

Primary Principles of Effective Alternative Education in Iowa **Iowa Association of Alternative Education**

- 1. Standards and benchmarks:** are honored in an alternative manner to traditional school practice. Options and flexibility to established student-centeredness are part of the expectations.
- 2. Students are the center of school/program management:** Student-first, Curriculum-second mentality. Students choose to attend alternative.
- 3. Alternative Timelines:** All students are not expected to be on the same timeline for graduation or to achieve identified education standards or benchmarks.
- 4. Utilization of legal age flexibility in law:** Students are supported to remain in school/education to complete goals of the student up to and sometimes beyond age 21.
- 5. Whole Student Development:** Goals of education balanced over personal-social development, career-vocational development and academic development.
- 6. Teachers are free to teach:** Teachers are certified at the level of education (elementary/middle school/high school) presently in practice and may manage learning/education in areas outside their endorsed certification via coordinating with highly qualified teachers on curriculum and assessments. Teachers choose to be an alternative educator.
- 7. Separateness:** Program/school are administered differently to accommodate student-centeredness. Policies and rules are identified for alternative.
- 8. Smallness:** Staff/student ratios do not exceed 12 students per staff to maximize learning.
- 9. Student leadership:** Students meet with staff as “family” to identify issues and manage learning opportunities/school.
- 10. Student responsibility:** Students work with staff to develop personalized plan for school/education. Plan is used as guide to realize the goals of the student/school.
- 11. Staff as Counselors:** All staff members are mentors and assume responsibilities for monitoring/guiding students. Students select preferred mentors.
- 12. Methodologies of teaching and learning** vary based on student-centered interests/needs/research.

