

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Mount Laurel Township School District Board of Education endeavors to provide an educational program adjusted to the needs of the individual child within the financial means of the district. Grouping enables a more efficient use of staff in meeting these needs. Program adaptations provide another means of using staff efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of many children.

When the needs of special individuals or groups cannot be met through adaptation or independent study, the chief school administrator shall investigate and propose to the board for approval alternative programs and facilities. Alternative education programs shall be approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Each alternative education program shall fulfill the program criteria that are specified in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.2 including but not limited to:

- A. A maximum student-teacher ratio of 10:1 for middle school programs;
- B. An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) shall be developed for each general education student enrolled in the program; and
- C. For students with disabilities the alternate education program shall be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Home Schooling

The board acknowledges the right of parents/guardians to educate their children at home. The board is not required by law to allow a resident child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in the regular school curriculum or in extracurricular or sports activities. The board may:

- A. Allow a child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities or sports activities;
- B. Loan books or materials to a child educated elsewhere than at school.

Required Services to Home Schooled Students

When a student of this district is home schooled, the district shall:

- A. Provide payment for tuition when a student is enrolled in a shared-time vocational school program. Once a resident student is enrolled in a shared-time vocational school program the student becomes a public school student;
- B. Review any written request for a special education evaluation and if warranted conduct an evaluation as described in board policy 6171.4 Special Education and in accordance with the federal special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 108-446 §612).

If the child is eligible for special education and related services, the district shall make a free, appropriate public education available only if the child enrolls in the district. If the child does not enroll in the district, but

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the district chooses to provide services, the district will develop a plan for the services to be provided.

Disruptive/Disaffected Children

The board of education recognizes that the active engagement of each pupil is a primary requisite for sound teaching and learning to take place. When a child is unable to benefit from the educational program because he/she is either disruptive or disaffected, then the educational goals of the district for that child will not be realized and the efforts of other pupils may be impeded.

In an effort to optimize the educational experience for each child, the chief school administrator shall develop procedures to identify and work with disruptive/disaffected pupils.

When it is determined by the child study team that a disruptive/disaffected pupil is not classifiable, the board shall consider some other program as an alternative to regular classroom attendance. When the district does not have a suitable alternative program available, the chief school administrator shall recommend to the board placement in a program of another district, or home instruction.

In accordance with state law and board policy, disruptive pupils whose continuing attendance interrupts the educational program and/or threatens harm to themselves and others may be suspended and considered for expulsion (see policy 5114 Suspension and Expulsion).

Removal for Weapons Offenses or Assault

Any pupil who is convicted or found to be delinquent for the following offenses shall be immediately removed by the principal from the district's regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year and placed in an alternative education school or program pending a hearing before the board of education to remove the pupil:

- A. Possessing a firearm on any school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function; or
- B. Committing a crime while possessing a firearm.

The chief school administrator shall determine at the end of the year whether the pupil is to return to the district's regular education program, in accordance with procedures established by the Commissioner of Education.

Any pupil who assaults a pupil, teacher, administrator, board member, or other district employee with a weapon other than a firearm on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function must be immediately removed from the school's regular education program and placed in an alternative school or program, pending a hearing before the board. The chief school administrator shall determine when the child shall return to the regular education program.

Potential Dropouts

While statute requires attendance of each pupil only until 16 years of age, it is in the best interests of both pupils and the community that they complete the educational program that will equip them with skills and increase their chances for a successful and fulfilling life beyond the schools.

The board directs that whenever a pupil wishes to withdraw, or has been identified as a potential withdrawal, effort should be made to determine the underlying reason and the resources of the district should be used to assist the pupil in reaching his/her career goals. No pupil under the age of 18 will be permitted to withdraw without the written consent of a parent/guardian.

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A pupil is of legal age and wishes to withdraw, or has been identified as a potential withdrawal shall be provided services that may include the following:

- A. Counseling services shall be made available to any pupil who wishes to withdraw;
- B. Every effort will be made to satisfy the pupil's future educational needs;
- C. Help for the pupil to define his/her own educational life goals and help planning the realization of those goals;
- D. Information about the high school equivalency program;
- E. Information regarding opportunities available in the armed forces.

Adopted: May 24, 2005  
 Revised: September 23, 2008  
 NJSBA Review/Update: June 2013  
 Readopted: January 28, 2014

Key Words

Alternative Educational Programs, Home Schooling, Dropouts, Disruptive Pupils, Disaffected Pupils, Disaffected Pupils, At-Risk Pupils

**Legal References:** N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties  
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. Discipline of pupils  
See particularly:  
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.2  
N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1, -25, -31 Attendance at school free of charge  
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)  
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 Graduation requirements  
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.2 High school diplomas  
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.1 et seq. Special Education  
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.5 Removal of pupils from general education for firearms offense  
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.6 Removal of pupils from general education for assaults with weapons  
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.1 et seq. Alternative Education Programs  
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 et seq. Home or Out-of-School Instruction for General Education Pupils  
N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1 et seq. Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts  
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-13.1 et seq. Pupil Behavior  
See particularly:  
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-13.2  
 20 U.S.C.A. 1400 et seq. - 1990 Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, P.L. 108-446 §612  
State v. Vaughn, 44 N.J. 142, 1965  
State v. Massa, 95 N.J. Super. 382, 1967

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20 USCA Section 8921 Gun Free Schools Act

**Possible**

<b><u>Cross References:</u></b>	*5113	Absences and excuses
	*5114	Suspension and expulsion
	5119	Transfers
	*5131	Conduct/discipline
	*5131.7	Weapons and dangerous instruments
	*5134	Married/pregnant pupils
	*6142.2	English as a second language; bilingual programs
	*6142.12	Career education
	*6164.2	Guidance services
	*6164.4	Child study team
	*6171.4	Special education
	*6173	Home instruction

\*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.