
Redefining Alternative Schools, Rule

The Background:

Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-3404 established the Governor’s Advisory Council for Alternative Education. The Council is a multi-discipline committee with authority under the Code to “Consider rules of governance of alternative schools and make recommendations concerning rules of governance.” Consistent with Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-3404, the Council revisited the current definition of an alternative school: “An alternative school is a short term intervention program designed to develop academic and behavioral skills for students who have been suspended or expelled from the regular school program.” State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.09. During that time, the Council and various stakeholders recommend that “alternative education” replace the header “alternative schools” in Board Policy and Rule and that “alternative education” be defined as “A nontraditional academic program or school designed to meet the student’s educational, behavioral, and social needs.” The Council respectfully requests that the Board make the noted change. In addition, throughout State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.09 the term “alternative school” is utilized. The definition provided by the Council acknowledges the existence of both alternative education programs and alternative schools. Therefore, the Council also requests that “alternative school” be replaced with “alternative program or school,” as appropriate, in State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.09 anywhere “alternative school” is referenced (with the exception of the header, as noted above, where “alternative education” would be used).

The Master Plan Connection:

This item supports the Board’s Master Plan by providing access to quality curriculum to a greater extent by properly defining and identifying students receiving educational services in an “alternative education program or school” thereby directing educators to the quality standards adopted by the Board. Such a change supports quality teaching by connecting educators to quality instructional practices specific to alternative learners outlined in Board Policy 2.302. Moreover, such clarification of alternative education provides clear guidance for school and program leadership.

The Recommendation:

The Governor’s Advisory Council for Alternative Education, the Department of Education, and other constituents recommend acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.

Proposed Rule Change

Rule 0520-01-02-.09 Alternative Schools is amended by deleting the phrase “alternative school” or “alternative schools” and replacing it with “alternative school or program.”

Paragraph (1) of Rule 0520-01-02-.09 Alternative Schools is amended by deleting the language in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

Definition: A nontraditional academic program designed to meet the student’s educational, behavioral, and social needs.