record of Alternate Program or Record of Alternate Course. This becomes part of the student's IEP and is placed in the cumulative file. A copy would be maintained by the teacher(s) as a working document. Teacher(s) must regularly update progress notes.

### **Registering an Alternate Course for Credit**

Students at the high school level may only receive credit for an alternate course under the **Any Subject Area** category of High School Graduation Requirements when all of the intended learning outcomes of the alternate course are at a level and quantity commensurate with high school (or higher). To register a curricular

alternate course for credit with High School Certification, the school principal must first assign a course number (code) to the alternate course. The course number is chosen based on the following criteria:

- grade level (Level 1, 2, or 3)
- number of credits (1 or 2 credits)
- 70 – indicates alternate
- subject area (Language Arts–73, Science–74, Social Studies–75, Mathematics–79)

For example, a Level 2, 2 credit curricular alternate course in Language Arts would be 70 2273.

The Alternate Course Registration form is completed and signatures of approval obtained. The alternate course description and the alternate course registration forms must be approved by the program specialist for the curricular area and the Assistant Director of Programs (or his/her designate) before the application is submitted to High School Certification, Department of Education. **All course descriptions** must be mailed by the District to the High School Certification Office.

**Note:** No more than four alternate course/local course credits may be applied to the thirty-six credit requirement for Graduation Status.