

# Denison Alternative High School Guidebook

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## Welcome

Welcome to Denison Alternative High School. We are glad you are interested in our program. Students choose to enroll with us for a variety of reasons. We want all of our students to feel welcome here and to enjoy learning in an environment that is different than a traditional high school setting.

## Mission Statement

Our purpose is to provide the atmosphere, the attitude, and the assistance necessary for students to earn a high school diploma.

# Program History and Concept

Denison Alternative High School was established in 1992 as a joint effort between the Denison Community Schools and the Denison Job Corps Center. The goal is to provide students who have dropped out of high school or who are not successful in a traditional high school an opportunity to earn a high school diploma. After successfully completing the application process, both Denison Community School and Denison Job Corps students may participate in the program. Each student must meet the guidelines set by his/her school to be eligible for application. Students from area high schools may take advantage of the program with approval from their home high school administration and the principal of Denison High School.

Unlike a traditional high school, Alternative High students work on one or two subjects at a time and at pace that fits their individual needs. Students often perform better than they did in the traditional high school setting because of the self-paced learning, individual attention, relaxed atmosphere, and smaller number of students in the classroom. Students often gain a sense of self-confidence and individual responsibility as they complete their studies. Students are responsible for completing all the required work for each course. Students at the Denison Alternative High School should realize this is a special opportunity to earn a high school diploma and, therefore, are expected to treat it as such.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who may enroll in the Denison Alternative High School?**

The alternative school is available for Denison High School students upon approval of the principal of Denison High School and the student's counselor. Students must also be enrolled in the Denison Job Corps program to earn vocational training in one of nine trades. Students from area high schools who meet the tuition requirements, are approved by their home school district, and the principal of Denison High School may enroll if the program has available space.

**Students must be 16 years old or older to enroll in the Alternative High School and Job Corp.**

### **Where is the Denison Alternative High School located?**

The Denison Alternative High School is comprised of several rooms located at the Denison Job Corps Center, which is a federally funded program sponsored by the United States Department of Labor. Denison students attending the alternative school will be in a classroom designated solely for local high school students.

### **Why do some students apply to attend the alternative school?**

There are numerous reasons why this option is better to earn a high school diploma for some students. In some cases, the student is supporting a family and needs to spend time earning a living while also going to school. Some students find studying several subjects each day is more difficult than focusing on one subject at a time. Some students need a structure which facilitates their learning style. Yet other students are behind their classmates in credits towards earning a diploma and believe this program will help them catch up.

### **What hours is this program open?**

The High School classroom is open from 7:30 a.m.. until 4:00 p.m. daily. Students schedules are determined based on their needs, their ages, and their program of study.

## **Is homework required at the Alternative High School?**

Though homework is not generally required, some students choose to take assignments home to advance more quickly through their courses. One credit per month is the minimum rate of progress expected in this program. It may be necessary to take work home to meet this level of progress.

## **What courses are offered?**

Due to the independent nature of this program, laboratory, shop, and other hands-on courses are not offered to students in the alternative school classrooms. Foreign language and higher level courses in core areas of science, math, language arts and social science are also not available.

## **How fast must my progress be?**

As noted earlier, each student is required to earn a minimum of one credit each month. Students not meeting the expectations will have a performance contract created to help them meet performance expectations. If these expectations are not met, removal from the program may result.

## **How many credits are required to earn a Denison Alternative High School diploma?**

Thirty-eight credits are required for all students to earn a diploma.

## **When can a student enroll in the program?**

Students may apply for acceptance at any time; however, it is common for the program to be full and students are then placed on a waiting list. The length of the waiting period varies, but is usually not longer than a few weeks. If you are on the waiting list, you will be notified when an opening exists. In some cases, special circumstances will dictate the order in which students are accepted into this program.

## **What calendar does the alternative school follow?**

Since students enrolled in the Alternative High School are also Job Corp students, the Job Corp calendar and schedule will be followed.

## **Is it true the Alternative High School is easier than the traditional high school?**

Some students may have this belief prior to enrollment; however, they find that earning a diploma from the alternative school can be more challenging than the traditional high school because all assignments and tests must earn a 70% before the student can advance to the next unit or chapter. Like any form of education, the alternative school requires students to have self discipline to be successful.

## **Are special education students allowed to enroll?**

Special Education students are welcome to attend Denison Alternative High School. Students with very high educational needs (Level III) may not be successful in this program. In such cases, the student may be referred back to Denison High School for a more appropriate level of programming.

## **Is lunch available on campus?**

All Job Corp students are provided a fee lunch each day.

## **Are there any other rules in the classroom and on campus?**

Students must follow the rules established for all Job Corp students. These will be explained during your orientation to Job Corp.

## **Courses and Grading**

Thirty-eight credits are required to earn your diploma from the Denison Alternative High School. These courses are:

- 6- English
- 4- Math
- 3- Science
- 6- Social Studies
- 1- Careers
- 1- Health
- 1- Keyboarding
- 16- Electives

**Beginning with the freshmen class in the fall of 2007, Iowa law requires the following credits:**

- 8 - English**
- 6 - Math**
- 6 - Science**
- 6 - Social Science**

Before a student may begin in the alternative high school, his/her past transcript(s) will be evaluated to determine which credits are needed to complete the diploma. With a few exceptions, students may complete your credits in any order.

The grading scale in use is as follows:

- A..... 100% - 93%
- B..... 92% - 86%
- C..... 85% - 76%
- D..... 75% - 70%

Students must pass all tests according to the above standards. If a grade is below 70% the student must restudy and retake the test until the standard is met. All completed assignments must be turned in immediately. All missing work must be redone by the student.

A syllabus showing all the work to be completed will be provided at the beginning of each new class. Once all of the work is completed satisfactorily, the credit is earned. Students are welcome to see their grade sheet to check their progress, but they also should record their daily progress on the course syllabus.

