

Guidelines for Alternative Learning Environments

Section II 9/5/17 Final Draft

Guidelines for Educational Opportunities for Students Who Have Been Expelled

Background

In 2016, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) issued its *Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*,¹ as required by a 2015 law calling for guidelines concerning alternative education programs in general.² During the 2016 legislative session, the General Assembly passed a law expanding and more clearly defining the obligation of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to provide alternative educational opportunities for students who have been expelled in particular. In articulating this obligation, the General Assembly relied on the definition of “alternative education” from the more general alternative education law passed in 2015. Thus, CSDE reconvened the *Alternative Schools Committee* (ASC) – originally established to help CSDE develop the *Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings* – to assist in developing guidelines specifically addressing alternative educational opportunities for students who have been expelled.

After the reconvened ASC completed its work, the General Assembly further refined the law governing educational opportunities for students who have been expelled – including by directing the State Board of Education to adopt standards for the provision of such alternative educational opportunities– in legislation passed at the end of the 2017 legislative session. In preparing the guidelines that follow, CSDE considered the extensive and thoughtful input provided by the ASC and incorporated the statutory changes resulting from the 2017 legislation. These guidelines reflect the standards as required by law. The guidelines are followed by a discussion of best practices for program implementation.

Overview of Legal Requirements

Connecticut law requires LEAs to offer an “alternative educational opportunity” to students who have been expelled in certain circumstances and further provides that LEAs may offer such an opportunity to any expelled student.

A. When an Alternative Educational Opportunity is Required

Under Section 10-233d of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), LEAs are required to offer an alternative educational opportunity to:

¹ http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/gaes/guidelines_for_alternative_education_settings.pdf

² Public Act 15-133, *An Act Concerning Alternative Education* (codified in Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-74j and 10-74k).

1. Any student under 16 years old who has been expelled (regardless of the reason); and
2. Any student between 16-18 years old who has been expelled for the first time and wishes to continue his or her education. (For these students, the district may require the student to comply with conditions established by the district).

B. The Alternative Educational Opportunity Requirement

In determining what is required of districts when providing an alternative educational opportunity for students who have been expelled, the General Assembly recognized that many districts offer alternative education programs that may be appropriate for students who have been expelled. Districts that provide such a program must operate it in accordance with state alternative education laws, C.G.S. Sections 10-74j and 10-74k, and the *Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*. But the General Assembly also recognized the importance of making individualized assessments concerning the appropriate educational programming and setting for each student. The General Assembly took both of these considerations into account in defining the alternative educational opportunity requirement set forth in C.G.S. Section 10-233d, as amended in 2017.

Under the amended law, in determining an appropriate alternative educational opportunity for a student who has been expelled, an LEA has the following options:

- (1) The LEA may offer the student enrollment in an alternative education program operated by the LEA if the program is appropriate for the student under the guidelines set forth below, and includes an individualized learning plan (ILP) for the student; OR
- (2) The district may provide a different alternative educational opportunity that is appropriate for the student under the guidelines set forth below (including through an alternative education program offered by another district or operator) and includes an ILP for the student.

CSDE expects that, in most cases, LEAs will determine that enrollment in an alternative education program is the appropriate alternative educational opportunity for a student who has been expelled. However, CSDE recognizes that there may be rare cases in which placement in such a setting would not be suitable or in which such a setting may not be available. LEAs should use the following guidelines in making an individualized determination of the appropriate alternative educational opportunity for each student who has been expelled.³

³ While LEAs must offer an alternative educational opportunity to eligible students who have been expelled, parents/guardians are not required to enroll their child in such an opportunity. Thus, if a parent or guardian of a child who has been expelled chooses not to enroll his or her child in an alternative educational opportunity, the parent/guardian is not subject to the provisions of C.G.S. Section 10-184 concerning compulsory school attendance.

Guidelines for Alternative Educational Opportunities

Guiding Principles

Consistent with the *Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*, these guidelines are grounded in the conviction that alternative educational opportunities for students who have been expelled should exhibit the following:

- a whole student approach that addresses the personal, social, emotional, intellectual, work skills, safety, and security needs of all students in addition to academic content (including the Connecticut Core Standards)⁴;
- planning and programming that is individualized and documented to meet the unique needs of every student;
- a full time, comprehensive experience, where the time devoted to instruction and learning is comparable to what the student would experience in a regular school environment;
- designed instruction based on a curriculum aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards unless modified as indicated by goals and objectives of an individualized education plan (IEP);
- high expectations that are consistent with LEA goals and Connecticut state standards including the belief that all students are capable and can be successful regardless of their discipline history; and
- designed with student success in mind which should involve the use of research/evidence based practices including the engagement of parents/guardians and families as well as community partners, as appropriate.

These principles are unlikely to be satisfied by assignment to homebound instruction. Further details regarding best practices for effective implementation are delineated in the “Best Practices” section of this document.

Student Placement

Although discipline decisions are individualized, they occur in a larger context. Therefore, administrators should consider how the overall climate may influence discipline practices, including expulsions as they occur for all students. The use of a tiered system of support which includes restorative practices, is recommended as a more appropriate resolution for supporting students’ social-emotional and behavioral development. It is essential that school staff and students develop the skill-sets required to prevent and de-escalate conflict and harm.

Connecticut’s data, like many states around the nation, indicate that there are disproportionate rates of discipline across many school districts, particularly for males of color and students with disabilities. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that LEAs and school administrators regularly, but no less than quarterly, review disaggregated school and district

⁴ Connecticut’s Core Standards <http://ctcorestandards.org/>

discipline data for patterns of exclusionary practices by subgroup, particularly race, gender, and disability. This would allow for schools and LEAs to learn more about their context for discipline and to assess whether there are disproportionate rates of all disciplinary practices including expulsion recommendations. If disproportionality is found, administrators can make adjustments to discipline practices. Specifically, school climate concerns should be addressed to ensure the implementation of equitable and culturally responsive education⁵.

LEAs must have a clear written policy concerning the use of expulsions (including criteria for use as a disciplinary sanction) and the provision of alternative education opportunities for students who have been expelled. This policy should include a plan with clear program goals and objectives for the provision of alternative education opportunities. These policies need to provide guidance on the practices that occur prior to expulsion, to make placement decisions, to monitor for progress during the placement and to make decisions regarding a change in placement. Guidance for these policies are outlined below and in the section to follow. LEAs with existing policies should update them to conform to new requirements as necessary.

Prior to Expulsion

LEA expulsion policies should include guidelines concerning the appropriate length of expulsions, such that the expulsion lengths are commensurate with the reason for the expulsion in a graduated manner. Prior to a recommendation for a student's expulsion, administrators should consider the appropriateness of an expulsion as a disciplinary response. As a first step, administrators should determine whether the evidence establishes that a student engaged in behavior for which an expulsion hearing is required under the applicable statute, CGS § 10-233d. As experienced administrators know, given the consequences of an expulsion it is important to carefully assess the strength of the evidence concerning a student's conduct and intentions before reaching a conclusion that the student's behavior requires an expulsion hearing under the law.⁶

Unless the evidence establishes student behavior for which an expulsion hearing is required by law, an expulsion should be considered as a last resort and a part of a larger menu of disciplinary actions including those consistent with restorative practices. At all times, LEAs should ensure that the expulsion sanction is being pursued and imposed equitably, without a

⁵ CT State Board of Education policy statement on culturally responsive education
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/board/culturally_responsive_ed.pdf

⁶ Under CGS § 10-233d, expulsion hearings are required for students in Grades K-12 in the rare cases where the evidence establishes that:

- **On school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity:** the student possessed a firearm or certain other deadly/dangerous weapons as outlined in § 10-233d.
- **Off school grounds:** the student possessed a firearm or possessed and used a firearm or certain other dangerous instruments in the commission of certain crimes defined § 10-233d.
- **On or off school grounds:** the student offered for sale or distribution certain controlled substances as specified in § 10-233d.

For more information, districts should carefully review § 10-233d with their counsel.

disproportionate impact on any racial or ethnic group or other sub-group of students. Additionally, to ensure full participation and engagement, parent(s)/guardian(s) are to be made aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the expulsion of their child prior to the hearing in their home language.

Specifically, prior to the expulsion hearing, the following should take place:

- Considerations for discipline other than expulsion should be explored using a checklist or decision guide based on a LEA policy and state statutes concerning student discipline, including C.G.S. §§ 10-233a - 10-233f;
- A review of the student's records (e.g., academic, attendance, health, behavior, student success plan (SSP)) to ensure that the disciplinary decision is fully informed by the student's history;
- If it is determined that there is a history of behavioral concerns, the record should be reviewed for a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and the consequent behavioral intervention plan (BIP). If found, the efficacy of the FBA and BIP should be addressed and if there is no evidence of a FBA/BIP, consider conducting a FBA and implementing a BIP prior to a recommendation for expulsion;
- Assurance that Child Find requirements have been met, particularly in the cases of those students who have presented a history of behavioral concerns;
- If the student has an identified disability additional procedures are required before expulsion is recommended. For any student entitled to receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the planning and placement team (PPT) must first convene to make a manifestation determination⁷ in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-233d(f) and 34 C.F.R. § 300.530 (e). For students with an identified disability who have a 504 plan, a manifestation determination review must also be conducted by the 504 team before recommending expulsion. For any other student with a disability the district should consult with its legal counsel prior to any expulsion decision to ensure that it has complied with federal and state legal requirements concerning appropriate accommodations and non-discriminatory treatment of students with disabilities; and
- If tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions were utilized, the documentation and efficacy of the interventions should be reviewed; and if tiered interventions were not utilized, the LEA should thoroughly consider the interventions that should be implemented before recommending expulsion (except in cases in which an expulsion hearing is mandatory, see footnote 6 above).

Before an expulsion hearing is held, please note the following: Students and their parents/guardians should be provided written notice of the expulsion hearing at least five (5) business days before the hearing, unless an emergency exists, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-233d(a)(3). The written notice should inform students and their parents/guardians of their rights under expulsion statutes and constitutional rights relating to a fair hearing, including the right to

⁷ CSDE Note on Manifestation Determination - <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/edguide/anoteonmanifestationdetermination.pdf>

counsel, the right to postpone the hearing up to one (1) week to obtain counsel, and the right to protection against self-incrimination (where the alleged conduct is delinquent and/or criminal). This notice should be provided to parents/guardians in their home language.

Expulsion Placement

If a decision to expel occurs, it is expected that the district will then take the following steps:

- Meet with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to placement to provide information concerning the potentially appropriate alternative educational opportunities for the student, ensuring that families understand their rights, options and responsibilities.
- Form a student support team. In addition to the student and his or her parent/guardian, the following should be considered for inclusion in this team:
 - Appropriate representative of the alternative environment,
 - At least one of the student's academic teachers,
 - School administrator (sending school),
 - Special education administrator or designee (if applicable for the student),
 - PPT/504 Team representative (if applicable for the student), and/or
 - Support service personnel (e.g., school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, school nurse)
- After parents/guardians have been informed and a support team has been formed, all alternative education opportunities are explored at a placement meeting. The placement decision should be made at this meeting, and key members of the student support team should attend if available. The meeting should be organized and led by the school administrator, who should obtain input (including written reports) prior to the meeting from members of the student support team who cannot attend. Participation by the parent/guardian or their representative is strongly suggested. Therefore, school staff should give appropriate notice to the parents/guardians using multiple methods. It is expected that placement meetings will take place as soon as possible after an expulsion decision occurs but no more than 10 days after the expulsion decision is made.
- At the time of the placement meeting, the parents/students should be informed of the right to apply for early readmission and criteria for early readmission to the school from which the student was expelled should be determined and recorded in the individualized learning plan (ILP) defined below.

Process for Placement

The local board of education is required to develop and approve a process for placing students who have been expelled in alternative educational opportunities that ensures the following:

- The student and parents/guardians are provided with an accurate and comprehensive description of the alternative education to be delivered.
- There are culturally and linguistically responsive family and student engagement practices regarding all aspects of decision-making as it relates to placement such that

the team will ensure that parents/guardians know and understand how the alternative education placement will support their child during the expulsion period.

- If placed in an alternative education setting, the program or school must have a transparent and defined purpose which is understood by the students and their parents/guardians at the time of admission.
- The development of the student's ILP is initiated following the placement meeting.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

Once the student is admitted to an alternative education placement due to expulsion, an ILP must be developed by the student support team (see above for suggestions regarding team membership) to govern the programming for the student for the period of the expulsion. Through collaboration among school personnel, the student and their parent/guardian, an ILP will be developed to inform and direct their learning goals and activities for the duration of their expulsion. The ILP will include summaries of the student's current school performance, drawing upon any student success plan, Individualized Education Program (IEP) under special education, Section 504 Plan, Individualized Health Plan, and/or other academic and behavioral data. It will identify specific goals for both academic and behavioral achievement.

The ILP must describe the student's personalized educational goals, progress measures and transition planning back to the school from which the student was expelled. For students who have a student success plan as mandated by state law, the student success plan may inform the ILP but does not replace the ILP. The ILP must address the following:

- The student's academic and behavioral needs and appropriate academic and behavioral goals and interventions;
- Benchmarks to measure progress towards the goals and ultimately, progress towards graduation;
- Timing and method for reviewing the student's progress and for communicating that progress to the parent/guardian or student;
- Documentation of academic performance for progress monitoring and the transfer of the student's records; and
- Early readmission to the school from which the student was expelled and any support services, including academic supports, needed to assist and facilitate the return to the regular education environment, and incorporating recommendations that are:
 - commensurate with the conduct resulting in the expulsion;
 - consistent with the student's future educational plans; and
 - aligned to the goals of the student's IEP or 504 Plan, where applicable.

Review of Student Placement

To ensure that the student is receiving the necessary supports and that continued placement in the alternative education setting is appropriate during the expulsion period, LEAs must have a clear process that is written in policy regarding monitoring the student's progress.

Progress Monitoring of Student Performance and Placement

A review of the appropriateness of placement occurs at least once per marking period with the student's support team. The following issues are to be considered:

- A review of the student's ILP to assess progress and to make adjustments as necessary;
- Opportunities for early readmission to the school from which the student was expelled shall be reviewed as indicated by the readmission goal outlined in the ILP; and
- A review of the student's ILP and alignment to the goals of his/her IEP, where applicable.

Process for Transition Planning

It is expected that, in most cases, students are best served in regular school environments with their peers and thus should be able to be readmitted to the school from which the students were expelled, as soon as possible. The LEA must adopt clear and explicit criteria and procedures to address students' transition from the alternative educational opportunity back to their regular school environments. As a part of the readmission process and the student's ILP, the following need to be considered:

- Efforts to connect returning students with opportunities to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities to support student engagement and general health and development; and
- The student's needs for academic and other supports upon return to the home school environment; Confirmation of the plan to transfer the student's credits and record as documented in the ILP.

If there is a determination that placement in the current alternative educational opportunity is no longer beneficial to a student who is expelled but it is also inappropriate to have the student return to the school from which the student was expelled, a plan for different alternative educational opportunities should be developed, following the procedure outlined on pages 6 and 7 of these Guidelines in the Student Placement section (subsections: Expulsion Placement and Process for Placement).

Early Readmission to School from Which Student was Expelled. Where students have successfully met their goals as outlined in the ILP prior to the end of the expulsion period, an early return to the regular school environment should be facilitated.

Best Practices for Program Implementation

As was described in *Section I – Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*, alternative education is primarily organized around well-developed and articulated indicators of student success⁸ which is characterized by small individualized learning environments. These indicators include a well-articulated program philosophy; a commitment to collaboration particularly among educators, students, and their families; and strong programmatic features grounded in high academic and behavioral standards to support the overall growth and development of students. In this section, principles to support the implementation of high quality programming in alternative education opportunities for students who are expelled will be described in the following areas: program philosophy; approaches to the engagement of students and their parents/guardians/families; roles of administrators and staff; services delivery in specific areas to include assessment, curriculum and instruction, community-based social services; and facilities. Readers will notice some overlap in content between the Best Practices in these guidelines and the aforementioned *Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*.

Program Philosophy

Alternative educational opportunities that are designed to serve students who are expelled should be grounded in five core philosophical ideals and realities:

- 1) regardless of the circumstances surrounding the student's placement, all students deserve and are entitled to an opportunity for a high quality education in an emotionally, culturally and physically safe environment;
- 2) the alternative education opportunity provides a student-focused perspective based on a respect for who students are and the belief that all students can learn to make appropriate choices given the right instruction and climate;
- 3) placement in an alternative setting as a decision of an expulsion hearing is not necessarily a choice made by the student and their family;
- 4) alternative education for students who have been expelled involves a full time, comprehensive experience, where the time devoted to instruction and learning is comparable to what the student would experience in his or her regular school environment, and is unlikely to be fulfilled by a homebound experience; and
- 5) high quality alternative education occurs in a context of respectful, supportive, reciprocal relationships among the LEA leadership (superintendents and local boards of education), the alternative school administration and staff as well as students and their families.

⁸ http://learningalternatives.net/wp-content/uploads/legacy/Quality_Indicators.pdf

Parent/Guardians and Families

As a part of the overall philosophy of alternative education, family involvement is welcomed and actively supported. While it is understood that a student's expulsion may limit parent choice regarding their child's educational placement, families must be recognized as equal partners. Therefore, LEAs and other operators of alternative education settings serving students who have been expelled should strive to give parents/guardians opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes for their child's learning and personal success as much as possible. LEAs and operators must ensure that parents understand and are able to explore the options for their child's education. In order to facilitate an equal partnership between school staff and parents/guardians, staff should engage in timely and effective communication with parents/guardians in a format and language that the families can understand, particularly with regard to:

- their and their child's right to privacy;
- expulsion statutes and their constitutional rights relating to a fair hearing, the right to counsel and protection against self-incrimination (where the alleged conduct is delinquent and/or criminal); and
- procedures to file grievances.

All education settings – including those providing alternative educational opportunities for students who have been expelled – must create a climate that supports receiving input from families. Therefore, these settings should establish structures for communication to and from families and opportunities for parents/guardians to support students to share information and for students to achieve maximum learning and personal success. Similarly, all staff should develop competency in family engagement practices from a family-centered approach and continually participate in ongoing training related to research-based, culturally relevant, family engagement strategies for working with parents/guardians from diverse backgrounds as equal partners in supporting student success.

Administrators

Consistent with *Section I – Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*, administrators engaged in providing alternative educational opportunities for students who have been expelled via an alternative education setting operated by the LEA must meet all local and state certification requirements. As instructional leaders, their duty is twofold. First, they are responsible for providing a quality learning environment for students and must ensure that the students in their care receive a high quality, efficacious educational experience. Second, they are responsible for representing the alternative education opportunity that is being provided within the LEA and ensuring that it is compliant with all related federal and state laws and regulations, particularly those concerning special education and identification under Child Find.

School district leaders support administration in a respectful manner that is consistent with all educational programs in the district. Administrators in the alternative education placement collaborate with district leadership, staff, and community members to develop relationships that reflect ownership and support for the alternative education opportunity. As leaders, administrators develop and support reasonable expectations by staff and students. The

expectations are positively stated and need to be applied consistently both to guide and teach appropriate student behavior, monitor progress, and manage the learning experience. The placement is prepared to support students for whom the monitoring system indicates more intensive supports are required (e.g., services provided by external providers). Please see section on *Community/Social Services* below.

Staff

As in all alternative learning environments and consistent with *Section I – Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings*, the process for the recruitment of staff requires that candidates evidence the value of high expectations for themselves and their students. They are actively committed to building a trusting school environment and understand their position as role models for students. Their practices reflect a holistic perspective of care for students' overall development (i.e., personal, social, emotional, intellectual, life success) and create a climate of safety/security.

Teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff providing education to students who have been expelled should meet local and state certification/licensure requirements. As such, staff is subject to an annual evaluation as governed by their district's system and/or approved by CSDE for evaluation. School and district administrators collaborate to ensure that the evaluation system is appropriate. As a part of their system for evaluation, each staff member participates in professional learning opportunities such as *Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)*, for self-improvement as indicated by their student learning objectives. Supports to staff may address needs specific to the environment such as burnout, building family-school-community relationships, culturally relevant pedagogy, cultural competency and reflective practice. Small learning environments are needed to ensure that students receive individualized attention and staff members are able to meet their goals for teaching. Teacher/student ratios are at most 1:12⁹ based on total students served and total teachers available.

Students

Students and their parents/guardians are active members of the student support team involved in placement and monitoring of the student's progress during the period of expulsion. It is important that administrators, in conjunction with members of their staff, provide an orientation to students and their parents/guardians prior to enrollment in an alternative educational opportunity –at which time expectations are explained, understood and agreed upon. Upon enrollment, students and parents/guardians, as appropriate, participate in the development and shaping of the ILP, including the student's involvement in the activities of the school. This will encourage a sense of belonging and ownership of a culturally responsive learning experience. Students are supported in taking responsibility for their own learning, including attendance, work completion, and timelines for completion, with support from administration and staff.

⁹ http://dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Framework_20080325.pdf

A focus on student growth and development is at the center of the programming. Students are encouraged to advocate for their needs and be fully informed about the requirements for graduation and readiness for college or career. Therefore, students and their families need to be regularly informed of student progress and be able to continuously monitor credits earned with regard to personal goals, completion and graduation. This is outlined in their personalized ILP.

Assessment

Educators select assessments for both formative and summative purposes such as to guide instruction, monitor student progress, design interventions in the context of a multi-tiered system of supports, and provide appropriate services to benefit the student. Multiple measures are utilized to guide student learning that are aligned with districtwide measures to allow progress reporting within the community. Assessments also include standardized measures to identify student overall achievement as well as student progress as deemed appropriate by CSDE. Students who have been expelled should have access to and be administered all relevant assessments administered by their school districts and required by the State.

Curriculum and Instruction

A distinction should be made between a student's exclusion from the school during an expulsion and exclusion from the curriculum. Students who have been expelled should be able to maintain their academic trajectory during the period of the expulsion to the greatest degree possible. Therefore, all students receive instruction based on a curriculum aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards¹⁰ unless modified as indicated by the goals and objectives of an IEP, in particular curricula areas. Implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards allows students and families to be confident that their curriculum prepares them for life, career, and future training in higher levels of education. For students who are functioning below grade level expectations, interventions to improve skills in identified areas of challenge should be implemented, especially in the area of literacy. Additionally opportunities for blended learning¹¹ and credit recovery¹² should be explored. Approaches, such as the Mastery Based Learning¹³ frameworks, are encouraged due to the emphasis on the following:

- rigorous college and career learning competencies;
- high quality instruction;
- curriculum based on state content standards; and
- learning based on authentic experiences and application of critical knowledge.

¹⁰ Connecticut's Core Standards <http://ctcorestandards.org/>

¹¹ Information on Blended Learning: <https://www.cttech.org/assets/uploads/files/About/Superintendent/Blended-Learning.pdf>

¹² Information on credit recovery: <https://www.flvs.net/docs/default-source/research/inacol-using-online-learning-for-credit-recovery-9-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

¹³ For CT's Mastery Based Learning Guidelines: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/mb/mbl/mastery_based_learning_guidelines.pdf

Vocational Technical and Career

An expulsion should not impede the student's goals towards college and career readiness. Therefore, all students are provided with supports to transition into postsecondary training and employment. For example, these supports may include opportunities for students to actively explore career options and complete personal assessments to promote career development. Consistent with family and community engagement practices, partnerships with the private and public sectors are fostered to support the learning community. As for all students within alternative learning environments, opportunities to provide internships, apprenticeships, career exploration, service learning, and paid work experiences are encouraged for credit, particularly when students had been participating in such experiences prior to the expulsion. Students may want to explore and participate in available college courses at the community college or 4-year college level.

Personal/Social/ Life Skills

Programming is designed to meet the needs of the *whole child* to prepare the student to be a productive member of school and larger community. A large aspect of who students are, is derived from how they identify themselves culturally. Therefore, it is important that all staff, students, and families consider cultural identity as critical to understanding personal needs. Accommodations for cultural identity are made to allow for personal success within the learning environment.

The development of students in the areas related to personal, social, emotional, behavioral, career and other essential learnings, which are not addressed by the Connecticut Core Standards are embedded in the program delivery and/or evidenced in specific course content. Instructional practices include cooperative learning, team building, and other group activities, which are practiced to exercise the development of personal/social behaviors important to the success of the community. Opportunities for mentorship should be considered.

Community/Social Services

In an effort to support the needs of the whole child, all alternative education opportunities need to ensure that resources for support service agencies and relevant community organizations are collected and coordinated to provide multiple support systems for both students and families. This should include opportunities for mentorship and service learning, particularly if these were in place prior to the expulsion. This will require strong partnerships among educators, local/ state agencies, and community organizations. Based on the resources available through these relationships, a reasonable effort to accommodate the delivery of community-based support services to students and families will be made as needed and documented in the ILP. Additionally, there are regular opportunities for students and their families to receive information and personal assistance to ensure access to relevant community-based support services. Staff receives professional learning opportunities that are related to effectively collaborating with community-based support services and how to connect students and families with such support services. Administrators may prioritize these areas for professional learning as necessary.

Facilities and Resources

Students who are expelled and participate in an alternative educational opportunity should have access to physical facilities that adequately accommodate their needs as well as those of staff. As with all alternative learning environments, alternative education opportunities must be consistent with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding physical plant. This includes the provision of adequate space to accommodate the following:

- group activities, as appropriate, without interfering with individualized learning;
- technology as a resource to students and educators; and
- "privacy areas" for counseling and the delivery of community-based support services.

Additionally, all academic materials used for an alternative educational opportunity for students who are expelled must be current, in usable condition and consistent with the materials used in other schools within the LEA.