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The purpose of *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools* is to establish a model for pilot projects which helps students advance academically and improve their behavior. Students attending a project component should show academic gains as well as gains in self concept, social adjustment and behavior.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project includes the following four components:

Accelerated Learning Centers - Accelerated learning centers provide remediation to help students become academically successful before experiencing serious discipline problems. The center is based on the findings that tendencies for violence and misbehavior are significantly reduced when students view themselves as academically successful. The center could be located on the school site and serve as a laboratory for the teaching staff.

These are non-traditional learning centers that use interactive technology and integrated project based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically. Teachers will serve as mentors/facilitators who assist academically at-risk students to develop a positive self-concept, develop good attendance habits, become academically successful, and display proper behavior.

Elementary and secondary students who have not succeeded to their potential in the regular classroom will be candidates for this center. The school will identify the academically at-risk students and consult with both students and parents before placements are made; both parent and student must agree to placement in the center. Exit points include successful return to the regular classroom or high school graduation linked to work or postsecondary training. Students who are over age are expected to achieve multiple grade gains and move up to an age appropriate regular classroom.

Students in this setting are expected to conform to standards of behavior. Those students who do not conform to behavior standards will be placed in another setting.

Alternative Classrooms - Alternative classrooms help students who are exhibiting moderate discipline problems to improve their behavior and become academically successful. These are on-site placement options for elementary and secondary students who fail to comply with the standards of behavior. Schools will determine the criteria by

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which students will be placed in alternative classrooms. The duration of placement will be between 3 and 12 weeks.

The alternative classroom will use interactive technology and integrated, project based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically. While the alternative classroom is academically based and focused, it will be very structured and have the capability to isolate students who continue to refuse to conform to rules. Students with repeated disruptive behaviors in the alternative classroom or with repeated placement in the alternative classroom will be considered for placement in the alternative school.

Alternative Schools¹ - Alternative schools help elementary and secondary students who are exhibiting serious discipline problems to improve their behavior and become academically successful. The duration of placement in the alternative school will be between 12 weeks and 1 year. Students possessing weapons on school grounds may be candidates for placement in these schools. Students failing to comply with the alternative school rules or who have repeated placements may be candidates for juvenile court intervention.

These schools will use interactive technology and integrated, project based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically. Stringent rules will be in place with absolutely no misbehavior allowed. Transportation to the alternative school may be provided by the school system. Students placed in the alternative school may forfeit all extra curricular activities in their home school. However, students attending the alternative school will be eligible for any extra curricular activities which may be provided at the alternative school.

Judge's Schools - Judge's schools are a last approach for student behavioral remediation following serious discipline problems. These schools are developed collaboratively by juvenile courts and one or more school systems. Placement and duration will be determined jointly by the juvenile courts and the school system. Students possessing weapons on school grounds may be candidates for placement in these schools. These schools are last efforts to address student needs within the community.

¹ Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3402; *see also* SBE Rule 0520-1-2-.09.

COMPONENT STRATEGIES

A variety of strategies will be implemented to meet the needs of at-risk students. Participants will have significant flexibility in selecting programs to implement each strategy. Staff development and technical assistance will be required to implement selected programs. It is anticipated that strategies learned through this project will be applied across classrooms throughout the school system.

Student Profiles - Problem students are often angry and do not trust anyone. Participating schools and school systems must be prepared to defuse hostility and anger using research-based strategies. Participating schools and systems must create environments of trust and success. A comprehensive evaluation will be completed when a student enters a project component. The evaluation will focus on such issues as learning styles and adaptive behavior.

Behavior- Specific strategies to address student behavior include peer mediation, conflict resolution and behavior counseling programs such as the Process Curriculum, the Peaceable School Program, the Assertive Discipline and the reclaiming Youth At-Risk Program. In these programs, students learn successful behaviors and are made aware of problem behaviors.

Counseling -Counseling will be provided while students are attending any of the project components. Community volunteers will assist counselors by serving as mentors for students. Support will be provided for students returning to their regular classrooms by guidance counselors and/or mentors to help ensure successful transitions. Counselors and/or mentors will work closely with classroom teachers to support students returning to the regular classroom.²

Delivery of Instruction - Schools participating in the project will maximize the use of technology. In many accelerated learning centers, students have a regular block of time during which core instruction is delivered by computer. The instruction is based on assessments of the students' current performance levels. Instruction is delivered so that sequential objectives are mastered at the students individual pace. No objectives are skipped, and the student progresses after mastery of each objective.

² Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-303.

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Alternative school programs have successfully used technology to deliver the bulk of the subject content and to assist students in catching up on basic skills. Participating schools may lease or purchase technologically based instructional programs to deliver content in such areas as basic skills, remediation, vocational instruction and life skills. Many such alternative schools find that students who could not do well in regular classrooms master content more quickly and retain the content for longer periods using technology. In this way the alternative school becomes an accelerated learning center. Project participants will be introduced to technology based programs such as the Tennessee Skills Net, a segment of the Tennessee Tomorrow Project.

Students will participate in cross-curricular projects and activities beyond the classroom. Students will use technology to access resources in the development of their inquiry. Students will have opportunities to work independently and in groups to produce projects and reports.

When designing the academic delivery system, especially the Accelerated Learning Center, participating school systems will consider the following strategies:

1. Learning is project centered and integrated across the curriculum.
2. Learning is aided by technology, especially through use of the Internet.
3. Students of different abilities work together in teams.
4. Students work on significant, real-life community problems.
5. Students explore ideas for the value of learning.
6. Students meet challenging opportunities using basic skills and critical thinking skills.
7. Students learn to become reflective and self-monitoring.
8. Student self-esteem is enhanced when tasks that are perceived to be difficult are accomplished; high expectations are established for challenging work.
9. Students see the connection between knowing and doing; they see a connection between education and career.

Family Involvement - Family involvement will be included in the project design. Programs such as Positive Parent Involvement or other family involvement guides will be implemented. The parents of strong-willed students will receive intensive training in

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programs such as the Parent Project, the Success is a Thinking Skill program or the Reality Program.

Community Engagement - Community engagement is accomplished by students involved in service learning projects, members of the community interacting with students within the school, in out-of-school settings, and in work-based learning (job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships). The Office of National and Community Service will be available to provide guidance and technical assistance in establishing service learning projects. Participating school systems will provide venues for community engagement as well as job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships when available.

Community engagement efforts do not necessarily end with the end of the school day or the school session. The successful applicant will include community engagement activities and projects at a variety of instructional levels and at occasions throughout the calendar year.

Career guidance and school-to-work strategies, as appropriate for the grade level, will be integrated throughout each project component. Career guidance strategies will utilize business and industry personnel from a variety of positions to communicate information about the world of work to students. Career guidance strategies will clearly communicate the skill requirements of current jobs as well as those skills projected for future jobs. Students will understand that people work in order to live and that there is a positive connection between the schooling process and living productive lives.

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Strategy	Acc. LC	Alt. CR	Alt. Sch.	Jud. Sch.
1. Student Profiles				
Learning style	X	X	X	X
Adaptive behavior		X	X	X
2. Behavior				
Students learn successful behavior	X	X	X	X
Students are made aware of problem behaviors		X	X	X
Assertive Discipline	X	X	X	X
Reclaiming Youth At Risk	X	X	X	X
3. Counseling - School/Community Provided Based on Evaluation				
Support returning to the regular classroom	X	X	X	X
Peer mediation	X	X	X	X
Conflict resolution (i.e. Process Curriculum and Peaceable School)	X	X	X	X
Behavior counseling program (i.e. Reality Program)		X	X	X
4. Delivery of Instruction				
Technology: Catch up instruction	X	X	X	X
Subject content	X	X	X	X
Integrated/project based learning	X	X	X	X
5. Family Involvement				
Family involvement guide (i.e. Positive Parent Involvement)	X	X	X	X
Programs for intensive parental training (i.e. Parent Project, Success Is a Thinking Skill & Reality)		X	X	X
6. Community Engagement				
Service learning projects	X	X	X	X
Mentoring - Within & Outside the School	X	X	X	X
Work-based learning as appropriate (i.e. job shadowing, internship and apprenticeship)	X	X	X	X

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SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

Projects will be established in three school systems of less than 7,000 students - one in each grand division - and supported by available state, federal and local funding through a competitive grant process. Renewal will be based on compliance with the requirements of the *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools* approved by the State Board of Education. Each project shall consist of the Accelerated Learning Center, the Alternative Classroom and the Alternative School components with the option of including the Judges School component based on available funds and community needs.³

Request for Proposals - The Commissioner of Education will approve grant applications based on the recommendations of a grant review panel. The panel will consist of representatives of the appropriate state agencies and other constituencies appointed by the Commissioner of Education. The following criteria will be used to judge the grant applications.

1. Extent proposed project conforms to the requirements of *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools*.
2. Extent proposed project assures a high quality academic program.
3. Extent proposed project includes strategies to prevent students placed in the Accelerated Learning Center from being negatively labeled.
4. Extent proposed project assures counseling strategies and mentors from the community to provide support for students.
5. Extent proposed project includes a selection process which is consistent with the requirements of *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools*.
6. Extent proposed project is integrated with career guidance and work-based learning strategies.
7. Extent proposed project considers appropriate service delivery options and demonstrates cost effective budgeting and administrative capacity.
8. Extent proposed project identifies procedures for tracking student academic progress.
9. Extent proposed project identifies procedures for tracking improvement in adaptive behavior.
10. Extent proposed project offers potential for replication.

³ Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-3-3403.

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11. Extent proposed project utilizes community resources.
12. Extent proposed project provides local funding in addition to the state grant.

Staff Development and Technical Assistance - When implementing projects, staff development and technical assistance will be needed. The State Department of Education will coordinate staff development and technical assistance activities in the delivery of instruction, community involvement, student management, family involvement and other appropriate strategies.

Evaluation and Assessment - The State Department of Education will design a program evaluation and assessment component to commence with the initiation of the projects. The evaluation and assessment of the projects will be designed to provide an initial and long-term student assessment and measure the following:

1. Number and percent of students in a project component who make successful transitions to the regular classroom.
2. Number and percent of students in a project component who successfully complete the grade level or course work.
3. Number and percent of students in a project component who show gains in self concept measures.
4. Number and percent of students in a project component who show improvement in adaptive behavior.
5. Number and percent of students in a project component who show gains in social adjustment measures.
6. Number and percent of students in a project component who maintain satisfactory attendance.
7. Number and percent of students in a project component who drop out of school.
8. Number and percent of students in a project component who are suspended or expelled.
9. Number and percent of students in a project component who become involved in juvenile court.

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Survey data on the effectiveness of a project component will be collected from educators who are associated with the project and from students who attend a project component and their parents in the following areas:

1. Academic remediation and advancement
2. Behavior remediation
3. Use of technology
4. Instructional strategies
5. Career guidance strategies
6. Support for students returning to regular classroom
7. Connection of education to life and work
8. Successful student transitions out of the alternative school

Finally, anecdotal data will be collected relating to school climate, school safety, and academic performance across the school system.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT

General Strategy - Participating school systems will adopt a discipline management system for use in the schools involved in the project. The US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has training materials available for use by schools. Participating school systems may choose one of the following or other comparable programs:

- **Process Curriculum** —The Process Curriculum teaches conflict resolution principles and processes through a time-limited course or through daily lessons. Typically, time-limited courses include teaching negotiation or mediation over a semester period or in a series of workshops in secondary schools. The Process Curriculum approach is designed to help students better understand and resolve the conflicts they encounter in their lives at school, at home and in the community. Most of the learning takes place through the use of structured activities, such as simulations, group discussions, and cooperative learning activities. The teacher implements the program in short time segments throughout the semester or the school year.

- **Peaceable School** —The Peaceable School is a holistic approach to conflict resolution that involves integrating conflict resolution into the curriculum and daily classroom management. The approach uses the instructional methods of cooperative learning and academic controversy. In cooperative learning, students work in small groups with two responsibilities: to learn the assigned material and to ensure that all other group members also learn it. In the academic controversy method, which is contained in the OJJDP training materials, students learn to deal with conflicts that often arise when students work together to design projects. Typically, peaceable classrooms are initiated on a teacher-by-teacher basis and are the building blocks of the peaceable school. Peaceable classrooms encourage learning activities and teachable moments that allow youth to recognize options in conflict situations and to schools those that are nonviolent, meet the needs of all parties to a conflict, and improve relationships.

Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution - Participating school systems will train students in peer mediation and conflict resolution.

- **Peer Mediation** —Peer mediation provides youth and adults with an opportunity to manage conflict and resolve disputes through the assistance of a neutral third party who helps reconcile both substantive issues and relationships. This approach provides mediation services to solve conflicts between youth, conflicts between youth and adults, and conflicts between adults. Young people trained as peer mediators help resolve youth conflicts involving jealousies, rumors misunderstanding, bullying and fighting, personal property disputes, and damaged friendships. In addition, young people and adults may serve as co-mediators to resolve disputes between youth and teachers or adult leaders that might involve personality clashes, respect and behavior issues, and other conflicts that diminish student-teacher or mentor-mentee relationships.

- **Conflict Resolution**—Conflict resolution has been an integral tool in juvenile justice facilities and has application in regular and in alternative schools. Conflict resolution is introduced to supplement existing disciplinary policies and procedures. With opportunity for positive expression and problem resolution, youth in regular and alternative schools learn alternatives to violent and self-defeating behavior.

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Youth in alternative placements may lack the foundation skills of conflict resolution, especially those associated with orientation, perception and emotional capabilities. Many have sense of personal failure and view success in life as something beyond their ability to achieve. While conflict resolution programs are not personal therapy programs, choosing to offer education in conflict resolution provides a strategy to help address areas of deficiency. The US Office Of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will have training materials that will prove valuable in implementing conflict resolution.⁴

Classroom Management - Participating school systems will budget for and implement a standard classroom management program that has proven its value in a varied settings. Participating school systems may choose one of the following or other comparable programs. Cooperative purchasing will be utilized in order to take advantage of quantity discounts on the training materials. Assertive Discipline and Reclaiming Youth At Risk are used currently by Tennessee schools which could be available for consultation and technical assistance.

- **Assertive Discipline** —*Assertive Discipline* is available from Lee Cantor and Associates. School systems electing to implement this program will conduct ongoing training in *Assertive Discipline, The High Performing Teacher, Positive Parent Involvement* and *Succeeding With Difficult Students*.

- **Reclaiming Youth At Risk** —Reclaiming youth at risk is a program produced by the National Educational Service. School systems electing to implement this program will conduct ongoing training in *Reclaiming Youth At Risk, Reconnecting Youth: A Peer Group Approach to Building Life Skills, Safe Schools and Discipline With Dignity*.

Note: Each of the suggested classroom management programs (above) has a variety of titles and subsections that may be purchased to support the project.

⁴ Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-2-118.