

# REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

---

**Related Entries:** ACG-RB, BLC, COB-RA, IOE-RB, JFA, JFA-RA, JGA-RB, JGA-RC  
**Responsible Office:** Chief Academic Officer  
Chief Operating Officer  
Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Improvement

## Placement Procedures for Alternative Programs

### I. PURPOSE

To identify alternative program options available to Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) students and describe program placement procedures

### II. BACKGROUND

Alternative programs are designed to expand the array of educational program options that provide additional academic, behavioral, social, and emotional support beyond what is available to middle and high school students in the regular academic programs. The purposes, objectives, and locations of MCPS Alternative Programs vary – from programs located at comprehensive MCPS middle and high schools, to programs located at other locations which may include other MCPS schools, or the sites of community partner agencies.

Consistent with Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*, MCPS will work to identify barriers that prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities. Schools are expected to utilize a continuum of instructional strategies and behavioral and disciplinary responses before referring a student to Alternative Programs and to consider all relevant information to identify educational supports or services that may be needed by the student beyond what has been provided. Alternative Programs placement practices, as well as discipline practices, are to be consistently, fairly, proportionally, and equitably applied.

### III. DESCRIPTIONS OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

A. *Level 1 Alternative Programs* are located within each comprehensive MCPS middle and high school and provide direct academic, behavioral, social, and emotional support and instruction to students who have not been successful, and

are considered to be best served by continuing in the regular academic program and school activities at their school with additional support. Students may participate in Level 1 Alternative Programs for the duration of their middle and/or high school years, or some part thereof. Each middle and high school has staff allocated and tasked with the design, development, and implementation of a Level 1 Alternative Program, under the supervision of the school principal.

- B. *Level 2 Alternative Programs* are located at Blair G. Ewing Center and other locations across the county and provide a general curriculum, offering credits needed for graduation, utilizing small classes and a personalized, whole-student approach that features customized, rigorous instruction in a non-traditional setting.
1. The purpose of Level 2 Alternative Programs is to provide direct academic, behavioral, social, and emotional support to middle and high school students who have not been successful in the regular academic programs, and students who have experienced interruptions to their education.
  2. Level 2 Alternative Programs offer different pathways to re-engage in an academic program and complete graduation requirements through a customized plan of instruction for each student that may draw upon options such as case management, on-line learning, dual enrollment, flexible hours, and credit recovery opportunities.
  3. Students may enroll in Level 2 Alternative Programs for the duration of their middle and/or high school years, or some part thereof.
- C. *Level 3 Alternative Programs* are located at Blair G. Ewing Center and other locations across the county and provide the same general curriculum as Level 2 Alternative Programs. For middle and high school students who have been recommended for extended suspension (for a time period between 11 and 45 school days) or expulsion, as set forth in MCPS Regulation JGA-RB, *Suspension and Expulsion*, Level 3 Alternative Programs provide excluded students with comparable educational services and appropriate behavioral support services to promote their successful return to the regular academic program.

#### IV. PURPOSE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE (APAC)

- A. A multi-stakeholder committee reviews and considers referrals for enrollment to Level 2 Alternative Programs. The committee includes, but is not limited to, representatives from –

1. Level 2/3 Alternative Programs principals/designees,
  2. Office of the Chief Operating Officer,
  3. Office of Special Education,
  4. Office of School Support and Improvement, and the
  5. Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement.
- B. APAC convenes at least once each marking period, and more often as required.
- C. APAC reviews aggregated data about Alternative Program referrals for the purpose of informing placement decisions and evaluating the implementation of Alternative Programs in alignment with Board Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*, as well as the priorities set forth in sections III.A-C above.

## V. PROCEDURES

### A. Level 1 Alternative Programs

1. Before referring a student to the school's Level 1 Alternative Program, the school-based Educational Management Team (EMT) is responsible for conducting an assessment to determine that any prescribed instructional and/or behavioral interventions and strategies have been provided consistently in the regular academic program over a measureable period of time. If the student has not demonstrated progress in response to such interventions and strategies, the EMT may consider whether the student could benefit from the Level 1 Alternative Program.
  - a) The parent/guardian, and eligible student as appropriate, must be notified of the EMT meeting and every effort should be made to schedule the meeting at a time when they can attend and provide input.
  - b) The EMT should consider information from a variety of sources, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - (1) Information provided in MCPS Form 272-9, *Teacher Referral*, and MCPS Form 272-10, *Documentation of Interventions*

- (2) Attendance data
- (3) Assessment data, including report cards
- (4) Written or oral reports of observations
- (5) Health records
- (6) Medical, psychological, psychiatric, and/or developmental reports
- (7) Evaluations of adaptive behaviors, including completion of MCPS Form 336-64, *Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)*, and MCPS Form 336-65, *Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)*
- (8) FBA and BIP data/documentation that suggests that previous interventions have been implemented and progress has not been made
- (9) Results of previous EMT meetings

2. The EMT shall establish –

- a) academic, behavioral, social, and/or emotional criteria based on the needs of the individual student, upon which to assess the student's progress in the Level 1 Alternative Program,
- b) a defined period of time that the student is expected to remain in the Level 1 Alternative Program in order to determine the effectiveness of the interventions, and
- c) a timeline for regular reviews and adjustments, as appropriate, of intake goals.
- d) Students are expected to remain in the program, at a minimum, until the completion of one marking period (in the case of middle school students) or one semester (in the case of high school students).
- e) At a minimum, middle schools students should be reviewed every marking period, and high school students should be reviewed each semester.

3. Upon the recommendation of the EMT, and with the input of the parent/guardian, and the eligible student as appropriate, the student is assigned to the Level 1 Alternative Program. Services are expected to begin immediately or during a natural transitional break, such as at the end of a marking period.
4. During the time that the student is in the Level 1 Alternative Program —
  - a) prescribed interventions are to be employed consistently and documented,
  - b) the school EMT will meet regularly to monitor and review the impact of the interventions. The team should review written documentation described above as well as consultations between the Level 1 Alternative Program teacher and regular academic program teachers.
5. Continued participation in the program is determined by the EMT with input from the parents/guardians/eligible student.
6. For middle school students matriculating to high school, an EMT, consisting of Level 1 Alternative Program representatives from each school, and parents/guardians, and students as appropriate, should be convened to plan for the transition of the student to the next school level.
7. Level 1 Alternative Programs are the responsibility of the principal at each school, and are supported and monitored by the Office of School Support and Improvement.

**B. Level 2 Alternative Programs**

1. Students who need additional supports beyond what the regular academic program has provided to the student in the school's Level 1 Alternative Program or other structured setting such as a resource class, may be referred to Level 2 Alternative Programs.
2. Before referring a student to a Level 2 Alternative Program, the referring school's EMT, including a Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW), is responsible for conducting an assessment to determine that any prescribed instructional

and/or behavioral interventions and strategies have been provided consistently in the Level 1 Alternative program, or other structured setting such as a resource class, over a measurable period of time. If the student has not demonstrated progress in response to such interventions and strategies, the EMT may consider whether the student could benefit from a Level 2 Alternative Program, and identify additional educational supports needed by the student beyond what has been provided.

- a) The parent/guardian, and eligible students as appropriate, must be notified of the EMT meeting and every effort should be made to schedule the meeting at a time when they can attend and provide input.
- b) The EMT should consider information from a variety of sources, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - (1) Information provided in MCPS Form 272-9, *Teacher Referral*, and MCPS Form 272-10, *Documentation of Interventions*
  - (2) Attendance data
  - (3) Assessment data, including report cards
  - (4) Written or oral reports of observations
  - (5) Health records
  - (6) Medical, psychological, psychiatric, and/or developmental reports
  - (7) Evaluations of adaptive behaviors, including completion of MCPS Form 336-64, *Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)*, and MCPS Form 336-65, *Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)*
  - (8) FBA and BIP data/documentation that suggests that previous interventions have been implemented and progress has not been made
  - (9) Results of previous EMT meetings

- (10) Suggested modifications to intervention plans
  - (11) Suggested instructional strategies, as appropriate
3. If the EMT team refers the student to a Level 2 Alternative Program, MCPS Form 336-55, *Referral for Alternative Program Placement*, must be completed and signed by the principal from the referring school, the PPW, the parent/guardian, and eligible student as appropriate.
- a) The PPW who attends the EMT meeting will conduct further outreach to parents/guardians, and eligible students as appropriate, who may be unable to attend the meeting and seek their consent as appropriate.
  - b) The PPW submits the referral packet to the supervisor of Alternative Programs for review by APAC.
4. Upon the approval of APAC, the student is assigned to a Level 2 Alternative Program.
5. The student is expected to begin in the Level 2 Alternative Program as soon as transportation can be arranged, or during a natural transitional break, such as at the end of a marking period, as determined at the intake meeting.
6. For each student accepted to a Level 2 Alternative Program, a multi-stakeholder group, to include, but not limited to, a Level 2 Alternative Program principal/designee, a principal/designee from the referring school, the PPW, the parent/guardian, and the eligible student as appropriate, shall conduct an intake meeting to establish –
- a) the academic, behavioral, social and/or emotional criteria, based on the needs of the individual student, upon which to assess the student's progress in the Level 2 Alternative Program,
  - b) a defined period of time that the student is expected to remain in the Level 2 Alternative Program in order to determine the effectiveness of the interventions, and
  - c) a timeline for regular reviews and adjustment, as appropriate, of intake goals.
  - d) Students are expected to remain in the program, at a minimum, until

the completion of one marking period (in the case of middle school students) or one semester (in the case of high school students). This enhances the opportunity for credits to be completed, earned, and appropriately reflected on the student's report card and/or transcript. Leaving before the end of the marking period/semester may jeopardize credits earned while in the Level 2 Alternative Program.

- e) At a minimum, middle school students should be reviewed every marking period, and high school students should be reviewed each semester.
7. There are times, however, when participation in a Level 2 Alternative Program does not result in the attainment of established goals. When this happens, Alternative Programs staff will conduct an EMT meeting, including parents/guardians, and eligible students as appropriate, staff members from the referring school, central office support staff, and the referring school PPW, to determine the most appropriate next steps.
  8. The Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement court liaison specialist is responsible for supporting students returning to MCPS from detention and may recommend to parents/guardians, and eligible students as appropriate, the option of the student enrolling in a Level 2 Alternative Program in lieu of a regular academic program.

#### C. Level 3 Alternative Program

1. The chief operating officer/designee has the authority to place a student who receives an extended suspension or is expelled into a Level 3 Alternative Program for the duration of the extended suspension or expulsion, subject to the provisions of Regulation JGA-RB, *Suspension and Expulsion*.
2. The superintendent of schools/designee also has the authority to make direct student placements into Level 3 Alternative Programs under exceptional circumstances.
3. For each student assigned to a Level 3 Alternative Program, a multi-stakeholder group, to include, but not limited to a Level 3 Alternative Program principal/designee, and a principal/designee from the regular academic program from which the student was suspended or expelled, shall–
  - a) conduct an intake meeting



- b) meet periodically to monitor the student's progress and plan for the student's transition and return to the regular academic program upon completion of the student's extended suspension or expulsion.
4. Parents/guardians, or eligible students as appropriate, may choose for a student who has participated in the Level 3 Alternative Program to transition to a Level 2 Alternative Program.

#### VI. Other Alternative Education Settings

- A. *Interim Alternative Educational Settings (IAES)* are temporary placements of not more than 45 days at locations other than the regular academic program, for students identified as having disabilities.
  1. IAES placement procedures are set forth in MCPS Regulation JGA-RC, *Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities*, and COMAR §13A.08.03.06.
  2. IAES placements may be provided in sites that operate Level 2 or Level 3 Alternative Programs as determined by the Office of Special Education.
- B. Where feasible, the superintendent of schools/designee may develop pilot recovery programs for the purpose of supporting students returning to MCPS from substance abuse treatment programs.

**Related Sources:** Code of Maryland Education, §13A.08.01.11.B(2)(c) and §13A.08.03.06.

**Regulation History:** New Regulation, August 2, 1996; revised September 28, 2007; revised August 13, 2009; revised July 30, 2018.