

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS: A CROSSROADS ON THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

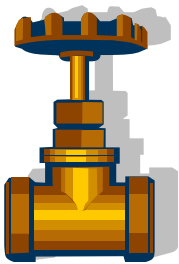
FACT SHEET

What is Alternative Education?



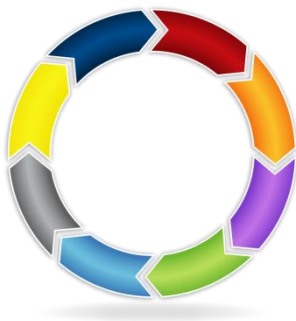
Alternative Education is a vague term that refers to the placement of disruptive and low-performing students in a non-traditional classroom setting. The **unbridled use of alternative placements can lead a child on a dangerous path toward incarceration.** Ineffective programs that operate as penal institutions without proper student supports only propel students deeper into the pipeline. In order to deconstruct the school-to-prison pipeline, we must focus on the point of entry, including alternative education placements.

What are some common examples of reasons for a student to be placed in an alternative education program?



- Possession, distribution, or use of alcohol and/or drugs;
- Physical altercations or fights;
- Possession or use of a weapon;
- Possession or use of a firearm;
- Continual academic failure;
- Disruptive verbal behavior and,
- Chronic truancy.

How can we re-invent Alternative Education Programs?



- Implement positive behavior supports to effectively discipline students, many of whom often also have special education and special behavioral needs.
- Remove law enforcement from alternative settings.
- Increase legislative oversight of alternative programs.
- Involve parents and communities in alternative programming decisions.
- Broaden eligibility for more types of “untraditional” students to benefit from alternative education programs.
- Clarify state and district roles and responsibilities, including accountability.
- Increase support and encourage innovation in programming and methodologies.
- Ensure high-quality staff and instruction.
- Enhance student support services by partnering alternative programs with community resources.
- Enrich funding and accountability for per pupil funding of alternative programs.