The Alternative Education Learning Community (AELC) professional development program began towards the end of the 2010-11 school year and was funded by Title II Roll-Forward Funds. The Alternative Learning Community Executive Director began developing the program in January 2011. The following is an overview of the program, goals and objectives, and expected outcomes. In addition, a review of professional development activities that occurred during the 2010-11 school year is included.

Needs Statement and Program Overview

The AELC executive director identified three needs associated with the new professional development program:

1. The Dallas ISD must provide professional development to principals assisting at-risk and over-age students who are potential dropouts.
2. The Dallas ISD must provide quality support and professional development to enhance the effectiveness of teachers working with over-age and at-risk students in alternative settings.
3. The Dallas ISD must ensure that students attending Alternative Schools are college and/or workforce ready.

The Alternative Education Learning Community was responsible for ensuring that principals, counselors and teachers addressing the needs of students who are potential dropouts were equipped with appropriate research-based practices to address the student’s social and academic needs.

Program Goals and Objectives

The first program goal was to expose principals and other administrative staff serving in alternative schools to research-based practices for students attending alternative schools. To do this, the AELC planned to research and implement professional development for principals and teachers who were providing leadership and instruction in alternative schools. The program would purchase research materials, books and utilize presenters, custodial and security services to support professional development to principals and teachers serving students in alternative schools. In addition to professional development training, the program director, five principals, and the Reconnect coordinator were scheduled to visit one alternative school in Texas and one alternative school in a large urban school district within the U.S. (not all staff would attend both alternative school settings).

The second program goal was to expose teachers and counselors serving in alternative schools to research-based practices for students who were attending Alternative Schools. In addition to this professional develop training, the program planned to send eight teachers and two counselors to an alternative school in Texas and one alternative school in a large urban school district within the U.S. (not all staff would attend both alternative school settings).

The third program goal was to implement quality academic and social programs to ensure students being educated in an alternative setting were college and/or workforce ready. To do this, the program planned to implement a college readiness project that included local college tours and Ready to Work for students attending alternative schools.

Expected Outcomes

It was expected that principals would be able to identify effective programs (academic and social) to implement in the alternative school setting. Expectations also included teachers implementing effective teaching strategies and programs (computer-based, project based learning) to at-risk students and counselors preparing and providing resources to students to transition them from the alternative setting to a college and career setting.

Program Activities

The program included four professional development opportunities for staff: three AELC staff members went to New York City April 13th through April 16th to visit two alternative education schools and meet with the New York City Board of Education to discuss the cities initiatives with regards to alternative education.

On May 23rd, seven AELC staff members visited six alternative education schools in San Antonio.

On June 6th, 50 AELC teaching and leadership staff members participated in an Association for Supervision, Curriculum, and Development (ASCD) training. In addition to the one-day training, these 50 staff members could participate in up to 20 hours of additional virtual professional development through ASCD.

Additional information may be obtained by consulting the John Leslie Patton Jr. Academic Center Report,
EA11-136-2, which can be found at [www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/](http://www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/).