



Southeast Polk
Alternative Program's Handbook
2025-2026

8031 NE University Avenue
Pleasant Hill, Iowa 50327

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****Information in this document is in addition to the Southeast Polk High School Student Handbook. All district policies and guidelines noted in that document also apply to students attending any of the Alternative Programs, in addition to those noted in this document.**

Welcome

Welcome to the Southeast Polk Schools Alternative Learning Programs, home to The Harbor, Connect, Renew, and EmpowerU!

We strive to create a welcoming, alternate education environment, which boasts an outstanding team of teachers and staff who are dedicated to creating an environment that supports all students as they strive for success!

We are committed to working hard to connect our students to learning with new and innovative approaches. The staff will utilize technology, effective teaching strategies, and the best educational programs to prepare students for their future beyond high school. This will all be done in an environment where students can feel safe, welcomed, and challenged as they pursue their goals for school and beyond.

As a staff, we pledge to do our best to provide positive experiences for you. We want our students to be successful in achieving their goals! We are committed to partnering with students and their families to ensure we are effectively meeting the needs of every student who comes through our doors!

Sincerely,

Cory Goldsmith
Principal of District Programs

PROGRAMS

The District Office houses multiple district programs that allow students to be successful based on tailoring their experience to their individual needs, talents, and skills.

- The Harbor
- Connect
- Renew
- EmpowerU

The Harbor is designed to accommodate students who, for a variety of reasons, require something different than the traditional school setting. Harbor faculty works with individual students to identify their academic needs and provide emotional and academic support in a small, safe, community environment. Class sizes are intentionally kept under fifteen (15) students to allow teachers ample opportunity to work one-on-one with every student.

A unique feature of The Harbor is the Expeditionary Learning course delivery model. Learning expeditions are courses of study that are purposeful, extensive studies of a single topic. Expeditions revolve around challenging projects, fieldwork, adventure and service. They culminate in exhibits, performances or projects. Expeditions are often community-based. The expedition curriculum is integrated with district standards and benchmarks.

Connect aims to re-engage students in their schoolwork in a safe, supportive, and small student-adult ratio setting. A dedicated staff member works to build relationships with students in order to better understand the barriers that are causing the lack of engagement in school, with the goal of building confidence in each student.

Connect utilizes Edgenuity online courses to provide individualized instruction to students within the program. Students may work on their courses at their own pace and in any setting. Prior to starting in the Connect Program, school staff, the student, and a parent/guardian meet to develop an individualized plan for success.

Renew program provides intentionally designed support and instruction to students with severe social, emotional, and/or mental health needs. Renew provides a small group setting staffed with two teachers and multiple classroom associates to provide personalized education targeted to each student's individual needs. The Renew Program has goals of providing students the support they need, when they need it, ultimately working to reintroduce students to a full or partial schedule in their home building.

EmpowerU is a program working with students who have an IEP and have met their graduation requirements, but are still working on their IEP goals. Students in EmpowerU are working towards independence in both living and employability skills.

Staff List

Cory Goldsmith - Alternate Programs Principal
Molly Brandhorst - Alternate Programs Counselor
Brittany Harrington - Alternate Programs Administrative Assistant

Miguel Badillo - Harbor Math Teacher
Amanda Corwin - Harbor Science Teacher
Eric Hendrickson - Harbor Social Studies Teacher
Dan Kline - Harbor English Teacher
Scott Powell - Harbor Special Education Teacher

Amy Barnes - Connect Program Supervisor

Katherine Humphrey - Renew Teacher
Shannon Stusse - Renew Teacher

Angela Duden - EmpowerU Teacher

Building Schedule

The academic side of the District Office is open from 7:15 AM - 3:15 PM, Monday through Friday, during the school year. Summer hours may vary.

Students are scheduled into classes on the basis of individual need, and hours can vary based upon program placement and individual student plan. Lunch is provided through the District's hot lunch program.

GENERAL INFORMATION – THE HARBOR

ENTRANCE PROCESS

Referral: Students are most often referred by Southeast Polk Senior High. The student's counselor and/or Administrator completes a referral based on student class performance. Referred students are added to the Harbor Waitlist, which is evaluated every quarter.

Students will be officially offered a spot at the Harbor on a quarterly basis, when openings occur. The Harbor counselor or Principal will reach out to the student and parent to offer a spot in the Harbor.

Incoming 10th grade students who are significantly credit deficient following their 10th grade year may enter directly into the Harbor to start their 10th grade year, as program enrollment numbers allow.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATION

Business leaders have told teachers and administrators alike that attendance and punctuality are keys to holding successful jobs after graduation. For this reason, we expect all students to attend school every day and to be on time. We believe it is our responsibility to help students develop and practice responsible job skill behaviors.

All coursework assigned in The Harbor is completed during classtime, and no homework is assigned. Due to this, attendance is vitally important. Course schedules are 9-weeks in length, and absences reset at the start of each quarter. Below is an overview of response to student absences per quarter:

0-3 Absences - Parents will be notified via automatic Infinite Campus messages when their student is marked absent.

4.5 Absences - School staff, student, and a parent/guardian will meet to discuss attendance, and create a plan for improved attendance.

10 Absences - Students may have their Harbor schedule dropped. The student may be moved to the Connect Program for the remainder of the Quarter, and will have the opportunity to earn credits via Edgenuity.

****If a student has their schedule dropped due to attendance in consecutive quarters, they will not be permitted to rejoin The Harbor until they earn at least 2 credits through the Connect Program.**

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

- A. The parent or guardian should report the absence to the school either by telephone (957-5197) or by utilizing the Infinite Campus Parent Portal **on or before the day of the absence.**
- B. If there has not been a call and a student is absent, the school will notify parents. This notification is not intended for punitive purposes, but for informational reasons. This is done via Infinite Campus messenger twice per day. Notifications come via email and text message.
- C. When a student arrives late or leaves early, he or she should check in and out with the administrative assistant.

CREDIT POLICY

Students must earn 37 credits to earn a Core Diploma. Students must pass a class with at least a D- in order to earn a credit for the course. Due to courses being a quarter in length, each course in the Harbor is worth $\frac{1}{2}$ credit. Students must earn 6 Math, Social Studies, and Science credits, in addition to 8 English credits, 1 Health credit, 1 personal finance credit, and 9 elective credits.

Students who are unsuccessful in earning credits in the Harbor may be referred to another alternate program. Most students who do not earn credit during two consecutive quarters at the Harbor pursue credits via the Connect Program. Students who fall significantly behind in credits may be referred to the HiSet Program.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students are invited and encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities and events that are sponsored by Southeast Polk Senior High. In doing so, they agree to follow the eligibility policies of their individual home high school. Students must abide by the Good Conduct Policy of Southeast Polk Senior High.

The Harbor Expectations

1. **Attend school daily.** Arrive on time, stay the entire time, come prepared, and participate.
2. **Respect the Harbor campus** by taking care of the building and picking up after yourself.
3. **Maintain an environment that feels safe to yourself and others. Harassment or threats of any type will not be tolerated, and may result in that student losing enrollment privileges at the Harbor. Violent language of any kind is not allowed at school.**

4. **Respect the learning time of others.** Maintain attitudes and behaviors that encourage a positive learning environment for you and others.

5. **Once you arrive, stay in the building.** Students may not leave the building once they arrive without being excused by a parent/guardian. If students need to go to their car after school has started, they must receive permission from the main office. Students who leave the building without permission will go home for the remainder of their day.

LUNCH

Students will have 30 minutes for lunch each day. Hot lunch is served on the Alt Programs Campus. Students may bring cold lunch, and they do have access to a microwave during lunch time. *Students are not permitted to use food delivery services of any sort to bring outside food to the building.*

The Harbor also serves breakfast through the District's hot lunch program.

Parking

Parking at school is available for students who drive their own cars. To better monitor the parking area, no student may be in the lot except when legitimately arriving for, or leaving from, school. Students needing to get articles from their cars should obtain approval from the Principal. On-campus parking and driving privileges can be revoked at any time for reckless driving or violation of school rules.

HARBOR SCHEDULE- (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday)

Monday/Tuesday/Thursday		
	Start	End
1st Period	8:45	9:24
2nd Period	9:26	10:05
3rd Period	10:07	10:46
4th Period	10:48	11:27
Lunch	11:27	12:00

Crew	12:00	12:24
5th Period	12:26	1:03
6th Period	1:05	1:42
7th Period	1:44	2:21
8th Period	2:23	3:00

Late Start (Wednesday)		
	Start	End
1st Period	9:35	10:11
2nd Period	10:13	10:49
3rd Period	10:51	11:27
4th Period	11:29	12:05
Lunch	12:05	12:35
Crew	12:37	1:01
5th Period	1:03	1:31
6th Period	1:33	2:01
7th Period	2:03	2:31
8th Period	2:33	3:00

Friday Academic Support		
	Start	End
1st Period	8:45	9:24
2nd Period	9:26	10:05
3rd Period	10:07	10:46
4th Period	10:48	11:27
Lunch	11:27	12:00

On Fridays, educational programming is geared toward team-building, individual academic needs, leisure activities, and/or service to the community. The Friday program runs from 8:45 am until 11:45 am.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

Expeditionary Learning is built on ten design principles which reflect the educational values and beliefs of Outward Bound. These principles also reflect the design's connection to other related thinking about teaching, learning, and the culture of schools. Through the Expeditionary model, the teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can. The design fosters curiosity about the world and challenges both students and adults to take responsibility for directing their own learning. Students feel physically and emotionally safe. They build the confidence and capacity to take risks, but more importantly they learn to persevere when things become difficult. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other, but with their own personal best. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous. Students learn to become stewards of the earth. They are encouraged to exchange their reflections with others and develop attitudes and skills which prepare them to be of service to their communities and the world.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. The Principle of Self-Discovery: Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, "grand passions", and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. They must have

tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline and significant achievement. A primary job of the educator is to help students overcome their fear and discover they have more in them than they think.

2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas: Teach so as to build on children's curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide matter to think about, time to experiment and time to make sense of what is observed. Foster a community where students' and adults' ideas are respected.
3. The Responsibility for Learning: Learning is both a personal, individually specific process of discovery and a social activity. Each of us learns within and for ourselves and as part of our group. Every aspect of a school must encourage children, young people and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.
4. Intimacy and Caring: Learning is best fostered in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring and mutual respect among all members of the learning community. Keep schools and learning groups small. Be sure there is a caring adult looking after the progress of each child. Arrange for the older students to mentor the younger ones.
5. Success and Failure: All students must be assured a fair measure of success in learning in order to nurture the confidence and capacity to take risks and rise to increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important to experience failure, to overcome negative inclinations, to prevail against adversity and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.
6. Collaboration and Competition: Teach so as to join individual and group development so that the value of friendship, trust and group endeavor is made manifest. Encourage students to compete, not against each other, but their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.
7. Diversity and Inclusivity: Diversity and inclusivity in all groups dramatically increases richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability and acceptance of others. Encourage students to investigate, value and draw upon their own different histories, talents and resources together with those of other communities and cultures. Keep the schools and learning groups heterogeneous.
8. The Natural World: A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and reveals the important lessons of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become good stewards of the earth and of the generations to come.
9. Solitude and Reflection: Solitude, reflection and silence replenish our energies and open our minds. Be sure students have time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections and create their own ideas. Then give them the opportunity to exchange their reflections with each other and with adults.
10. Service and Compassion: We are crew, not passengers and are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others. One of a school's primary functions is to prepare its students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others.

Southeast Polk Connect Program

Administration

Cory M. Goldsmith

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515-957-5195

Counselor

Molly Brandhorst

Molly.Brandhorst@southeastpolk.org

515-957-5197 Ext. 1704

Connect Daily Supervisor

Amy Barnes

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Hours

Connect is available Monday through Friday with two different sessions (9:15 am to 11:45 am or 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm). Students will be assigned a session to attend during an intake meeting.

Connect is held at Southeast Polk District Office in the Alternate Academic Wing. Students will be dropped off or park on the Northwest side of the building and enter through the Harbor doors.

Attendance

- During their intake meeting, students, parents, and school personnel will collaborate to determine if the student will attend either the AM or PM session, as well as how many days per week the student will attend.
- Students will attend each day that they are scheduled. If a student does not attend on a scheduled day, a parent/guardian will be contacted by the Connect supervisor. If a student does not attend for 10 consecutive scheduled days, without notice from a parent/guardian, the program administrator or counselor will schedule a meeting with the student and their parent/guardian.
- Absences should be reported directly to Connect personnel. Emails can be sent to either Cory.Goldsmith@southeastpolk.org, Molly.Brandhorst@southeastpolk.org, or Amy.Barnes@southeastpolk.org.
- **After 15 days of not attending or communicating a plan with an administrator, the student will be issued a drop letter with notice of being dropped from the school district per Board Policy [501-09R1](#).**

Attendance Probation

- If a student is not making satisfactory progress on their coursework in the program, a meeting will be held, and the student may be dropped from the Connect Program.

Transportation

- Students who drive themselves will park in the northwest corner parking lot in front of the District Office building. Students will be provided with a Harbor parking permit.
- Students who need transportation will receive services through KidZoom. Students who attend the PM session will ride KidZoom to school, but will ride a district bus home.
 - **Kidzoom does not run on Wednesdays. Students utilizing Kidzoom will have a schedule that does not include Wednesday attendance.**

Inclement Weather

- In the event of a 2-hour delay to school, AM Connect sessions will be cancelled, and PM sessions will run as normally scheduled.
- In the event of a 2-hour early release due to weather conditions, PM Connect session will be cancelled.
- During Conference Week, Connect will be open as normally scheduled, but we will not provide transportation on the Thursday of conference week due to lack of van availability.

Lunch

Students have the choice for lunch to be served while at Connect.

Course Completion

Once a student has completed all necessary courses to graduate from Southeast Polk High School, they will be considered a graduate. If their coursework is completed before the end of the fall semester, the student is considered an early graduate. Early graduates will no longer be eligible to participate in Southeast Polk sport(s) or extracurricular activities, but they will be able to attend school dances.

Student Support During Online Learning

Students will be working on classes through Edgenuity. Ms. Barnes will be the primary support for students in the classroom. There is limited support provided by Scott Powell, the Harbor Special Education teacher.

Course Offerings

Courses will be completed through Edgenuity or other High School approved credit recovery options.

Course options:

<p><u>English Language Arts (7 credits available)</u> English 1 Semester 1 and 2 English 2 Semester 1 and 2 American Experience Semester 1 and 2 World Literature (1 semester)</p> <p><u>Math (6 credits available)</u> Algebra 1 Semester 1 and 2 Algebra 2 Semester 1 and 2 Geometry Semester 1 and 2</p> <p><u>Social Studies (6 credits available)</u> Economics Government US History Semester 1 and 2 Global Studies Semester 1 and 2</p>	<p><u>Science (6 credits available)</u> Earth & Space Science Freshman Physics Biology Semester 1 and 2 Chemistry Semester 1 and 2</p> <p><u>Electives (2 credits)</u> Strategies for Academic Success Career Planning and Development</p> <p><u>Business (1 credit available)</u> Personal Finance</p> <p><u>Health & PE (1.5 credits available)</u> Health Physical Education</p>
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