

Denison High School Alternative Program Handbook
Written in July, 2008
Revised in July, 2009

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Welcome

The Denison Community School District has established the Denison Community High School Alternative Program for students wanting to earn a regular high school diploma, but are unable to be successful in a full-time schedule at Denison High. This handbook is written for students interested in attending this program.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who may enroll in the alternative program at Denison High School?

The alternative school is available for Denison High School students upon approval of the Enrollment Committee, consisting of the principal of Denison High School, Dean of Students, alternative program director and the student's counselor. Students from area high schools who meet the tuition requirements, are approved by their home school district, and the principal of Denison High School may enroll if the program has available space. Students must be at least 16 years old.

Where is the Denison High School's alternative program located?

Starting in August of 2008, the alternative program will be located at a building on the Broadway Elementary School site.

Why do some students apply to attend the alternative school program?

There are numerous reasons why this option is better to help earn a high school diploma for some students. In some cases, the student is supporting a family and needs to earn a living while also going to school. Some students find that studying several subjects each day is more difficult than focusing on one subject at a time. Some students need a structure which facilitates their learning style. Students not completing the traditional diploma with their classmates can use the alternative school program as a way to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma. Students transferring to Denison High not being enrolled in school at their previous home are often enrolled in the alternative school program to earn credits prior to the start of a new semester/year at Denison High School. Yet, other students are behind their classmates in credits and this program may help them catch up.

When can a student enroll in the program?

Students may apply for acceptance at any time; however, the program may be at capacity. New students may be placed on a waiting list. In most instances, students are admitted on a first come, first serve basis. In some cases, special circumstances will dictate the order in which students are accepted into this program. The length of the waiting period varies, but is usually not longer than a few weeks. If you are on the waiting list, you will be notified of an opening.

What hours is this program open?

School begins at 8:20 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m. for all students 18 years of age or younger. If a student's age group has already graduated from high school, he/she may attend less than the three hours to complete their diploma.

What will a student do in the afternoon since the individualized study portion ends at 11:30 a.m.?

The options are as follows:

1. Attend high school courses at Denison High School and/or dual credit courses through Western Iowa Technical Community College.
2. Participate in an EBCE or Apprenticeship (job training) experiences.
3. Enroll in the Denison Job Corps. program and take a vocational trade on that campus.
4. Enroll in college classes at the WITCC campus in Denison (must be accepted to attend WITCC)
5. A combination of the above options.

Each student will have an individual plan of study to guide their process towards completing a high school diploma.

Are all students enrolled in the alternative program required to participate in one or more of the above options?

The only exceptions will be for students who must be employed full-time to provide for their families or students whose age peers have already graduated from high school (usually under the age of 19).

Can a student attending the alternative program also apply for early graduation?

Yes. The same policy applies for all students whether they attend the traditional program at Denison High or the alternative program. The application for early graduation must be completed by July 1 prior to the senior year.

How many credits are required to earn a Denison Alternative High School diploma?

Students enrolled prior to August 20, 2008 will need 38 credits to graduate with a Denison Alternative High School diploma. If the student desires a Denison High School Diploma the number required is 46 credits. All students enrolled after August 20, 2008 will need 46 credits for a Denison High diploma. Resident students of the Denison School District wanting a Denison Alternative School diploma (which requires 38 credits) must be enrolled at the Denison Job Corps. program. See your counselor for more information on how to enroll in the Denison Job Corps.

Also starting on August 20, 2008, new enrollees into the alternative program will be required to pass eight semesters of English and six semesters each of Science, Math and Social Science.

May a student choose to take courses both at the alternative program and at Denison High School?

Yes. Students may choose to enroll in courses at any site in Denison, however,

required courses for a Denison High School diploma must be taken at Denison High School whenever possible. Students will not be allowed to take courses in the alternative program in an attempt to avoid a “hard class” or “hard teacher” at Denison High. In most cases, students must take the course first at Denison High before taking the same course through the alternative program.

Can students in the alternative program participate in school activities at Denison High?

Yes. Since the alternative program is part of Denison High School, students are able to participate in school activities as long as the student meets the eligibility policies for the state associations.

What courses are offered?

The alternative high school program offers most of the courses necessary to earn a Denison High School diploma. Courses taken during the summer are also included on a Denison High transcript. Due to the independent nature of this program, laboratory, shop, and other hands-on courses are not offered to students in the alternative program classrooms. Foreign language and higher level courses in core areas of science, math, language arts, and social science are also not available. These courses may be taken at Denison High School.

How fast must my progress be?

Each student is required to earn a minimum of one credit each month. Students not meeting this requirement will be placed on probation for the next month and a performance improvement plan will be designed. Students may be removed from the program if they fail to meet the goals of their performance plan. Depending on one’s work ethic, study skills, and ability most students earn more than one credit per month. Students will not be allowed to just occupy space in the program as a means to pacify parents or a juvenile court judge.

Is homework required at the alternative high school?

Though homework is not generally required, students may take assignments home to advance more quickly through the courses.

Is it true the alternative high school is easier than the traditional high school?

Some students may have this belief prior to enrollment; however, they find that earning a diploma through the alternative program can be as or more challenging than the traditional high school since all assignments and tests must earn a 70% before the student can advance to the next unit or chapter. Like any form of education, the alternative program requires students to have self motivation to be successful.

Is there a discipline policy for the alternative program?

Yes. The same attendance and discipline expectations exist for students attending courses at Denison High School or through the alternative program.

How is attendance handled in the alternative program?

The same policy will be used in all high school programs in Denison. Students are required

to attend a minimum of 90% of the time for each semester. If a student fails to meet this expectation, a meeting will be held including the student, a parent and the attendance committee to discuss the attendance issues and devise a plan for meeting the requirement. Students refusing to meet the standard may be dropped from the alternative program.

One day of absence will be recorded for every five tardies to school. This absence will count against meeting the 90% attendance standard.

What calendar does the alternative school follow?

School will be in session the same days at the alternative program site as with the rest of the Denison School District. School dismissal due to bad weather will be the same for all schools in the Denison School District. Listen to KDSN radio for that information.

How are special education IEP's (Individual Education Plans) handled at the alternative program?

Students having an I.E.P.. are welcome in the alternative program. To assure the I.E.P.. is updated when a student enrolls in the alternative program, a meeting must be held to revise the current I.E.P.. to reflect this change in placement. An annual review and Three-year Re-evaluation will be conducted the same as students attending the traditional high school program. Students with very high educational needs (Level III) may not be successful in this program. The traditional high school is often the more appropriate for these students to earn a diploma.

What transportation is provided to students attending the alternative program?

Students will be provided the same busing service as any other student in the Denison School District. Students may walk to the school or ride a school bus to be transported to the alternative school building. Older students may also drive and must park in the spaces provided on the east end of the school site along 16th Street (Monarch Drive). Those taking college courses or courses located at Denison High School will be transported in the same manner as students attending the traditional program.

What activities/programs may a student attending the alternative program participate?

All students working towards a Denison High School diploma have the same opportunities to participate or attend school activities, this includes all sports, clubs, organizations, etc. Students will also be under the same academic eligibility and good conduct requirements. Since students are completing a Denison High School diploma they will also be included in the graduation ceremonies held in late May.

What other "support services" are provided students attending the alternative program?

All counseling and health services will be provided in the same manner/amount as provided students attending the traditional program.

Courses Requirements and Grading

Forty-six credits are required to earn your diploma through the Denison High School alternative program. These courses are:

- 8- English
- 6- Math
- 6- Science
- 6- Social Studies

Before a student may begin in the alternative high school program, his/her past transcript(s) will be evaluated to determine which credits are needed to complete the diploma. With a few exceptions, students may complete credits in any order.

The grading scale in use is as follows:

| | |
|---------|------------|
| A..... | 94% - 100% |
| A-..... | 90% - 93% |
| B+..... | 88% - 89% |
| B..... | 83% - 87% |
| B-..... | 80% - 82% |
| C+.... | 78% - 79% |
| C..... | 73% - 77% |
| C-..... | 70%-72% |

Students must pass all tests according to the above standards. If a grade is below 70% the student must restudy and retake the test until the standard is met. All completed assignments should be turned in immediately. Any missing work must be redone by the student.

A syllabus showing all the work to be completed will be provided at the beginning of each new class. Once all of the work is completed satisfactorily, the credit is earned. Students are welcome to see their grade sheet to check their progress, but they also should record their daily progress on their course syllabus.

Denison High School Summer Student Guidelines

Since the independent study portion of the summer school program is located at the Broadway Elementary site, the rules of the center must be followed. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the summer school classes. You will receive a copy of the rules when you register for your summer classes.

Students will:

1. not be contacted on a daily basis if you do not attend class.
2. be sent home if you don't remain busy.
3. earn the credits by successfully completing all the required work and tests at a minimum of 70% accuracy.
4. will be given a syllabus before you begin the course showing what work must be done before the course is completed.
5. determine what courses you will take during summer school with the assistance of your guidance counselor and an alternative program teacher.
6. not socialize during class time.
7. not waste the time of classmates, teachers, or teacher aides.

Other things to know include:

Incomplete credits will not be carried over to the next school year or the next summer. If the director of the summer alternative program gives permission, incomplete work may be completed (on an individual basis) after summer school is over (for one or two assignments) which is in mid-July.

Course fees must be paid before a class can be started. Fees are to be paid to the teacher in charge of the summer program classroom.

The discipline policies of Denison High School will be followed while you're in attendance in the summer school program. In addition, The Denison Job Corps. has the right to request the permanent removal of any student causing a disruption on campus.

Approval Process

For students who are applying to attend the Denison High School alternative program is as follows:

1. Student meets with his/her Denison High School counselor to discuss admission.

If the student resides outside the Denison Community School District, he/she must meet with his/her guidance counselor at the high school of residence. That counselor will then contact the Denison High School principal or one of the counselors for additional information. Acceptance into the alternative program must be granted by the principal of Denison High School upon meeting with the student, parent and admissions committee.

2. Student must meet with the Denison High Principal to further discuss admission.
3. In most cases, the principal will request a meeting with the student, parent, his/her counselor, the alternative program instructor and the Dean of Students, to discuss the purpose of the request and determine whether attending the alternative program is the best long-term educational choice for that student. Students having an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan) must have a special education teacher also meet with the team to discuss how attendance at the alternative program would affect the goals of the I.E.P.
4. The student and a parent/guardian must read this handbook in its entirety and complete the application form.
5. Upon completion of all the appropriate application procedures, the student will be admitted to the program as soon as available space exists. A waiting list for admission to the alternative high school is common, and admission is generally based on a first come, first serve basis. However, special circumstances may require that the special needs or circumstances of a student outweigh the date of application.

- * For 5th year students who are returning to high school, or students who have special considerations, some steps may be eliminated.

Attendance and Behavior Contract

This contract (agreed upon by the student, the instructor, and a parent) determines the schedule you will follow each day at the alternative program.

1. I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the alternative program if I am ill or unable to attend school for any reason.
2. I understand to remain in the alternative high school, I must have 90% attendance for each month. If I do not meet or exceed the 90% standard for a month, I will be placed on probation for one month. If I still do not meet the attendance standard, I may be dismissed from the program. I must reapply to the program if I have been dismissed for attendance reasons and will be accepted only if there is available space for me.
3. I understand I will be under the same disciplinary and good conduct policies as are used at Denison High School and I have read the student handbook.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Approval Form

I accept all the requirements and rules for enrollment at the Denison High School alternative program. I plan to be enrolled for:

_____ **Half day of academics and half day of career apprenticeship.**

_____ **Half day of academics and half day in a Job Corps trade.**

_____ **Half day of academics and half day in WIT dual credit classes or on-line courses.**

_____ **Courses at Denison High School.**

_____ **Combination of the above. Describe this combination.**

Student Signature

Date

I approve of my son/daughter's enrollment in the Denison Alternative High School.

Parent

Date

High School Counselor

Date

Alternative Program Teacher

Date

Denison High Principal

Date