

Alternative to Suspension for Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drugs

(ATOD)

The Alternative-to-Suspension Program, ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs), provides two options for middle and high school students suspended for alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in lieu of the traditional out-of-school suspension process. By attending the program's 3-hour classroom drug education course, students suspended for alcohol and other drugs may receive a waiver of up to five days of the mandatory 10-day suspension, with five days held in abeyance. Likewise, students suspended for tobacco may receive a waiver of up to three days of the mandatory 5-day suspension, with two days held aside.

Over the three-year period since the program began, 50-plus schools throughout the District - including traditional, magnet, charter, and alternative - have referred students to the program each year - impacting over 1,500 students who have taken and completed the program, saving them more than 5,000 out-of-school suspension days.

The program's educational component is also extended to include students involved in or referred by the District's Youth Diversion (Youth Court) Program for substance abuse offenders.

In addition to the substance abuse awareness instructional practices provided in the 3-hour program, students are engaged in a combination of whole group, small group, and individual activities and discussions involving reflection, decision-making, time, money and stress management: designed to support and strengthen their social and emotional development. The program concludes with students having one-on-one communication with the classroom facilitator through the use of motivational interviewing and the Exit Ticket Strategy, which is required for students to complete and return to their school-based administration for follow-up monitoring and for facilitator use to provide referral information, as needed, regarding the District's Behavioral Health Cooperative Agreement.



