**Section 240.70 Application for Program Approval**

No students shall be enrolled in the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) until the State Board of Education grants approval for the program to operate (see 105 ILCS 5/13B‑25.10).

a) The State Board of Education shall annually notify school districts of the opportunity to submit an application, specifying the information that school districts shall include in their applications and requiring that applications be submitted no later than the date specified in the notification.

b) Each application shall be reviewed for completeness and conformance to the requirements of Article 13B of the School Code and this Part.

1) Incomplete applications shall be returned to the applicant, specifying the additional information that is needed. Applicants shall supply the requested information within 15 calendar days after receiving the request.

2) Based on the criteria contained in Section 240.75 of this Part, applications that do not meet the requirements of Article 13B of the School Code and this Part shall be returned to the applicant, specifying the reasons why the application was not acceptable.

c) A school district seeking to establish a new ALOP or to receive approval for a conversion of an existing alternative program shall submit an application for approval, on a form supplied by the State Board of Education, that contains the following elements.

1) A description of the planning process conducted to determine the type of ALOP to be established and a list of the participants in that process.

2) A district plan for the program that meets the requirements of Section 13B-25.20 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/13B-25.20].

A) In the case of a cooperative involving two or more school districts, the plan must address how it is consistent with each school district's mission and is aligned with the local school improvement plans of each participating school (see 105 ILCS 5/13B-25.20).

B) A copy of the plan must be sent to the Regional Office of Education serving each district participating in the ALOP by the deadline indicated in the notification sent pursuant to subsection (a).

3) An organizational chart that reflects the governance, administrative, educational and support structures of the proposed ALOP and describes the responsibilities of each entity involved in the program.

4) Evidence that the program is derived from scientifically based research on successful instructional approaches for students who are at risk of academic failure (see 105 ILCS 5/13B-30.5), including specific references to research that discuss the types of services and strategies to be offered by the program as effective in addressing the needs the district has identified among the students it plans to serve.

5) The specific curriculum to be used (see Section 240.30(a)) and a description of the ways in which it differs from the regular school program (e.g., program sequence, pace, instructional activities). If a non-profit or for-profit entity will be providing instructional services, then the district shall provide evidence that the entity meets the requirements of Section 240.30(a)(4).

6) Evidence of the need for the ALOP's educational supports and other support services beyond those currently offered by the regular school program (e.g., the district lacks funding for the supports and services, specialized staff would need to be hired, proposed service would not have a general benefit for the majority of the students in the district). This evidence shall include a description of the educational and other service interventions that the district currently uses to assist its students who are experiencing difficulty with their academic achievement.

7) The procedures to be used to review student progress on a regular basis, which shall at least conform with the requirements of Section 240.30(d).

8) The procedures to be used for participation of students in the State assessments required under Section 2-3.64a-5 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/13B-25.25]. The procedures shall indicate:

A) the site where the student or students will take the State assessments. If the program is located at a site that is other than a State assessment testing site recognized by the State Board of Education, such as a regular public school, then the student shall take the State assessment at his or her home school; and

B) how the home school will ensure that the results for individual students will be shared with staff of the ALOP, if the program site is other than the student's home school.

9) The proposed calendar for the program, providing evidence that it is in conformance with the requirements of Section 13B-45 of the School Code and Section 240.60 of this Part.

10) The location of the ALOP.

A) Consideration must be given to locating the program on-site in the regular school (i.e., a school where the general education curriculum is offered) (see 105 ILCS 5/20.30), subject to the requirements of Section 240.20(i) of this Part.

B) If the program is offered at other than a regular school, then the school district shall provide a rationale stating how the proposed site is in the best educational interests of the students to be served (e.g., the regular school has limited space for the program, the site is not accessible to all the students to be served, the proposed site provides a learning environment more conducive to the needs of the students enrolled in the program).

11) A plan for ensuring that students enrolled in the ALOP shall continue to receive other services for which they qualify (e.g., bilingual, special education, free and reduced-price lunch).

12) A plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the program in improving academic performance of the students who are enrolled and successfully returning them to the regular school program. The plan must include:

A) the methods to be used to conduct the evaluation;

B) the data to be collected, which shall include at least the indicators outlined in Section 13B-30.15 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/13B-30.15], as applicable to the program;

C) the specific procedures for how achievement levels of individual students enrolled in the program will be assessed to ensure that each student is making anticipated progress, as stipulated in his or her Student Success Plan;

D) the specific procedures for how achievement levels of students with IEPs will be assessed, if these students are enrolled in the program;

E) how the evaluation will measure the extent to which the program overall is an effective strategy for improving the achievement levels of students identified as being at risk of academic failure; and

F) how the evaluation results will be used to improve the program.

13) A description of how the school district's professional development plan will address instruction of at-risk students (see 105 ILCS 5/13B-50.10).

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 13491, effective September 24, 2015)