

Buchanan County
Success Center
Alternative Program
Handbook
For Full-time Students



2349 Jamestown Avenue, Suite 12
(Entrance is through Hawkeye College side)
Independence, IA 50644
319-334-7440

June 2015

WELCOME to the
BUCHANAN COUNTY SUCCESS CENTER (BCSC)

Hi, welcome to the BCSC (yes, our abbreviation for the Buchanan County Success Center). We know handbooks can sometimes be boring and easily ignored. With that in mind, we've tried to create a user-friendly, interactive version for you (some parts have to be more traditional though - please bear with us through those pages). We have laid out some of the basics regarding the Success Center. Obviously, we cannot address every topic or issue that will arise, but we've built what we believe to be a solid foundation from which we can operate. If you have any questions as you go, write them down and ask!

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Mission, Beliefs, and Goals

Mission Educating people to be lifelong learners and respectful, responsible citizens.

Beliefs

- ❖ Everyone is capable of learning and leading productive, healthy lives.
- ❖ The quality of education in the alternative setting should be of equal quality as more traditional programs.
- ❖ Each individual is recognized and accepted as having his/her own unique interests, abilities, and learning styles.
- ❖ The overall growth of the individual is important; this includes, but is not limited to, mental, emotional, and social growth.
- ❖ A cooperative effort among students, staff, parents/guardians, and community helps facilitate positive individual growth.

Goals

- Provide a more individualized opportunity for learning which allows students to obtain a high school diploma.
- Offer a quality education supported by technology, career and post-secondary skill development, healthy lifestyle support, and curriculum and services of Independence High School.
- Teach and encourage behaviors that positively contribute to one's self-concept.
- Provide a safe, supportive environment that recognizes and encourages personal and academic growth.
- Encourage healthy choices and productive life skills through problem-solving, decision-making, conflict resolution, behavior change, and goal setting.
- Involve students, staff, parents, family, and community in the educational program at BCSC.

Staff

On Site

Shelly Bertelli~Director/Teacher

Jayme Hurley~ Teacher

Amy Gustafson~Teacher

Angela Webb~ Secretary

Off Site - Independence

Jean Peterson, Superintendent
John Howard, IHS Principal
Josh Payton, Asst. IHS Principal
Shalon Frye, Counselor
Loren Pink, Liaison
Rhonda Jasper, Nurse

Off Site – Jesup

Nathan Marting, Superintendent
Rod Chamberlin, Principal
Kristin Bower, Counselor

Off Site – East Buchanan

Dan Fox, Superintendent
Travis Schueller, Principal
Paula McGraw, Counselor

Student Responsibilities

- **Be involved and productive** – be here every day, on time; develop and meet your goals.
- **Be physically and mentally prepared to participate in your education** – keep your body healthy (drug & alcohol free); keep your mind on the task at hand.
- **Respect the worth and rights of yourself and others** – no violence of any kind (physical, sexual, emotional; verbal or nonverbal) will be tolerated. If it's not yours, don't mess with it.
- **Display a positive image of oneself** - your physical appearance matters. Leave offensive, inappropriate clothes at home.
- **Be truthful and responsible** – integrity (doing what is right, fair, and honorable) is your most valuable asset. Keep yours by being honest; be responsible for your actions.

Enrollment Process

Eligibility

- Resident of the Independence Community School District or a district that has approved the curriculum of the Buchanan County Success Center and has signed a 28E agreement with the Independence Community School District.
- Non-mandatory attendees'.
- Meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Sporadic attendance (i.e. dropped from class or school due to attendance).
 - An altered schedule which cannot be accommodated by the high school is needed (i.e. childcare needs, supporting self financially).
 - Behind on credits needed for traditional high school diploma.
 - Experienced a disruptive life event which interferes with progress toward graduation (i.e. death in family, sexual assault).
 - Extensive individualized support is needed to address non-academic needs (i.e. social skills, healthy life style choices, problem-solving).
 - Additional opportunities are needed to develop positive relationships with adults, encouraging better acceptance of authority and structure.
 - School and student have evaluated on-site options at the high school and determined BCSC to be the best fit.
- As a guideline, a student should have a minimum of 25 transferable credits.
- Written application – available in the high school guidance office.
- Take placement test/s for reading and math, if current Iowa Assessment scores are not available.
- Official transcript on file.
- Desire to learn – as displayed by your behavior and application essay.

Eligibility (cont)

Special circumstances:

1. Special education – copy of current IEP needs to be submitted and a meeting between IEP team member/s and a member of the BCSC referral team needs to occur to determine if needs can be met at BCSC.
 2. Behavior concerns – we need to be made aware of behavior issues at previous institutions; be honest and be prepared to discuss the changes you are willing to make; you may need to agree to follow a written behavior plan before being admitted to BCSC.
- A meeting will take place with members of the referral team (which may include the BCSC teacher, principal, counselor, school liaison, and/or others deemed necessary to discuss student needs).
 - Approval from sending districts administration.

If determined eligible

- Up-to-date immunization record on file in home district.
- Complete registration form in home district.
- Meet with BCSC staff to review requirements and determine courses needed to earn a diploma.
- Review handbook with BCSC staff.
- Sign contract indicating understanding of and willingness to follow policies, practices, responsibilities, and academic requirements.
- If applicable, sign behavior contract.

Fees

- Students need to register and *pay fees at resident high school.*

For the BCSC and all involved to be successful, it is vital that a stable, supportive environment be maintained; therefore, enrollment is limited. The nature and needs of each new applicant along with current enrollment numbers will determine how quickly new students are admitted. Applicants are considered for admittance by an administrator. The referral team consists of the principal, counselor and/or school liaison, BCSC teacher/advisor, student and his/her parent/guardian (or other adult representative). If the young adult applicant is eligible but the BCSC enrollment numbers have already been reached, the applicant will be placed on a waiting list and notified when there is an opening.

Educational Program

Diplomas

1. Independence High School Diploma (for Independence Community School District Students – dual enrollment option where credits transfer to IHS. Requirements for this diploma are available in the Independence High School guidance office. This option is preferable, and we will do what we can to assist you in getting this diploma.
2. Buchanan County Success Center Alternative Program Diploma – full-time alternative program option. Most credits earned from other high schools will transfer in. Requirements for this diploma are explained below. Diploma is a high school diploma, issued and approved by sending district.

Requirements for BCSC Diploma

You must meet the Buchanan County Success Center standards and benchmarks. Standards and benchmarks can be met by successfully earning the following 44 credits:

8 English Credits

(required: English 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)

7 Social Studies Credits

(required: 4 U.S. History, 1 World History, 1 Economics, 1 Government)

6 Math Credits

6 Science Credits

1 Computer Skills Credit

4 Physical Education Credit (2 of which may be Health)

1 Real Living/Post Secondary

11 Elective Credits

You must earn at least **two** credits from BCSC to receive the Buchanan County Success Center Alternative Program Diploma.

Most credits earned at other high schools will transfer in with the following exceptions:

1. Only 5 combined credits for band, choir, and BSS/Resource
2. Driver education does not transfer.

Classification

0-11 credits Freshman
12-23 credits Sophomore

24-35 credits Junior
36-44 credits Senior

District-wide Testing

You are required to take the district-wide tests given by your home district. BCSC follows home district requirements for testing regarding age/grade of students who take test/s and which test/s will be taken.

Course Offerings

A current list of course offerings at the BCSC is available from the BCSC teacher/advisor or from the high school counselor.

Full-time BCSC students have the option of taking selected classes at Independence High School if space is available. The referral team and the course instructor will determine enrollment in these classes. If you are interested in this option, speak with the BCSC teacher/advisor for specific details.

Full-time BCSC students may also earn up to 2 credits for working in the community. These will be considered elective or career credits and must be earned outside of your school day. The criteria for earning these credits will be determined by the BCSC teacher/advisor. If you are interested in this option, speak with the BCSC teacher/advisor for specific requirements to earn credit.

Credits and Grading

You must score 70% on the sum of all assignments and on each assessment for each chapter/unit to show that you are at least competent in the topic/s covered. If you score below 70% on the sum of all assignments, any individual assignments below 70% will have to be redone. If you score below 70% on an assessment, you will have to do additional work for the chapter then retake an assessment until at least 70% competency is achieved. The following grading scale will be used at the BCSC:

A 93-100%	Indicates exceptional mastery
A- 90-92%	
B+ 87-89%	Indicates proficient mastery
B 83-86%	
B- 80-82%	
C+ 77-79%	Indicates competent mastery
C 73-76%	
C- 70-72%	

You will earn 1 credit for each course you complete in its entirety. 0.5 credit classes are available on a per case basis.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be given to you and sent home approximately 5 times a year. The reports are valuable in helping to monitor progress and set goals.

Time Cards - You will keep a time card to record how much time you spend completing work in each class. You will have one for each class you are enrolled in.

Daily Schedule - We follow the *Independence High School Calendar*, which is available from a staff member.

Regular

AM: 8:20 – 11:30 (9:45 – 10:00 break)
Lunch: 11:30 – 12:00
PM: 12:00 – 3:10 (1:25 – 1:40 break)
Extended hours – explained below

The schedule you will be assigned is dependent upon the number of students already enrolled in each section. You are expected to attend for the entire time daily and on time each day (see specific rules regarding attendance/tardies on page 8).

Delays and Cancellations - If IHS is delayed or cancelled, BCSC will also be delayed or cancelled.

1 hour delay

AM: 9:20 – 12:00
Lunch: 12:00 – 12:30
PM: 12:30 – 3:10

2 hour delay

AM: 10:20 -12:30
Lunch: 12:30 – 1:00
PM: 1:00 – 3:10

Activity Days - About once a term, we will have an activity day that is open to all full-time BCSC students. Due to transportation issues, the number of students who can attend may need to be limited. If only a limited number of students can attend, selection will be based on student attendance to date, progress made, and the number of previous activity days attended. Activities will vary under the following categories: cultural, career, educational, relationships, service and physical activity.

Textbooks - Textbooks cannot be checked out as BCSC only has a limited number available. However, copies of the chapters can be checked out. Individual reading books may also be checked out.

Extended Hours Program- This program has been designed to meet the needs of students who are working during the normal school day. At least two nights a week, classes will run from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., and occasionally other hours will be available (depending on teacher/advisor schedule). Students in this program will need to do the following in order to remain a student in good standing:

- Once a month provide evidence of employment (check stub or time sheet).
- Attend school at least three hours a week **and** do work at home (the amount to be done will be set by the student and teacher/advisor).
- Follow the guidelines and expectations laid out in this handbook.
- If you are not here three hours in any week, you must make up the time in the following week. If the time is not made up in the following week, an attendance contract will be written specifically spelling out attendance criterion and consequences.
- If the Independence Schools are dismissed early or cancelled, there will be no extended hours that day.

Attendance/

Missed Time

We know that for some of you, regularly attending school has not been a priority.

We are not here to judge those reasons. We are here, however, to assist you in making more productive choices and to help you earn a diploma.

We cannot help you if you are not here.

There is also a “bigger picture” to be considered which includes all those involved at BCSC.

Your absence affects the whole program.

For these reasons, as well as others, we have developed the following rules:

Behavior Expectations

Attendance:

- If you are going to be absent/tardy, call the BCSC at 334-7440 and let us know before your school day starts. If you do not call us, do not be surprised if we call you.
- If you are gone two days in any given month (**NOT** including August, December, or June), you will meet with a BCSC staff member and sign an attendance contract. The attendance contract states that if you miss a third day you have to make up the time missed within five days (or your break will be taken away until it is made up). If a fourth day is missed in the same month, you will be laid-off. One broken attendance contract per school year results in a two day lay-off; a second broken attendance contract results in a two week lay-off (and a meeting in order to return – see page 10); a third broken attendance contract results in a nine week lay-off; a fourth broken attendance contract results in being laid off for the rest of the school year.
- You may not miss any days the following month until all of your “time owed” is made up.
- If you attend every day in one school week, of at least four days, you will earn 1.5 hours of personal time.

Missed time:

- If you are going to be tardy/late or need to leave early, you need to notify us. If you do, you will simply have to make up the time missed. If you do not notify us, you will have to make up double the time missed. Leaving at break without good cause and permission is considered a whole day absence.
- You have three days to make up missed time or you will lose your break until the time is made up.
- If you “owe time”, you may not participate in Group, Games, or other activities.

Remember - by not attending BCSC, you are less likely to be able to meet your academic progress goals that may lead to academic probation (see following section for description). We understand that there are times when a longer-term absence may be required. We need to know when such cases occur though, or it appears that you do not want to attend BCSC. Each proposed instance of a longer-term absence will be dealt with individually at the discretion of the principal and/or BCSC teacher/advisor.

For any other special attendance circumstances, meet with a BCSC teacher/advisor to discuss available options.

Academic Progress

Since earning a diploma is a goal of attending the Buchanan County Success Center, it is vital that you continually work toward that goal and that staff continually monitor your progress. You must show academic progress. The amount of progress will vary from student to student, but progress must be shown. We will make and track weekly progress goals for each of your classes, and the BCSC teacher/advisor will complete a progress report. When academic progress is not evident in your classes, the following steps may occur:

- BCSC teacher/advisor will meet with you and discuss a specific progress plan for you to meet and follow by the next monthly evaluation.
- If progress isn't made the following month or any month after, you will be put on Academic Probation.
- Once you are on Academic Probation, a more detailed weekly progress plan will be written which will include consequences. Full-time students may be laid-off from BCSC (described on page 10). The principal or school liaison and the BCSC teacher/advisor will determine the amount of time you will be laid off.
- You will be removed from academic probation once you have met your weekly goals for six consecutive weeks.

Discipline Expectations

The BCSC environment needs to be one that is safe, supportive, healthy, and educational. Any behavior that interferes with that atmosphere needs to be altered. No one can foresee every possible behavioral issue; however, included below are some general expectations:

- *Productive* – work on the classes you're signed up for; keep day-dreaming, talking with others, or any other "off-task" behavior to a minimum.
- *Attitude* – keep it positive and solution-oriented. Of course there will be days when you're down, but don't let it contaminate others.
- *Respect* –
 - *Yourself*: practice positive self-talk and positive behaviors.
 - *Others (both staff & peers)*: you're not being asked to like everyone around you, but you are being asked to respect their individuality and give them the space they need to meet their goals. As stated earlier, no violence or harassment of ANY kind (racial, sexual, physical, emotional; verbal or nonverbal) will be tolerated.
 - *Our space*: keep BCSC clean and neat. Please do not write on the equipment, furniture, walls, books, materials, etc.
- *Appearance* – this not only includes clothing (see clothing/apparel guidelines on page 11), but also your physical state...read: be awake and drug free.
- *Law abiding* – possession and/or use of illegal substances or weapons, theft, vandalism, or assault will include police involvement along with a BCSC consequence.

Consequences

As you've probably been told before, all choices have consequences. It's only legitimate that you know the possible consequences and how consequences will be determined at BCSC. Consequences will be based on the following factors:

- Frequency—how often has the behavior occurred...is this the 2nd or the 22nd time?
- Severity – how intense was the behavior ...was it quiet and non-threatening or was it loud and aggressive?
- Duration – how long did the behavior go on ...did it last 5 seconds or 5 minutes?

Considering the criteria above, it's clear that there is no one possible consequence for any given behavior. Listed below are some possible consequences; again, the actual consequence will be determined by the frequency, severity, and duration of your behavior:

- Verbal or written reminder
- Apology
- Clean up
- Private meeting with BCSC teacher/advisor and/or other staff members
- Specific behavior management plan
- Removal for the rest of the day which would be counted as an absence
- Being laid-off
- Expulsion

Clothing/Apparel

Clothing is a reflection of who you are, and we do not want to squelch your individuality. However, we need to maintain a safe, healthy environment that shows respect for yourself and others as well as promoting healthy choices. For these reasons, the following clothing/apparel rules will be followed:

- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times.
- Any hat or head covering that prevents staff from seeing your eyes cannot be worn.
- Any clothing, jewelry or other apparel that uses, advertises or promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, profanity; racial, gender or ethnic discrimination; or any other inappropriate message (as determined by BCSC staff) cannot be worn.
- Any clothing, jewelry or other apparel that causes a significant disruption or distraction or is considered unsafe (as determined by BCSC staff) cannot be worn.
- No bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, see-through or open backs will be allowed.

If you choose to wear clothing or other apparel that is not allowed, you will be asked to either turn it inside out (shirts), or change it (shirts, pants), put it on (shoes/sandals), or take it off (hats, jewelry). To continue to choose to wear inappropriate clothing, jewelry or other items would be interpreted as a sign that you're not ready to commit yourself to BCSC. If that is the case, we will meet and set up a specific short-term improvement plan with consequences clearly defined.

Laid-off

Being laid-off means that you are not allowed to attend BCSC for anywhere from one day to the rest of the school year. The length of your lay-off will depend upon your previous behaviors, including but not limited to, your attitude, effort, attendance, and willingness to work toward goals. The final decision as to the amount of time that you will be laid-off is left to the discretion of the principal and the BCSC teacher/advisor. If you are laid-off for two weeks or more for any reason besides attendance, you will be required to meet with the BCSC teacher/advisor and the principal or counselor or school liaison. Your re-admittance will be based upon positive behavior change, agreement to follow a specified plan, and available openings. Students are allowed and should work at home during their lay off.

Smoking/Tobacco &

Related Products:

As we know, many people are addicted to tobacco products. We are aware that we cannot stop you from smoking altogether, but you can be sure that we will discuss the habit and assist you if you're ready to quit.

Keeping in mind that one of the goals of BCSC is to encourage healthy choices, tobacco products should not be seen by any BCSC staff member while you are in the building.

If tobacco or tobacco-related products are seen but not being consumed, they will be taken and NOT returned.

Smoking is NOT allowed on school grounds. Beginning July 1, 2008, Iowa law prohibits smoking within 50 feet of school grounds, which includes the parking lot. Any student smoking in prohibited areas face legal and school sanctions.

Telephone Use:

The BCSC phone can only be used with staff permission. If there is an emergency at home, parents/guardians may call BCSC at 334-7440.

ALL phones **will** be placed in the pencil box on top of the table, with lid closed. If your cell phone is heard, or becomes an issue, staff will take the phone and return it at the end of your day.

Computers:

Personal computers/school laptops will **not** be allowed to be used at BCSC.

BCSC provides four computers for students to use for their school work. Students cannot be on YouTube, Facebook or any other social media sites during class time. Students caught abusing computer privileges will not be allowed to use the computers.

Headphones provided for E2020 use only.

Music:

We have a radio on during the day (no, the station is not negotiable). You are allowed to listen to your own music in your own player as long as you use headphones. You should have the volume low enough that you can hear us and we can't hear your music. Your music device **MUST** be placed in the pencil box, on top of the table, with the lid closed. You must have a play list or listen to a station. Changing songs/stations will not be tolerated.

Cheating and

Plagiarism:

Cheating by looking at or copying another student's work, copying exactly from the work of others (plagiarism), getting answers from an answer key, manipulating computer programs or data, discussing answers to tests, etc., is not acceptable.

Students found cheating, as well as anyone assisting, may be given an alternate assignment, receive a zero on the work and lose credit in the class, be laid off, or be expelled depending on the circumstances and honesty of the person/people involved.

General Information

Transportation

Students are responsible for transporting themselves to and from BCSC.

Supplies

Folders will be provided for you in which class work will be kept. Paper, pencils, pens, calculators, rulers and other basic supplies are kept on hand; however, feel free to bring your own. You will be assigned a container in which to keep some supplies.

Lunch

A delivered lunch is available from the high school at 11:30 a.m. If you would like to eat lunch, we will need to know by 8:30 that day so that we can inform the high school. You will need to have a lunch account with money in it to eat. Free and reduced lunch applications are available from the BCSC teacher/advisor or the high school.

Beverage/Food

Food and unopened water/soda may be brought into BCSC and consumed as long as it is not disruptive to learning (as determined by BCSC staff).

Breaks

Breaks may be taken inside or outside. Please do not be disruptive to those we share the building with. Remember... the tardy policy applies to returning from breaks.

Visitors

Visitors to BCSC are only allowed if a prearranged time has been set up. Anyone who has been expelled or laid off from BCSC is considered a visitor.

Personal Property

BCSC does not provide locker space. The BCSC assumes no responsibility for the safekeeping of personal property.

Individual Appointments

If you need to speak with a BCSC teacher/advisor or associate about individual problems, concerns, or celebrations, please see us to set up the time.

Non-Discrimination Act

It is the policy of the Independence, Jesup and East Buchanan Community School Districts not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or disability in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by Title VI and VII of 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of 1972 Educational Amendment and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Title IV, or Section 504 may be directed to the superintendent in your home district: Independence - 1207 1st St. West, Independence, IA 50644, (319) 334-7400; Jesup - 531 Prospect, Jesup, IA 50648, (319) 827-1700; East Buchanan - 414 5th St., Winthrop, IA 50682, (319) 935-3767.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Affirmative Action)

It is the policy of the Independence Community School District Board of Education to extend equal opportunities to all employees and to applicants for employment who meet the qualifications established for a class or a position for which the application is made. It is also the policy of this district not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. (Code No. 401.2)

Inquiries regarding compliance with equal educational or employment opportunities and/or affirmative action shall be directed to Affirmative Action Coordinator, Independence Community School District, 1207 First Street West, Independence, IA 50644 or affirmative@independence.k12.ia.us. Inquiries may also be directed, in writing, to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission in Des Moines, the Director of the Region VII Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, or the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education in Kansas City, MO.

Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of the Independence Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Danielle Meyer, Director of School Improvement at 334-7400, extension 459, or via email at dmeyer@independence.k12.ia.us.