

# Battle Creek Area **Alternative Education Programs**

## *Our Common Vision*

*To graduate all Battle Creek area young people with identified career plans, who are prepared to be successful after graduation.*

## **How to Identify a Student Who Might Benefit from Alternative Education**

### **COMMON DESCRIPTORS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS**

**There are a number of indicators that can be used to identify students who might benefit from alternative education. A potential candidate for alternative programs may be a student who:**

- Reflects a history of failing grades and/or poor attendance
- Demonstrates consistent impulsive behavior or an inability to make good decisions
- Refuses to recognize adult authority
- Demonstrates an inability to accept responsibility for their own behavior
- May appear to be withdrawn
- Dislikes school / refuses to attend
- Has numerous conflicts with other student and/or adults
- Has low self-esteem or is not flourishing in their current setting
- May be significantly underutilizing their abilities

# What is Alternative Education?

*Some students feel disconnected from their schools. This may lead to attendance problems, behavioral concerns, and eventually to dropping out. Traditional schools work for most students. What happens to those for whom schools are not working?*

**Alternative schools exist to meet the needs and interests of these particular groups of students.** Alternative schools try to personalize learning for students to engage them in all dimensions—socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and morally. Alternative schools recognize that different students learn in different ways and that learners find meaning as they connect learning to their “real” lives. Alternative schools celebrate diversity and the worth of each individual student while recognizing the cost to the community when any student is not successful.

Most alternative schools provide smaller class sizes, lower student/teacher ratios, and emphasize the value of caring adults (staff and others) in young people’s lives. As smaller schools, organizationally they can be more relaxed, flexible, and responsive to changing student needs and learning styles. Many schools emphasize career/vocational connections. To be successful, schools must also provide services to address the challenges alternative education students face in their lives outside of the school setting.

Current Battle Creek Area Alternative Education programs serve a variety of learners. Area school districts are working collaboratively to coordinate services to best serve students and to identify emerging unmet needs.

# Available Programs

## Elementary Alternative Program

**One classroom Grades 1—5 with maximum capacity of 12 students**

Location: Urbandale Elementary School  
123 N. Bedford Road, Battle Creek, MI 49037  
Contact: Principal, Brendel Hatley  
Phone: (269) 965-9735

## Middle School Alternative Program Grades 6—8

### **South Hill Academy Grades 6—8**

Location: South Hill Academy  
50 Spencer Street, Battle Creek, MI 49014  
Contact: Maurice Ware, Director of Alternative Education  
Phone: (269) 965-9671

## High School Alternative Programs

### ***Diploma-bound High School Programs:***

### **South Hill Academy Grades 9—12**

Location: South Hill Academy  
50 Spencer Street, Battle Creek, MI 49014  
Contact: Maurice Ware, Director of Alternative Education  
Phone: (269) 965-9671

### **Operation Grad Grade 10—12 servicing students who have dropped out of area high schools**

Location: Level Park School  
3515 W. Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek, MI 49037  
Contact: Director, Jim Sherman  
Phone: (269) 964-2410 ext. 113

### **Need help?**

Contact the **Student Recovery Office at 660-5812** for an individualized assessment, free of charge. Know your options! We can remove barriers to your high school education.

### **Other Options**

- Night School
- Home School Program
- Student Placement

Location: Student Recovery Office  
Miller-Stone Building  
77 Capital Avenue N.E.  
Battle Creek, MI 49017

## *Specialized Programs*

### **Michigan Youth Challenge Academy**

**Grades 9—12**

Residential Boot Camp setting operated by Michigan National Guard, where cadets work to cover the course of one semester to complete GED's.

Location: VA Medical Center  
Campus, Bldg. 13

Contact: Jim Luce  
Phone: 800-372-0523

or

Contact: John Wemlinger  
Phone: (269) 968-1048

### **Pregnant/Parenting Teen Program**

**Grades 7—12**

Academic and Parenting/Child Care Education servicing girls who are pregnant. Classes are held for half day at CATC and the other half day at the home school.

Location: Calhoun Area  
Career Center  
475 E. Roosevelt  
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Contact: Linda Ratti  
Phone: (269) 968-2271 Ext. 229

## *Night School*

The purpose of the Night School Program at South Hill Academy is to provide an opportunity for non-traditional high school students to earn school credits due to the failing of several courses during the regular school day, or who have unique life situations that require them to take courses at a non-traditional time and in a non-traditional setting. These courses are provided at South Hill Academy via NovaNet computerized credit recovery program.

# Making the Right Choice

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

### *—Is it the right decision for your student?*

All students have aspirations and all deserve the chance to choose an educational setting consistent with their wishes. Beginning in the 1960's, America's alternative schools began exploring innovative techniques in order to provide appropriate instructional settings for students in need of additional educational opportunities.

Many students struggle in a "one size fits all" model of education. The human spirit comes in all shapes, sizes, dreams, needs, and expectations. Finding the right environment for each student to succeed is one of the goals of alternative education.

All schools try to develop curriculum and programs that will allow the majority of students to achieve success in their academic offerings. *But, what if you are in the minority?* Students with different learning styles and rates may not prosper in traditional school settings. Some students learn better in smaller schools or programs with smaller class size and more individual instruction. Others need closer monitoring with a more focused approach to learning.

Practical models of education that allow for "real life" application with "hands-on" experiences are the right "alternative" for many students. Each year, over 500 students in the Battle Creek Area join over 25,000 other students in the State of Michigan in using alternative education programs to meet their educational needs.

If your student is having difficulty meeting their full potential, then alternative education may provide the solution for success.

The alternative education options described in this publication exhibit a wide variety and diversity. Please review all the options and contact any program that seems to fit the learning needs of your student.

# South Hill Academy

## **Program Description**

South Hill Academy (SHA) operates both a middle school (Grades 6-8) program and a high school (Grades 9-12) program on its campus.

## **Academic Program**

South Hill Academy uses a traditional curriculum that allows students the maximum flexibility for future educational decisions. The academic program at South Hill prepares students for post secondary options, the world of work, or military service. The core curriculum is identical to the offerings at Battle Creek Central High School. Elective classes include: Art, Physical Education, Career Planning, Home Economics, Health, Computers, and NovaNet credit recovery.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Twenty four (24) high school credits are required for graduation from South Hill Academy. Students who complete the credit requirement earn a Battle Creek Public Schools high school diploma. Students must carry a full load of classes at South Hill Academy every semester that they attend. Math, Science, English, and Social Studies are required along with two electives.

## **Student Age/Grade Eligibility**

Students must NOT have reached their 20th birthday before the start of the school year for which they are applying.

## **Vocational/Career Opportunities**

All students are encouraged to participate in the SHA career planning program. Students explore the world of work and develop a plan for continued education, employment, or military service. Junior and Senior students are encouraged to attend the Calhoun Area Career Center in any of their career pathway programs. Students are given the opportunity to "job shadow" a particular career to gain firsthand knowledge of what the position requires.

## **Special Components**

South Hill Academy offers the following:

- Later starting & ending times 9:15 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
- Busing within the Battle Creek Public Schools attendance area
- Small class size
- School uniforms
- Closed lunch

## **Enrollment Process**

Enrollment in South Hill Academy may be accomplished by calling 965-9671 or 965-9451 to schedule an interview or to seek additional information.

# Michigan Youth Challenge Academy

## MYCA

### **Program Description**

Michigan Youth Challenge Academy (MYCA) is a residential, military—"Boot-Camp" style program. Students participate for one semester of intense training with the goal of being ready for a return to school, employment, or military duty. Cadets are chosen from throughout the State of Michigan for MYCA.

### **Academic Program**

MYCA is a GED preparation program that equips cadets to successfully complete the five tests needed to earn a GED certificate. Cadets also complete 13 credit hours at Kalamazoo Community College in computer classes as well as attending 7 1/2 hours per week of vocational training at the Calhoun Area Technology Center.

### **Graduation Requirements**

Students do not actually "graduate" from MYCA.

The benefits of MYCA completion are:

Learn self-discipline

May be eligible to earn a GED

Earn a semester of high school credit

Receive computer training

Receive First Aid/CPR training

Develop skills that will help you get and keep a job

Earn 13 college credits

Participate in Vocational/Technical training

Receive physical training

Develop life coping skills

### **Student Age/Grade Eligibility**

Male and female high school dropouts or potential dropouts between the ages of 16 thru 18. Applicants must be residents of the State of Michigan and not have a felony conviction on their record. Cadet applicants must be drug free and voluntarily agree to make changes in their lives and be willing to follow directions and learn in a demanding environment.

### **Vocational/Career Opportunities**

Cadets receive 160 hours of Vocational/Technical training in one of five different skills. All cadets are matched with a local mentor from their community who will keep weekly contact with the cadet and help guide the cadet in executing their life plan. Cadets are given a full battery of tests that assist the cadet in developing a life plan.

### **Special Components**

MYCA offers the following:

- Residential opportunities
- No cost for housing, food, uniforms, or education
- GED opportunity
- Physical, mental, and moral development

### **Enrollment Process**

Call 1-800-372-0523 or 1-269-968-1048 and we will send an application packet to your address. When the application packet is complete, mail it in. You are required to attend an orientation.

# Operation Grad

## Program Description

Operation GRAD is an alternative high school for students wishing to complete their high school diplomas.

## Graduation Requirements

When you enroll at Operation GRAD, the credits you have previously earned in grades 9-12 are evaluated. A credit evaluation form will be completed to determine which classes should be taken at Operation GRAD. Each student must complete a minimum of 4.0 credits and 1 semester at Operation Grad and fulfill other credit requirements to receive their high school diploma from Operation Grad.

**Amount of Credits Needed:** English 4.0 credits, Math 2.0 credits, Science 2.0 credits, Social Studies 0.5 credit, U.S. History 0.5 credit, Government 0.5 credit, Computer Literacy 1.0 credit, Life Skills 1.0 credit, Senior Seminar 0.5 credit, plus Electives 10.0 credits (minimum) for a **Total of 22.0 Credits (minimum)**

## Student Age/Grade Eligibility

Students living in the Battle Creek, Lakeview, Pennfield, Harper Creek, Athens, Bellevue, Olivet, or Marshall school districts are eligible to enroll. You must have been out of school for at least one semester and be between the ages of 16 and 19.

## Vocational/Career Opportunities

Educational Development Plans	Hands-On Technical Skill Training
Job Shadow Opportunities	Mentorship Program
Personal Counseling Services	Community Service Opportunities
Scholarship Opportunities	Completion of a Senior Portfolio
Construction Trades	Marketing
Computer Technology	Business Software Applications Training
Calhoun Area Technology Center Programs	
Junior Achievement Program—Success Skills, Economics of Staying in School	

## Special Components

Operation GRAD was developed to meet the needs of students who have not completed high school:

- Go to a small, personal, flexible school
- Learn in a small classroom environment
- Learn at a pace appropriate for the individual student
- Develop a vocational/technical skill
- Learn about one's self and set goals to meet individual needs and expectations
- Learn how to communicate and get along with others
- Learn from instructors who will work with you on a personal level

## Enrollment Process

Contact 269-964-2410	Enrollment Information	Extension 111
	Student Services Office	Extension 112 or 116

1. Fill out a registration packet
2. Bring a copy of your birth certificate and an up-to-date immunization record
3. Get a copy of your transcript from the last school you attended
4. Schedule and attend an appointment to set goals for yourself and your education
5. Attend an orientation session at Operation GRAD
6. Obtain your class schedule
7. Attend classes every day!

# Pregnant & Parenting Teens

## **Program Description**

Alternative Education for Pregnant and Parenting Teens is located in the Calhoun Area Technology Center, 475 East Roosevelt Avenue, Battle Creek, Michigan and has been in existence since 1967.

This program is specifically designed to keep the student in school during her pregnancy and to prepare her for birth and parenting. The program addresses the educational, medical, social, economic, and emotional challenges which occur with a teen pregnancy.

Each student who is enrolled receives academic credit for Home and Family Living, Child Care and Development, and at least one additional credit needed for graduation requirements.

The students attend one half day in the program and the other half day is at the local school.

## **Student Age/Grade Eligibility**

Any pregnant teen in the Calhoun Intermediate School District is eligible for enrollment. The student must not be a high school graduate.

## **Special Components**

Pregnant teens face many social, medical, and emotional challenges, which may disrupt the educational process. Most local schools are not prepared to handle absences due to delivery, numerous medical appointments, and pregnancy complications. The program allows for these absences, so students do not lose credit due to absences. Alternative Education for Pregnant and Parenting Teens is specifically designed with the special needs of the pregnant teen in mind. The program staff works closely with the local school counselor, and networks with the following agencies or programs for support services: Teen Parent Program, Calhoun County Health Department, Family Independence Agency, Gentiva/MSS/ISS, Friend of the Court, Child Support/Paternity Specialist, MSU Extension Office, Battle Creek Health System, Family & Children Services, Health Network/211, and the Juvenile Court System.

## **Enrollment Process**

1. A student must have a proof of pregnancy to enroll in the program.
2. She would contact her local school counselor who should call (269) 968-2271 ext. 229 to set up an appointment to visit the classroom. The counselor should also fill in the referral form completely and include a class schedule and textbooks if possible.
3. Arrangements are then made to transfer the student to Alternative Education for Pregnant and Parenting Teens.

There is an open enrollment policy, thus students are taken in any time during their pregnancy. The student generally remains in the program until the semester after the birth of the baby.