



**W·A·Y ACADEMY™**

Widening Advancements for Youth

WEST CAMPUS

# Parent/Researcher Handbook

2025-2026



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*Welcome to WAY Academy West. We are pleased to have you as a researcher (student). Our staff will do their best to help you make your experience as successful as you wish to make it.*

### **WAY Academy West Campus**

19321 W. Chicago // Detroit, MI 48228

Phone: 313.444.9398

Fax: 313.451.8775

#### **West Building Hours of Operation**

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

#### **Online Centric Learning Platform**

Accessible 24 hours/ 7 Days

[www.centric.school](http://www.centric.school)

### **Our Vision**

To make every young person a Hero

### **Our Mission**

Changing lives by creating engaging and encouraging educational opportunities for all young people.

#### **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of WAY Charter Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, height, weight, genetics or marital status in its programs, services, activities or employment. Inquiries related to nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Civil Rights Coordinator, Superintendent, 369 Main Street, Belleville, MI 48011 Phone: 313.638.2716/ Nondiscrimination inquiries related to disability should be directed to: Section 504 Coordinator, Director of Special Education (same address and phone)



## **DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

Isaiah Pettway

Superintendent

Trena Braswell

Director of Charter Schools

Mark Ray

Network Administrator

Alexandra Guzman

District Compliance Officer

## **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

Cameron Nichols

Program Director

Channon Nunn

Administrative Assistant



## **LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT**

Dear WAY Academy West Parents and Researchers,

Welcome to WAY Academy West. We are so pleased you have chosen WAY as your path to a high school diploma. WAY = Widening Advancements for Youth and through the Academy's standards-focused, project-based curriculum it does just that. WAY Academy West Team Leaders and Mentors work together with other experts in various content areas to support Researchers as they design and implement projects that will result in credits required for graduation. It is a very different way of approaching teaching and learning. Researchers are responsible to collaborate with one another, their Mentors, and other educational leaders as they participate actively in the design of their own education. While this is a great responsibility, it is also an opportunity to shape meaningful learning experiences.

Members of WAY Academy West's Board of Directors believe in the potential of every Researcher. We have high expectations for your performance. We believe you have the power within yourself to become anything you want to be in life. We believe if you work hard and dream big you can do whatever you want to do.

Our responsibility is to set the policy direction for WAY Academy West and to assure there is a strong foundation supporting its operation. We understand that for you to accomplish great things, you need access to resources. That is why the technology and connectivity you, as researchers, use is placed in your homes. This access to information expands opportunities for your parents and family members also. We also commit to linking researchers and parents and the community in order to support the development of your skills and knowledge.

This handbook has been created to help you understand the policies and guidelines that apply to WAY Academy West. We encourage you to read and discuss the information together. We are engaged in a great educational opportunity. Let's make the most of it.

Mike Murray

President  
WAY Academy, Board of Directors



## **LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Welcome to WAY Academy West! We are honored and excited you have chosen our school for your child's 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade school experience. We are committed to providing our researchers with opportunities for growth and learning. WAY Academy is known for its strong academic curriculum, instructional practices and dedicated staff.

As Superintendent I want to assure you that your child's safety and well being as an individual is our primary concern. We are a small school with a big heart and a drive for academic excellence. We have a school year planned that will support your child's academic and social achievement. I look forward to meeting you personally at one of our parent nights this year.

We look forward to working with all of our families towards our common goal of preparing our young people to be college, career and workforce ready!

On behalf of all of the staff at WAY Academy, I want to thank you for allowing us to be an important part of your son or daughter's life.

Sincerely,

Isaiah Pettway,  
Superintendent



## **FORWARD**

This handbook was developed to answer many frequently asked questions that parents/guardians may have during the course of the school year. The handbook contains information about researcher rights and responsibilities, please take time to read it thoroughly with your researcher and keep it available for use during the school year. This handbook supersedes all prior handbooks and other written or oral statements regarding any items in this handbook.

*NOTE: The term "researcher" refers to students at the WAY Academy-Detroit West.*

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of researcher education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the researcher when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Researchers to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible researchers."

- Parents or eligible researchers have the right to inspect and review the researcher's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible researchers to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible researchers have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible researcher then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible researcher has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible researcher in order to release any information from a researcher's educational record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest
  - Other schools to which a researcher is transferring
  - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes



- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a researcher
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special Education and 504 services are available to students who have difficulty in learning or have a medical disorder, which makes learning difficult. The difficulty may occur in any academic area. The staff will work with these problems, try to find new methods and materials to aid each student in the learning process, and will work to find the best possible way that each student can learn. Teachers, school officials and parents may refer researchers. Individualized instruction is available to all students with special needs.



## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### Type and Size of School

WAY Academy West is a small, student centered high school offering project based learning and a 6:1 adult to researcher ratio. WAY Academy is a place where every researcher is provided with personalized, student-centered learning, unique in-school and online environments and 24/7 live access to educators—all year long.

### History & Affiliations

WAY Academy West is based on the model started by the WAY Program, which began in 2007. Our founders were searching for a way to re-engage young people who were dissatisfied with the standard educational model. They found their answer in the United Kingdom and began a partnership with a highly successful program called Not School.net. In 2012 WAY Academy West opened as our first public charter school.

### Graduation Requirements

#### 22 Credit Track

Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders are required to earn a minimum of 22 credits to receive a diploma from WAY Academy of Detroit West. The following courses meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum and are required for a diploma:

Math	4 credits
English/Language Arts	4 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies	3 credits
PE & Health	1 credit
Visual/Performing/ Applied Arts	1 credit
ICT	1 credit
Language (other than English)	2 credits
Personal Finance	.5 credit
Electives	2.5 credits
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 credits</b>

WAY Academy West serves students up to age 20 who seek a high school diploma. Therefore our alternative program offers a 20 credit track option for students who are behind and need to recover credit. For students who are in jeopardy of aging out before a diploma can be earned, an 18 credit track option is available. The Team Leader at WAY Academy West will advise students on the credit track that will best meet their needs.



The 20-Credit Track meets the Michigan Merit Curriculum but requires less elective courses. The core courses are the same as the 22-credit track.

Math	4 credits
English/Language Arts	4 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies	3 credits
PE & Health	1 credit
Visual/Performing/ Applied Arts	1 credit
Language (other than English)	2 credits
Personal Finance	.5 credit
Electives	1.5 credits
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 credits</b>

The 18 credit-track meets the minimum requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

Math	3.5 credits
Personal Finance	.5 credit
English/Language Arts	4 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies	3 credits
PE & Health	1 credit
Visual/Performing/ Applied Arts	1 credit
Language (other than English)	2 credits
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 credits</b>



## **Personal Curriculum**

1. Personal Curriculum: A personal curriculum (PC) is a tool that is provided for in Michigan law 380.1278b that allows specific modifications to be made to certain requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) in order to individualize the rigor and relevance of the educational experience. While the law specifies the areas in which modifications may be made for specific groups of students, the personal curriculum is intended to help make the MMC accessible to all researchers while maintaining the academic rigor required to uphold the integrity of the high school diploma. A personal curriculum may be developed to address the needs of an individual researcher for one of four reasons:
  - a. A researcher demonstrates the need for modification of the Algebra II requirement of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.
  - b. A researcher with an IEP demonstrates the need for modification to the MMC within the area(s) of his/her disability.
  - c. A researcher who transfers from a school outside of Michigan or from a non-public school to a public high school after completing the equivalent of two years of high school demonstrates the need for modification to the MMC based on previous academic experience.
  - d. A researcher demonstrates the need to modify Social Studies, PE/Health, and/or Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts in order to take credits beyond those required in the areas of Math, English Language Arts, Science, and/or World Languages. The researcher must earn 2 credits in Social Studies, including .5 credit in Civics before requesting a PC to modify the Social Studies requirement.



**Michigan Merit Curriculum  
 Personal Curriculum Modification Options**

Subject Area Credit Requirements	Personal Curriculum (PC) Modification Required
<p>All requirements may be fulfilled in a variety of ways, including: traditional courses; Career and Technical Education; integrated sequence of instruction of the required High School Content Expectations (HSCE); online learning; Advanced Placement and college credit courses; work based learning; project based learning, etc.,</p>	
<p><b>4 English Language Arts Credits</b></p>	<p>✓ No modification except for students with disabilities</p>
<p><b>4 Mathematics Credits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 credits: Geometry, Algebra I, Algebra II; or an integrated sequence of instruction of the required High School Content Expectations (HSCE) for mathematics.1 additional math or math-related course</li> <li>• Math or math-related high school level credit in the final year</li> </ul>	<p>To qualify for a PC math modification, students must have completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2 MMC math credit requirements (Geometry and Algebra I or equivalent) and would like a modification to complete Algebra II over two years with credit given for each year OR</li> <li>✓ 2.5 MMC math credit requirements (Geometry, Algebra I and .5 credit of Algebra II or equivalent) and have a minimum of 4 credits including math in their final year</li> </ul> <p>To graduate, students must complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A minimum of 4 math or math-related credits up through an equivalent of .5 of Algebra II and math in their final year</li> </ul> <p>Additional modifications may be available for students with disabilities</p>
<p><b>3 Science Credits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 credits: Biology, Chemistry or Physics; or an integrated sequence of instruction of the required HSCE for science from the above courses</li> <li>• 1 additional high school level science credit</li> </ul>	<p>✓ No modification except for students with disabilities</p>
<p><b>3 Social Studies Credits (no sequence required)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .5 Civics</li> <li>• .5 Economics</li> <li>• US History and Geography</li> <li>• World History and Geography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No modification of Civics</li> <li>✓ 2 credits must be earned</li> <li>✓ Modified only if student takes additional credit(s) beyond the required credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages</li> </ul>
<p><b>1 Physical Education and Health Credit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How this credit is offered is a local district decision</li> </ul>	<p>✓ Modification allowed only if student takes additional credit(s) beyond the required credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages</p>
<p><b>1 Visual, Performing, Applied Arts Credit</b></p>	<p>✓ Modification allowed only if student takes additional credit(s) beyond the required credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages</p>
<p><b>Online Learning Experience or Credit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online course or learning experience OR</li> <li>• Online experience is incorporated into each of the required credits</li> </ul>	<p>✓ No modification except for students with disabilities</p>
<p><b>2 World Language Credits</b></p>	<p>✓ No modification except for students with disabilities</p>

This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to MCL 380.1278a and MCL 380.1278b. v.12.07 38



### **Grading Scale**

Our students are awarded competency-based strands that are aligned with National Standards based on the completion of projects. These strands accumulate and when a student has completed the strands for an individual course they are awarded credit. Proficiencies of 1, 2 and 3 are awarded, which are congruent with C, B and A based on the depth of understanding shown for each strand. Our students are also given detailed explanations of the grades received on each project and are given clear direction on how, and the opportunity, to improve the grade. We accept all prior credits earned and previous GPA's are erased giving students a clean slate and the opportunity to earn a GPA as high as their motivation is willing to take them.

### **Integrated Courses**

Our projects are cross-curricular which means that if a student shows understanding in more than one subject area in any given project they can earn standards in any of those courses. For example, if a student completes a Science project and also writes a research report they will earn standards in Language Arts as well as Science.

### **Instructional Model**

All learning takes place within the context of projects. Students are active researchers of information that they apply to the completion of their projects. Students have the opportunity to choose projects in all subject areas from our on-line learning environment called Learning Your Way as well as having the opportunity to design their own projects based on their interests or work face to face with certified teachers in our learning lab. Our teachers' design challenging projects tied to competency-based strands that suit the needs and interests of their students. Our approach to instruction fundamentally changes the role of teacher and student. Instead of traditional one-to-many instruction, teachers become facilitators and coaches who guide students to take charge of their own learning, invent their own solutions, and develop self-management techniques.

### **Cultural Foundation**

Researchers and experts alike share ownership of the learning experience and school environment. Students have a level of responsibility similar to what they might experience in a professional work environment. Working on projects and becoming accountable takes individual responsibility to get the work done. In this trusted, respectful environment, students decide how to allocate their time, how to ask for and receive assistance, and how to set and reach goals.

Students also have the flexibility to customize their in-lab time and projects to meet their needs.

### **1 to 1 Computing**

WAY Academy West provides each student with a brand new Chromebook and internet service as needed, along with all the tools needed to succeed. Every student receives individualized training on all applications. With ubiquitous access to web enabled computers, every student becomes a self-directed learner who no longer needs to rely primarily on teachers or textbooks for knowledge. A web-based system called Drive unifies students' learning experiences. This enables them to share projects online, collaborate with teachers and peers, and create new knowledge.



### **Purpose Statement**

WAY Academy West will combine a blended model of personalized, project-based learning with both online and face-to-face interaction. Every member of the staff is invested in the success of each researcher, knowing they are responsible for their success, and provides support seven days a week, 24 hours a day, all year round. This dedication will allow researchers to excel at their own pace, developing customized learning plans on topics that truly appeal to them.

WAY Academy West will offer an innovative approach to education: one that encourages self-esteem, independence, and the development of 21st century skills that will facilitate a college education and subsequent career paths for each young person. Each researcher is on a track to receive a high school diploma. Researchers will be provided with a customized, competency-based learning plan and paired with a mentor who will coach them toward graduation.

WAY Academy West is committed to ensuring all researchers enrolled in the high school will succeed in college. WAY Academy is committed to ensuring at least 85% of the school's researchers will graduate from high school, of those graduates at least 85% will enroll in college, and of those who enroll at least 85% will earn a college degree.

Our program is designed to build on the personal interests of our researchers and surround them with a community of learners. Using high-powered cyber lessons and hands-on technology, students become embedded in an engaging, project-based learning environment.

Our Program is designed to counter traditional comprehensive settings, where researchers may go through an entire day without interacting with an adult. By contrast, in WAY Academy, every action places the researcher at the center of every dialogue, action, and plan.

### **Philosophy of Education**

In a free society, every individual has both the right and responsibility to make choices and decisions for him/herself and for society. A prerequisite for every member of such a society in meeting those responsibilities is competence in the use of the rational thought processes needed to make intelligent, ethical choices and decisions.



If our society, as originally conceived, is to survive and function effectively, its young people need to be prepared to exercise their rights and their responsibilities in ways that benefit them and the society. Likewise, if individuals are to be able to achieve their life goals in a free society, they need to be competent to choose among the myriad alternatives that are and continue to be available to them.

With regard to societal expectations, people in this society are expected to:

1. Be self-sufficient -- that is, to meet their own needs, to the extent they are able, in their own way and without inhibiting others' opportunity to do the same;
2. Fulfill their responsibilities to contribute to the "common good" by actively participating in affairs affecting all members of society.

The Board and staff believe that the thought and action process involved in taking intelligent, ethical action can be learned just as any other set of procedures can be learned, provided that researchers are given consistent, appropriate opportunities to:

- A. See the procedures modeled;
- B. Learn what the procedures are;
- C. Practice using the procedures and correct effective use of them;
- D. Apply the procedures to a variety of relevant situations.

The Academy is committed to making adequate provision for such opportunities and to the applications of these processes to achieving the other educational goals associated with the corporation's mission. (See Board Policy 2110)

#### **Parent/Researcher Handbook Review and Revision**

The Board of Education and/or Superintendent will review the parent/researcher handbook a minimum of one time per year at which time there may be revisions made. Also, the parent/researcher handbook may be reviewed and revised at any time during the school year by the WAY Academy Board of Education and/or Superintendent. We reserve the right to change policy at any time at our discretion.



## PROCEDURES

### Admissions

All students wishing to attend WAY Academy are required to submit a completed application. We accept students up to the age of 22 years old.

Researchers who qualify for admission, in accordance with Board of Education Policy **5111**, shall be accepted when the following documents have been submitted:

- A. Birth certificate or other appropriate documentary evidence
- B. Court orders or placement papers, if applicable
- C. A minor researcher who is also a parent must provide evidence that s/he is living in a living environment supervised by a responsible adult

If a birth certificate is not available, the parent is to complete Form 5111 F1 and submit the documentary evidence called for therein. If custody has been established by the courts, a copy of the court order must be submitted. If such verification is not received within thirty (30) days or the document appears to be inaccurate or suspicious, the principal shall notify the Wayne County Sheriff's Department.

Researchers without appropriate records will be admitted under temporary enrollment for a period of thirty (30) days, unless extended by the director. Parents are to be so informed at the time of admission.

The sending school shall be contacted within twenty-four (24) hours of the researcher's entry into the school and requested to send all appropriate records.

If the school indicates no record of the researcher's attendance, or the records are not received within fourteen (14) days of the date of request, or if the researcher does not present a certification of birth or other documentary evidence, the director shall immediately notify the law enforcement agency where the researcher resided and the Wayne County Sheriff's Department that s/he may be a missing child.

Researchers transferring from another school district must submit an official transcript from the sending school in order for the researcher to receive credit for course work. Report cards will not be considered sufficient evidence for granting credit toward graduation.

Immunization requirements are to be in accordance with AG **5320**. The staff member enrolling the researcher is to check the immunization record the parent submits against the requirements listed in AG **5320** to determine if there are any discrepancies or missing inoculations. If so, the



parent is to be informed that the needed inoculations must be completed within the next two calendar weeks or as soon thereafter as the schedule for the missing immunization permits.

The registrar is to be provided the names of all children who have not met the immunization requirements and the dates by which missing immunizations are to be completed.

A researcher shall be considered homeless under Federal law (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq) if s/he is an individual who:

- A. Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;
- B. Has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - 1. A supervised publicly operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including hotels, congregate shelters, or transitional housing for the mentally ill)
  - 2. An institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized;
  - 3. A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

### **Researchers experiencing homelessness**

Children who meet the federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free appropriate public education in the same manner as all other researchers of the school. To that end, researchers experiencing homelessness will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and will be assigned to the school serving those non-homeless researchers residing in the area in which the homeless child is actually living. The School shall establish safeguards that protect researchers experiencing homelessness from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include those who meet any of the following criteria:

- A. Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons
- B. Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- C. Live in emergency or transitional shelters



- D. Are abandoned in hospital
- E. Are awaiting foster care placement
- F. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, or
- G. Live in a car, park, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

Additionally, pursuant to Federal and State law, migratory children who are living in circumstances described in A-G above are also considered homeless.

The school shall remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless researchers in school. Researchers experiencing homelessness shall be enrolled immediately, even if they do not have the necessary enrollment documentation such as immunization and health records, proof of residency or guardianship, birth certificate, school records, and other documentation.

Researchers experiencing homelessness will be provided services comparable to other researchers in the school including:

- A. Transportation services;
- B. Educational services for which the homeless researcher meets eligibility criteria including services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or similar State or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for researchers with limited English proficiency;
- C. Programs in vocational and technical education;
- D. Programs for gifted and talented researchers;
- E. School nutrition programs; and
- F. Before- and after- school programs.

Researchers experiencing homelessness have the right to remain in their school of origin or the local attendance area school, according to the child's best interest. The school of origin is the school that the researcher attended when permanently housed or last enrolled. The local attendance area school is any public school that non-homeless researchers who live in the attendance area in which the researcher is actually living are eligible to attend.

Researchers experiencing homelessness have the right to dispute their school assignment, if their assignment is other than their school of origin. In determining the best interest of the researcher, the school shall, to the extent feasible, keep the researcher in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the homeless researcher's parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth. If the researcher is sent to a school other than the school of origin or a



school requested by the parent or guardian, a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, will be provided to the homeless researcher's parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth.

The Board of Education requires that these rights and the dispute process be communicated to the parent or guardian of the researcher experiencing homelessness or unaccompanied youth.

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless researcher or unaccompanied youth of the rights described above, the school shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school.

At the request of the parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local homeless liaison, transportation shall be provided for a researcher experiencing homelessness to and from the school or origin as follows:

- A. If the homeless researcher continues to live in the school district in which the school of origin is located, transportation will be provided in accordance with school policy/administrative guidelines.
- B. If the homeless researcher moved to an area served by another district, through continuing his/her education at the school of origin, the district of origin and the district in which the researcher resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. If the schools cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally.

The Director will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children who will perform the duties as assigned by the Director. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.

42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. (McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act)



## INDUCTIONS

Your first two official days of school at WAY Academy is called an Induction. During your first and second day, you will attend an in-person orientation using the school-provided equipment. You'll learn about the program/school, your WAY team, learn how to contact online tutors, locate projects, set up your work plan, and start your first project.

### 5 Requirements of a Researcher

To remain enrolled in WAY Academy West, researchers must:

#### #1 Message their mentor at least 2-3 times per week (email, chat, text, phone call).

- Tell them about what you are going to work on that day, what questions you have, what situations you are struggling with, and any ideas you may want to explore in a project. This is important, as it lets your mentor know what your goals are, what you have been struggling with, and what is going on in your life so that they can help you balance both life and school work.

#### #2 Earn at least 0.125 credits a week and 0.5 (a half) credit each month.

- The program is configured so that a freshman coming in with 0 credits will graduate high school on time if they earn 0.5 credits September - June, and 0.25 credits for July - August, every year for 4 years.
- To earn this credit, you will need to submit anywhere from 1-3 or more projects per week. If you ever want to know how much credit you have for a given week or a given month, please email or talk to your mentor or team leader.
  - *The credit goals stated above are for **every month, 12 months a year**. WAY West students do **not** officially take a summer break, spring break, or winter/holiday break. No matter the time of year, you are required to earn the monthly credit goal.*
- However, you do **not** have to login 24/7, 365 days a year.
  - *Example #1 - the 1-Day Holiday (Memorial Day, July 4th, MLK Jr. Day, etc.)*
    - You do not have to work on these days. However, if you do not work on these holidays, you will need to spend the rest of the week making up the work you did not do on the holiday.
  - *Example #2 - Large Holidays (Christmas)*
    - Researchers do not get an official holiday break. However, the office is closed for 2 weeks. What you can do is "front load" at the beginning of December. Do the entire month's work in the first 2-3 weeks of



December, then once you attain your 0.50 minimum credit goal, then you can take the last two weeks off. Please make sure to let your mentor know if you plan on doing this.

- *Example #3 - Vacations*
  - You will need to get permission from your mentor and team leader if you want to take any time off from school. They will decide if you will need to work or not while you are gone.
  - If you have done consistently good work (meeting your monthly credit goals), then you can take a vacation.
  - If you have NOT been earning your credit, you will not be allowed to take a vacation.
  - If you do take a vacation, you are still required to earn the credit goal for that month. You either make up the work before you go or when you come back.
  
- *Example #4 - Life Event (birth, death, move, etc.) or Illness*
  - If you have a major life event, please contact your mentor and team leader and they will work out an alternative credit plan for you to help you stay caught up.

**#3 Log in to Centric and work on projects for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week (40 hours per week), all year**

- Being present and logged in to Centric for 40 hours per week is about the same amount of time you would spend in a traditional school each week. All students are required to log-in and work on projects, and meet with staff between the hours of 8:00am to 4:00pm. If the 8:00am to 4:00pm schedule does not accommodate students' life schedule, then they would need to schedule a meeting with the mentor/Director to accommodate a change of schedule.

**#4 Attend Count Day in October and February and complete all Count Day requirements.**

- Every **Wednesday for 4 weeks starting the first in October** and **every Wednesday for 4 weeks starting the second week in February** are Count Days, which is a day that all students must attend (log in to) school and “be counted.” The school receives funding for each student counted on Count Day. This funding is what we use to educate



our students. The requirements that must be met ON Count Day are as follows:

1. Log in to Centric.
  2. Email, chat, text, or phone call your mentor and have an academic conversation about a specific project you are working on. This type of conversation must then happen the 3 Wednesdays following Count Day as well.
- Please mark these days on your calendar and keep them conflict-free. No doctor appointments, no lunch dates. It will take time to complete the class requirements, so please make those the focus on that day.

**#5 Complete State and Charter-authorized mandatory testing (see School Calendar for testing dates)**

- Each September, February, April, and May, all of our researchers are required to take the local, state, and charter- authorized mandatory standardized tests according to the grade they are in, which is determined by the amount of credit they have the week leading up to the test. (If a researcher is behind in credit, they take the tests associated with the grade they are currently in, not the grade they should be in based on age.)
- For some of these tests, you will have to travel to a testing location. We understand that some of you will have to travel a long way, and we will make what accommodations we can. Specific accommodations will be worked out between the researcher, the researcher's parent/guardian, and the Team Leader.
- You will be sent information via email and regular mail and via the researcher's mentor about specific tests, dates, times, locations, and what to bring to the test at least a month prior to the test so that plans can be made well in advance.



## **ATTENDANCE**

The Board of Education shall enforce the regular attendance of researchers. The Board recognizes that the researcher's presence in the blended learning environment enables the researcher to participate in instruction, discussions, and other related activities. As such, regular attendance and lab participation are integral to instilling incentives for the researcher to excel.

Attendance shall be required of all researchers during the days and hours that the Academy is in session. Researchers are required to work online for a minimum of 50 minutes a day, 5 days per week in each of their 6 courses for a total of 1098 hours per year as mandated by the Michigan Department of Education.

A minimum attendance of 879 hours of instruction is required of all researchers in order to be on track to graduate.

The Board may report infractions of the law regarding the attendance of researchers aged six - sixteen (6-16) to the Intermediate School District and/or County Prosecutor's Office.

Attendance need not always be within the school facilities, but a researcher will be considered to be in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board.

The Board shall consider each researcher assigned to a program of other guided learning experiences, authorized under Policy 5200, to be in regular attendance for the program provided that s/he reports daily to such staff member s/he is assigned for guidance at the place in which s/he is conducting study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of the course of study.

## **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

The School Director shall develop procedures for the attendance of researchers which:

- A. Ensure a school session which is in conformity with the requirements of the law;
- B. Ensure that researchers absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they missed;
- C. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with the rules of the State Board and the Michigan Department of Education; Pupil Accounting Manual, including a written electronic procedure, if applicable;
- D. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her education program to meet particular needs and interests;



- E. Ensure that any researcher who, due to a specifically identifiable physical or mental impairment, exceeds or may exceed the School's limit on excused absence is referred for evaluation for eligibility either under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the attendance of researchers which The Board considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for time missed:

- A. Illness
- B. Recovery from accident
- C. Required court attendance
- D. Professional appointments
- E. Death in the immediate family
- F. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- G. Such other good cause acceptable to the School Leader

Absences are unexcused unless a note or phone call is provided by the parent or guardian the day the researcher returns. The note or phone call should state the researcher's name, date of absence, reason for absence and parent or guardian phone number and signature. If the absence is due to a doctor or dental appointment, a note from the physician will also be accepted for an excused absence.

Such guidelines should provide that a researcher's grade in any course is based on his/her performance in the instructional setting. If a researcher violates the attendance or other rules of the school, s/he should be disciplined appropriately for the misconduct, but his/her grades should be based upon what the researcher can demonstrate s/he has learned.

M.C.L.A. 380.1561, 380.1561(3a-3c), 380.1586(3)

### **Summer Policy**

This policy is to provide information on the requirements for researchers during the Summer Months (July and August).

- Summer Break (School is out for 4 weeks, please check calendar for dates): During summer break students have the opportunity to continue work on the Centric Learning system but is not required to unless staff has assigned projects for students to complete.
- After Summer Break (Check calendar for end of Summer Break): Students are expected to follow the summer academics, attendance and communication requirements.

*Academics:* Our academic requirements will be reduced in the Summer Months. Researchers will be required to earn .25 credit per month or .070 credit a week.



**Attendance:** According to the Parent/Researcher Handbook under our Attendance policy (pg. 23) researchers are required to have regular attendance. This is a minimum of six hours a day five days a week. We are a year round school, which means that this attendance must continue into the Summer Months.

**Communication:** Researchers will be responsible to communicate regularly with their mentor. If the researcher plans to take a vacation this must be communicated to the researcher's mentor and team leader. During vacation the researcher will not be responsible for the attendance requirements, but will be held responsible for the monthly credit requirement.

**What does Completion look like?**

At the W-A-Y Program we are looking for researchers to succeed at the highest level. To demonstrate this researchers will be required to revise all work that is awarded a Possible, 1, or 2 proficiency. The goal is for all researchers to have a level 3 proficiency for each of the learning targets that are covered in Centric.

1. Regularly attend and participate in two weeks of Virtual Cohort Learning.
2. If, researcher is having an issue they must send a written notice to the Director of Programs of their Academy with a detailed explanation of why Virtual Cohort Learning will not work for them.
3. The Director of Programs will forward explanations to the Superintendent and Director of Charter schools for review.
4. The Superintendent and Director of Charter Schools will either accept excusal requests, ask for clarifying information, or deny excusal requests.
5. The Director of Programs will then continue in the following ways:

**Progress Reports**

This policy is to provide information on how we will conduct Progress Reports.



Progress Reports: We will be mailing home progress reports to all researchers with the monthly newsletter. To be on track the researcher should have approximately 20 logins (unique days), 4-8 artifacts submitted, and .50 credit earned.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Opportunities for Researcher Involvement**

Statistics show that overall researcher success in school is closely related to involvement in school activities. The administration and experts, using recommendations from researchers and their parents, will offer various extra activities during each school year.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

### **Researcher Conduct**

- The behavior expected from researchers online and in school is a combination of common courtesy and safety considerations. There are only a few special areas, which require the application of very specific rules. The following types of conduct are **never** permissible: defiance of school staff, the use of profanity, refusal to participate, possession of weapons or other dangerous objects, possession or use of tobacco, possession or use of any controlled substance, gambling, or vandalism.
- School discipline policies will be established and consistently enforced. When a researcher is having a problem the team leader may: conference with the researcher, conference with the parent, refer the situation directly to the director.
- Researchers will not engage in any activities that are contrary to the laws of the State of Michigan. WAY Academy will follow procedures for expulsion as prescribed by the school and the State of Michigan.

### **Bullying**

It is the policy of the Academy to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its researchers. This policy protects all researchers from bullying/aggressive behavior regardless of the subject matter or motivation for such impermissible behavior. Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a researcher, whether by other researchers, staff, or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to: written, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats, or actions to a researcher, which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of



administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for researcher behavior.

This policy applies to all "at school" activities in the Academy, including activities on school property, in school provided transportation, and those occurring off school property if the researcher or employee is at any school sponsored, school approved or school related activity or function. Such as field trips or athletic events where researchers are under the Academy's control, or where an employee is engaged in Academy business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

"Cyber-Bullying" is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to: e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

1. Deliberately threatens, harasses, intimidates an individual or group of individuals; or
2. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

"School owned, operated, or supervised technologies" is any computer, networking system, electronic equipment, or any other equipment or device that may be used by a person to communicate to another which is owned, leased, operated, or under the control or supervision of the school district and/or school district staff.

*Reference: MCL 380.1310B (Matt's Safe School Law, PA 241 of 2011) Policies on Bullying, Michigan State Board of Education Model Anti-Bullying Policy, Michigan State Board of Education*

### **Researcher Conduct:**

The conduct goal of WAY Academy is for each researcher to achieve the ability to govern themselves from within. As the researcher's ability to govern themselves increases, there is less need for imposing rules and regulations upon them. We believe researchers should show respect for both parents and experts. Staff and parents working together to teach our children to do what is right will result in exceptional young leaders, ready to impact the world.



*Discipline actions that may be used include, but are not limited to:*

1. Warning: Staff will talk to the researcher and explain his/her offense
2. Time-out – in or out of Lab
3. Call to Parents
4. Researcher conference with the Director
5. Conference with the Director and parents
6. Possible Suspension
7. Possible Expulsion

*NOTE: By listing these possible disciplinary actions, the school, in no way, implies that some or all of these will be utilized in a specific situation or prior to suspension and/or expulsion.  
\*POSSESSION OR USE OF DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO OR WEAPONS MAY RESULT IN EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL.*

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

This Student Code of Conduct was established to ensure that every researcher in every learning lab is provided with a safe, orderly and secure learning environment to pursue the educational opportunities WAY Academy has to offer.

The rules and procedures govern researcher behavior at all the WAY Academy Learning Labs. Administrators and staff are responsible for addressing researcher behavior and implementing the Student Code of Conduct at their locations.

WAY Academy reserves the jurisdiction of the Student Code of Conduct covering offenses that occur on lab grounds, on buses or in other lab related vehicles, during sponsored field trips/events/activities, and when researchers are en route to or from the learning lab.

All WAY employees are required to function in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. When an employee discovers a researcher engaging in unacceptable conduct, the employee is required to take prompt action in accordance with the Board of Education approved policies and the Student Code of Conduct.

Parents have the right to know how their child is progressing in the program and will be provided with regular progress reports. Many times it will be the researcher's responsibility to deliver information to their parents. If necessary, reports will be mailed or hand delivered. Parents are encouraged to contact school personnel if they have questions and concerns.



## **STUDENT CODE OFFENSES**

Misconduct is classified into 3 categories based on the severity of the behavior. Level A offenses are the least severe and may result in actions leading up to and including a short-term suspension of 1-5 days. Level B offenses are more severe and may result in a short-term suspension up to 10 days. Level C offenses are the most severe violations and may result in a long-term suspension and even expulsion from WAY Charter Schools. State law requires that offenses warranting the notification of local law enforcement agencies be reported accordingly. The definitions of misconduct at each level are not an all-inclusive list, but are representative of the most common offenses reported. A researcher who commits an act of misconduct not listed herein is subject to disciplinary action.

### **LEVEL A. OFFENSES**

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR LEVEL A OFFENSES WHICH MAY RESULT IN SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION FOR THE FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS:

#### **A-1 Insubordination**

Ignoring or refusing to comply with directions or instructions given by WAY staff and administration

#### **A-2 Refusal to Identify Self**

Refusing to show or wear an identification card and/or give your correct name when requested by school personnel or using another person's name or identity

#### **A-3 Student Demonstrations**

Any form of protest or demonstration that disrupts the normal educational process or that is conducted in a manner that violates legal restraints

#### **A-4 Improper or Unauthorized Use of Electronic Communication Devices**

Using any smartphone, cellular phone or other device without obtaining prior approval of an administrator or teacher or improper use that causes a disruption.

#### **A-6 Improper or Unauthorized Use of School Materials/Equipment**

Using any school equipment technology or materials without obtaining prior approval of an administrator or teacher or improper use of any school equipment, technology or materials.

#### **A-7 Cheating/Academic Misconduct**

A researcher will not plagiarize, cheat, gain unauthorized access to, or tamper with educational materials

#### **A-8 Disorderly Conduct**

A student will not harass others or misbehave in a manner that causes disruption or obstruction to the educational process. Disruption caused by talking, making noises, throwing objects or otherwise distracting another constitutes disorderly conduct. Behavior is considered



disorderly if a teacher is prevented from starting an activity or lesson or has to stop instruction to address disruption

**A-9 Inappropriate Displays of Affection**

Students will not engage in inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing, or long embraces of a personal nature

**A-10 Loitering/Trespassing**

A student will not enter upon the premises of the school district, other than the location to which the student is assigned, without authorization from proper school authorities. If removed, suspended, or expelled from school, a student will not return to the school premises without permission of the proper school authorities.

**A-11 Objectionable Conduct**

A student will not orally, in writing, electronically, or with photographs or drawings direct profanity, insulting, and obscene or other objectionable gestures toward any other person. Conduct under this offense is not of a sufficient nature to rise to the level of harassment.

**A-12 Violations of Attendance Policy**

Acts, not specifically listed, which constitute a violation of the District's attendance policy

**LEVEL B. OFFENSES**

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR LEVEL A OFFENSES MAY RESULT IN SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION OR LONG-TERM SUSPENSION FOR THE FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS

**B-1 Threats of Violence/Intimidation**

Written, verbal or physical conduct, or electronic communication, less than bullying, that is intended to place one or more persons in fear of harm. Refer to C 16- Bullying to describe conduct of a serious, severe or substantial nature

**B-2 Possession of Dangerous Objects**

Dangerous objects are objects other than firearms, guns or knives that include but are not limited to explosives, firecrackers, clubs, mace, pepper spray and other irritant sprays. Possession includes carrying an item, storing an item, having an item under one's control and or voluntarily permitting another person to store an item in or around the school without reporting it to staff.

**B-3 Use or Possession of Illegal or Controlled Substances or Materials**

Illegal or controlled substances include tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, drugs prohibited by law, over the counter medicines and prescription medications not prescribed for use by the students in possession of them. Students found guilty of the second offense of B-3 within the same school and in the same school year, will be charged with a C-18-Other Illegal Conduct (an expelled offense). In the event intervention is provided to a student, WAY will not be prevented from suspending or expelling the student.

**B-4 Theft or Receipt of Stolen Property**

Taking or conspiring to take without permission of the owner or custodian or

receiving or possessing property known to be stolen valued at less than \$100.00

**B-5 Extortion, Coercion or Blackmail**

Obtaining money or property (something of value) from an unwilling person or forcing an individual to act by either physical force or intimidation (threat).

**B-6 Defacement of Property**

A student will not willfully cause defacement of or damage to property belonging to the school or belonging to school personnel or persons in attendance at the school.

**B-7 Interference With or Intimidation of School Personnel**

Preventing or attempting to prevent school personnel from engaging in their lawful duties through threats of violence, harassment or intimidation.

**B-8 Interference With the Movement of Pupils in and Out of Schools, Between Schools or Between Home and School.**

Any action that prevents or delays scheduled transportation of pupils to and from school that prevents pupils from entering or leaving school at scheduled hours, or that causes fear or jeopardy to students while walking to and from an assigned school.

**B-9 Harassment**

Written, verbal or physical conduct that is persistent or pervasive that causes emotional distress or does the following to one or more students directly or indirectly: substantially interferes with educational opportunities, adversely affects the ability of students to participate in or benefit from school programs, causes a substantial disruption to the orderly operation of schools.

**B-10 Gambling**

Participating in games of chance or skill for money or profit.

**B-12 Admittance of Unauthorized Individuals into School Buildings**

The act of knowingly and intentionally admitting or allowing an unauthorized person(s) into any school building, without expressed permission from any authorized person, through any unopened door or unmonitored point of entry in a manner that breaches any method of established security.

**B-13 Verbal Abuse**

Name-calling, racial or ethnic slurs or derogatory statements directed at and offensive to another person.

**B-14 Forgery/Giving False Information or Identification**

Intentionally misrepresenting information to school district personnel, such as giving false information, false identification or signing another person's name to a document



**B-15 Abuse of Technology**

The act of tampering with or unauthorized use of computer hardware or software, including loading unauthorized software, making unauthorized copies of software, tampering with the hard drive, infection of computers with viruses, unauthorized internet access, unauthorized access to another's files, computers, or computer systems, and computer network "hacking". The use of internet or WAY technology, equipment or materials, including networks and servers to commit any offense is a violation under the Student Code of Conduct.

**B-16 Fighting**

A physical confrontation between one or more students that does not cause serious injury.

**B-17 Hazing**

Any intentional, knowing, or reckless activity which endangers the physical safety, causes mental distress, embarrassment, humiliation or ridicule of a student done for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliated with, participating in or become a member of any organization, team, group, club, school activity, regardless of whether the activity is done without the consent of the person(s) being hazed.

**B-18 Other Prohibited Conduct**

Any school related conduct that violates rules, policies or school decorum.

**B-19 Sexual Harassment**

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with the student's educational opportunities or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

**LEVEL C OFFENSES**

PENDING AN EXPULSION REVIEW HEARING, IF FOUND GUILTY, DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR LEVEL C OFFENSES CAN RESULT IN EXPULSION FOR THE FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS

**C-1 Possession of a Firearm**

Firearm means 1. Any weapon including a pistol, starter gun, gun, zip gun, pellet gun and BB gun or any other type of gun which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive 2. The frame or receiver of any such weapon 3. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer or 4. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary device, bomb, grenade, poison gas or rocket. Students found

guilty of this offense are subject to mandatory expulsion.

**C-2 Possession of a Knife**

Knives are defined to include any knife regardless of blade length or total size, straight razor, box cutter with razor or any instrument which has been altered to be used as a weapon in a manner similar to a knife such as a letter opener or file. A student found with a 3 inch blade or greater is subject to mandatory expulsion.

**C-3 Possession of Other Dangerous Weapons**

Possession of weapons and objects, other than gun or knives, such as, brass knuckles, which have the capacity to cause serious injury or death.

**C-4 Use of a Weapon or an Object as a Weapon**

Use of a weapon or dangerous object is defined to include: using a weapon or dangerous object in a physical altercation, having a weapon in one's possession during a physical altercation, threatening a person with a weapon or dangerous object, using a weapon or dangerous object while committing robbery, extorting or coercing through threat or actual use of a weapon or dangerous object, or discharging of a firearm

**C-5 Physical Assault of an Employee, Volunteer or Contractor**

Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to an employee, volunteer or contractor through force or violence

**C-6 Destruction of Property**

Acts that result in a substantial threat of or actual destruction of property of \$100.00 or more, which significantly necessitates altering a school's operation and activities. Specifically included are acts which result in significant damage to the physical plant or property, conditions that require the evacuation of students or the inability of a school to perform its functions.

**C-7 Theft or Receipt of Stolen Property**

Taking or conspiring to take without permission of the owner or custodian or receiving or possessing property known to be stolen valued at \$100.00 or more, which does not belong to the student.

**C-8 Arson**

The willful and malicious burning or attempt to burn any part of property that belongs to, or is under contract with the school district, or property of persons employed by the district or on school property or the setting of fires on school property. Students found guilty of this offense are subject to mandatory expulsion.

**C-9 Sale/Distribution of Controlled Substances or Illegal Materials**

To attempt to conspire to sell, sell or distribute any illegal or controlled substance or a substance represented to another person as illegal or controlled. Students will be charged under this violation if they are in possession of a substantial quantity of an illegal or controlled substance that is packaged for sale.

**C-10 Physical Assault of Another Student**

Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to a student through force or violence. Acts that result in serious bodily injury or participating in gang gang-like activity or group violence are also punishable under this provision. Gang or gang-like activity includes an ongoing organization, association or group of three or more individuals who display one or more of the following: wear or display common clothing, jewelry, insignia, signs that intentionally identify that student as a member of the group, have a high rate of interaction among themselves to the exclusion of others or are frequently involved in anti-social, delinquent or criminal activity

**C-11 Criminal Sexual Conduct**

Means a violation as set forth in the Michigan Penal Code (MCL 750.520b to MCL 750.520g). It includes sexual penetration or sexual contact that occurs. It is sexual contact with another person at least 13 but less than 16 years of age AND the other person is 5 or more years older. Sexual contact is the intentional touching of the intimate parts of the body of another person for a sexual purpose, for revenge, to inflict humiliation or out of anger. If a student commits criminal sexual conduct in a school building, on school grounds or any other school property, the student shall be expelled.

**C-12 Sexual Misconduct**

A student shall not engage in intimate sexual contact with another person, including, but not limited to: consensual sexual intercourse, oral sex or intentional touching of the other person's genitals, groin, inner thigh, buttock or breast or the clothing covering those areas, other inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature including displays of sexual parts.

**C-13 Forgery/Fraud**

Signing the name of another person for the purpose of defrauding school personnel of the district or causing or deceiving another by false or misleading information in order to obtain anything of value.

**C-14 Terroristic Activity**

Communicating terroristic threats, including bomb threats, or committing terroristic acts directed at any student, employee, volunteer, contractor, physical plant or property.

**C-15 False Alarm**

Activating a fire alarm system in any school building on school property and/or reporting a fire or bomb when none exists.

**C-16 Other Illegal Conduct**

Other acts, not specifically listed, which constitute an offense under state or federal laws.

### **C-17 Bullying**

Written, verbal, physical conduct or any electronic communication that is intended to place one or more students or other persons in fear of harm or cause substantial emotional distress by directly or indirectly doing the following: substantially interfering with educational opportunities, adversely affecting the ability of a student(s) to participate in or benefit from school programs, having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student's physical or mental health, causing substantial disruption of the orderly operation of school. The use of any electronic communication (i.e. internet, personal digital assistant, smart phone or wireless handheld device), or network or technology including social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, etc.), to bully is cyber-bullying. Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited against all students, educators, employees, parent/guardians, contractors, agents or volunteers.

### **C-18 Sexting**

Forwarding, sending, using sharing, viewing or possessing a sexually explicit image via text message, email, social networking websites and/or other electronic means using school property (computers, devices, networks, or servers) on school grounds, outside of school-sponsored activities or on student owned devices that result in disruption to the orderly operation of the school environment is punishable under this provision.

## **MANDATORY FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Before suspending or expelling a researcher (other than for firearms) the following factors are considered

1. Age of the researcher
2. Disciplinary history
3. Disability
4. Seriousness of behavior
5. Whether behavior poses safety risk
6. Restorative practices
7. Whether lesser interventions would address behavior

## **INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS**

Lab Experts and School Directors have the authority to utilize various interventions and behavior management techniques to encourage positive student behavior within the learning lab. Parent/Guardian assistance, other educational support services and/or other community agencies may be engaged as appropriate.



The following list of strategies may be used:

- ✓ Warning or reprimand from school personnel
- ✓ Researcher and/or parent/guardian conference with school personnel
- ✓ Counseling from the school Social Worker or other agency referral
- ✓ Daily/weekly progress monitoring reports
- ✓ Behavioral contracts or plans
- ✓ Change in student schedule
- ✓ No contact directive
- ✓ Loss of privileges
  
- ✓ Restitution /restoration community service
- ✓ Confiscation of appropriate item(s)
- ✓ Denial of participation in extracurricular activities
- ✓ Referral to the District Disciplinary Team
- ✓ Suspension (short-term and long-term)
- ✓ Recommendation for Expulsion Hearing

### **DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES**

Before a researcher is suspended or expelled from the learning lab, there are procedures that must be adhered to. When alleged violations to the Student Code of Conduct occur and disciplinary action is considered, due process must be applied in all cases where student behavior and rights are evaluated.

The researcher has the right to be fully informed about the alleged violations and must be given an opportunity to respond to the alleged violations. Due process procedures vary depending on the severity of the violations and the seriousness of the disciplinary action that may be imposed on the researcher as a result of the hearing. Separate due process procedures apply to a researcher facing short-term suspension, long-term suspension or expulsion.

### **Investigations**

Before it is determined that action should be taken, an investigation must be conducted to discern what happened. The School Director will inform the researcher of the allegations and the supporting evidence. The researcher will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations. It is preferred that the researcher gives a written statement. If this is not possible, a verbal statement is acceptable. Witnesses, including staff and students, should also give written statements.

Due to the serious nature of some offenses, immediate removal of a researcher from the learning lab may be required. If the allegations are warranted, the parent/guardian will be notified by phone.



Following the investigation, if the allegations are substantiated, an attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian by phone. A suspension letter should be sent by first class mail within 1 school day. The letter should state the researcher is being removed from school, the number of days suspended and the reason for the removal. If a long-term suspension is given, the letter will include the time and place for parents to attend a hearing.

### **Short-Term Suspensions**

A researcher can be suspended up to 10 days on a short-term suspension depending on the severity of the offense. Short-term suspension should only be given after consideration of other alternatives to correct the researcher's behavior have been exhausted.

Before a researcher can return from a suspension, he/she may be required to attend a re-admissions conference with the parent/guardian to discuss the offense and implement a plan to correct the behavior. The School Director may waive the requirement for the conference or provide alternatives to the parent being present in order to participate.

### **Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions**

A researcher can be suspended more than 10 days on a long-term suspension depending on the severity of the offense. Before a Long-term suspension is given, the District Discipline Team will hold a hearing (see Hearings).

### **Expulsions**

The District Discipline Team will review the case for the purposes of confirming the suspension and referring the case for an expulsion hearing. The Superintendent and the Board of Education conducts expulsion hearings. The researcher and parent/guardian are expected to attend (see hearings). Michigan law requires permanent expulsion of a student, subject to possible future reinstatement, for certain acts. These include possession of a dangerous weapon, commission of arson or criminal sexual conduct in a school building or on school grounds; and, for students grade 6 and above, commission of physical assault at school against an employee, volunteer or contractor.

### **Re-admittance from Expulsion**

A written request from the researcher or parent/guardian must be made to the Superintendent. The District Disciplinary Team will review the petition when a researcher has been expelled for a non-mandatory expulsion offense. The researcher must meet the criteria set by the State of Michigan and/or WAY Charter Schools before re-admissions will be considered and/or approved.



### **Appeals**

A suspension may be appealed within 5 days after receipt of the suspension notice. Appeals must be made in writing to the Superintendent. An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 5 days after receipt of the written request. During the appeal process researchers may not be allowed to remain in school. The appeal will be conducted by the District Disciplinary Team in a private meeting room. The researcher may be represented by a parent/guardian or representative. The researcher will be notified by first class mail of the decision. The decision of the District Disciplinary Team is final and cannot be appealed. Suspensions from after school programs and extra-curricular activities may not be appealed.

### **Hearings**

Hearings must be held within 5 days of the date of the offense following the removal of the researcher to determine whether the allegations are substantiated. The researcher and parent/guardian will be notified of the date and time of the hearing via first class mail. The researcher and parent/guardian are expected to attend all disciplinary hearings. If they are unable to or choose not to attend the hearing must still be held. Attendance will be documented for the record. A parent/guardian or representative may represent the researcher. The person making the allegations and witnesses shall be present at the hearing. Parents do not have the right to question student witnesses but they can provide a list of questions to be asked by the District Disciplinary Team.

At the hearing the researcher and parent/guardian must be fully informed of the allegations and supporting evidence. The researcher and parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to present their side. If the allegations are substantiated the District Disciplinary Team will determine the action to be taken. The researcher will be notified by first class mail of the decision. The decision of the District Disciplinary Team is final and cannot be appealed.

### **Make-Up Work**

During a suspension researchers are entitled to make-up missing assignments and tests. If a researcher chooses not to make-up assignments it will be reflected in their credit attainment. Researchers who are expelled lose the opportunity to make-up assignments and earn credit.

### **Researcher Searches**

The Board seeks to ensure a learning environment which protects the health, safety and welfare of researchers and staff. To assist the Board in attaining these goals, school officials may, subject to the requirements below, search a researcher's person and property. This includes property assigned by the school for the researcher's use. Such searches may be conducted at any time on school property or when the researcher is under the jurisdiction of the school at



school-sponsored activities. All searches for evidence of a violation conducted by the school shall be subject to the following requirements:

1. The school official shall have individualized, “reasonable suspicion” to believe evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, administrative regulation or school rule is present in a particular place.
2. The search shall be “reasonable in scope.” That is, the measures used are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age, sex, and maturity of the researcher and nature of the infraction. School officials may also search when they have reasonable information that emergency/dangerous circumstances exist.

Routine inspections of school property assigned to researchers may be conducted at any time.

School officials may seize any item which is evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, administrative regulation or school rule; or which the possession or use of is prohibited by such law, policy, regulation or rule. Researchers may be searched by law enforcement officials on school property or when the researcher is under the jurisdiction of the school upon the request of the law enforcement official.

If, at any time, parents have questions or disagreements regarding disciplinary actions, it is their responsibility to immediately discuss these questions or differences with the staff member involved.

### **Drug-Free Policy**

In accordance with Federal Law, the Board of Education prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs by researchers on school grounds, in school or school-approved vehicles, or at any school-related event. Drugs include any alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, dangerous controlled substance (as defined by State statute) or substance that could be considered a “look-a-like” controlled substance. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all researchers. Any researcher who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with due process and as specified in this handbook, up to and including expulsion from school. When required by State law, the District will also notify law enforcement officials.

The school is concerned about any student who is a victim of alcohol or drug abuse and will facilitate the process by which she/he receives help through programs and services available in the community. Researchers and their parents should contact the Director or Team Leader whenever such help is needed.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION DISCIPLINE REQUIREMENTS**

Specific legal requirements exist that determine appropriate and allowable disciplinary procedures for use with students with disabilities. There are specific discipline procedures when removing a student with a disability from their educational placement.

### **Suspension for Violation of School Rules**

School officials may suspend a student with a disability for violating school rules, just as it would a student without a disability, for **up to 10 school days**. Additional separate suspensions are permissible for **10 school days, or less**, in the same school year.

Beginning with the **11th** day of suspension, and for all subsequent days during the suspension, educational services must be provided to the student. In all situations where a student has been suspended for **10 days or more**, the following must occur not later than **10 business days** after suspending the student. A Manifestation Determination Review must be conducted as follows:

1. If the school has not already conducted a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and implemented a behavior implementation plan (BIP), the IEP Team will complete a FBA to analyze the behavior(s) of concern. The FBA is necessary to determine an appropriate BIP to address the behavior(s) subject to disciplinary action.
2. If the student already has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP Team will review the plan and modify it, if necessary, to address the behavior of concern.
3. On the day on which the decision is made to suspend for more than 10 days, the parent must be notified of the decision and of all procedural safeguards.

A change in placement occurs when disciplinary action results in a pattern of suspensions (consider length of each suspension, proximity to each other, and total number of days) that accumulate to more than **10 days** or a single suspension of **longer than 10 days**. The following requirements apply to change in placement situations:

1. No later than **10 school days** after the day on which the decision is made to suspend the student, an IEP Team must meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to discipline.
2. If the IEP Team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, disciplinary procedures applicable to students without disabilities may be implemented. However, **during the suspension from school, programs and/or services must be continued** as determined by the IEP Team to allow the student to progress in the general curriculum and advance in the goal areas of the IEP.



3. If the IEP Team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the removal is terminated and the IEP Team must remedy any deficiencies in the IEP or placement, if any.
4. If the student's parent disagrees with the determination that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, the parent may request an expedited hearing from the MDE. During the appeal, the student's placement is in the setting given in the last uncontested IEP.

### **Weapons or Drugs**

If the disciplinary action is due to a student's possession of a weapon or drugs, the school may administratively place a student with a disability in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 calendar days. This may occur even if there is an affirmative manifestation finding (see Behavior Review form) or a parent appeal of a non-manifestation finding. Special education instructional services must be maintained during this time period.

### **Danger to Self or Others**

In situations not involving weapons or drugs, if the student is considered dangerous to self or others, the school can request an Expedited Due Process Hearing from MDE and ask the hearing officer to order an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 calendar days. Special education instructional services must be maintained during this time period.

### **Suspension with Student Working at Home**

Every time a special education student is suspended from school, the special education teachers must be notified. The student must receive special education services during the suspension, if the suspension is for more than 10 days or if the student is allowed to work at home. This can be accomplished by having the special education teacher and school social worker call or chat with the student to provide services. If there needs to be face-to-face interaction by any service provider, it must be done at a mutually agreed upon setting, for example, a library or community center.

### **Dress and Grooming**

The staff of WAY Academy is concerned with the health, safety, and well-being of researchers and maintaining an appropriate educational environment, free from distractions to learning. For these reasons, researchers are expected to dress appropriately for school. The purpose of a dress code is to help each researcher set an appropriate standard for his/her personal appearance. It is a mark of maturity when a researcher can freely choose apparel that demonstrates individuality without deviating from the standard of appropriateness. Please adhere to the following guidelines when choosing your school attire:

- Dress in a manner that will not distract the educational focus for any fellow researcher.



- All shirts and tops must cover the chest (cleavage), midriff, and bra straps. Halter-tops, tube tops, etc. are not allowed.
- All under garments must be out of view (including boxers, thong underwear, bras, etc.)
- Skirts and shorts must be at least as long as the tip of the researcher's fingers when hands rest at the sides.
- Signs, decals, slogans, and/or clothing (including hats) that promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, contain profane, crude, vulgar, or sexually explicit comments, or are identified in the community with gang behavior is disruptive and not appropriate.
- For safety reasons, any clothing that may be used as a weapon is strictly prohibited. For example, sharp object jewelry, chains, dog collars with spikes, and any other spiked clothing are prohibited.

Unauthorized group apparel is prohibited. Clothing or accessories worn in a manner (including but not limited to gloves, bandanas, shoestrings, wristbands, belts, jewelry) related to an unauthorized group or a group that may provoke others to act of violence are prohibited. Belts, bandanas, or other items hanging out of pants, hanging from rear pants pockets, or displayed in clothing are prohibited.

Example: sharp object jewelry, chains, dog chains with spikes, and any other spiked clothing are prohibited.

- Hats and hoods will not be worn inside WAY Academy.
- Apparel (including pants) that reveals midriff must not be worn.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.

### **Opportunities for Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is critical to WAY Academy's overall effectiveness. Parents can get involved by:

- Fund-Raising
- Volunteering
- School Improvement

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

It is of the utmost importance that WAY Academy provides a safe environment for our researchers. Because of this commitment, the following rules will apply:

#### **Distribution and Consumption of Medication:**

Parents are requested, whenever possible, to schedule medication to be given at home.

**If medication is needed during school hours, parents shall provide a written request from the child's physician, including the name of drug, time of dosage.**



**route of administration, possible adverse effects, and emergency instructions that might be applicable.** Medications must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician and is to include only that medication to be given during school hours.

**Administering of Medication:**

The parent requesting that the school staff administer the medication shall provide a signed permission slip. Forms are available from the school office. The school administrator or school nurse, if one is assigned to the school, will be responsible for administering the medication. A log will be kept of all medication administered at school. It shall include the researcher's name, the date, dosage, time of administration, and initials of the staff member giving the medication. All prescription medications shall be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer.

Should your child need any non-prescription medication during school hours, parents must notify the school and provide these medications for their researcher. A signed permission slip will also be required for non-prescription medication.

Researchers are not to carry any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) on their person with the exception of prescribed inhalers for asthma. They must have a signed order from the doctor.

**Illness:**

If a child has been ill during the night or became ill upon awakening, please do not send the child to school. Researchers with low-grade fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or other acute symptoms will be sent home. If your child has been ill at home with any of these symptoms, please keep him/her home until these symptoms have subsided for 24 hours. If a child becomes ill after coming to school, the parent will be contacted. If a child has a fever of at least 100 degrees of temperature or has vomited, the researcher will be sent home.

If the parents cannot be reached by phone, the emergency contact person(s) listed in the researcher file will be called to pick up the child. **Please maintain accurate and current information for the emergency file. Any addition or deletion for emergency contact person(s) should be given immediately to the school office.**



### **Immunizations/Medical Examination**

***Current immunization records must be on file at WAY Academy for every researcher by the first day of the school year. If not, the child will not be allowed to attend.***

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

**Fire** – In case of fire, it is imperative that the building be emptied quickly and calmly. Fire drills will be held periodically during the school year to practice clearing the school quickly, and experts will instruct researchers on proper procedures during a fire.

**Tornado** – When a tornado warning is given, the staff will lead researchers to a designated area within the building. Lab staff will be well versed regarding proper emergency procedures and will dismiss researchers from the designated area only when an “all clear” signal is given. Tornado warning drills will be conducted periodically.

**Lockdown** – May be implemented in situations involving intruders.



**W·A·Y ACADEMY™**  
Widening Advancements for Youth  
W E S T C A M P U S

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **LAB Visitors**

WAY Academy welcomes parents/guardians to visit our school. For safety, all visitors, including parents and guardians, are required to sign-in upon arrival and sign out at departure. Researchers not enrolled in WAY Academy are not permitted to visit unless accompanied by an adult.

### **Change of Address**

When families move during the course of a school year, it is critical that they notify the team leader of this change so the school can maintain necessary and appropriate contact with the family. If you move during the course of the year, please submit all information to the school prior to the move.

### **Field Trips**

During the school year, experts may schedule educational field trips. Field trips will be announced in writing in advance. A permission slip must be signed and returned to the school in order for the researcher to attend the field trip. The permission form will provide details of the trip (destination, time, transportation, and cost) and a way for the parent to sign up to chaperone.

### **Lost and Found Items**

Items that are lost or found can be turned in or looked for with team leaders. Researchers are reminded to check the lost and found for any missing items. Researchers should report all lost items to the team leaders immediately.

### **Lunch Program**

WAY Academy provides breakfast and lunch through Edibles Rex lunch program. Researchers who apply and qualify for free lunch will not need to purchase lunch daily. All others may purchase lunch or bring a sack lunch. Researchers will remain in the lunch area during lunch unless supervised by an adult personnel. Those researchers who qualify for the free/reduced meal program must complete the form available in the lab.

### **Emergency Form**

In the event of an accident, illness, or emergency, clear and accurate information is essential. This information will be shared with appropriate school staff and emergency medical personnel in case of emergency. If any information, such as address, emergency or work phone numbers changes, please notify the main office.



### **School Closure Information**

Watch local television stations for the list of closed schools. In case of weather emergencies and/or other situations, which might necessitate researchers being dismissed early from school, every attempt will be made to alert parents through the media. However, parents should ensure in advance that the researcher has a procedure to follow for early dismissals.

### **Withdrawal From The Academy**

The Board of Education affirms that, while Michigan law requires attendance of each researcher until eighteen (18) years of age, it is in the best interests of both researchers and the community that they complete the educational program that will equip them with skills and increase their chances for a successful and fulfilling life beyond the schools.

The Board directs that whenever a researcher wishes to withdraw from school, efforts should be made to determine the underlying reason for such action and the resources of the school should be used, when and as appropriate, to assist the researcher in reaching his/her career goals. No researcher under the age of eighteen (18) will be permitted to withdraw without the written consent of a parent or the approval of the Director.

The Director shall develop administrative guidelines for withdrawal from school which:

- A. Make counseling services available to any researcher who wishes to withdraw;
- B. Make every effort to satisfy the researcher's future educational needs;
- C. Help the researcher define his/her own educational life goals and help plan the realization of those goals;
- D. Inform the researcher of the G.E.D.
- E. Assure the timely return of all School-owned supplies and equipment in the possession of the researcher.

M.C.L.A. 380.1561 (board policy 5130)



**W-A-Y Academy Detroit  
District Calendar  
2025-2026**

<b>Staff Return</b>	August 4, 2025
<b>No School</b>	August 29, 2025
<b>Labor Day (No School)</b>	September 1, 2025
<b>School Begins</b>	September 2, 2025
<b>Thanksgiving Break (No School)</b>	November 27-28, 2025
<b>Winter Break (No School)</b>	December 22, 2025 - January 2, 2026 <i>resume Jan. 5th</i>
<b>Martin Luther King Day (No School)</b>	January 19, 2026
<b>President's Day (No School)</b>	February 16, 2026
<b>Spring Break (No School)</b>	March 30 – April 3, 2026
<b>Good Friday(No School)</b>	April 3, 2026
<b>Memorial Day (No School)</b>	May 25, 2026
<b>Juneteenth(No School)</b>	June 19, 2026
<b>End of School Year</b>	June 26, 2026
<b>Summer Break</b>	June 29 - July 31, 2026

**District Professional Development**

- August 22, 2025
- September 19, 2025
- November 4, 2025
- January 16, 2026
- May 15, 2026

**School Professional Development**

- December 12, 2025
- February 13, 2026
- March 27, 2026



**NWEA Assessment Windows:**

<b>Fall NWEA</b>	September 8 - October 3, 2025
<b>Winter NWEA</b>	January 5 - February 6, 2026
<b>Spring NWEA</b>	April 27 - June 5, 2026

<b>Spring 2026 Testing Schedule for Summative Assessments</b>																		
Assessment	Week of																	
	1/26-1/30	2/2-2/6	2/9-2/13	2/16-2/20	2/23-2/27	3/2-3/6	3/9-3/13	3/16-3/20	3/23-3/27	3/30-4/3	4/6-4/10	4/13-4/17	4/20-4/24	4/27-5/1	5/4-5/8	5/11-5/15	5/18-5/22	
M-STEP Online											6 weeks							
M-STEP Paper/Pencil											4 weeks							
MI-Access Alternate Assessments											7 weeks							
College Entrance: SAT w/Essay											3 weeks							
Work Skills: ACT WorkKeys									3/26 Window 1		4/9 Window 2		4/23 Makeup					
ACT WorkKeys Accommodated Testing Windows									Window 1: 3/26 - 4/8 <b>OR</b> Window 2: 4/9 - 4/22 Makeup Window: 4/23 - 4/29									
PSAT 8/9 (Grade 8)											3 weeks							
PSAT 8/9 (Grade 9)											3 weeks							
PSAT 10 (Grade 10)											3 weeks							
WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs	10 weeks																	



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