

Elementary and Middle School Alternative Education Pilot Project Progress Report
Prepared by the West Virginia Department of Education
Division of Educator Quality & System Support
Office of Healthy Schools
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Program Background

The West Virginia Legislature created the Elementary/Middle School Alternative Education Pilot Project in July 2010 and allocated \$1,000,000 in FY11 and again in FY12. In August 2010, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) convened an advisory committee to provide input to the competitive application process and the selection of pilot sites. The application for funding was released on October 1, 2010 with a submission deadline of November 15, 2010. The application required submittal of a three year plan and three year budget.

A total of nineteen applications were received, scored and reviewed by the advisory committee. In December 2010, the advisory committee finalized and announced the selection of four applicants to receive the Elementary/Middle School Alternative Education Pilot Project funding. They included Jackson County, Mercer County, Monongalia County and Nicholas County. The advisory committee requested clarification on specific application content from two counties prior to finalizing the selection of the fifth grant recipient. In January 2011, the advisory committee met and selected the fifth recipient, Calhoun County.

The WVDE convened project representatives from the five counties in January and May 2011 to share project plans and create a venue for implementation networking among projects. The Office of Healthy Schools, West Virginia Department of Education has conducted at least two on-site technical assistance visits with each county to ensure smooth project development and implementation since grant awards were announced. Additional site-visits and networking meetings are planned for the fall and spring of each year.

Project Descriptions

The full \$1,000,000 allocation for both FY11 and F12 has been divided in varying amounts to the five counties based on each county's budget request and budget negotiations with the WVDE. Individual allocations are as follows:

County	FY11	FY12
Calhoun	\$184,910	\$192,464
Jackson	\$189,444	189,444
Mercer	\$271,734	258,254
Monongalia	\$178,741	210,617
Nicholas	\$175,171	149,221
	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

The individual county activities and sites varied according to population served and project plans. The following table provides a site-by-site summary of county projects:

	Calhoun County	Jackson County	Mercer County	Monongalia County	Nicholas County
School(s) Served	Calhoun County Middle School	All elementary schools	Princeton Primary (K-2) Bluefield Interm. (3-5) Glenwood School (K-8)	All elementary schools	Summersville Middle School
Location(s)	On site	Ripley Elementary	On site at each school	Westover Annex	On site
Staff	Staff hired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 teacher MS • 1 paraprofessional 	Staff hired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Professional trained in behavior management • 1 professional school counselor • 1 paraprofessional 	Staff hired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 teachers • 3 aides 	Staff hired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 teachers - NTCB Certified Behavior Analysts • 2 psychologists • social work doctoral student 	Staff hired
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPL • Coaching/mentoring • Behavior contracts • PBS • Life Space Crisis Intervention • Behavior Management • Bullying Prevention • Classroom Management • SAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALC Plan • PBS • Pre-Referral Intervention • Tier Intervention • Coaching/mentoring • Behavior Management • Bullying Prevention • Classroom Management • Covey's Seven Habits of Successful Students • Time to Teach • Character Counts • SAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing Kids' Hearts • EXCEL teaching model • Keystone Character Education Curriculum • Behavior Management • SAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review & Revision of PBS Plans • Tier II Behavior Intervention Training (University of OR) • Behavior Monitoring Training (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) • ISLP and Transition Plan Training for administrators • Adult Mentor Training • AEC Teacher CE, Evaluation • Generative Instruction • 21st Century Technology Skills • Coaching • SAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balfanz At-Risk Research • ALC Plan • Behavior Management • Success Plans • SPL • Parent Engagement • "Why didn't I learn this in college?" • Transition • Peer mentoring • Alternative Education Best Practices • SAT

<p>Program Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alternative Education Committee meets regularly ● Pertinent data reviewed/analyzed to drive plan ● Plan timelines on target ● Instructional materials: computers, core books, library ● P.E. and Arts provided ● re-teach and enrichment activities ● Required parent involvement (classes and counseling) ● Site to open 2011-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AE Committee meets regularly ● Parent Involvement ● Utilizes “Read Naturally”, “Read 180”, “system 44” aligned with WV CSOs ● Opened Spring 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Princeton Primary is an Educational Psychology, Assessment & Technology (EPAT) site through Concord University ● Bluefield Intermediate is a Clinical Development Site for Bluefield State College, Bluefield College, & Concord University ● These initiatives are collaborating with the AE pilot project ● Process for collaboration/transiti on between regular classroom and AE classroom are in place ● Sites to open 2011-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AE Committee meets regularly ● Pertinent data reviewed/analyzed to drive plan ● School based staff development ● Tiered Behavior Management Systems ● Strong collaboration and Partnership with WVU ● Weekly visits with referring school instructors ● PE and Arts provided ● Parent involvement required ● Opened Spring 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AE Committee meets regularly ● Pertinent data reviewed/analyzed to drive plan ● Shorter term than traditional ALC placements ● Process developed for close connection with regular school environment ● Utilizing existing At-Risk Chart (revised with Balfanz work) ● Parent involvement required ● Opened Spring 2011
<p>Support Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counseling scheduled 2X week and on request in partnership with Minnie Hamilton Health Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counseling daily ● Transportation provided from other elementary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Psychological services provided through partnerships with IHE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation provided ● Meals transported to site ● Site includes access to therapy and counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation provided for parent meetings ● Collaborates with local wellness center, mental health agency, WVU extension office

Data Collection

Student level data were collected between November 15 and November 30, 2011 from each of the counties participating in the pilot project. To be sure that the data for this report was as complete and representative of the pilot project as possible, counties were instructed to report data for each students having been placed in the program anytime from the beginning of their grant award through November 15, 2011. Of interest were the following:

- The number and general demographic characteristics of the students placed in alternative educational settings as part of the pilot, and the distribution of those students among the participating counties;
- The primary reasons for placement into an alternative setting;
- Opinions about academic and behavioral progress during placement;
- Duration of placement; and
- Recidivism (i.e., re-referral to the alternative after having returned to the regular classroom)

Number and Demographic Characteristics of Students

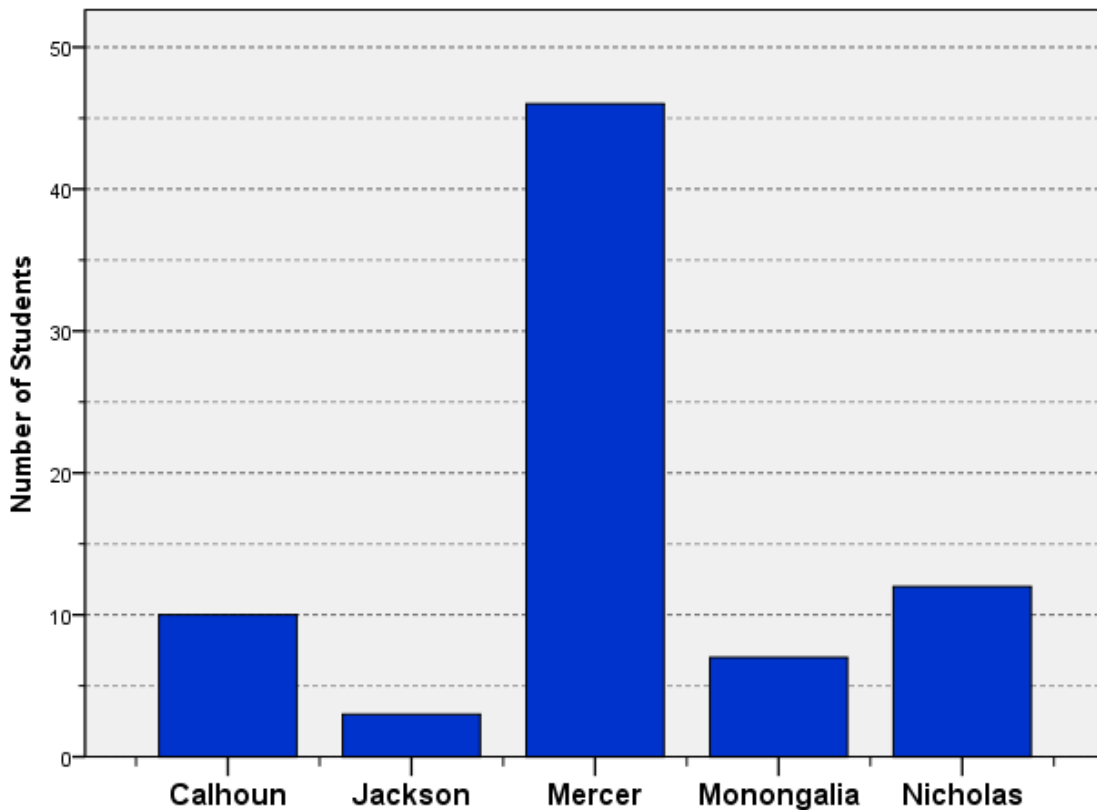
Counties submitted data for a total of 78 students that had been placed in alternative education setting thus far as part of the pilot project. The students were primarily male (66, or 84.6%), and 22 (28.2%) were reported to be eligible for special education services or had an established Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The students were somewhat unevenly distributed among the elementary and middle school grade levels ([Table 1](#)). Fifty five (70.5%) of the students were at the elementary school program level, and surprisingly most of those were reported to be only in the first or second grade.

Table 1. Grade level distribution of students in the Elementary and Middle School Alternative Education Pilot Project

What grade level is this student?	Students	Percent	Program Level	Percent
1st Grade	18	23.1	55	70.51
2nd Grade	12	15.4		
3rd Grade	4	5.1		
4th Grade	14	17.9		
5th Grade	7	9.0		
6th Grade	2	2.6	22	28.21
7th Grade	10	12.8		
8th Grade	10	12.8		
Unknown/Unassigned Grade	1	1.3	1	1.3
Total	78	100.0	78	100.0

The participating counties varied substantially in terms of the number of students they had placed in an alternative setting. Mercer county reported having placed 46 of the 78 students (59%), whereas Jackson and Monongalia reported having placed only three and 7 students, respectively ([Figure 1](#)). This variance is due to the different placement approaches that were designed by each site. Mercer County's placement plan was unique in setting a maximum four day placement; this allows Mercer County to serve more students for shorter periods of time. Examination of the results achieved by these different approaches will be a focus of the implementation networking meetings and the end of year evaluation report. This data will be very useful in determining best practice models for replication in other schools.

Figure 1. Distribution of Students among Participating Counties.



The Primary Reasons for Placement into an Alternative Setting

Counties were presented with three broad categories with which to indicate the primary reasons for which students had been placed in an alternative education setting: *Violation of the Student Rights and Responsibilities (Policy 4372)*; *Violation of the Student Code of Conduct (Policy 4373)*, or *Some Other Reason*. By far, the majority of students (61 of 78, or 78.2%) had been placed for inappropriate behaviors in violation of the student code of conduct. Only two were placed for violations of the student rights and responsibilities and 15 (19.2%) more for other reasons.

Of the 61 students placed for violation of the student code of conduct, 48 (78.7%) were reported to have committed two or more offenses. Overall, the types of behaviors leading to placement had to do with disrespectful/inappropriate conduct, aggressive conduct (e.g., verbal or physical assault of other students, repetitive disruptive behavior/disorderly conduct), or failure to obey classroom rules. Other types of behaviors such as inappropriate substance possession or use, weapons, or legal concerns were infrequent and primarily reported for middle school students.

Academic and Behavioral Progress During Placement

Counties were asked to provide their opinions about the student's academic and behavioral progress since their initial placement in an alternative educational setting.

Responses were remarkably similar to both questions in that about two-thirds of the students were reported to have made positive progress both academically (66.7%, [Table 2](#)) and behaviorally (65.4%, [Table 3](#)). Conversely, about a quarter of students were said to have not made progress, and for a few more it was reported to be too early to tell, not applicable, or the respondent didn't know.

Table 2. County reports of student positive academic progress since initial alternative education placement.

	Students	Percent
Yes	52	66.7
No	22	28.2
Too early to tell	2	2.6
Don't know	1	1.3
Not applicable	1	1.3
Total	78	100.0

Table 3. County reports of student positive behavioral progress since initial alternative education placement.

	Students	Percent
Yes	51	65.4
No	20	25.6
Too early to tell	3	3.8
Don't know	2	2.6
Not applicable	2	2.6
Total	78	100.0

Duration of Placement

Forty-nine (62.8%) of the 78 students were reported to have been returned to his/her regular education setting. Based on the dates of placement and dates of having been returned to the regular classroom, most of these students 36 (73.5%) were placed for 5 or fewer days. The participating counties are at different stages of implementation; that is, their pilot alternative education sites became operational at different times since being awarded grant funds. Nonetheless all were operational at the beginning of the current (2011-2012) academic year, and as a result most of the 78 students were reported to have been placed during the current year. Eight students however, were reported to have been placed in alternative education setting late in the previous 2010-2011. Of these only one was returned to the regular classroom before the summer break. Of the others, three returned to the regular classroom within the first few weeks of the current year.

Recidivism

As reported above, 49 students had returned to the regular classroom. Of those 13 (26.5%) have been referred for a repeated placement, and for the most part for the same or similar reasons. About half of these students have been reported to be making positive progress academically and behaviorally.

Conclusion

It is important to note that only two of the five sites began limited implementation during the 2010-11 school year. Therefore, the data collected for this report represents less than one semester of full scale implementation in all five counties. A full school year of data must be reviewed before real progress can be measured and validated. However, this preliminary data will be used within the network of pilot sites to look at the different approaches being used in each site and the early effect of such approaches. In addition, this data can begin the dialogue with policy makers to determine the usefulness of the data collected and the desire for additional data.