




ALC / AEO Relocation

June 14, 2021



What we do & who we serve:

Staff serves both the Area Learning Center and Academic Excellence Online

The **AREA Learning Center** serves students from the the entire northeast AREA of MN, from the Iron Range to Moose Lake and at times beyond.

Our students come to us with many barriers. To enroll with ALC a student must have one or more qualifying situations. Some examples include:

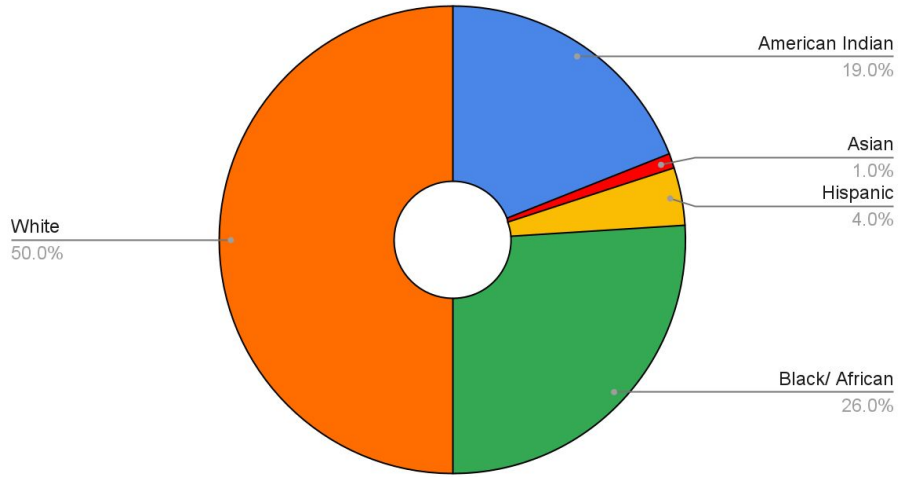
Teen parent	Sexual / Physical abuse	Homeless
Failed at another school	Behind academic track and/or expulsion from another school	Chemical Dependency Issues

Who we serve at ALC: (Pre-covid) Seat-based= 100-125 students, Independent study= 150+ students, Credit recovery= 200+ students

We serve the students who have not had success in their previous traditional setting

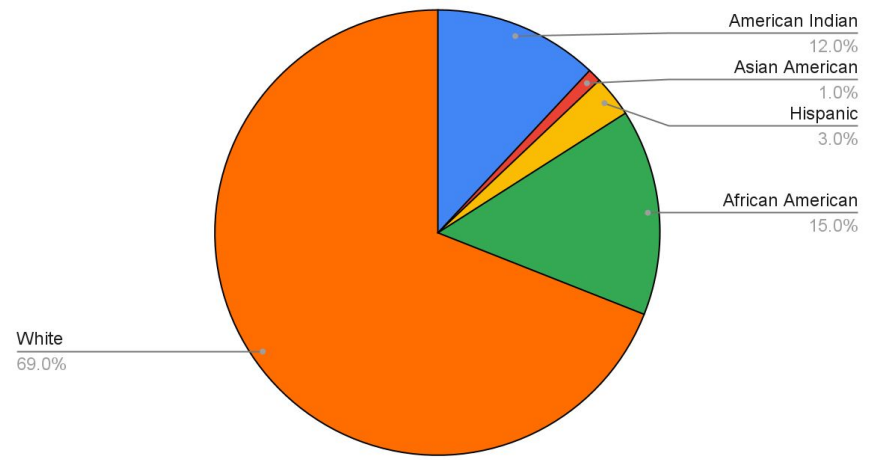
The seat based program

50% are students of color, 10% are Special Education



Independent Study Program

31% Student of color



9% of our students are homeless

We help students graduate. We help ISD 709's graduation rate

Academic Excellence Online

- 16 Teachers offering 43 courses
- Pre-covid enrollment (2020 annual MDE Report) :
 - 858 total full and part-time students
 - 1746 total courses completed
- MDE approved statewide online provider / NCAA Accredited
- Untapped future potential (little to no advertising)
- Opportunity to provide an option our neighbors/competitors don't offer (Post-pandemic?)
- Logical distance learning option should districts need to re-adjust again
- Possible CITS platform for the entire district; more cost effective option
- Exciting possibility to link LSC, ALC, and AEO to create exclusive area program

Our understanding of financial options / decisions

What we have been told & what we think we know:

- ALC / AEO relocation is not part of the \$31.5 million historical tax credit legislation
- Our current location has been sold and there are no dedicated funds allotted for our relocation.
- The CFO has shared in QLT & QSC that none of the resources from the new admin building project, or the sale of buildings or properties would be used for our students or programs that are being relocated.
- We were told that the district will not invest money to build us a new school.
- The CFO shared in QLT & QSC that we will only be using lease levy authority money so as not to impact the district budget.

LEASING IS THE ONLY OPTION WE WERE GIVEN. A lease anywhere will end the same way: a ledger of payments with no facility ownership at the end.

Does leasing make the most financial sense for our district in the long term?

If leasing forever is the long term plan, then what is the thought behind a 3 year lease vs a 15 year lease?

Our understanding of how we arrived at 2 site options

- A delayed site-search process limited our options; none of the 20ish site options met equity lens criteria or could replace a school without significant programming adjustments.
- The LSC site idea was a desperate suggestion for relocation when we couldn't find suitable sites during the search. The "phase" discussion back in March was meant for partnership and programming development work with LSC, not physical site building on their campus. There seems to have been confusion about this.
- Our desired partnership planning with LSC doesn't require us to be on their campus. If that were to happen years from now, LSC would obviously expect a lease or an investment by the district to help build a space for us there. We think it's more logical to invest in our own site.
- The LSC confusion contributed to a delay in the process and a communication disconnect between what our staff expected in the process and what the administration was able to provide for updates. This resulted in frustration from both administration and ALC/AEO staff.
- The district requested tech village fit plans; ALC/AEO staff requested radio station fit plans.

***The following thoughts in this presentation are based on what we have learned about the sites and what we know about our programs and needs.**

Tech Village Option (The quick and easy option)

From our perspective, the Tech Village is not an option that should be considered; it is not practical in any way for our programs or students.

- There are too many barriers for our students and families in this location
 - Parking is limited and variable
 - Navigating downtown and the tech building would be challenging for our families who are already struggling with day-to-day obstacles
 - Walking into the building is not welcoming to our students
 - A building guard is present at the door; this is not a school liaison who works with students
- Neighboring businesses would not be happy with our traffic, disturbances, challenging students...
- Limited exposure for our name and signage
- Space would significantly limit programming (no access to phys. Ed. options, music offerings would be a disturbance, plumbing needs for science, and art etc...would be difficult)
- Too many opportunities for trouble (skywalk, parking ramp, large building, downtown population, building exits immediately onto busy intersection)
- Does not feel like a school or allow for building a sense of community and comfortability
- Students/families will not make the effort to navigate all the barriers= programs will die

Radio Station Option

(The correct option)

Centrally Located for the students we serve.

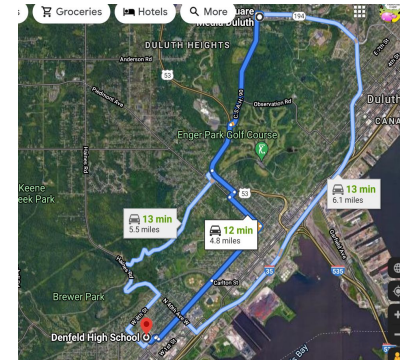
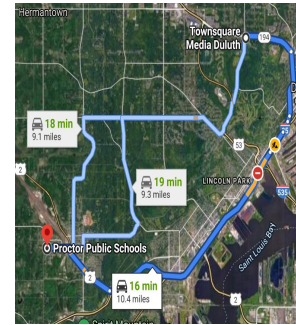
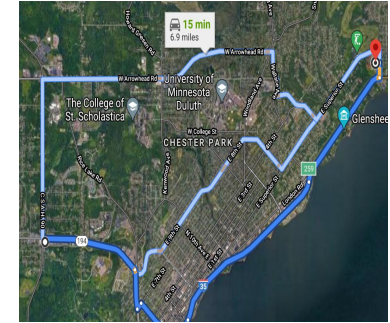
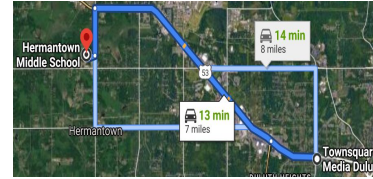
East - 6 Miles @ 12 minutes

Denfeld - 5 Miles @ 12 minutes

Hermantown - 8 Miles @ 14 minutes

Proctor - 10 Miles @ 16 minutes

- Creative ideas to work with equity -
 - Fitness studio across parking lot, music rooms across the street
 - Rebuild allows for a shared science / art / common space
- Bathroom access can be private and exclusive to ALC students.
- Access to bus line (bus stop in front), easy access for families
- Stand-alone structure, no immediate neighbors so it feels like a school
- Ample parking for students, families, and staff
- Potential to build to suit for long terms goals



ALC / AEO staff are united in support of the radio central location. The Duluth Federation of Teachers (DFT) has made the same endorsement.

- We are aware of move-in delays but believe the growth potential for our students and programs is worth the extended temporary situation.

We are confident a short transition will lead to long term success...exiting HOCHS, executing a temporary transition plan & Entering New Location.

Summer, 2021

Summer school operates on a shortened calendar but extended days.

- Transition planning
- Exit from HOCHS plan
- Review digital curriculum and identify course adjustments to be made to accommodate temporary transition plan

Sept. 2021

Begin school year @ HOCHS.

- Transition planning
- Contact/gather disconnected students
- Educating students about our transition
- Continue outreach at both high schools
- Establish guidelines for temporary routine at new site (partial access to portion of new site)

Oct. 2021

Begin transitional instruction time.

- Transition planning
- Creative planning to ensure teacher contact on-site
- Identify and provide supports needed
- Lunch pick up.
- Continue outreach at both high schools
- Continue program accommodations until site completion

Beyond

Completion of new physical space.

- Move in
- Establish new school programming, culture, and expectations
- Continue outreach at both high schools

The Students Need a Building of Their OWN.

- Our most disenfranchised/underserved students deserve an appropriate facility on par with what the rest of our students in the district have.
- Our students have not been successful at their home school; they left for a fresh start or were referred to us (a mutual parting of ways).
- Students should feel safe and welcomed from the moment they set foot in their school = greeted by familiar school personnel and decoration, not judged by strangers in a huge, sterile office building.
- Our students (more than their peers) need a culture of openness and caring; having an environment where that can happen reliably and consistently will allow them to grow and excel.
- Having a long term site also promotes stability and reflects that we value them. A “forever home” vs a 3 year lease=(potentially moving again.)

ALC/AEO: Perception vs Reality

People sometimes form opinions and make decisions based on what they perceive to be true vs what the facts reveal from all angles. We fear our programs and staff have at times fallen victim to this thinking:

Perception

- Difficult/demanding
- Aggravating
- Selfish/loud
- Troublemakers/ bad soldiers
- Not worth investment

Reality

- Passionate/invested
- Committed
- Advocates for underserved
- Driven to be the best
- Hidden opportunities

We simply want what is best for our students and programs to thrive and grow!

The Radio Central site ensures our future and opportunity for success!