DHS ALTERNATIVE ED
Social Emotional Learning

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Come inside and meet us...
One teacher: ELA, math, SS, electives.

One gen ed teacher has 2 alt. Sci classes while the alt ed teacher teaches a senior graduation requirement in mainstream.

12-15 students is target: current enrollment 10. 2 seniors/8 juniors

freshmen and sophomores are not encouraged to apply, but can

An ET3 has been proposed for the 19-20 budget to increase capacity. The alt ed teacher will also not teach the gen ed course next year to maintain program integrity.
RESILIENCY: The Theory Behind Our Program

• Youth need adults who believe in them unconditionally and hold them to high expectations of putting in good effort and being compassionate, generous and creative.

• Modeling healthy resiliency strategies for youth is more important than anything we say to them.

• No one demonstrates resilience or engages in a change process when they are viewed as being broken or damaged.
  
  • *DHS Alt Ed builds resiliency skills while simultaneously focusing on academics.*

"When a child can't calm down they need connection and comfort, not criticism and control."

~Jane Evans
Maslow (1970a) adopts a holistic approach to education and learning. He looked at the complete physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities of an individual and how they impact on learning.
“The most important and consistent protective factor is that of adults caring for children during or after major stressors” (Masten et al., 1991, p. 431).

Suldo et. al. (2014) summarize the interplay of student mental health and academic functioning: “The literature base indicates that the relationship between academic and mental health functioning is bidirectional, and changes in one domain can predict changes in the other” (Suldo et. al., 2014, p. 90).

Research tells us we have to have strong, positive, trusting relationships with our students if we want to impact their learning.


• A cross-section of 17,000 middle class American adults completed a confidential survey during routine physical exams.

• 39% had a college degree or higher

• Major research study that compared childhood traumatic events with adult health status

• Revealed a powerful relationship between childhood trauma and reduced health and wellbeing later in life.

• ACES are linked to risky behaviors, chronic health conditions, low life potential and early death.

• Evidence that time does not heal some adverse childhood experiences

• ACES are very common! Almost 2/3 of all adults have a score of 1 or more.
Increasing numbers of students experience stressors beyond what classroom teachers feel capable of competently addressing. Larson et. al. (2017) report that “approximately 80% of US children and adolescents have experienced childhood trauma in the form of victimization, [while] 1 in 5 children and adolescents have a diagnosable mental health disorder that can cause severe lifetime impairment” (Larson, Chapman, Spetz, & Brindis, 2017, p. 675).

Unsurprisingly, they also report that children’s exposure to chronic childhood trauma predicted poor academic performance (Larson, Chapman, Spetz, & Brindis, 2017, p. 681). They highlight the need for prevention: children who grow up without adverse childhood experiences have higher academic achievement than children who do.

We cannot remove all traumatic experiences from our students, but we can respond to students in a way that builds a trusting relationship that helps minimize the impact of said trauma.

THE 3 A’s OF DIRIGO ALT ED

Academics
• School is a place of learning.
• We’re here to take the classes that have us pass the standards and earn the credits that we need for graduation.

Attendance
• Being at school is important. It is hard to pass classes that you do not attend.
• I want you at school! You can’t get the support you need if you are not here.

Attitude
• In order to do well in school, we have to be in a learning mindset.
• We have to be willing to accept help.
Our space is cluttered... But every item shows our history.
WHAT HAPPENS IN ALTERNATIVE ED?

• Provides the option for both credit recovery and an alternative way of interacting with the standards
• Provides the opportunity to address behavior concerns and develop a plan to make appropriate changes
• It provides a safe place for students experiencing trauma and loss
  • Surrounded by other students also experiencing the same things
  • Fewer adults and students to get comfortable with
  • A place to help get basic needs met, or develop a plan to address them
  • Opportunity to build a strong relationship with a concerned adult

  “Without alt ed, I wouldn’t be able to graduate.”
  – current DHS junior
Most of what happens in our room can’t be highlighted in a picture or listed out as a set of instructions.

- It’s responding to the kids in front of me today, emotionally and physically.
- It’s remembering the little things and asking about them.
- It’s taking the time to follow the teachable moment, no matter what the standard is.
- It’s being vulnerable myself... and sharing how I am responding and keeping myself safe.
- It’s laughing--and crying--together.
- It’s being our authentic selves all day every day.
- It’s building a community of people who agree to help each other get where we’re going.
- It’s unconditional love, always.

The world would be a happier, more peaceful place if we all tried to understand instead of judging, paused before reacting, and gave each other the benefit of the doubt instead of assuming the worst.

Lori Deschene
“There is no such thing as a ‘bad kid’ – just angry, hurt, tired, scared, confused, impulsive ones expressing their feelings and needs the only way they know how. We owe it to every single one of them to always remember that.”

—EDUCATOR JESSICA STEPHENS
Earning your diploma matters more than when you earn it.