

**Mahanoy Area School District  
SUCCESS Learning Center (SLC)  
Alternative Education Program**

**PHILOSOPHY**

The Mahanoy Area School District, in cooperation with parents and community members, provides diverse educational opportunities to enhance each child's self-esteem, to develop individual talents and interests that encourage students to achieve their full potential, and to become productive citizens in an ever-changing global society.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the SUCCESS Learning Center (SLC) Alternative Education Program at Mahanoy Area Middle School is to provide support and intensive instruction to students that demonstrate difficulty learning in the conventional mainstream educational setting and to enable them to become successful in the mainstream classroom, the school environment, and the community at large.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The SUCCESS Learning Center (SLC) is a self-contained classroom in the Mahanoy Area Middle School designed to minimize disruption of the mainstream education environment. It is designed for students (Grades 5-8) consistently exhibiting disruptive behavior that interferes with the education of other students. SLC students require a more individualized, secured educational setting, where core academics as well as life skills are emphasized. Students receive 20+ instructional hours per week in core subject areas that include language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies/history. The core subject areas are embedded in an integrated curriculum that also addresses adolescent health and life skills initiatives. In addition to the academic components, the students complete community service projects and utilize the COMPASS and Study Island computerized programs in mathematics, reading, science, and Basic English. The SLC works to return students to the mainstream classroom and also serves as a transition to and from other out of school placement programs for disruptive students. The SLC is capable of providing educational services for up to 20 students and each student is required to remain for a minimum of one marking period of 45 days.

A Social Worker (MSW) serves as the Adolescent Health Coordinator to provide program development, case management, counseling services and family outreach. The Social Worker provides individual and group counseling services to students/families to assist them in developing the skills necessary to adjust and cope with peer, family and life stressors that place them at risk for out of school placement. In collaboration with the American Cancer Society, the Adolescent Health Coordinator serves as the liaison with the American Cancer Society in the development of local, community health care partnerships. These local partnerships will provide health, safety and life skills programs to ensure that students are connected with local resources and aware of health and safety risks.

**EDUCATIONAL THEORY & APPROACH**

All students of the Mahanoy Area Middle School (grades 5-8) who: 1) Earn frequent school suspensions and pose continued disruptions to the educational process; 2) Demonstrate chronic

truancy; 3) Demonstrate overt threat of violent behavior/Physical Acts of Violence/Dangerous to Self/others and/or 4) Demonstrate apathetic approach to current mainstreamed studies are eligible for SLC services as described below. Instruction takes place in the designated SLC classroom. Educational practices in the SLC classroom mirror approaches used throughout the district in the mainstream classroom, but are coupled with self learning activities.

### **BELIEFS AND VALUES OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

- All children have a right to an uninterrupted education.
- No student has the right to hinder the learning process of themselves or others by misbehavior.
- There is a need to teach ethics and values for students to conduct their lives in terms of these values.
- Hard work and perseverance are necessary to accomplish life goals.
- Structure and a safe environment are necessary for effective learning to occur.

### **EDUCATIONAL GOALS**

The goal of the Mahanoy Area School District is to provide students the opportunity to meet the academic standards under Chapter 4.12 in an alternative learning environment. The specific educational goals of the Mahanoy Area School District SUCCESS Learning Center are as follows:

#### **Common Core Goals**

*Self-Worth.* The SLC helps students to develop capabilities, talents, self-understanding and a feeling of self-worth through acknowledgement of student behavior, effort and achievement.

*Information and Thinking Skills.* The SLC assists students in developing the skills necessary to locate and manage information, solve problems, and to make decisions utilizing the processes of analysis, synthesis, creativity and evaluation.

*Learning Independently and Collectively.* The SLC encourages students to become independent life-long learners through independent exploration, as well as, collaborating with others to develop skills, expand knowledge and to facilitate new ideas.

*Adaptability to Change.* The SLC prepares students to develop and grow in a world where change is normal and constant.

*Honesty, Responsibility and Tolerance.* The SLC conveys to students the need and importance of honesty, integrity, individual responsibility and tolerance.

#### **Academic Goals**

Students will receive instruction and participate in learning activities that facilitate the development of proficiency in accordance with Pennsylvania State Academic Standards for:

- Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology

- History
- Environment and Ecology
- Health, Safety, and Physical Education

**Parental Component Goals Include:**

- Involving parents in the educational plan of their children;
- Informing parents about the new school environment;
- Informing parents about various programs and extracurricular activities for their children;
- Informing parents of community agencies and resources.

**Community Service Goals Include:**

- To create a positive connection between the students and their community
- To provide another strategy for academic achievement and career planning in a realistic environment using hands-on strategies of pedagogy and critical thinking.
- To nurture self esteem through positive experiences while working in a team environment.
- Allow students to achieve trust and caring relationships with others.
- To close the gap between academic learning and what is happening in real life.

**REFERRAL CRITERIA**

Students are referred to the SLC based on the following criteria:

- Frequent school suspension
- Chronic truancy
- Apathetic approach to studies
- Overt threat of violent behavior
- Physical acts of violence
- Behavior interferes with the learning of other students
- Creates an unsafe school environment
- Disrupts the overall educational process
- Transitional placement of student returning from outside educational placements

**ENTRANCE PROCEDURE**

Mahanoy Area Middle School utilizes a progressive disciplinary model that exhausts options before removal from the regular classroom. The following are the progressive disciplinary actions/responses.

- Verbal Warning
- Detention
- Withdrawal of Privileges
- In-School Suspension (1-10 days)
- Out-of-School Suspension ( 1-10 days)
- Parental Conference
- Enforcement of Attendance Policy
- Confiscation of Material
- Referral to Outside Agencies

- Referral to Appropriate Law Enforcement Agencies
- Referral for Psychological Services, drug/alcohol treatment, anger management/conflict resolution counseling
- Formal expulsion hearings before the School Board of Directors
- External Alternative Education Programs

**CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE SUCCESS LEARNING PROGRAM (SLC)**

Special Education services are available for all SLC students once it has been determined that the student placement based solely on behavior and/or attendance and not on student disability. General procedures in accordance with IDEA and Chapter 14:

- Request MDE meeting (to include manifestation determination)
- Generate Notice of Recommended Education Placement (NOREP) if applicable
- Insure inclusionary measures are addressed (Pull-out/Push-In special services/assistance)
- Insure student is afforded the least restrictive environment
- Funding requirements are met in accordance inter-district memorandum of understanding (MOU) contracts
- Parental involvement

**CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO THE REGULAR CLASSROOM**

Student reviews are conducted at the end of every quarter to assess student progress. There are also meetings held between the principal, alternative education teacher and social worker to discuss progress of each child in the program. Exit criteria include:

- Weekly faculty consultation to assess student progress
- Textbook, workbooks and computer software are in alignment with the current mainstream curriculum
- Lesson plans reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum
- Behavioral assessments are completed documenting to exit the program. All students must progress to the exit level before reintegration into the mainstream classroom.

**TERMINATION FROM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

Students can be terminated from the alternative education program for non-compliance of established rules and regulations.

**DISCLAIMER**

ANY SITUATION NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED IN THIS POLICY/HANDBOOK SHALL BE GOVERNED BY THE POLICIES AND GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE MAHANOEY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT.