



HAMILTON LOCAL SCHOOLS
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HAMILTON ALTERNATIVE ACADEMY
2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

From the Sponsoring Superintendent – Christopher T. Lester

We welcome you to review our annual report for the 2011-2012 school year. This year we formally changed our name from Hamilton Local Digital Academy to Hamilton Alternative Academy (HAA). Our primary goal is to offer students, grades K-12, the highest quality alternative educational programming possible in order to meet individual student needs. The academy primarily educates at-risk students who are between the ages of 16 and 22. The information that follows provides a statistical and narrative overview of our school during the previous academic year. We are pleased with the success many of our students have found and look forward to continued improvement.

To address student performance, the staff creates action plans and reviews data collected during the school year. This methodology is critical to student academic growth. By offering a variety of curriculum options, our students have the greatest learning flexibility, allowing us the ability to provide ongoing academic support on a continual basis.

Should you have questions regarding this report, please contact me through e-mail: clester@hamilton-local.k12.oh.us or by phone: (614) 491-8044.

Christopher T. Lester
Superintendent, Hamilton Local Schools



HAMILTON ALTERNATIVE ACADEMY

Allyson Price, Executive Director

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From the Executive Director – Allyson Price

Hamilton Alternative Academy embarked on its initial year of existence on September 15, 2003, with Mr. William Morrison as the Director. Our goal was to provide learning opportunities to students who, for a variety of reasons, could not regularly attend school. Initially, we provided on-line learning opportunities for students in grades 7-12.

During the 2004-2005 school year, the student population increased almost two-fold and the inquiries about this school option became numerous. We became a “mixed” or “blended” environment with the addition of a correspondence program for high school students in grades 9-12). We also created an alternative classroom for middle school students in grades 7 & 8.

The correspondence program allowed secondary students to work in a familiar environment using textbooks and study guides as the main core of the curriculum. This also enabled us to provide credit recovery courses to students attending our high school. Students who had either failed a course, or could not fit one into their schedule, could therefore earn credits.

The alternative classroom allowed students, who would otherwise be home-schooled, the ability to work with an instructor in a small group setting within the school. The instructor worked diligently to provide as much individual attention as possible to the students there and to guide them through the state required curriculum as effectively as possible. These additions greatly enhanced our learning community as we continued to grow and improve.

As the alternative classroom proved to be successful for students, we added a second alternative classroom in 2005-2006 for students in high school. The students placed here had the option of obtaining a diploma from the high school or the correspondence program. During this year, we broadened the credit recovery program and were able to meet the needs of more students than in the year before.

During the 2006-2007 school year, we worked diligently to provide additional support for students who were in jeopardy of not being successful. We hired teachers to work one-on-one or in small groups to tutor students, both in the full time and in the credit recovery programs. We focused on reaching out to students who were at-risk of dropping out of school all together. We utilized our district resources, such as the attendance officer and the career based intervention instructor, to help communicate with students about educational options available to them.

The 2006-2007 school year also brought about a change in administration as Mr. Morrison became Hamilton Local’s Assistant Superintendent in February and I assumed the role as Director. As I had a variety of roles within Hamilton during my career - short-cycle assessment coordinator, assistant principal, instructional support specialist and fourth grade teacher, it was a good fit for me. This continues to be my great pleasure to work with students in this capacity.

In 2007-2008, we were able to add an alternative classroom to the Intermediate School. The three teachers in these classrooms helped support and learn from each other. The full-time population continued to grow exponentially, as did the students taking credit recovery courses.

We were excited to add an additional staff member in 2008-2009 to help with instruction and tutoring, Mrs. Jenny Davisson. She worked with students daily and provided curriculum support as needed. In addition she helped monitor student work and attendance. We were able to utilize Mrs. Davisson in the same capacity during the 2009-2010 school year as well.

For the 2010-2011 school year we made some staff changes in an effort to provide better support to our students. We maintained the alternative classroom at the high school and moved the teacher in the alternative classroom at the intermediate school to a high school social studies position. Aaron O'Reilly, our middle school alternative classroom teacher, was moved to the Alternative Academy full time and we hired a 2nd teacher, Jason Benton, to work with him. Having the instructors here full-time enabled our students to be more successful and work completion went up tremendously. As a result, more students have earned high school diplomas.

Another change we implemented was in how students are placed in the Alternative Academy. I work closely with the building principals to ensure we are only referring students when we know they need this type of learning environment to be successful or for when all other possibilities have been exhausted. The buildings are following a Response to Intervention (RTI) or an Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) process to provide interventions and support as soon as a problem occurs within the buildings. This process allows the buildings time to provide assistance and support to the student and collect data on how to best meet the student's needs. If it's deemed appropriate, the building principals and I make a referral to the Alternative Academy, which then goes to the Assistant Superintendent and then to the Superintendent for final approval. Parents are involved with this process and in the decision making from the initial concern to the final outcome.

This continues to be the model we follow in 2011-2012. Additionally, our Director of Teaching and Learning reviews all student transcripts and appropriately places students in the Alternative Academy who are deficient in credits or who need additional one-on-one support. Hamilton Alternative Academy continues to offer unique opportunities to students where an alternative environment for their education is a valid choice. I know I speak for the entire staff when I say that it is exciting to be part of an organization that is serious about providing such educational experiences for students.

Should you have questions, feel free to contact me through e-mail at: aprice@hamilton-local.k12.oh.us or call our office at (614) 491-8044 Ext. 1240.

Allyson Price
Executive Director, Hamilton Alternative Academy

SECTION ONE – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The State Model Courses of Study are the basis for the curriculum. To develop our curriculum, we follow a multi-factored approach as well as look for a variety of options so we best meet each student's academy and learning needs.

Initially, we began with an on-line learning environment. Through study and review of the State Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Indicators, we found resources from the World Wide Web that supported Ohio Standards and therefore aligned to the State Model Courses of Study. This approach allowed us to insure that our students were prepared for the state achievement and graduation tests, which they are required to take annually.

At the beginning, the on-line courses were delivered using FirstClass, an Internet-based educational collaboration tool. During the 2005-2006 year, we moved up to the Angel environment provided by TRECA Digital Academy. This learning environment allows students and teachers to engage in both asynchronous and synchronous interaction. Following instruction and completion of work the student progresses to the next unit. This allows students to move forward at their own pace, one of our main goals of the program.

The addition of the correspondence program for high school aged students allowed us flexibility to meet individual needs and meet graduation credit requirements. We utilize the American School of Correspondence for a majority of our courses, however teachers from our sponsoring district's high school have developed several courses for our use as well. Our goal is to be able to use more locally developed curriculum each year. This program also enables us to have a very strong credit recovery program with over 100 high school students participating throughout each school year.

The alternative classroom enables us to meet students' individual needs in a small group flexible setting. Here you will find a blend of academic programs depending on each student. You might see students on-line, using textbooks or following the teacher's lesson plans and curriculum. This allows students to be successful in a learning method best suited for them.

To meet our special education students' needs, we implemented the Special Needs Academy in 2006-2007. Students with IEPs are able to work in a flexible environment with teacher provided lessons and support. We are able to maintain IEP goals in this manner. This program is of great benefit to our students who are thus able to maintain academic success.

Our students participate in 920 hours of instructional time each year. Students are required to be on site weekly for instruction time as well as submit work and must stay in regular contact with the academy director. Communication comes in many forms including: direct contact, e-mail, home visits, office visits, phone calls and texts.

SECTION TWO – FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Hamilton Digital Academy/Alternative Academy was last audited on August of 2011 with no findings.

Total Receipts and Expenditures for FY 12

Beginning Balance: \$116,677.96

Revenues: \$578,601.40

Expenditures: (\$584,698.00)

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Ending Balance: \$110,581.36

SECTION THREE – FAITHFULNESS TO THE SCHOOL’S CONTRACT

Attendance

Student attendance has been a critical emphasis, and we continue to refine what attendance means in a flexible learning environment. Since students have the opportunity to “attend” school 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, documentation of their activities and contacts with their teachers is critical. We feel as if this is one of our strengths. As we are now able to provide on-site instruction, this has become a requirement of all of our students weekly which includes signing in on sign-in sheets and documentation of all attendance and work submission manually and electronically. In addition to the direct contact in the classroom, we communicate with students and parents weekly through an automated phone system, through letters home as well as personal phone calls.

Assessment Results

Based upon feedback from all stakeholders, one of the biggest challenges we face is how to deliver the most effective, quality curriculum tied to state standards possible to meet a diverse group of student needs. To meet this challenge, we continually work on ways to modify curriculum delivery. We utilize locally developed curriculum wherever possible, which include short cycle assessments to help students be prepared for the Ohio Assessments. We participate in all OAAs and OGTs as required. Below you will find links to our Ohio Department of Education’s School Report Cards.

[2004-2005 Report Card](#)

[2005-2006 Report Card](#)

[2006-2007 Report Card](#)

[2007-2008 Report Card](#)

[2008-2009 Report Card](#)

[2009-2010 Report Card](#)

[2010-2011 Report Card](#)

The 2011-2012 Report Card information has not yet been released as of the publication of this report. Preliminary results show that we earned one indicator out of twelve, in the area of 11th grade writing. This puts us in Academic Emergency. Our staff, along with the administrative staff of Hamilton Local Schools has already created and put into place Action Plans to address OGT preparation, Attendance and Graduation rate improvements. This will be our major focus during the 12-13 school year so we make great gains in the 12-13 school report card and in student academic success.

Parent and Community Involvement

The Hamilton Alternative Academy staff strongly encourages parents and guardians to be actively involved in their child’s education. Executive Director Price meets with students and adults prior to enrollment to guide them through how our school works as well as the expectations of enrollment. Students receive continued support from the teachers daily and progress reports/grade cards are sent home every 4.5 weeks. Miss Price is available at any time for questions or further explanation of courses and required coursework as well as to help students plan for their future after high school.

Special Needs and Support

As per Ohio Law, students with special needs are admitted to the program and are served in educationally appropriate ways, without discrimination. A special education supervisor coordinates and oversees appropriate educational services. The HAA Board of Education

adopted the current Ohio Model of Policies and Procedures. A certified special education instructor oversees all IEPs/ETRs and implementation of goals.

Future Planning

In closing, our Board of Education, Administration and Staff are committed to providing the highest quality educational options for students as possible. We continually seek methods to improve instruction and student learning. With that in mind, we plan to implement the following for the 2012-2013 school-year:

- We will utilize a continuous progress model.
- We will examine hardware and software for dependability and instructional benefits.
- Because of the diversity of our population and our commitment to provide the best education, we will continue to modify curriculum, programs, delivery, and instruction in order to increase student achievement along with preparing them for the world of work and a democratic society.
- We will continue to provide additional services for students participating in all of our tracts so that they may be better prepared for state assessments and for life after high school.