ENGROSSED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1458

By: Wells of the House

and

Fisher, Williams and
Morgan of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; amending Section 44, Chapter 247, O.S.L. 1996 (70 O.S. Supp. 1996, Section 1210.568), which relates to statewide alternative education programs; providing for inclusion of certain alternative education programs in statewide system; providing for funding of certain Alternative Education Academies programs; listing criteria for alternative education programs; providing for certain reporting of revenue and expenditures; requiring the State Board of Education to contract for technical assistance; stating qualifications of technical assistance provider; providing priority for contract renewal; stating duties of technical assistance provider; requiring compliance with certain laws and rules; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 44, Chapter 247, O.S.L. 1996 (70 O.S. Supp. 1996, Section 1210.568), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1210.568 A. Beginning with the first semester of the 1996-1997 school year, the State Board of Education shall implement a statewide system of alternative education programs which shall be phased-in within five (5) years. The statewide system shall include but not be limited to Alternative Approaches grant programs, funded pursuant to Section 1210.561 of this title, Alternative Education Academies pilot programs, funded pursuant to Section 1210.563 of this title and alternative academies or alternative programs implemented pursuant to this section. The funding for Alternative Education Academies pilot programs, after the third year of funding provided pursuant to Section 1210.563 of this title, shall be provided from funds appropriated for the statewide system.

B. Beginning with the first semester of the 2000-2001 school year, all school districts of this state shall provide alternative education programs that conform to the requirements of statutes and rules applicable to alternative education. A program shall:

1. Allow class sizes and student\teacher ratios which are conducive to effective learning for at-risk students;

2. Incorporate appropriate structure, curriculum, and interaction and reinforcement strategies designed to provide effective instruction;

3. Include an intake and screening process to determine eligibility of students;

4. Demonstrate that teaching faculty are appropriately certified teachers;

5. Demonstrate that teaching faculty have been selected on the basis of a record of successful work with at-risk students or personal and educational factors that qualify them for work with at-risk students;

6. Reflect appropriate collaborative efforts with state agencies and local agencies serving youth;

7. Provide courses that meet the curricula standards adopted by the State Board of Education and remedial courses;

8. Offer individualized instruction;

9. State clear and measurable program goals and objectives;

10. Include counseling and social services components with the provision that providers of services are not required to be certified as school counselors;

11. Require a plan leading to graduation be developed for each child in the program;

12. Offer life skills instruction;

13. Provide opportunities for arts education to students, including Artists in Residence programs coordinated with the Oklahoma Arts Council;

14. Provide a proposed annual budget;

15. Include an evaluation component including an annual written self-evaluation; and

16. Be appropriately designed to serve middle school, junior high school and secondary school students in grades six through twelve who are most at risk of not completing a high school education for a reason other than that identified in Section 13-101 of this title.

C. By September 15 of each school year, all revenue received and expended for students participating in an alternative education program shall be reported to the State Department of Education by major object codes and by program classifications pursuant to the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System as adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Section 5-135 of this title.

D. 1. The State Board of Education shall contract for technical assistance for operation of an Alternative Education Technical Assistance Center. The technical assistance provider

shall be an entity located in Oklahoma that has been officially recognized by the United States Department of Education to assess and facilitate dissemination of validated educational programs in Oklahoma. The technical assistance provider shall have priority, if its operations are deemed satisfactory by the State Board of Education and if funds are available, for annual renewal of the contract.

2. The duties of the technical assistance provider shall include, but shall not be limited to:

a. providing initial and ongoing training of personnel who will educate at-risk populations through alternative education programs,

b. providing technical assistance to school districts to enhance the probability of success of their alternative education programs,

c. evaluating state-funded alternative education programs,

d. reporting to the State Board of Education the evaluation results of state-funded alternative education programs, and

e. providing in-depth program analysis and evaluation of state-funded alternative education programs.

E. All alternative education programs shall be subject to statutes and rules applicable to alternative education, including any exemptions from statutory or regulatory requirements authorized by statutes or rule.

F. An alternative education program may be offered by an individual school district or may be offered jointly by school districts that have formed interlocal cooperative agreements pursuant to Section 5-117b of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1997.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the House of Representatives the 6th day of March, 1997.

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Passed the Senate the ____ day of _____, 1997.

President of the Senate