Task Force Report
Long Range Planning Special Committee
Alternative Education

Final Report

January 14, 2008

"There is never a border to what you can learn, the mind is always open
and ready to obtain new information – your job is to keep it [your mind]
open and reach towards challenges, not shrink away."

Daniella Ohnemius
Rosemont Ridge Middle School
Editor, "*The Ridge*"
7th Grader

We dedicate this report to **Kim Noah (**Principal, West Linn High School) and **Andy Sommer** (Principal, Wilsonville High School). Eight years ago, despite their very significant success with high school students in our district, they brought to our attention a handful of capable students who were not learning and thriving in their schools – capable students with credit deficits and ideas about leaving high school early. Kim and Andy believe, like Martin and Halperin suggest, that *"reconnecting [kids to school] is not rocket science. Rather it is more an exercise in imagining what might be, of having the skills, will, and the stamina to shape reality in more creative and positive directions."*[1] For their insight, stamina, will, and imagination, we say thanks!

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[1] *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reaching Out-of-School Youth,* Martin and Halperin, American Youth Policy Forum, 2006

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<u>Challenge and Summary:</u>

The district administration recommended to the Long Range Planning Committee that the next capital bond include a special facility for the purpose of serving students whose needs would best be met in an alternative setting to the current comprehensive middle or high school model. This committee was formed for the purpose of exploring the extent of the need for alternative programs and the range of possibilities for program design to meet those needs.

As we began to look more closely at the challenge the district administration laid out, it was quickly apparent that the task was more complicated than considering only the specific facility needs of one of our alternative education programs, ArtTech Charter High School. What emerged in our process was a better understanding of the needs of students who either drop out of formal learning systems or leave our schools to continue their learning in other places, as well as an understanding of how important it is to look at the task of addressing those students' needs more systemically with a clear eye on our district guiding mission question and vision themes. **Are we helping every learner become the greatest thinker and most thoughtful person for the world?**

Our study included the following four components: (1) research that describes data and patterns for kids over time, (2) existing alternative school programs in and outside Oregon, (3) data collected from our district's middle and high school programs, and (4) knowledge of best practices for teaching and learning. This report will summarize the key understandings generated from our study, examine existing practices, and consider the efficacy of locating alternative options in a separate facility. This report will acknowledge several strong implications for practice, the existence of a small group of students who would benefit from these services, and make the following two recommendations for action.

First, we hope to continue to increase the numbers of students who learn and thrive in our schools, by more intentionally paying attention to the implications included in this report. **We recommend the creation of an Alternative Education Stewardship Committee** appointed by the district superintendent and composed of diverse stakeholders from across our district and community. Their role will be threefold: (1) to advocate personalized education and the development of larger circles of support for each child; (2) to champion the implications included in this report; and (3) to continue the study and conversations around quality learning and teaching begun by this task force.

Second, we acknowledge that there exist a small group of high school students whose needs require a more intense, coordinated set of interventions. **We recommend that the district dedicate district funds to find a permanent location/facility to house this set of services** – a small, separate facility that could house approximately 150 students beginning at 9th grade whose programs, structure, and leadership would be based on the key qualities successfully used in schools across the country.

Task Force Members:

Margaret Allen, Special Projects & Facilitator
Thayne Balzer, Assistant Superintendent
Debi Briggs-Crispin, Principal, Rosemont Ridge Middle School
Saskia Dresler, Instructional Coordinator, Cedaroak Park Primary School
Peter McDougal, Assistant Principal, Wood Middle School
Patti Millage, Secretary, Curriculum & Instruction
Curt Scholl, Assistant Principal, West Linn High School
Carlos Sequeira, Assistant Principal, Wilsonville High School
Cathy Smith/Cheri Canfield, Adult Transition Program, Student Services
Mike Tannenbaum, Principal, Art & Technology Charter High School
Ken Welch, Director/Dawn Bolotow, Assistant Director, Student Services
Tim Woodley, Director of Operations

Meeting Dates: *(see appendix chart, "Work and Process Timeline")*

September 11	September 25	October 9	October 23
October 30	November 6	November 13	November 19
December 4	December 11	December 18	January 8
January 14			

Task Force Guiding Questions:

How do we (the West Linn-Wilsonville School District) help all students learn and thrive – academically, socially, emotionally, and as members of communities?

How do we (the West Linn-Wilsonville School District) help those students (from ages 11 to 21), who struggle in our comprehensive middle or high school models, learn and thrive – academically, socially, emotionally, and as members of communities?

What is the breadth and depth of these needs? What are we currently doing to support students? Should we house existing and future programs in our current schools or at alternative sites?

Historical Perspective:

Comprehensive High Schools
High schools began in the late 1800s with the coming of the industrial age. During this time, only a small percentage of students stayed in school long enough to go to high school. And, these students took a traditional academic course load, in preparation for becoming the professionals and managers in our society.

In the early 20th century, with immigration rates skyrocketing and the industrial economy booming, new social understandings developed around the purpose of high school. The new immigrants were considered unprepared to take classes offering the usual academic rigor. Progressives, like John Dewey, saw this as an opportunity to broaden the scope of high schools – a place to advance our democratic way of life, while training the influx of immigrants to

become the large potential workforce to feed the industrial machine. A proliferation of different kinds of course offerings ensued, less than half of them involving the traditional academic focus. Over a relatively short period of time, the comprehensive high school developed into an efficient sorting mechanism preparing students for very different roles in the work force and our society.

Over most of the 20th century, the large comprehensive high school has been seen as an efficient and egalitarian way of educating masses of students. In the mid-1980s, the federal government released a report called, "A Nation at Risk." This lengthy document called into question, among other things, the effectiveness of the large comprehensive high school, and reignited debate about the purpose of schooling in general, and more recently, intense discussions about how to measure student performance.

The West Linn-Wilsonville School District, of course, has been impacted by this larger historical picture. And, in the last decade, our school district has made learning for all students a moral imperative. Our mission question and vision themes are alive with the notion that we are creating a community responsible to and for the learning of all. In 2000, high school principals, Kim Noah and Andy Sommer, began a conversation with Mike Tannenbaum, district Assistant Superintendent, about how to meet the needs of students who were not experiencing success in our high schools. This year, the school board adopted policy IGBHB, "Establishment of Alternative Education Program", dedicated to providing educational options for all students *(see appendix, WLWV School District Board Policy IGBHB)*.

Art & Technology Charter High School
During the 2002-03 school year, the school board and district administration commissioned a year-long study of high school graduation requirements. At the conclusion of their work, "The study group, composed of students, parents, teachers, and administrators unanimously agreed that an alternative secondary school was the greatest educational need in the school district" *(see readings handout, "Exhibit A of a 'Proposal to ODE for [Art Tech] Charter School' ", page 1)*. This group recognized a need to support ". . . students who feel disconnected or alienated from the two comprehensive high schools."

In June of 2003, the committee submitted a proposal to the Oregon Department of Education and was granted $50,000 in start-up funds and $300,000 in implementation funds to start an alternative secondary school called the O'Brien Learning Center. The committee then spent the next two years finding a home, hiring teachers, and creating a curriculum for the new school. In May of 2005, ArtTech High School accepted applications from 58 students for the 50 available spaces. A store front in Wilsonville was leased in the summer of 2005. The West Linn-Wilsonville School Board allocated additional FTE to accommodate eight additional students and the use 2002 Bond Funds to create a physical learning environment within the storefront shell. ArtTech Charter High School opened in the fall of 2005. From the start (and especially, after the enrollment grew to eighty students), this facility's space was too small to serve the educational needs of enrolled students. Administrators and teachers creatively managed their way through this dilemma by using space in Wilsonville Public Library, holding physical education classes in Memorial Park, holding science classes at CREST, and making changes to the curriculum and schedules. Entering its third year with students, ArtTech Charter High School currently serves 82 students, celebrated their first group of graduates in the spring of 2007, and continues to carry a list of students waiting for enrollment.

Task Force Process and Findings:

Andre Gide writes that, "One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time." Our task was no less complex; it was accomplished through our joint commitment to reading, reflection, and collaboration over time. There were times that required our group to look outside our current contexts toward new possibilities. Our journey included asking hard questions of ourselves, the readings, and our district data. Are we helping every learner become the greatest thinker and most thoughtful person for the world? The findings and implication you are about to read are based on our belief that we need to do everything in our power to help prepare students to be those strong thinkers and thoughtful people – able and confident enough that they'll consent to lose sight of the shore and journey beyond the safety of their home, circumstances, and school setting to become the members of our community we envision.

The challenge set before this task force was accomplished over the last four months through the intentional study of: (1) research described in literature that depicts the patterns of behavior for kids over time, (2) existing programs in and outside Oregon, and (3) data collected from our district's middle and high school programs. We interviewed the principals of all three district high schools, Ken Welch, Director of Student Special Services, and consultants in the greater Portland area, collecting information about needs and current alternative options available to students.

The term "alternative" is an often used term connected to education. For the intent of this report, "alternative education" means the application of options or possibilities to support the educational process for students – one can develop options, "other educational pathways" that help students learn and thrive in schools. Alternative education schools come in a variety of organizational structures including schools within schools, charter schools, magnet schools, focus schools, or alternative high schools. These programs might be housed within comprehensive high schools or in separate facilities. These programs might be private or district sponsored. Programs are classified as either "progressive" (with the objective of trying a new approach) or "retrieval/continuation" (with the objective of bringing students back and helping them finish high school).

What Are Other Programs Within and Outside Oregon?
Finding alternative options (including programs and services) to help students learn and thrive is not a new endeavor and becomes a focus of many school districts as they reach or exceed enrollment of 10,000 students. Larger districts that offer multiple focus schools and alternative schools have wrestled over the course of many years with the same questions that face our task force. Schools range in size, in their degree of partnership with the existing school district, and in the variety of programs they offer.

We examined alternative education schools both within and outside Oregon. Our comparison group of schools included twenty-three alternative schools in Oregon, Washington, Nebraska, New York, Iowa, Massachusetts, Colorado, Illinois, Virginia, Indiana, Idaho, and Kansas. We read two research reports that summarized program options and organizational characteristics of 85 schools in Minnesota (*Characteristics of Alternative Schools and Programs Serving At-Risk Students*, Lange & Sletten, 1995) and 153 in Kentucky (*Academic Success of At-Risk*

Students in an Alternative School Setting: An Examination of Students' Academic Success Out of the Mainstream School Environment, Turpin & Hinton, 2000). We also read two reports that helped us understand other programs: *Final Report, Alternative Education Committee (An Advisory Committee to the Seattle School Board*), June 30, 2005 and *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth*, American Youth Policy Forum, 2006.

While organizational characteristics varied across programs, we found some common elements worth noting *(see appendix table, "Summary of Alternative Schools Characteristics")*. Programs enrolled varied numbers of students from 38 to 280, but most ranged from 50 to 150 students. All programs were managed by a director or principal, housed in facilities separate from their sponsoring high schools, and were completely self-contained (except for a very small percent of schools in Kentucky). Their hours ranged from 8:00am until 8:00pm, and mostly began with programs at 9th grade. Only 23% of programs that included students from 7th and 8th grade and services for this age range were separated from the high school, self-contained, and more structured than the alternative high school that housed their program. All schools were "re-entry" or "recovery" schools that included progressive options to attract dropouts ("early leavers"). None of the schools we examined were magnet or charter schools for general populations of high school students.

All schools included a wide variety of programs – multiple options within an optional school. They used similar terms to describe the uniqueness of their schools: longer, flexible blocks for scheduling; choice; individualized instruction; smaller class size; admission procedures; fewer electives; and dedicated, committed staff. All schools included advisory program periods, credit recovery, and activities to support families. Fewer programs included apprenticeships or internships, service learning components, online courses, transition to work programs, or pregnancy and parenting programs. It is important to note that there were several schools (including Centennial Learning Center in Oregon, Bryan Community School in Nebraska, and Dutchess Alternative High School in New York) that included all of the above options.

What are the Key Qualities of Effective Alternative Schools?

Our study of existing alternative schools within and outside Oregon, while showing the common organizational characteristics and program options, point to strong key elements of effective programs. These key elements are affirmed in research that describes effective alternative schools. The following lists, taken from a study of twelve communities across the nation, *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth,* are a summarize these key qualities.

Observations of Programs Attempting to Reconnect Out-of-School Youth
(1) Obstacles to student success include the quality of prior schooling and social, economic, and psychological barriers – students need ready access to multiple forms of support especially in the areas of health, nutrition, teen parenting, child care, substance abuse, mental health and sometimes instruction in English
(2) Focus on the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and communication skills for students to be adequately prepared for adult life
(3) Effective programs are comprehensive, flexible, intentional, pragmatic, and include post high follow-up

(4)   Young people want to learn and succeed

(5)   Service to others and the community is a key element of many programs

(6)   "Committed adults, steadfast in their support of young people's success, are the key element of dropout recovery"

(7)   School districts take responsibility for the education of all their young people

(8)   Many practices successful in the alternative schools, if adopted by all schools in the district, could improve the academic success of every student

(9)   Most attractive program features include flexibility and adaptability

(10)   Most programs are funded through local or state revenues

(11)   High quality programs are possible for any community to implement

Characteristics of Effective School Efforts

(1)   Open-entry/open-exit – students proceed through programs at their own pace with graduation occurring at multiple points in time

(2)   Flexible scheduling and year-round learning

(3)   Teachers as coaches, facilitators, and crew leaders

(4)   Real world career-oriented curricula

(5)   Opportunities to link employment with educational programs

(6)   Clear codes of conduct with consistent enforcement

(7)   Extensive support services

(8)   A portfolio of options

What Are the Needs and Challenges in our District?

Currently, our response to those groups of students (ages 11 to 21), who struggle academically, socially, emotionally, or as members of our learning communities, is well intentioned and varied. Programs are located in a variety of settings within and outside the district.

A wide range of alternative options exist for students in our district *(see appendix list, "Current Alternative Placements")*. Some of these groups are housed in our middle and high school buildings; for example, credit recovery courses, early bird classes, summer school programs, a program for students from 18 to 21 years with identified disabilities, and two self contained Life Learning Programs. Some of these students are placed in programs outside our district; for example, Clackamas Community College, Cascade Academics, and other private alternative high school programs. And, some are district sponsored programs currently housed in a variety of locations; for example, ArtTech Charter High School, a district sponsored charter school housed in a Wilsonville storefront space, and S.T.E.P., a tutoring program for students, housed at Stafford School. These programs generally lack centralized access to families, and vary in their quality and overall effectiveness. Approximately, 166 students use these programs - 84 identified special education students and 82 general education students.

Our greatest needs exist with three groups of students: (1) Adult Transition ("Post High"), (2) Short Term Placement and Support, and (3) Alternative School Setting (*see appendix graphic, "Diagram of Student Groups"*).

(1) Adult Transition Needs – We hold legal responsibility (through IDEA requirements) to serve and support students who are ages 18 to 21, have an IEP, and have not received traditional high school diplomas. Mostly, these students are identified for special services programs that include a wide range of support, academic, and transition to work goals. A very small number of these students need daily programs; most need less frequent support that might range from a location to hold a meeting to other needs (e.g. counseling, training) two or three days each week. Since they are past typical graduation age, a strong concern with these young adults is their reluctance to continue attending programs housed on high school campuses. Currently, there are at least 20 students identified in this group. Finding a place to house this program outside the high school is a challenge; in fact, there is no identified location for this program next school year (2008-09).

(2) Short Term Placement and Support Needs – We know that some students in our district have been expelled, suspended, or are unable (for a variety of reasons including medical) to attend regular classroom based programs. While we attempt to work with these families to find alternatives outside their school, we are beginning to more intentionally pursue formal learning options for these students. The numbers of these students varies over the course of the year. While the number of students expelled from school is relatively small (9 to 10 over the year), students suspended for 5 or more days can be as many as 50 to 60 over the school year. These students need short term placements to support their continued learning, along with academic, social-emotional, or drug and alcohol counseling to bring them back on track to graduation. They also need venues for credit recovery or access to programs that offer certificates leading to GED completion. We would like to provide district sponsored programs for these learners, more formally identified re-entry points for these students.

Other students included in this category are dropouts ("early leavers") and homeless students who are not currently enrolled in other school settings. The number of homeless students in our district is very small, less than .1% (approximately 14 students across the district). The number of "early leavers" identified in our district has ranged over the last four years from .7% to 3% (approximately, 5 to 50 students). These students need academic credit recovery programs, and often, individually designed environments and programs. Students from this group may end up in the first or third groups over time. While we know that these are relatively low numbers compared to other districts, we would like to provide stronger, more effective options for these students in our district.

(3) Alternative School Setting Needs – Like the study five years ago described at the beginning of this report, our task force study of literature and district data revealed the need for alternative options and school settings for some students. For a variety of reasons, from family problems to academic access, some students' instructional needs would be better served in smaller, more connected settings where there is strong community accountability and flexible structures, schedules, and strategies. National research assumes that 12 to 14% of enrolled high school students fall in this group. While we have significant numbers of students who might fall in this group, our numbers (9-10%) do not match national averages. The data we collected from two groups (2007 ArtTech applicants and middle school at-risk students) helps us add depth and breadth to our understanding of this group's needs.

First, we collected data from the 2007 applicants of ArtTech Charter High School (*see appendix charts: "Demographics, ArtTech High School", "Learning Characteristics Scores of Excellent or Good", and "Student/Adult General Comments"*). Data was collected from both boys and girls and both West Linn and Wilsonville residents. Their needs strongly match those described for students in other alternative middle and high school settings described in literature. For example, the recurring comments of applicants attempting to enroll at ArtTech Charter High School describe varied and intense needs. Their comments describe problems with school anxiety, attendance, isolation and lack of connection to their peers and teachers, failing classes, and family counseling need. Students see themselves heading to school beyond high school, but are unable to complete assignments, manage timelines, and monitor their goals. They know that they need to work on skills that will help them be successful in school and life, but often do not have the confidence to attain their goals. As Koca states, they have a "strong desire to get out of their predicament" and are seeking ways to get back on track and complete graduation requirements.[2]

Data from this case study of students makes us wonder about the mobility of their families and its impact on student learning. Eighty-nine percent describe attending 3 or more districts over the course of their time in public school. Several described 3 or more high schools in the last two years. Clearly, it is hard to know a place and the people who are willing to help you or to become connected to activities and people when you know you may leave. We also know from research that those students who move frequently in their school experience often lack the integrated, consistent approach to learning and skill development that successful students possess. This group of students, not only came to our middle and high school programs with a propensity to leave (a "moving habit"), but we suspect with holes in the sequence of their skills. They became the "alienated and disconnected students" described by principals Andy Sommer and Kim Noah at the beginning of this report. We need more district sponsored options for this group of students.

Second, our data also suggests that students show "early warning signals" (of their upcoming struggle) along their way in their school experience before they enter high school. Neild, Blefanz, & Herzog state that, "sixth graders with even one of the following four signals had at least a three in four chance of dropping out of high school: a final grade of F in mathematics, a final grade of F in English, attendance below 80 percent for the year, and a final 'unsatisfactory behavior' mark in at least one class" *(See readings handout, "An Early Warning System", Neild, Blefanz, & Herzog, Educational Leadership, October, 2007)*. These signals are patterns that incrementally intensify over time, as they enter 9th and 10th grade. If a middle school student received a failing grade in one subject, he becomes a high school student with multiple failing grades.

Our study of identified at-risk students at both Rosemont Ridge and Wood Middle School affirm the existence of these warning signs. In comparison to their cohorts of students, they are often tardy, absent, fail classes, and are referred to the office for disruptive behavior *(see appendix chart, "Middle School Case Study – Profile of 12 Students")*. Literature suggests (and we suspect) that these "early warning signals" have strong implications for us as educators in the West Linn-Wilsonville School District. We need to pay close attention

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[2] *PBS: The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*; "Group Helps Homeless Children, a Profile of Rick Koca"

to these 45 middle school students, and develop more programs to prevent them from becoming the future "early leavers" in our high schools in the years to come.

How Might the Three Groups Interact?

The needs of the three groups described above, although distinct, have commonalities that make it possible for their services to be housed in one location (*see appendix chart, "Service Commonalities"*). All three display strong needs related to support services, especially mental health, family, and substance abuse counseling programs. Currently, support in these areas is not specifically addressed through district sponsored programs (although available through private sources). More severe students who might benefit from these types of programs on a daily, consistent basis attend programs outside our district that include day treatment and drug/alcohol rehabilitation. Also, the district does not provide safe programs for children experiencing homes with addictions and abuse.

It is also relevant to note that there are students in our high schools who learn more effectively through direct hands-on approaches. They need opportunities to apply their learning in real world settings, small class settings, and more connected relationships with adults. Professional technical opportunities, partnerships, apprenticeships, and internships of a variety of types would fall in these categories. We do not have formal programs to support these needs.

Research supports our finding that there is a distinct advantage in housing these services together – an economy of effort to support students, clearer communication lines for parents, and just-in-time access for students that might not be achieved when housed in various locations across the district. Research based on student feedback states that there are distinct benefits to housing these programs in facilities outside the comprehensive high school. Students say that there is a feeling of a fresh start, new beginning, or second chance by attending a program in a different location to the current high school. There is a value in going to school someplace other than the building where they did not find success. A program in a separate facility can give them a fresh start with friendships and academic expectations, while providing the supportive community that is so important for at-risk youth.

Although distinct for our purposes in this report, all three mentioned groups have intersection points across time where they might merge, mix, and interact. This makes the distinctiveness around estimates of enrollment numbers less precise. Within these groups and across groups, you will find all kinds of work/school combinations – full time students, part time students attending partial days at school or work, part time students who might attend specialized workshops/seminars once a month, or simply groups that need monthly access to counseling or meeting rooms. These groups of student might interact, mix, and merge over time in their journey to become productive members of their community. For example, students who need short term placement outside school for suspension or expulsion might reenter their current high school settings or alternative school settings. If their needs become more intense or elongated over time, they might become part of those students seeking help to transition academically or socially to the world of work during their post high years. Some students from comprehensive high schools might benefit from the shorter or extended time periods to complete their graduation requirements that alternative schools provide. This is especially true for those students involved in internships, apprenticeships, and transition to work programs.

Location – Challenges and Implications:

We explored four specific scenarios that might serve as homes for the services described above. Strong implications arose from our belief that it is not in the best interest of the district economically to (1) continue leasing commercial property to house district programs or (2) continue paying for outside placements. We also recognize due to increasing enrollment demands, that in the long term, our current high school facilities may not have room to house alternative services and programs. The appendix table, *"Alternative Locations – Strengths and Challenges",* summarizes the major points described below.

Location #1   Status Quo
This option considers the implications of continuing our current programs in existing settings including programs outside our school district setting. This option keeps some students (for those interested) at our high schools when possible, and is not limited by a prescribed space. Our history shows that these existing programs are effective for some students – for example, the eight students who graduated from ArtTech Charter High School the spring of 2007.

The challenge of option #1 is its sustainability over time (due to the long term impact of enrollment demands over the next ten years) and the lack of effectiveness for a percentage of students who are currently enrolled outside our school settings. It is economically expensive to send these students outside our district to alternative programs, like Herron Creek Academy. Our district sponsored charter school has limited space, and rental of their existing storefront property is expensive. Since some of these programs are outside our district, we cannot impact the quality of the programs that accept their enrollment. Currently, there are limited programs (and spaces to house them) for students who are expelled or suspended, or support services for students (and their families) seeking counseling or drug/alcohol abuse treatment.

Location #2   Dedicated Spaces at Each District High School
This option considers the creation of alternative programs that would be housed within both Wilsonville and West Linn High School buildings. A dedicated program/space in each high school building shows our commitment to these students in a visible way to the entire community. Some areas might be shared, for example, library and computer services, maintenance, custodial, while providing opportunities for some support programs (especially counseling services) to be shared with the greater school community. Space demands in these building might make it necessary to stretch the use of existing physical spaces beyond typical classroom hours – evening, late afternoon, Saturdays, and during the summer.

The challenge of this option lies in its sustainability over time – will space be available to house these programs in the long term. We also question the ability of a larger school setting to accomplish the flexibility and personal connection that alternative education programs provide for students and their families. Other questions that should be considered: What is the impact on the experiences of traditional students and their families? Will families and students resist placement in a traditional setting when they have already experienced failed relationships? Could a new setting create the feeling of a fresh start for some students?

Location #3   One Separate Facility

This option considers the creation of a symphony of alternative services, programs, and options that would be housed in one separate facility outside our district high school buildings. The strength of this option is its long term commitment to both a dedicated space and instructional identity for learners. If designed with our vision in mind, it could become a place for a fresh start - a home that breaks the cycle/habits/fixed mindsets some have experienced in our schools. Since programs would be owned and managed by the district, accountability of costs and effectiveness can be monitored. It would be our program – with all the benefits and challenges that entails. As well, support programs would be centrally located, integrated, and readily available in real time to students and their families.

The challenge of this option lies in its lack of visibility to those in our comprehensive high schools – a center of this type could be construed as a "dumping place", and would entail costs to maintain, clean, and manage a program in a separate new facility.   As well, creating the identity described above will require a team with shared vision, commitment, a willingness to stretch their imagination and resourcefulness. This option might be the biggest risk, but the biggest payoff!

Location #4   Two Separate Facilities (Located Near Existing High Schools)

This option considers the creation of alternative programs that would be housed in two separate facilities – within proximity to each district high school building. The strength and challenges of this option are similar to those described in option #3. The unique difference will be our ability to create identities and visions for students and their families that might more specifically match the needs of these neighborhoods.

While this option provides flexibility for the creation of programs that more closely align with the populations of West Linn and Wilsonville, two separate facilities will entail double the expense to maintain and sustain two additional facilities, and to provide services and personnel to each site.

Implications of Our Findings:

Understanding the breadth and depth of the needs in our district (from our readings, data, and analysis of the three groups mentioned above), has strong implications for all of us as educators, parents, and community members in Wilsonville and West Linn. While the students described in this report represent a very small percent of learners in all of our schools, the "moral imperative" to be responsible for the learning of all described at the beginning of this report cannot be ignored. It is those few (the handful) that generate our concern. Our ultimate goal can only be to "help every student learn and thrive" in our schools. The following implications will help us reach that goal:

(1)   Reduce the numbers of students ages 11 to 21 who need alternative education options by the time they reach middle or high school settings – help every learner every day thrive in our schools;

(2)   Use varied interventions, flexible options, and alternatives to formal fixed assessment at all levels in our schools that are both individually and systemically organized. Literature calls these types of support systems, "nested series of interventions" – systematic and coherent practices across grade levels, schools, groups, and district programs. Intervention needs to begin with children and families from the time they

are born, and for some, until they reach the age of 21. It should be "nested" within a variety of levels and structures across all programs in our district;

(3)   Continue our district initiative begun 12 years ago to bring toddler/preschool programs that are nestled in each primary school;

(4)   Continue our district initiative to bring quality instructional practices and whole school practices that support learning for every learner every day;

(5)   For some students (and their families), build a larger circle of support and more intense system of intervention over time;

(6)   Help every student experience the sense of belonging, competence, and optimism that people experience through supportive relationships, proximity to helpful adults, personal attention over time, and a sense of being known;

(7)   Build belief in the inherent ability of every learner, every day;

(8)   Study and learn from our early attempts to alter instruction for at-risk learners;

(9)   Bring the learning of this task force to every school and teacher in our district;

(10)   Find ways to support learners who come to our district from a variety of educational settings over the course of their educational career – especially those who have been enrolled in three or more district before they come to high school programs;

(11)   Monitor the "early warning signals" described by Neild, Blefanz, and Herzog; and

(12)   Continue the high quality of some existing interventions, while creating new options for 11 to 21 year olds who are not currently thriving in our schools.

Our Vision for Alternative Education:

While our study suggests that the greatest impact for helping all students learn and thrive are the implications described above, we also know that there is a group of students currently struggling in West Linn-Wilsonville School District's comprehensive middle or high school programs. This group is broader than those currently being served at ArtTech Charter High School.

This group (a subset of the three groups described previously in this report) includes 11 to 21 year olds – boys and girls, both Wilsonvillle and West Linn residents. Some of these students will move to our district in the next few years with records that show enrollment in multiple districts over the life of their school career. They may have poor attendance, problems with work completion, failing grades, credit deficits, and sometimes, disruptive behaviors that send them to the principal's office. Some of these students need a daily program (approximately 100 to 150 students); some require interim options over the course of the week (approximately 30 to 50 students); and some need the use of counseling services for academic, mental health, or family issues. Most importantly, they are a group of learners whose mind set about themselves as learners is negatively fixed.

For the most part, our work with these students has been reactive. It should be built on the "nested series of interventions" over time that will keep them learning. This group needs alternative forms of intervention today and in the near future. We hope to make our efforts on behalf of these students, not only thoughtful and intentional, but more effective and targeted. The place we envision is based on our research of effective alternative programs *(see*

appendix list, "Bibliography of Task Member Readings"). We believe this place should mirror the characteristics described in this literature *(see appendix list, "Key Qualities of Effective Programs", and appendix graphic, "Figure 4.1, How People Experience Smallness")*. While these characteristics are important for every learner in every school, they are especially important, relevant, and timely for those learners who currently struggle in our programs or who may have left our school district for alternative programs.

We envision a place – a home designed to help them become confident learners with the power and confidence that is built from belonging and accomplishing meaningful work in a caring community. This place would include spaces for offices, classrooms, a community area for groups to gather and greet each other, flexible spaces that might be used for consulting or rented to private businesses, and centers for real time hands on projects. For example, there might be a math/engineering center, a visual arts center, a wellness center – including counseling and mental health services. We want students to be involved in powerful learning – active, relevant, customized, fun, relational, and rigorous. Programs should develop their skills as strong readers, writers, mathematicians, and critical thinkers, and build their confidence and motivation to learn. We envision a place – a home where every student will find a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

We specifically envision:
  (1)   A facility full of options – for example: counseling services, short term tutoring, adult transitions and other IEP meetings, credit recovery classes in the evening or summer, and an apprenticeship program;
  (2)   A facility with flexible spaces and schedules from more intensive time commitments, like daily classes, to one time needs for meeting spaces;
  (3)   Space to house approximately 150 students at any one time (total enrollment across all programs of 200 full- and part-time students with some programs only enrolling as few as 20 students);
  (4)   5-6 smaller classroom spaces;
  (5)   Stronger, more interactive partnership for students and their families;
  (6)   Conference rooms, offices, kitchen, reception area and other amenities;
  (7)   Several specialized areas for hands-on learning;
  (8)   Full access to technology;
  (9)   A common area for community gatherings;
  (10) A place that begins with 9th graders;
  (11) A place that lets students complete graduation requirements as early as 11th grade and extending beyond the traditional graduation timeline of their 13th or 14th year; and
  (12) A set of dedicated, committed staff.

Task Force Recommendation:

Based on our study of national research, existing programs in and outside Oregon, and data collected from our district's middle and high school programs, **we acknowledge**:

(1) That we need to continue to work towards creating high quality academic environments nestled among a larger circle of support for every student;

(2) That we need to be more intentional about how we serve those students who struggle in our schools;

(3) That our current responses are well intentioned, but vary across settings both within and outside our district;

(4) That we need to continue to pursue and use an even wider variety of interventions and options at all levels in our schools;

(5) That we should be less reactive and more disciplined in our support of students, so that fewer of them find themselves needing alternative options when they get to high school;

(6) That it is not in the best economic interest of the district to lease commercial property or pay for outside placements of services;

(7) That services for adult transition learners ("Post High Learners") and short term placement (S.T.E.P. Program) do not have "a home" in our current facilities;

(8) That as our district reaches a student population of 10,000 or more, the number of students needing alternative options increases to the point that their services can be merged in one location;

(9) That when services are combined in one space, we gain economy of effort to support students, clearer lines of communication for parents, and easier access for students and their families; and

(10) That the key qualities of successful programs can be replicated in our schools, including committed staff, small scale, flexibility of options, and communities that nurture care, rigor, and a sense of belonging.

Based on our study, **we recommend**:

(1) The creation of an Alternative Education Stewardship Committee appointed by the district superintendent and composed of diverse stakeholders from across our district and community. Their role will be threefold: (1) to advocate personalized education and the development of larger circles of support for each child; (2) to champion the implications included in this report across the district; and (3) to continue the study and conversations around quality learning and teaching begun by this task force.

(2) The district dedicates sufficient funds to find a permanent location/facility for the alternative options and services mentioned in this report. We recommend a small, separate facility that might house approximately 150 students at any one time (total enrollment across all programs of 200 full- and part-time students with some programs only enrolling as few as 20 students). We recommend that the programs, structures, and leadership be based on the task force's vision and the key qualities described in research and successfully used in schools across the country.

Appendix Contents

1. Task Force Work and Process Timeline *

2. WLWV School District Board Policy IGBHB – *Establishment of Alternative Education Program* *

3. Summary of Alternative Schools Characteristics (sampling of 23 schools nationwide) *

4. WLWV Current Alternative Placements

5. Diagram of Student Groups

6. Demographics, Art Tech High School – 2007 Applicants

7. Learning Characteristics, Scores of Excellent or Good, Art Tech High School – 2007 Applicants

8. Adult and Student General Comments, Art Tech High School – 2007 Applicants

9. WLWV Middle School Case Study, Profile of 12 High-Risk Students

10. Service Commonalities (Alternative Education Student Groups)

11. Alternative Locations – Strengths and Challenges

12. Bibliography of Task Force Readings *

13. Key Qualities of Effective Programs

14. "Figure 4.1, HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SMALLNESS"; <u>Designing Places for Learning</u>; Anne Meek, Editor; ACSD & CEFPI; 1995, p. 36

* Updated/added since 11/19/07

LRP Task Force – Alternative Education
Work and Process Timeline

* Task Force Meetings – Tuesday at 8:00

August, 2007	September, 2007	October, 2007	November, 2007
August 1 - 3 Initial Meeting (Superintendent Roger Woehl)		October 1 – 5 Continue research, study of literature, and review of data.	
August 6 - 9 Planning for Task Force - set meeting dates, timeline, and process schedule Initial Contact: Task Force Members and District High School Principals	September 3 - 7 Research – Gather data from national research and related literature.	October 8 - 12 Task Force Meeting (10/9 – 9:00) (blue room) Continue research, study of literature, and review of data.	November 5 - 9 Synthesis of Information and Vision Statement Task Force Meeting (11/6 – 8:20) (Wilsonville High School)
August 13 - 17 District Administrative Retreat	September 10 – 14 Task Force Meeting (9/11 – 8:00) (board room) Gather data from national research and related literature.	October 15-19 Continue research, study of literature, and review of data. Compile data and charts for task force review.	November 12 - 16 Compile Draft Report; Review Implications and Recommendations Task Force Meeting (11/13 – 8:00) (blue room)
August 20 - 24 Interview High School Principals regarding: (1)history, (2)needs and current practices; (3)update task force process; (4)suggestions for contacts; and (5)look at available data.	September 17 – 21 Gather District Data: (1)Middle school study (Rosemont Ridge and Wood Middle School); (2) Demographics; (3)Applicants to Art Tech High School; (4)List of Current Alt. Ed. Options	October 22 - 26 Continue research, study of literature, and review of data. Task Force Meeting (10/23 – 8:00) (board room)	November 19 - 20 Distribute Initial Task Force Report Meet with Long Range Planning Committee and School Board (11/19 – 7:00 p.m.) (board room)
August 27 - 31 Research – Gather data from national research and related literature.	September 24 - 28 Continue research, study of literature, and review of data. Task Force Meeting (9/25 – 8:00) (board room)	October 29 - 2 Continue research, study of literature, and review of data. Synthesis of Information and Vision Statement Task Force Meeting (10/30 – 8:00) (blue room)	November 26 - 30 Planning next steps Contacts alternative education specialist/consultants Planning Meeting Roger/Tim/Thayne/Margaret (11/27 – 1:00) (office)

* Task Force Meetings – Tuesday at 8:00

December, 2007	January, 2008
December 3 – 7 Research Alternative Sites and Programs Task Force Meeting 12/4 8:00 – 10:00 Blue Room (Ad. Building)	December 31 – January 4 Report Planning and Writing Task Force Meeting (Schedule if needed) 8:00 – 10:00 Blue Room (Ad. Building)
December 10 – 14 Meet with Alternative Education Consultants Task Force Meeting 12/11 8:00 – 10:00 Blue Room (Ad. Building)	January 7 - 11 Draft Report and Editing Task Force Meeting 1/8 8:00 – 10:00 Blue Room (Ad. Building)
December 17 – 21 Finalize Recommendation – Program Specifics & Location Task Force Meeting 12/18 8:00 – 10:00 Blue Room (Ad. Building)	January 14 - 18 Finalize Report Task Force Meeting School Board & Long Range Planning Committee 1/14 7:00 p.m. Board Room (Ad. Building)
December 24 – 28 Winter Break	January 21 - 25
	January 28 - 31

WEST LINN-WILSONVILLE SCHOOLS
MEMO

TO: Roger   ☒ Action Required

FROM: Thayne   ☐ Information Only

SUBJECT: Approval of Alternative Programs   Due:

DATE: January 7, 2008

In 2007, the Oregon Department of Education approved new administrative rules defining alternative education programs and the manner in which they are approved and registered with the State. Additionally, the rules require school districts to evaluate the specific alternative programs and schools in which students from the respective districts are enrolled, and establishes criteria by which they are to be approved.

The Policy IGBHB, which is on the agenda for first reading, satisfies ORS 336.615-336.665 and OAR 581-022-1350 regarding board policy for alternative education programs. Additionally, we have joined a consortium of Clackamas County School Districts to share in the annual evaluation and approval of public and private alternative programs to which we send students. The Clackamas Education Service District has committed to facilitating this process. We meet annually to consider the programs which must be evaluated, divide up the programs among the 10-12 participants, and coordinate the sharing of information so school districts can approve specific programs.

At this point in time, 14 alternative programs are being evaluated: Alpha High School, Cascade Academics, Clackamas Community College, Crossroads, Lents Educational Center, Mt. Scott, Learning Center, Oregon Outreach (Molalla), Oregon Outreach (N. Clackamas), Quest, Portland Youth Builders, Serendipity, Job Corps, Life Works, and Helensview.

The school board is asked to approve the programs we are using – located at Cascade Academics and Clackamas Community College.   These programs have been evaluated and approved by the consortium, and the programs are registered with the Oregon Department of Education. We presently have contracts with each of these organizations.

WEST LINN-WILSONVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Establishment of Alternative Education Program

The Board is dedicated to providing educational options for all students. It is recognized there will be students in the district whose needs and interests are best served by participation in an alternative education program.

The superintendent will develop alternative education program options in compliance with Oregon Administrative Rules and Oregon Revised Statutes:

1. For students who are unable to succeed in the regular programs because of erratic attendance or behavioral problems;

2. For students who have not met or who have exceeded all of Oregon's academic content standards;

3. When necessary to meet a student's educational needs and interests;

4. To assist students in achieving district and state academic content standards;

5. When a public or private alternative education program is not readily available or accessible.

Alternative education programs implemented by the district are to maintain learning options that are flexible with regard to environment, time, structure and pedagogy.

1. A separate school;

2. Evening classes;

3. Tutorial instruction;

4. Small group instruction;

5. Large group instruction;

6. Personal growth and development instruction;

7. Counseling and guidance;

8. Computer-assisted instruction;

9. Professional technical programs;

10. Cooperative work experience and/or supervised work experience, in accordance with the student's educational goals;

11. Instructional activities provided by institutions accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges;

12. Supervised community service activities performed as part of the instructional program;

13. Supervised independent study in accordance with a student's educational goals; and

14. The district's Expanded Options Program.

The superintendent will develop administrative regulations for establishing alternative education programs.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

ORS 329.035
ORS 329.485
ORS 332.072
ORS 336.135 – 336.183
ORS 336.615 – 336.665
ORS 339.250

SB 300 (Chapter 674), effective
January 1, 2006

OAR 581-021-0045
OAR 581-021-0065
OAR 581-021-0070
OAR 581-021-0071
OAR 581-022-1350
OAR 581-022-1620
OAR 581-023-0006
OAR 581-023-0008

Summary of Alternative Schools Characteristics
(From sampling of 23 programs nationwide)
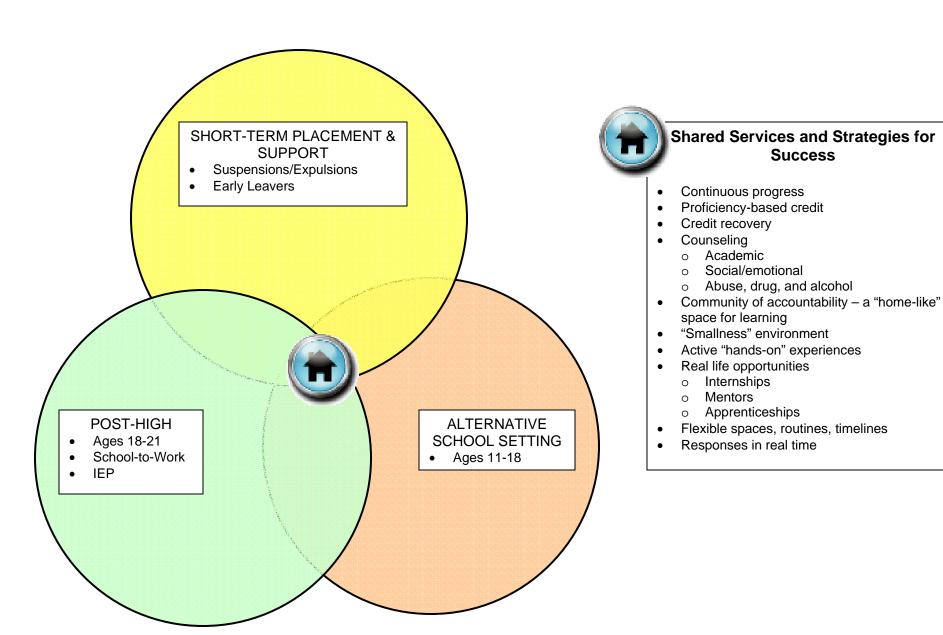
SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	
Has principal or director	All
Number of students	Range: 38 to 280
Housed with (another) traditional school	None
Operating hours/periods	Range: 8am – 8pm 9-12 months
Grade levels served	Range: 7 to 15
High school only	86%
Middle and high school	23%
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS/OPTIONS	
Student advisory	All
Apprenticeships/internships	48%
Service learning	35%
Online courses	39%
Credit recovery	All
Transition to work	52%
Pregnant teens and parenting	26%
Counseling	82%
Family education activities	All

WLWV Current Alternative Placements
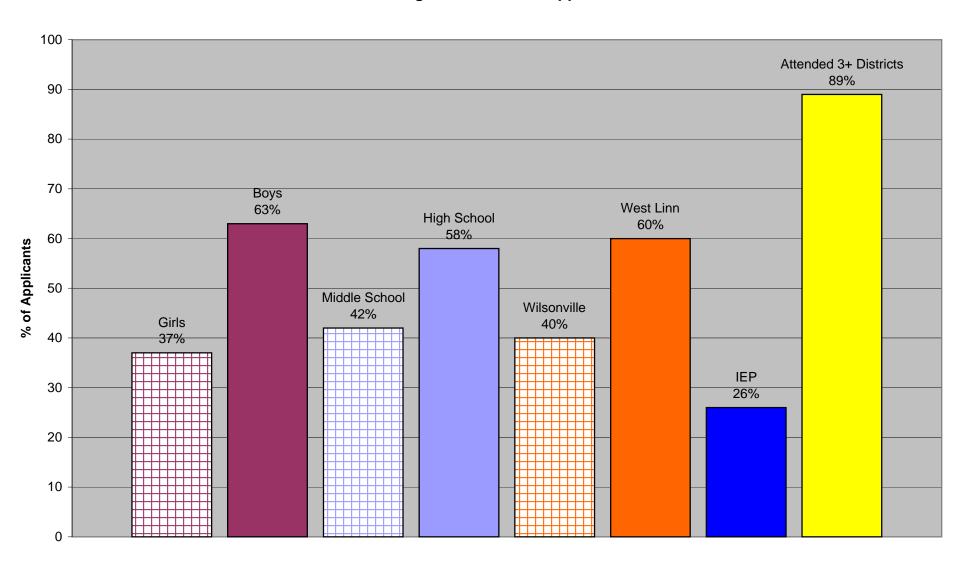
Student Numbers: 2007-08
Costs: Mix of 2006-07 and 2007-08

Placement	Grades	Type	Agency	GenEd #s	SpEd #s	Cost / Student	Expense
Academic Connections	K-12	Alternative Placement	WLWV		4		N/A for last yr.
Alliance Charter Academy	K12	Charter	Oregon City SD		1		?
Art Tech High School	9-12	Charter	WLWV	67	15		$587,000
Carus Elementary	K-6	Leep	Clackamas ESD	0	1	$30,065	$30,065
Cascade Academics	6-12	Private	Private	3	1		$11,800
Cascade Heights	K-7	Charter	N. Clackamas		1		
Clackamas Comm College	9-12	Alternative Placement	CCC	6	1		$71,700
Young Parent Opp. Program	15-21	Pregnant & Parenting	CCC		1		
Clackamas Web Academy	1-12	Charter	N. Clackamas		1		
Gladstone High School	9-12	Leep	Clackamas ESD	0	2	$30,065	$60,130
Heron Creek	K-6	Day Treatment	Clackamas ESD	0	1	$32,200	$32,200
Heron Creek Academy	7-12	Day Treatment	Clackamas ESD	0	4	$32,200	$128,800
Home School	K-12	Parent Decision	WLWV		2		
HomeTutor	K-12	Alternative Placement	WLWV	6	10		$21,800
Lake Grove Elementary	K-6	Leep	Clackamas ESD	0	2	$30,065	$60,130
Lakeridge High School	9-12	Interdistrict Transfer	Lake Oswego		1		
Lifeworks	PreK-Adult	Day Treatment	Private	0	1	$29,500	$29,500
Ogden Middle School	7-8	Leep	Clackamas ESD	0	1	$30,065	$30,065
Oregon City High School	9-12	Interdistrict Transfer	Oregon City		1	$30,065	$30,065
Oregon Connections Academy	K-12	Charter	Scio SD		3		?
WLWV Post High	T	Transition	WLWV	0	30		$133,788
Total				82	84		$1,227,043

Diagram of Student Groups

SHORT-TERM PLACEMENT & SUPPORT
- Suspensions/Expulsions
- Early Leavers

POST-HIGH
- Ages 18-21
- School-to-Work
- IEP

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL SETTING
- Ages 11-18

Shared Services and Strategies for Success

- Continuous progress
- Proficiency-based credit
- Credit recovery
- Counseling
  - Academic
  - Social/emotional
  - Abuse, drug, and alcohol
- Community of accountability – a "home-like" space for learning
- "Smallness" environment
- Active "hands-on" experiences
- Real life opportunities
  - Internships
  - Mentors
  - Apprenticeships
- Flexible spaces, routines, timelines
- Responses in real time

**Demographics
Art Tech High School - 2007 Applicants**

% of Applicants

- Girls 37%
- Boys 63%
- Middle School 42%
- High School 58%
- Wilsonville 40%
- West Linn 60%
- IEP 26%
- Attended 3+ Districts 89%

Learning Characteristics
Scores of Excellent or Good
Art Tech High School - 2007 Applicants

% Rated Excellent or Good

Characteristic	Student Rated	Teacher Rated
Dependability	80	56
Initiative/Motivation	60	62
Group Work Skills	65	63
Attendance	60	70
Work Independently	90	75
Honesty/Integrity	100	81
Writing Skills	85	81
Reading Skills	85	88
Computer Skills	85	100

Legend: ☐ Student Rated ■ Teacher Rated

Adult General Comments
Art Tech High School - 2007 Applicants

Problems with
Traditional High School
Setting
27%

Differing
Instructional
Needs
36%

Have Talent/Potential
37%

Student General Comments
Art Tech High School - 2007 Applicants

Social/Emotional Concerns
18%

Differing Instructional Needs
(Hands-On)
5%

Differing Instructional Needs
(Teacher Connection)
10%

Differing Instructional
Needs
(Work Completion)
11%

Have Talent/Potential
5%

Miscellaneous
17%

Problems with
Traditional High School
Setting
34%

WLWV Middle School Case Study
Profile of 12 High-Risk Students

Average #

- 6th Grade Tardies 10.2
- 7th Grade Tardies 12.6
- 6th Grade Absences 9.5
- 7th Grade Absences 9.5
- Office Referrals 7.1
- In-School Suspensions 1.0
- No Pass Grades 3.8

Service Commonalities

| Alternative School Setting | Adult Transition | Short-Term Placement |

SERVICES

School to Work	**School to Work**	**School to Work**
Counseling **Individual** **Family** **Academic** **Social Emotional** **Mental Health**	**Counseling** **Individual** **Family** **Academic** **Social Emotional** **Mental Health**	**Counseling** **Individual** **Family** **Academic** **Social Emotional** **Mental Health**
Special Workshops	**Special Workshops**	**Special Workshops**
Internships	**Internships**	**Internships**
Credit Recovery	**Credit Recovery**	**Credit Recovery**
Classes **Daily** **Nights** **Summers** **Online**	**Classes** **Daily** **Nights** **Summers** **Online**	
Tutoring		**Tutoring**

LRP Task Force – Alternative Education
Alternative Locations – Strengths and Challenges

LOCATION	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
#1 **STATUS QUO** Keep doing what we're doing in the same places	• Keeps some post-high population at the high school (for those that are interested) • Works for some that need alternative education opportunities (i.e. ArtTech High School graduates) • Continues awareness/recognition of needs for more people • Not limited by a single facility (able to move between our existing buildings year-to-year based on needs) • Efficiency of services (maintenance, technical, clerical, etc.) – these already exist at these sites	• Cost of sending students to services outside the district • Limited/no control over quality of services • Lease rental for ATHS expensive • Some post-high students not willing to come to high school campus • No place for suspended/expelled students (who have to be outside school facilities) • No alcohol/drug/family counseling, day treatment programs – have to go outside the district • This option may not be sustainable based on increased growth/limited space/priority of needs

#2
 	
Dedicated Space in Existing High Schools
 	
Implement alternative education vision (house programs at high schools)
	• Demonstrates commitment to serving needs by having a dedicated space
	
	• More ownership due to visibility to all
	
	• Efficiency of services (maintenance, technical, clerical, etc.) – these already exist at these sites
	
	• Support services (counseling, etc.) could be shared by all students and even families (i.e. ALNON program)
	
	• Could use spaces outside typical school hours (i.e. nights, Saturdays and summers)
		• Space may become long-term problem
		
		• Kids and families who need alternatives might resist placement on high school campus – "stigma"
		  ✓ Already tried that
		  ✓ Damaged relationships
		  ✓ Don't attend existing facilities
		  ✓ Size (too big)
		  ✓ Too structured (class periods, etc.)
		
		• Feel of the place could conflict with "traditional" high school identity for students and their families (parents asking why we need these programs/services in their children's high school)

LOCATION	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
#3 **One Separate Facility** Implement alternative education vision (house in one separate facility**)**	• Owned and managed by WLWV School District • Considers population growth and changing space needs • Commitment to an on-going space • Can be a "home" – a fresh place to start – to break the failure cycle • Efficiency of support services (counseling, work experience, etc.) – centralized, cohesive, integrated and readily accessible to students & families • Opportunity to create a new identity/culture • More personal curriculum – smaller can be more flexible & responsive • Qualified/special skills people used most effectively	• Costs of services (maintenance, technical, clerical, etc.) for another building • Less visibility to others within the school district • Could be construed as a "dumping place" – care needed in creating the right identity of this program • Finding the right people (administrators, teachers, professionals, etc.) to staff this facility • Stretches us – biggest risk but could be the biggest pay-off
#4 **Two Separate Facilities** Implement alternative education vision (house in two separate facilities close to each high school)	• Owned and managed by WLWV School District • Considers population growth and changing space needs • Commitment to an on-going space • Can be a "home" – a fresh place to start – to break the failure cycle • Efficiency of support services (counseling, work experience, etc.) – centralized, cohesive, integrated, and readily accessible to student & families • Variety of locations could provide different "feels": personality, focus, identity that matches needs of the neighborhood • More personal curriculum – smaller can be more flexible & responsive to needs in real time	• Costs of services (maintenance, technical, clerical, etc.) for <u>two</u> buildings • Additional ("doubles") personnel for two sites • Cost to build and sustain <u>two</u> buildings • Could be construed as "dumping places" – care needed in creating the right identities • Finding the right people (administrators, teachers, professionals, etc.) to staff this facility

Bibliography of Task Force Readings

1. ** Roger Woehl memo on Long Range Planning, dated 7/23/07

2. An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students, Ron Berger, Heinemann, 2003

3. Five Minds for the Future, Gardner, H., Harvard Business School Press, 2006

4. The Power of Mindful Learning, Langer, E., Perseus Publishing Books, 1999

5. ** "There's a Proven Way to Educate Urban Kids Successfully – What's Needed is a Political Strategy to Make it Available in Every City", Doug Ross and Peter Plastrik, April 2007

6. ** "Children at Risk: Graduation Day", Lawrence Hardy, American School Board Journal, September 2007, pp. 39-43

7. ** "8 Conditions That Make a Difference", Ray McNulty & Russell Quaglia, The School Administrator, September 2007, pp. 24

8. High Schools on a Human Scale: How Small Schools Can Transform American Education, Thomas Toch, Beacon Press, 2003

9. ** "Expeditionary Learning Schools – Key Components & Design Principles"; John LeCavalier, School Designer and Consultant; www.elob.org

10. ** "Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship"; A. Melaville, A. Berg, & M. Blank; Coalition for Community Schools

11. ** "An Early Warning System"; R. C. Neild, R. Balfanz, and L. Herzog; Educational Leadership; October 2007, pp. 28-33

12. ** "Figure 4.1, HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SMALLNESS"; Designing Places for Learning; Anne Meek, Editor; ACSD & CEFPI; 1995, p. 36

13. ** "The Perils and Promises of Praise"; Carol S. Dweck; Educational Leadership; October 2007, pp. 34-39

14. ** "Insisting on Success"; Andrew Beaton; Educational Leadership; October 2007, pp. 74-77

15. ** "Dynamic Inequality and Intervention: Lessons from a Small Country"; W. Norton Grubb; Phi Delta Kappan; October 2007, pp. 105-114

16. ** "Lessons from Skateboarders"; Richard Sagor; Educational Leadership; September 2002, pp. 34-38

17. Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth, Nancy Martin & Samuel Haperin, American Youth Policy Forum, 2006

18. Final Report, Alternative Education Committee, An Advisory Committee to the Seattle School Board, June 30, 2005

19. ## "Life Lessons: An Educator's Questions Incubates Alternative Education Successes"; Diane Dennis; The Oregonian; January 3, 2008

20. ## "Keeping That Works: West Linn-Wilsonville Alternative Programs Keep Kids in School, But They've Run Out of Room to Grow"; Wendy Owen, The Oregonian; December 20, 2007

** Included in distributed readings packet (11/19/07)
Distributed with final report (1/14/08)

Key Qualities of Effective Programs

Research says (generally). . . if these qualities are present that learning works. While they suggest that it is important for all learning situations, literature highlights the incredible importance of these qualities for alternative education programs. This is especially true at the high school level.

Powerful learning is described by Ross & Plastnik as:
    (1) **Active** – engaging learners in the task;
    (2) **Relevant** – real world settings and authentic issues and tasks;
    (3) **Customized** – suits learners style, pace, and interests;
    (4) **Fun** – enjoyable (people look forward to it);
    (5) **Relational** – close working relationships with adults and collaboration with other students; and
    (6) **Rigorous** – demands high quality thinking and work.

Generally, the components of quality education programs include (McNulty & Quaglia – *My Voice Survey*, "Eight Conditions That Make a Difference"):
    (1) Sense of **belonging** – student a valued member of a community;
    (2) heroes – people with whom a student can **connect**;
    (3) Sense of **Accomplishment** – Recognition for different types of success including hard work and being a good person;
    (4) **Fun** and Excitement – Students actively engaged and emotionally involved;
    (5) **Curiosity and Creativity** – Students ask why or why not about the world around them;
    (6) **Spirit of Adventure** – Students willing to tackle something new without fear of failure;
    (7) **Leadership and Responsibility** – Students can make decisions and accept responsibility for their actions; and
    (8) **Confidence** to Take Action – Students believe in themselves, dream about their future, and are motivated to set goals in the present.

What are the Skills Needed to Succeed in College/Work Settings (Ross & Plastrik)?
    (1) Strong reading, writing, math, and critical thinking skills
    (2) Confidence
    (3) Self motivated learners

Five Strategies (Tools) of Effective Alternative High School Programs (Ross & Plastrik)
Alternative Education Programs should include the following components:
    (1) Advisory: The Power of Relationships
    (2) Individual Learning Plans: The Power of Customization
    (3) Small School Communities: The Power of Intimate Settings and a Human Scale
    (4) Learning Through Internships: The Power of Real World Settings
    (5) Learning Through Rigorous Expectations: The Power of Academic Rigor

FIGURE 4.1

HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SMALLNESS

QUANTITY

→ low numbers
→ not many
→ small scale

TIME

→ individual/personal attention
→ having enough
→ taking
→ schedule flexibility
→ giving

PROXIMITY

→ geographic isolation
→ mental propinquity
→ living close to: the school
each other
→ being in a certain area

SMALLNESS

→ how to deal with things properly
→ what kind of person someone is
→ people's backgrounds
→ situations
→ families
→ everyone by name
→ what happens at home
→ relating well to others
→ the school personnel

→ knowing another's needs
→ money matters
→ helping each other out
→ filling-in for someone
→ pulling and pitching-in

→ having something special
→ being personal
→ feeling like family
→ being close knit
→ having a closeness
→ having self-contained classes

SUPPORT

taking care of others
showing interest in others
showing concern for others
caring for each other
taking pride in others
showing affection for others
having sympathy for others
being connected to others

RELATIONSHIPS

trusting others
being related

KNOWING