



STATE OF TENNESSEE

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Some quality programs found in alternative schools; but others deficient

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Alternative schools are often the last chance for the state's neediest students, but many do not provide adequate staffing, curriculum, and support services. A new report by the Comptroller's Office of Education Accountability entitled "Tennessee's Alternative Schools" explores the differences in these schools across the state.

Many alternative school students have been suspended or expelled from regular schools. State law requires school systems who have students in grades 7-12 to provide at least one alternative school.

The report found that

- Many teachers in alternative schools are not certified for all their instructional responsibilities.
- Although most programs attempt to model the core curriculum of regular schools, they struggle to offer courses such as science labs and foreign languages
- Some lack quality behavior management and remediation practices
- Many do not provide adequate transition back to regular schools
- Most do not measure outcomes and results of their program

In addition, the report found Tennessee's expulsions, suspensions, and referrals to alternative schools disproportionately include males and African-Americans.

To better serve this critical student population, the report recommends that the state create greater systems of accountability, provide the programs with more resources, and enhance collaboration between alternative and regular schools.

The report also recommends that the state require alternative schools to submit annual progress reports; develop better discipline and behavior management strategies; and create a task force to further examine alternative schools. The report also calls for more community involvement.

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The report is available on the Comptroller's Web site at www.comptroller.state.tn.us/orea/reports

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