



The Alternative High School

A Walworth County Charter School

Servicing Badger, Big Foot, Delavan-Darien, Elkhorn-Area, and Williams Bay High Schools with Gateway Technical College

2007-2008 HANDBOOK

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WELCOME

The Alternative High School is an opportunity to learn. We have no two students who are the same, yet each has one thing in common – something has interfered with his/her progress. We would like to help our students deal with whatever the barriers to their success have been, while helping them learn to learn. We will do whatever we can to help them be successful. This is our commitment as a faculty and is the commitment we require from each of our students.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Alternative High School to provide an environment, which promotes the academic, emotional, social, and vocational growth and development of those students whose needs are not being met by the traditional school setting. Our goals are to have AHS students successfully complete a program leading to graduation, and a successful post-graduate career in one of four areas; college, vocational, military, or trades person. We shall accomplish these goals through innovative use of technology broad-based curricula, diverse teaching strategies, community involvement, and varied authentic assessment of progress and performance. It is also our goal to help our students live as productive, contributing members of society.

BACKGROUND

The Alternative High School (AHS) is a creation of the Walworth County Educational Consortium, a partnership of Gateway Technical College (GTC), Lakeland School, and Badger, Delavan-Darien, and Elkhorn Area School Districts. The school was established in August 1990 to serve the 11th and 12th grade students at risk of not graduating from the three local high schools. In August 1992, Williams Bay and Big Foot High Schools participated on a tuition basis and then joined the consortium in 1994. The AHS achieved charter school status in the summer of 2000. Our Governance Board is comprised of representatives from the five consortium high schools. (See following page.)

Alternative High School
GOVERNANCE BOARD
September 2007

STRUCTURE:

1. Agree to terms for 1 year, 2 years, 3 years.
2. New terms will begin with the first scheduled meeting in May.
3. Each district will determine how vacant slots are filled.

Big Foot:	Mike Lynch 3 yr. expires 2010
Williams Bay:	Kim Travis 3 yr. expires 2008
Lake Geneva:	John W. Druszczak 3 yr. expires 2010
Delavan-Darien:	Laurie Rubendall 3 yr. expires 2008
Elkhorn:	Karen Linak 3 yr. expires 2010 Ray Baur 3 yr. expires 2009 Mary Ellen Wright 3 yr. expires 2008
Human Services:	John Vymetal-Taylor 3 yr. expires 2009
District Admin.:	Dr. Wendy Overturf 3 yr. expires 2010

AHS STAFF OFFERS BALANCE, EXPERIENCE, AND EXPERTISE

We are very proud of our staff, which brings tremendous dedication and expertise to our students. Our staff includes backgrounds in elementary education, special education and high school disciplines. In addition, we enjoy excellent clerical support from a .6 time administrative assistant and a .6 time administrator.

PROFILES:

- Jerry Hawver, Administrator, Degrees: Ed.D NIU, MS Administration NIU, MS Learning Disabilities NIU, BS Elementary/Special Ed. NIU AA Rock Valley College. 30 years experience.
- Deb Bartholomay, English Teacher, Degrees: BA Washington/Webster U., Secondary English, Administrative, Alternative Education Certification, 31 years experience. Masters in Education Administration UW Madison.
- Marilyn Giacomelli, Math, Degrees: BS Physical Education K-12 & Speech 7-12. Graduate classes - Viterbo University, UW-Whitewater, and Cardinal Stritch University. Masters in Education Viterbo University. 11 years experience.
- Moya Smitka, Science, Degrees: BS Biology/Secondary Ed. ISU, Illinois Certification for Biology, Botany, General Science & Zoology. Graduate classes- Viterbo. 10 years experience.
- Kathy J. Simes, Senior Skills Instructor. Degrees: BA Family and Consumer Education K-12, Mount Mary College. Masters in Education Viterbo University. Nine years experience.
- Ryan Bensheimer, Social Studies, Degrees: Bachelor of Arts in Education, minor in Youth Ministries, Moody Bible Institute. Masters of Arts in Education, with curriculum and instruction, leadership, and sports emphasis, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. 14 years of experience.
- Heide Johnson, Administrative Assistant. Work history includes secretarial support, sales/marketing and teacher's assistant.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL
ADMISSION GUIDELINES
2007-2008

1. The student has completed his/her second year of high school.
2. The student is at least one year behind his/her graduating class.
3. The student is not a severe disciplinary problem
4. The student has demonstrated a desire to be successful at the AHS, through improved attendance and a positive attitude toward learning.

CALENDAR

In 1993, we began a two-year pilot, year-round calendar to better meet our students' needs. This pilot evolved from the traditional calendar of two, eighteen-week semesters. We noticed that many students needed contact over the summer. In 1994, our students voted unanimously to maintain this calendar. The AHS continues to utilize this schedule.

We have divided the mandated 180 school days into six, six-week sessions (calendar enclosed). Please note that three sessions equal one semester, and six sessions equal a full school year. This means that if a student wishes to complete two semesters (one full year) by June, he/she must begin attending the AHS during the summer session. Students may, however, enter the AHS at the *beginning* of any session. The successful completion of any three sessions is equal to one semester. School will be in session from 8:00-11:30 on Monday through Friday for morning session students and from 11:30-3:10 on Monday through Thursday for afternoon session students.

GRADING AND RECORDS

Traditional transcripts are issued by the Alternative High School for each of our students. Both competencies and credits are recorded simultaneously, thereby keeping options open for our students at all times. Students receive their grade report. This is the equivalent of a progress report. It is a combination of a narrative and a credit/no credit or letter grade (if the student so chooses). At the end of three sessions, a Semester Grade Report will be issued including both the progress report for that session as well as the official semester grade. Incomplete work should be made up in a timely manner. Copies of completed transcripts are forwarded to the school of origin upon completion of graduation requirements or dismissal from the program.

WORK COMPLETION

Students should be aware that because of the “hands-on” nature of much of our class work, daily attendance is critical. For the morning students, 11:00-11:30 is designated individual time to make up missed work or competencies. Afternoon students should come in early, or on Fridays. Students expecting to graduate at the end of Session Six (June) must have all missed competencies, that will not be addressed in that last session, completed by the last day of Session Five.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is recorded daily and sent to the local school weekly.

Definitions:

Attending – Participating in class, not just existing on campus. Students may not leave the AHS building during school hours unless for an authorized class activity.

Truant – (Wisconsin statute definition) unexcused absence for all or part of any day (includes tardiness) for 5 days of a semester.

Excused Absence – Illness is the only excused absence, unless there is a verified family emergency or a pre-arranged absence. A doctor’s excuse is required for each absence after five in a semester (3 sessions = one semester).

Procedure:

Daily – Exact times of attendance are recorded and reported to local schools and other appropriate authorities. Truancy is reported.

Students who demonstrate poor attendance or lack of progress will be placed on “three strikes”, as outlined in the pre-enrollment/enrollment packet.

Break Policy:

Teachers may facilitate breaks within the building for students as they deem appropriate. Any student leaving the building or class activity during the school day without faculty permission is considered to have left for the school day. The student will not be readmitted to classes that day. This is considered an unexcused absence.

Excused Absence:

In the event of an excused absence, the parent or guardian must call the AHS school office that morning (741-8138). A note is required upon the student’s return.

TRANSPORTATION

The student is responsible for providing his/her own transportation to and from the AHS. Most students are able to arrange car pooling.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Student must demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and property. Judgments of appropriate behavior are ultimately made by the faculty.

Students, who are experiencing difficulty with attendance and/or completion of assignments, or behavior, will be referred for interventions which include the three strikes template. Three strikes will result in the student’s return to his/her school of origin (see enrollment packet).

These behaviors are unacceptable and considered disrespectful of person and/or property:

- Foul language or verbal abuse
- Racial or cultural jokes or slurs
- Displaying clothing or accessories which are offensive in nature or that promote illegal or unhealthy activities.

Violation of the law is a legal issue and requires police action. Such violations include, but are not limited to:

- Physical harassment
- Threat of harm against an individual or property
- Defacing property
- Theft
- Possession and/or use of alcohol or other drugs*
- Possession of weapons*

* Violation will result in student's return to school of origin for disciplinary actions which may result in suspension or expulsion from his/her school of origin.

A student who is experiencing conflict with another student, is expected to notify a faculty member. Immediate arrangements will be made for participation in Conflict Resolution.

VISITORS

Because of its small size, the AHS does not allow students to bring visitors.

SCHOOL CLOSING

NOTIFICATION of AHS closing is broadcast through local radio and TV stations. In general, if Elkhorn Schools are not in session, the Alternative High School will also be closed.

SCHOOL SERVICES

AHS students have access to all support services, for example, guidance, counseling, or health, at their local school. AHS students will also be afforded the opportunity to enroll in additional classes at their school of origin.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families are welcome in any activity. Conference time can be arranged to address individual student or family needs. Families are especially encouraged to take advantage of the orientation sessions (the first day of each session) and open house held September 19, 2007 from 8:00-11:00 a.m.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Our students are an integral part of their community. Some activities that our students participate in are:

- Christmas program to benefit others in the community.
- Easter program to benefit others in the community.
- Benefits for the children of Twin Oaks
- Maintenance of Fontana Fen
- Maintenance of Four Seasons Nature Preserve
- Maintenance of Kishwauketo Wetlands

AHS students are deservedly very proud of their impact on the community.

PHONE NUMBERS FOR AHS STAFF

Main Line (Heide Johnson) 741-8138	Moya Smitka, Science 741-8490
Deb Bartholomay, English 741-8468	Kathy Simes, Senior Skills 741-8714
Marilyn Giacomelli, Math 741-8486	Ryan Bensheimer, Social Studies 741-8466
Jerry Hawver, Administrator 741-8352	