



**TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Office of Safe & Supportive Schools

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Nashville, TN 37243

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**Annual Alternative Education Report**  
(School Year 2013-2014)

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*Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education*

*March 2015*

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*Printable report also available on our website at:*

[http://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/alternative\\_education.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/alternative_education.shtml)

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# Annual Alternative Education Report (2013-2014 School Year)

## Introduction

*T.C.A. § 49-6-3404* requires that at least one alternative school or program be established for districts serving students in grades seven through twelve and also allows LEAs to create alternative schools or programs for grades one through six. Additionally, *T.C.A. § 49-6-3404* provides that the Advisory Council make an annual report to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education on the status of alternative education in Tennessee. The report presented herewith meets the legislative requirement set forth.

To obtain the needed data, the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education, in conjunction with the Department of Education, developed the *2013-2014 Annual Alternative Education Survey*. A copy of the survey has been included as Appendix A. When reporting on alternative education, districts used the definition supplied by the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education which states "***A nontraditional academic program or school designed to meet the student's educational, behavioral, and social needs.***" Operating under this definition, districts reported on various aspects of their alternative education programming. Information presented in this report summarizes surveys provided by Tennessee school districts.

In addition to collecting data on current programming at the local level, districts were also asked a series of questions related to their current needs in the field. Those major findings have also been included in this report. The report also provides a historical background of alternative education in Tennessee, current trends in the field, and stories of success.

Questions regarding this report may be directed to Pat Conner, Executive Secretary for the Advisory Council. Ms. Conner may be reached by phone at (615) 253-0018 or via email at [Pat.Conner@tn.gov](mailto:Pat.Conner@tn.gov).

## Survey Results/Findings

The annual alternative education survey required each LEA to identify an alternative education coordinator, thereby providing a framework for networking, collaboration, training, and technical assistance. To view the designee for every Tennessee district

please visit Appendix B. Based upon the responses from districts, findings indicate that there are **180** alternative schools and/or programs. This translates to **506** classrooms solely dedicated to providing alternative education services. The total number served in an alternative setting last school year was **13,320** students. Districts have **20,503** seats in an alternative school or program, indicating that some placements are less than one school year.

On the survey, districts were also asked to distinguish between the various types of professionals providing services to students in the alternative school or program. Statewide, there were **574** certified teachers serving students. Of those certified teachers, **83** were certified special education teachers, and **42** were certified ELL teachers. School counselors are also working with alternative education students **78 statewide**. Other groups providing alternative education services include **243** non-certified staff in which **68** were education assistants, **63** were school resource officers (SROs), and **55** were social workers. For a summary of those findings please see Table 1.

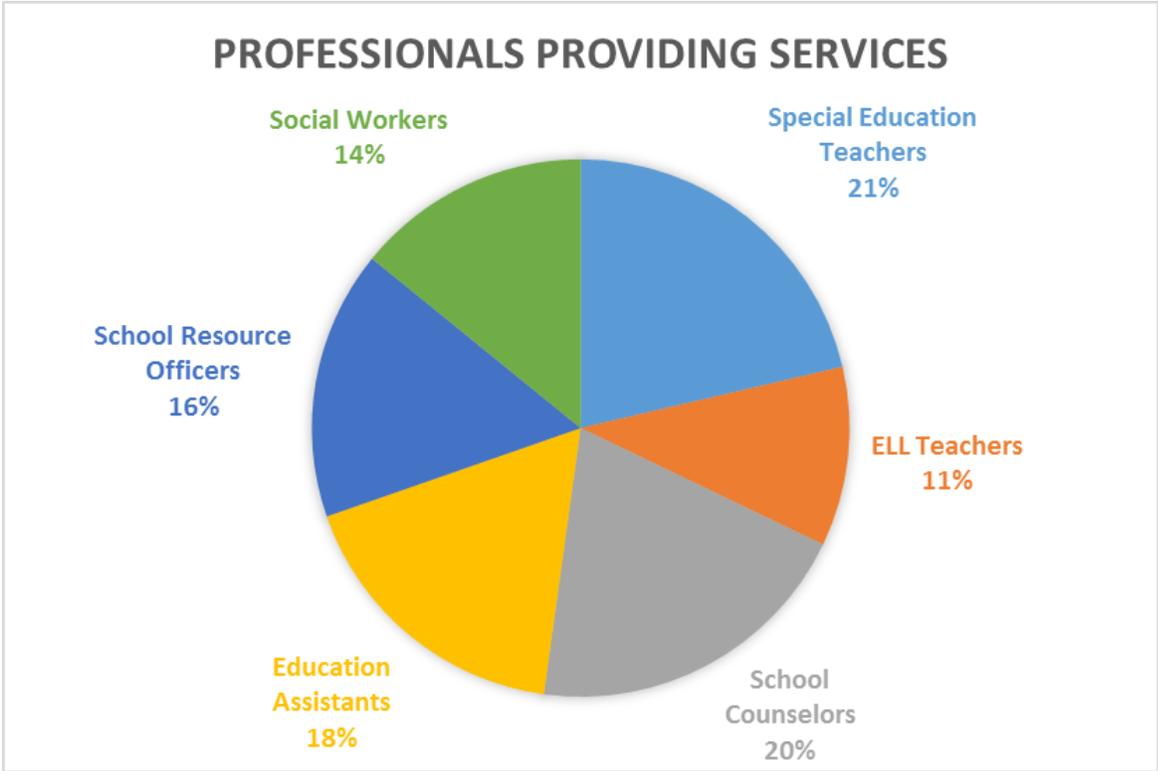
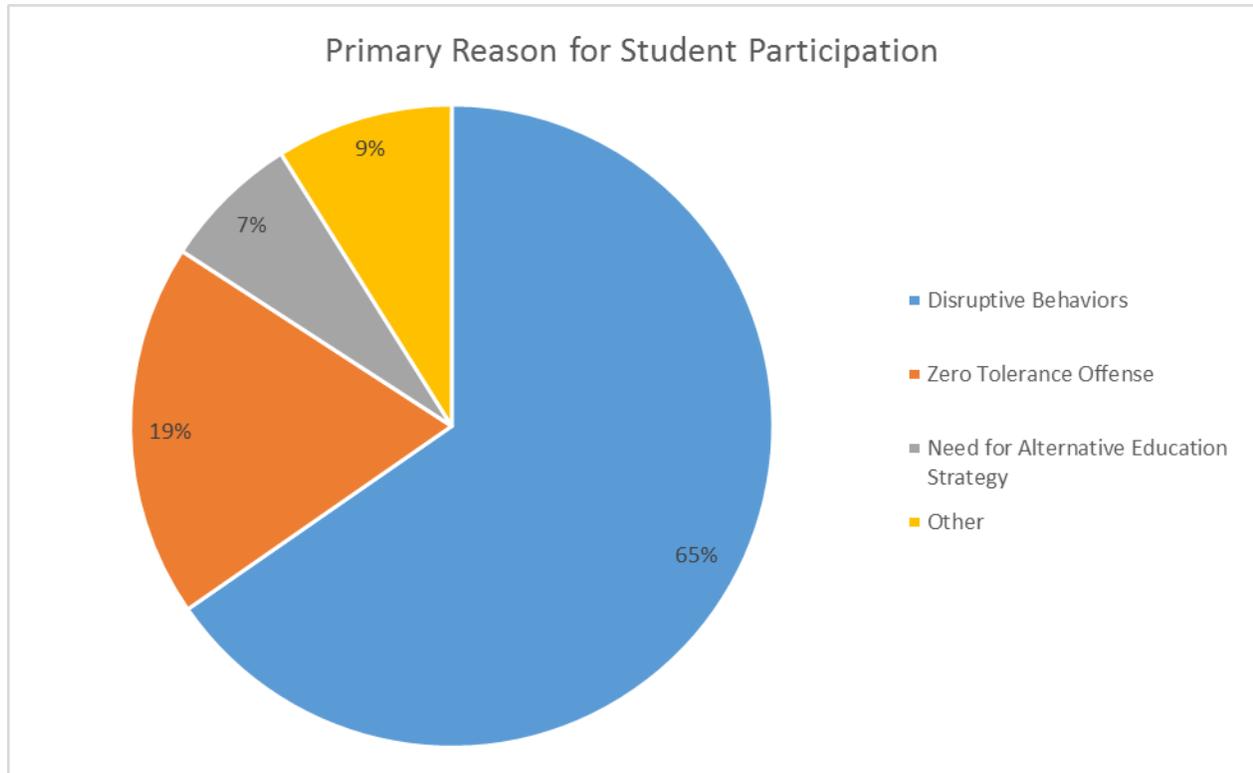


Table 1: Professionals Serving Students in an Alternative Setting

Districts were asked to rate the primary reason for student participation in the alternative school or program. The number one reason for attendance was a culmination of *disruptive behavior(s)* (**66 percent**). The second most cited reason was for committing a *zero tolerance offense* (**19 percent**). The *need for an alternative education strategy* was

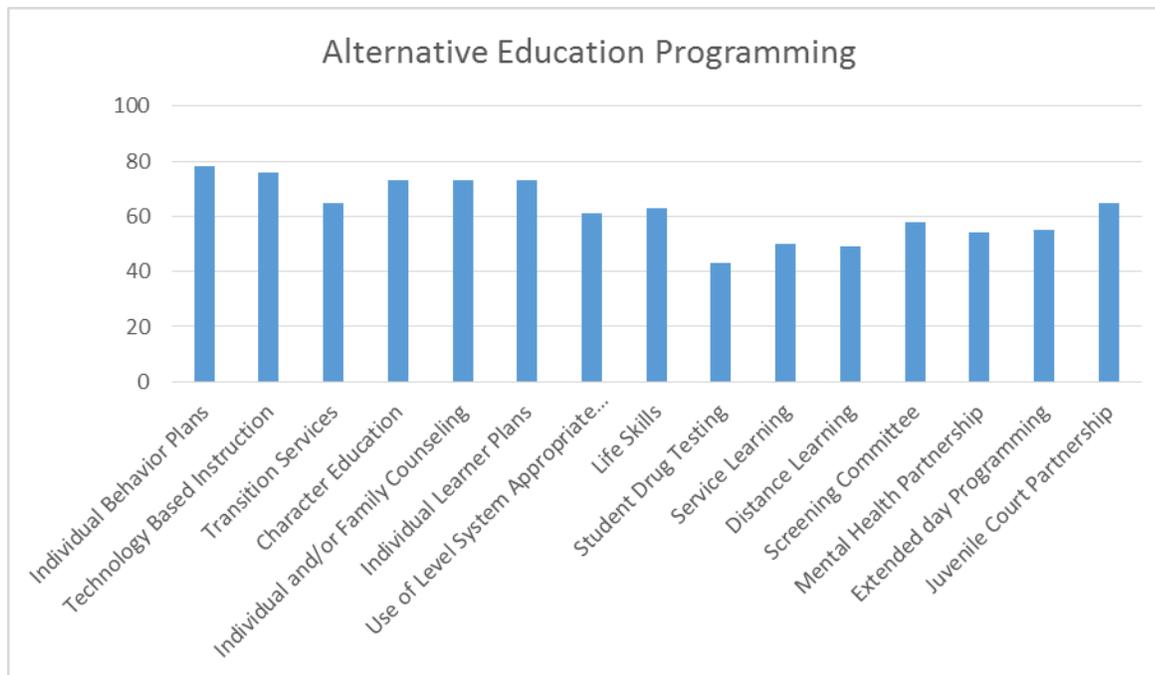
also noted by districts (**7 percent**). Finally, districts noted *other circumstances warranting participation* (**9 percent**). Table 2 summarizes those findings.



*Table 2: Primary Reason for Student Participation*

LEAs were asked to indicate the type of services offered in the alternative school or program. The most prevalent programming/services include the following: individual behavior plans (**78 reporting**), technology-based instruction (**76 reporting**), transition services (**65 reporting**), character education (**73 reporting**), individual and/or family counseling (**73 reporting**), individual learner plans (**73 reporting**), use of level system appropriate behavior (**61 reporting**) and life skills (**63 reporting**).

Less frequently cited/offered include the following: student drug testing (**43 reporting**), service learning (**50 reporting**), distance learning (**49 reporting**), screening committee (**58 reporting**), mental health partnership (**54 reporting**), extended day programming (**55 reporting**), and Juvenile Court partnership (**65 reporting**). Table 3 summarizes those findings.



*Table 3: Alternative Education Programming*

According to the survey, alternative education programs may be housed in a designated, separate, alternative school building that may or may not have a school number. Districts also report that alternative education programs may be self-contained within a traditional school. Alternative services may be geared toward students who have been suspended or expelled, as well as students that have dropped out of school and are reentering the education system. Some alternative schools and programs have a mixture of the above elements making them a hybrid school serving various alternative programming purposes.

Districts were asked if they had established an alternative education advisory committee and 50 districts reported having an advisory committee. Districts were also asked the average length of placement (stay) in the alternative setting. The reported average was 100 days.

The survey gave districts an opportunity to discuss the general needs of their program(s) and/or school(s). Sample comments from districts may be found in Appendix C. Comments shed light on the vast needs of alternative education programs. The one need most commonly reported was: ***The majority of LEAs cited a need for earmark funding designated specifically for alternative education.*** Many districts recommended that the current BEP funding be changed to designate specific funding for alternative education.

Lastly, a history of alternative education in Tennessee is included as Appendix D.

### **Alternative School Spotlight: R.T. Fisher Alternative School, Gallatin**

R. T. Fisher Alternative School (RTF) is part of the Sumner County School System. The alternative school concept for the county has been in place since 1992 with programs located in various schools around the county. In 1999, the district made the decision to consolidate all alternative programs into one centralized school. Thus RTF was formed and housed in the vacant Vena Stuart Elementary building in Gallatin where it has remained for the past sixteen years. The mission of RTF, in partnership with parents, is to encourage and equip each student with the emotional, social, and academic skills to successfully return to their home school.

Within the three wings of the school there are now four separate schools: high school, middle school, elementary school, and a special education area. The school has a gym, weight room, library, Plato computer lab, science lab, a rain garden, and a full service cafeteria. The staff consists of twenty-one teachers, twenty educational assistants, one full-time guidance counselor, one part-time guidance counselor, one part-time health teacher, and a transition coordinator.

RTF is comprised of two different educational settings - an extended therapeutic behavior program and alternative school program. The extended behavior program has three elementary classes, a middle school class, and a high school class. These classes provide intensive behavior modification and fall under special education guidelines. The second setting, the alternative school program, consists of a complete K-12 program that follows the regular educational curriculum. All core content classes are available to middle and high school students.

Students are remanded to RTF through the Sumner County Schools Disciplinary Hearing Authority. Once enrolled, each student is required to complete a fifty-five day program that is based on a level system. Building on each of the four levels, students practice safety, respectfulness, and varying responsibilities in order to progress. As the levels change, expectations increase, challenging students to build resiliency needed for transition back to their home schools. Although the length of the program is fifty-five days, the average student completes the program is sixty-five to seventy days. RTF students are also expected to follow a strict dress code. Transportation to RTF is provided by the county from sites located in the six major communities of Sumner County.

Once students complete the program at RTF, a transition plan is developed to ensure the successful transition of that student to their home school. A transition coordinator meets once a week for nine weeks with the student at their home school to monitor the student's behavior, attendance, and grades. If there are any issues between the school and the student the transition coordinator is responsible for acting as both a counselor and an ombudsman to resolve these issues thus

ensuring that all students are successful. Since establishing the transition coordinator position five years ago, students who appear before the Disciplinary Hearing Authority has decreased by 86%.

Students who are sent to RTF on a drug or alcohol offense are required to complete the FACE IT program. Implemented seven years ago, FACE IT is an 8-week mandatory drug and alcohol class for both students and their families. The program is unique to any other drug and alcohol program as parents or guardians are required to attend the weekly classes with their students. Although the primary focus of the FACE IT program is drugs and alcohol, there are other topics that are included in the 8-week sessions such as communication, how to handle stress, anger management, and how to make healthy choices. The weekly class is taught during the evenings by members of the RTF staff. The FACE IT program has a success rate of 97% of non-reoffenders.

RTF is a temporary placement for students who have been removed from their home schools for behavior or zero tolerance infractions. RTF provides a place for students to learn from their mistakes, understand that there are consequences for their behaviors, build confidence, continue their education, stay on track for graduation, and learn life skills that can become lifelong habits.

For further information about RTF please contact Bob Gideon at [bob.gideon@sumnerschools.org](mailto:bob.gideon@sumnerschools.org).

**Annual Alternative Education Report  
(2013-2014 School Year)  
APPENDICES**

## Annual Alternative Education Survey

*As Required by T.C.A. § 49-6-3404*



**Alternative Education as defined by the Advisory Council for Alternative Education:**

*“A nontraditional academic program designed to meet the student’s educational, behavioral and social needs.”*

**T.C.A. § 49-6-3402** mandates “at least one (1) alternative school shall be established and available for students in grades seven through twelve (7-12) who have been suspended or expelled.” **T.C.A. § 49-6-3404** also requires that the Department of Education submit a report annually on the status of alternative education in Tennessee. In order to gain a better perspective, the following survey was developed. The information provided to the Department will be reported to the Governor, both education committees of the General Assembly, and the State Board of Education. Please complete the following survey and return it to the address listed below.

<b>School System:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>District Alternative Education Coordinator:</b>	<b>Email Address:</b>
<b>Phone Number:</b> (     )     -	<b>Fax:</b> (     )     -
<b>Address:</b>	<b>City and Zip Code:</b>
<b>Person Completing Report (if different from above):</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b> (     )     -

**ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL(S) OR PROGRAM(S) THAT OPERATED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR:**

*(For each alternative school/ program, please identify the principal or program coordinator and provide an email address and phone number for each. Please do not include ISS.)*

Alternative School/Program Name	Principal/ Program Coordinator	Email Address of Principal/ Program Coordinator	Phone Number for School/ Program
			(     )     -
			(     )     -
			(     )     -
			(     )     -
			(     )     -
			(     )     -

**PARTICIPATION (TOTAL FOR ALL SCHOOL(S)/PROGRAM(S) IN YOUR DISTRICT):**

Number of <b>alternative school(s)*</b> :	
Number of <b>alternative education program(s)**</b> :	
Total number of classroom(s) serving alternative education students:	
Total number of students served:	
District’s total capacity (seats):	
Average length of placement (stay) in an alternative setting (number in days):	
Number of certificated staff working in an alternative school/program:	
Number of non-certificated staff assigned to an alternative education setting:	
Has an alternative education advisory committee been established at the district level?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

\* **A facility dedicated solely to alternative education**

\*\* **An alternative education program or class within a school**

**PRIMARY REASON FOR STUDENT ASSIGNMENT (RANK 1, 2, 3 AND 4)**

Need for alternative education strategy	
Other (please describe in space given)	

**SCHOOL/ PROGRAM ELEMENTS PRESENT IN YOUR DISTRICT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):**

Afterschool or other extended day programming	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual behavior plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Character education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit recovery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dropout prevention strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual and/or family counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual learner plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Juvenile court partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening committee (for alternative education placements)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student drug testing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology-based instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transition services (a formal plan)*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of level system or similar behavior support mechanism that encourages appropriate behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe in space given)	

*\*Mandated requirement under Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-3402*

**SPECIAL GROUPS SERVING THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL/PROGRAM (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

ELL Teachers		
School Counselors		
Special Education Teachers		
Social Workers		
School Resource Officers		
Teaching Assistants		
Other (please describe in space given)		

1. What models or curriculum are you currently implementing in your alternative education classroom(s)?
2. What technical assistance opportunities would help you as an alternative educator?
3. What is the greatest challenge facing your alternative education school(s)/programs(s)?
4. Additional comments/ feedback that would be appropriate for the alternative education report to the General Assembly?
5. Of the students served how many went on to graduate with a regular high school diploma during the current school year?
6. Do you see a growing need for alternatives at the elementary level? Yes  No

Please return all forms no later than **June 30** to: [Artina.Fossett@tn.gov](mailto:Artina.Fossett@tn.gov) or 615-741-3248

**Appendix B: District Alternative Education Coordinators**

Achievement School District	Candice Miller	<a href="mailto:cmiller@tnasd.org">cmiller@tnasd.org</a>	(601) 624-5879
Alamo City	Not Required		
Alcoa City	Scott Porter	<a href="mailto:sporter@alcoaschools.net">sporter@alcoaschools.net</a>	(865) 982-4631
Alvin C. York Institute	Kaye Copley O'Brien	<a href="mailto:k.obrien@fentressboe.net">k.obrien@fentressboe.net</a>	(931) 879-5082
Anderson County	Sue Voskamp	<a href="mailto:svoskamp@acs.ac">svoskamp@acs.ac</a>	(865) 463-2800, ext. 2821
Athens City	Robert Owens	<a href="mailto:owensr@k12tn.net">owensr@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 745-1516
Bedford County	Janice Womble	<a href="mailto:womblej@bedfordk12tn.net">womblej@bedfordk12tn.net</a>	(931) 684-3284
Bells City	Pre-K-None Required	-	
Benton County	Dr. Randy Shannon	<a href="mailto:randy.shannon@tennk12.net">randy.shannon@tennk12.net</a>	(731) 584-4492
Bledsoe County	Jack Roberson	<a href="mailto:jackroberson@k12tn.net">jackroberson@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 447-2914
Blount County	Jane Morton	<a href="mailto:jane.morton@blountk12.org">jane.morton@blountk12.org</a>	(865) 984-1212
Bradford SSD	Shane Paschall	<a href="mailto:paschalls2@k12tn.net">paschalls2@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 742-3152
Bradley County	Dan Glasscock	<a href="mailto:dglasscock@bradleyschools.org">dglasscock@bradleyschools.org</a>	(423) 473-8473
Bristol City	Dr. Dixie Bowen	<a href="mailto:bowend@btcs.org">bowend@btcs.org</a>	(423) 652-9225
Campbell County	Larry Nidiffer	<a href="mailto:nidifferl@k12tn.net">nidifferl@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 562-8377
Cannon County	Pam Sonderman	<a href="mailto:pam.sonderman@ccstn.net">pam.sonderman@ccstn.net</a>	615-563-5752
Carroll County	David Stone	<a href="mailto:dstone@carrollschools.com">dstone@carrollschools.com</a>	(731) 986-8908
Carter County	C.B. Hardin	<a href="mailto:cbhardin@k12tn.net">cbhardin@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 547-4050
Cheatham County	Jo Jones	<a href="mailto:jo.jones@ccstn.org">jo.jones@ccstn.org</a>	(615) 746-1424
Chester County	Bobby Helton	<a href="mailto:heltonb2@tennk12.net">heltonb2@tennk12.net</a>	(731) 989-8144
Claiborne County	Travis Bailey	<a href="mailto:baileyt21@k12tn.net">baileyt21@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 526-9835
Clarksville - Montgomery County	Dr. Kim Sigears	<a href="mailto:kim.sigears@cmcss.net">kim.sigears@cmcss.net</a>	(931) 542-5056
Clay County	Diana Monroe	<a href="mailto:monroed@k12tn.net">monroed@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 243-5510
Clinton City	No Program	-	
Cleveland City	Jeff Elliott	<a href="mailto:jelliott@clevelandschools.org">jelliott@clevelandschools.org</a>	(423) 472-9571
Cocke County	Bryan Douglas	<a href="mailto:douglasb@cc-boe.net">douglasb@cc-boe.net</a>	(423) 625-9768
Coffee County	Major Shelton	<a href="mailto:sheltonm@k12coffee.net">sheltonm@k12coffee.net</a>	(931) 723-5189
Crockett County	Jarrod Shelton	<a href="mailto:jerrod.shelton@crockettschools.net">jerrod.shelton@crockettschools.net</a>	(731) 696-4525
Cumberland County	Vicki Presson	<a href="mailto:pressonv@k12tn.net">pressonv@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 456-1228
Dayton City	Chris Tallent	<a href="mailto:tallentch@daytoncity.net">tallentch@daytoncity.net</a>	(423) 775-8414
Decatur County	Jeff Melton	<a href="mailto:jeff.melton@tennk12.net">jeff.melton@tennk12.net</a>	(731) 847-6437
DeKalb County	Marshall Ferrell	<a href="mailto:ferrellm@k12tn.net">ferrellm@k12tn.net</a>	(615) 597-4059
Dickson County	Karen I. Willey	<a href="mailto:kwilley@dcbe.org">kwilley@dcbe.org</a>	(615) 740-6070
Dyer County	See Dyersburg City	-	
Dyersburg City	Danny Walden	<a href="mailto:dwalden@k12tn.net">dwalden@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 286-3611
Elizabethton City	Dr. Corey Gardenhour	<a href="mailto:gardenhourc@k12tn.net">gardenhourc@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 547-8000 Ext 8223
<b>Etowah City - no program</b>		-	
Fayette County	Terry Williams	<a href="mailto:terry.williams@k12tn.net">terry.williams@k12tn.net</a>	(901) 465-5260
Fayetteville City	Ron Perrin	<a href="mailto:perrinr@fcsboe.org">perrinr@fcsboe.org</a>	(931) 433-5542
Fentress County	Diana Hannahan	<a href="mailto:diana.hannahan@fentressboe.com">diana.hannahan@fentressboe.com</a>	(931) 879-5082
Franklin County	Diana Spaulding	<a href="mailto:diana.spaulding@fcstn.net">diana.spaulding@fcstn.net</a>	(931) 967-0626
Franklin SSD	Beth Herren	<a href="mailto:herrenbet@fssd.org">herrenbet@fssd.org</a>	(615) 794-6624
Giles County	Cindy Young	<a href="mailto:cyoung@giles.k12.tn.us">cyoung@giles.k12.tn.us</a>	(931) 363-4558
Grainger County	Keith Lamb	<a href="mailto:klamb1@k12tn.net">klamb1@k12tn.net</a>	(865) 828-3611

Greene County	Daniel Thompson	<a href="mailto:thompsond3@greenek12.org">thompsond3@greenek12.org</a>	(423) 798-2646
Greeneville City	Jeff Townsley	<a href="mailto:townsleyj@gcschools.net">townsleyj@gcschools.net</a>	(423) 787-8009
Grundy County	Judy Fults	<a href="mailto:jafalts@blomand.net">jafalts@blomand.net</a>	(931) 692-5427
Hamblen County	Calvin Decker	<a href="mailto:cdecker@hcboe.net">cdecker@hcboe.net</a>	(423) 585-3785
Hamilton County	Margaret Abernathy	<a href="mailto:abernathy_margaret@hcde.org">abernathy_margaret@hcde.org</a>	423-209-8453
Hancock County	Tony Seal	<a href="mailto:tseal2@k12tn.net">tseal2@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 733-4848
Hardeman County	Steve Gibson	<a href="mailto:gibsons4@k12tn.net">gibsons4@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 658-2510
Hardin County	Charles Patton	<a href="mailto:pattonc5@k12tn.net">pattonc5@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 925-3940
Hawkins County	Steve Starnes	<a href="mailto:steve.starnes@hck12.net">steve.starnes@hck12.net</a>	(423) 272-6655
Haywood County	Art Garrett	<a href="mailto:garretta2@k12tn.net">garretta2@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 772-9613 Ext 2240
Henderson County	David N. Weatherford	<a href="mailto:weatherford@k12tn.net">weatherford@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 967-9527
Henry County	Michael N. Poteete	<a href="mailto:poteetem@henryk12.net">poteetem@henryk12.net</a>	(731) 642-7500
Hickman County	Greg McCord	<a href="mailto:greg.mccord@hickmank12.org">greg.mccord@hickmank12.org</a>	(931) 729-3391 Ext 2251
Hollow Rock-Bruceton	See Carroll Co.	-	
Houston County	Cathy Harvey	<a href="mailto:harveyc@k12tn.net">harveyc@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 289-4148
Humboldt City	John Bond	<a href="mailto:john.bond@humboldtschools.com">john.bond@humboldtschools.com</a>	(731) 784-2781
Humphreys County	Daniel Moran	<a href="mailto:morand@hcss.org">morand@hcss.org</a>	(931) 296-2568 ext. 2243
Huntingdon SSD	Dr. Steve Peery	<a href="mailto:peerys@k12tn.net">peerys@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 986-2222
Jackson County	Johnny McLerran	<a href="mailto:mclerranj1@k12tn.net">mclerranj1@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 268-6762
Jackson-Madison County	Dr. Tina Williams	<a href="mailto:trwilliams@jmcass.org">trwilliams@jmcass.org</a>	(731) 664-2534
Jefferson County	Mandy Schneitman	<a href="mailto:schneitmanm@k12tn.net">schneitmanm@k12tn.net</a>	(865) 397-3194
Johnson City	Dr. Janie H. Snyder	<a href="mailto:snyderj@jcschools.org">snyderj@jcschools.org</a>	(423) 434-5585
Johnson County	Dr. Mischelle Simcox	<a href="mailto:msimcox@k12tn.net">msimcox@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 727-2620
Kingsport City	Shanna Hensley	<a href="mailto:shensley@k12k.com">shensley@k12k.com</a>	(423) 378-2138
Knox County	Brian Hartsell	<a href="mailto:brian.hartsell@knoxschools.org">brian.hartsell@knoxschools.org</a>	(865) 594-1506
Lake County	Bret Johnson	<a href="mailto:johnsonb11@k12tn.net">johnsonb11@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 253-6601
Lauderdale County	Shirley Robinson	<a href="mailto:srobinson@lced.net">srobinson@lced.net</a>	(731) 635-4856
Lawrence County	Mickey Dunn	<a href="mailto:mdunn@lcss.us">mdunn@lcss.us</a>	(931) 762-3581
Lebanon SSD	Beth Goolesby	<a href="mailto:goolesbyb@k12tn.net">goolesbyb@k12tn.net</a>	(615) 453-2694
Lenoir City	Laura Dunn	<a href="mailto:ldunn@lenoircityschools.net">ldunn@lenoircityschools.net</a>	(865) 986-2072
Lewis County	Allen Trull	<a href="mailto:allen.trull@tennk12.net">allen.trull@tennk12.net</a>	(931) 796-3264
Lexington City	Jamie McAdams	<a href="mailto:mcadamsj3@caywood.org">mcadamsj3@caywood.org</a>	(731) 967-5591
Lincoln County	Linda G. Tallman	<a href="mailto:ltallman@lcdoe.org">ltallman@lcdoe.org</a>	(931) 433-3565
Loudon County	Tom Hankinson	<a href="mailto:hankinsont@loudoncounty.org">hankinsont@loudoncounty.org</a>	(865) 986-2036
Macon County	Brenda	<a href="mailto:ellerb@k12tn.net">ellerb@k12tn.net</a>	(615) 666-2125
Manchester City	Deborah Williams	<a href="mailto:dwilliams2@k12tn.net">dwilliams2@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 728-2316
Marion County	Jennifer Rector	<a href="mailto:jrector@mctns.net">jrector@mctns.net</a>	(423) 298-5218
Maryville City	Dr. Sandra Ernest	<a href="mailto:sandie.earnest@maryville-schools.org">sandie.earnest@maryville-schools.org</a>	(865) 982-7121
Maury County	Robert Busch	<a href="mailto:buschr@mauryk12.org">buschr@mauryk12.org</a>	(931) 381-1474
McKenzie SSD	See Carroll Co.	-	
McMinn County	Gary Bowman	<a href="mailto:bowmang@k12tn.net">bowmang@k12tn.net</a>	(423)746-4589
McNairy County	Stephanie Brown	<a href="mailto:browns@mcnairy.org">browns@mcnairy.org</a>	(731) 645-9366
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Metro/Nashville Public	Bruce Curtis	<a href="mailto:bruce.curtis@mnps.org">bruce.curtis@mnps.org</a>	(615) 259-8400

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Morgan County	Ronnie Wilson	<a href="mailto:wilsonr@mcsed.net">wilsonr@mcsed.net</a>	(423) 346-6214
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Newport City	None Required		
Oak Ridge City	Dr. Larrissa Henderson	<a href="mailto:lhenderson@ortn.edu">lhenderson@ortn.edu</a>	(865) 425-9002
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Paris SSD	Leah Watkins	<a href="mailto:leah.watkins@parisssd.org">leah.watkins@parisssd.org</a>	(731) 642-9322
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Pickett County	Randy Garrett	<a href="mailto:garretr@k12tn.net">garretr@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 863-3123
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### **Appendix C: Sample Comments from LEAs (SY 2013-2014)**

Local education agencies were asked to indicate any comments or feedback they might have for the Tennessee General Assembly. Below are just a few sample comments from school districts. Comments shed light on the vast needs of those educators that teach in the alternative setting.

- **Alvin C. York Institute** notes that they are in need of a school counselor to meet the social and emotional needs of their students and to assist in the transition back to the regular school.
- **Blount County** would like for the ELOC alternative program to have their own school number. Currently students remain enrolled at their home school.
- **Bristol City** states the need for additional funding solely for alternative education to support an off-campus alternative facility for students who are unable to be successful in the regular classroom.
- **Dickson County's** alternative program hopes to become competitive with other schools in the district with regard to academic growth and that they will be held accountable for this in the future. Their goal is for alternative programs not to be used for punishment only.
- **Greene County Schools** identifies the lack of appropriate funding as a major obstacle to providing appropriate services in their alternative school.
- **Jackson County and Jefferson County** both advocate for additional funding for working with at-risk students to support academic, behavioral and school safety needs.
- **Johnson City** is advocating for a separate set of standards that would allow alternative education to "think outside the box" and truly prepare at-risk students to be college and career ready.
- **Lawrence County** cites the need for additional resources for emotionally disturbed students in the elementary grades.
- **Maryville City** would like additional opportunities and/or funding for collaboration with community agencies and for long-term assistance with transitioning from alternative programming to regular programming.
- **Oak Ridge City** states that in order to adequately serve their families counseling programs for parents and students that provide mental health services would be helpful.
- **Obion County** would like for the state to mandate the teacher to pupil ratio for an alternative setting.
- **Rhea County** sites the need for changes to teacher evaluation for alternative programs based on the alternative program not on regular school program.
- **Roane County** requests that the BEP for alternative education be evaluated and to require oversight by LEA to insure quality of programs meets the law.
- **Rutherford County** principal's request that alternative educators not have value-added scores used for advancement/pay.

## **Appendix D: History of Alternative Education in Tennessee**

According to the Comptroller's report on alternative education titled *Tennessee's Alternative Schools*, one of the first alternative schools in our state originated in Dickson County in the late seventies (2005, p. 2). Former Juvenile Judge William D. Field, Sr. identified a true need for alternatives to students being expelled or suspended from school (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 2). In 1984, the General Assembly passed a bill authorizing the establishment of alternative schools for those who were continually having disciplinary problems in their traditional school environment (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8). The legislature soon amended that bill in 1986 to *require* an alternative school for students in grades seven through twelve (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8).

The Education Improvement Act (EIA) was passed by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1992. This mandated that any school district serving students in grades seven through twelve have at least one alternative education program (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005 p. 3). The state legislature later authorized LEAs to create alternative programs for grades one through six. The General Assembly also passed legislation that prevented students from graduating from an alternative school (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8).

In 1996, the General Assembly authorized the Department of Education to establish a pilot alternative school program, one in each grand division (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8). The state legislature also mandated that the State Board of Education provide a curriculum for alternative schools focused on reforming students. In response, the Board released *Alternative School Program Standards* in 2000 (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8-9). In 2004, the Senate passed Joint Resolution 746 that required the Office of Education Accountability of the Comptroller's Office to conduct a study of alternative schools in Tennessee. That report was released in April of 2005.

More recently (2006), the General Assembly amended *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404* to require the establishment of an Advisory Council, referred to as the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education. The Advisory Council is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Consider any issue, problem or matter related to alternative education presented to it by the Governor, the Commissioner, or the State Board of Education, and give advice thereon.
2. Study proposed plans for alternative education programs or curricula to determine if the plans or curricula should be adopted.
3. Study alternative education programs or curricula implemented in Tennessee school systems to determine the effectiveness of the programs or curricula, and alternative education programs or curricula implemented in other states to determine if the programs or curricula should be adopted in Tennessee schools.
4. Consider rules of governance of alternative schools and make recommendations concerning rules of governance.
5. Make an annual report to the Governor, the education committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education on the status of alternative education in Tennessee.

In 2007, Public Chapter Number 517 mandated a transition plan for students entering and leaving an alternative education setting and establishes greater accountability measures to include monitoring academic and behavioral progress of students. Public Chapter Number 211 required that the Advisory Council for Alternative Education study issues relating to the establishment of pilot alternative school programs. Finally, Bill Public Chapter Number 455 required the Department of Education to create a pilot project for the 2007-2008 school year in Davidson County.

With the release of the first annual Alternative Education Report in January of 2008, the Council acknowledged the need to examine the following question, "What do we really mean by alternative education?" Due to the complexity of alternative education in our state, the Council proposed that the

State Board of Education adopt a much broader definition that encompassed all alternative education programs in Tennessee. The Council recommended that the Board adopt a new, more contemporary definition of alternative education. The Council proposed that the following definition of alternative education be adopted: ***“A nontraditional academic program designed to meet the student's educational, behavioral and social needs.”***

In August of 2008, the Governor’s Advisory Council for Alternative Education in conjunction with the State Board of Education released *Alternative Education Program Standards*. The model standards address the following broad categories: mission and environment, governance, transitional planning, support services, parent and community engagement, staffing and professional development, individualized learner plans, life skills, curriculum and instruction, student assessment, and monitoring and program assessment. The standards replaced the previously adopted *Alternative School Program Standards* from 2000.

In February of 2009, the Advisory Council released *A Feasibility Study Related to the Establishment of Alternative Programs in Tennessee* with specific recommendations on how to drive quality by enriching funds for alternative education. Additionally, in February of 2009, the Council hosted the first annual Student Discipline and Alternative Education Institute. Over three hundred educators attended the first Institute.

In October of 2009, the Council joined with the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) on the first ever southeastern regional summit on alternative education. Partnering with the organization, and our friendly neighbors, this conference explored best practice, national trends, and allowed alternative educators an opportunity to collaborate with other practitioners outside of the state. The first summit was held in Rogers, Arkansas.

The Council also recently published (February of 2010) an executive brief entitled *Promoting High Quality Alternative Education: An Update from the Advisory Council*. In the brief the Council set forth several legislative recommendations/priorities which include the following: redefine alternative education, establish an *Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education Award*, investigate ways to enrich funding, and create a state-level position to support alternative teachers, students, and parents.