

# Coventry CARES keeps kids in town

## Tiogue Avenue facility will be alternative program's school

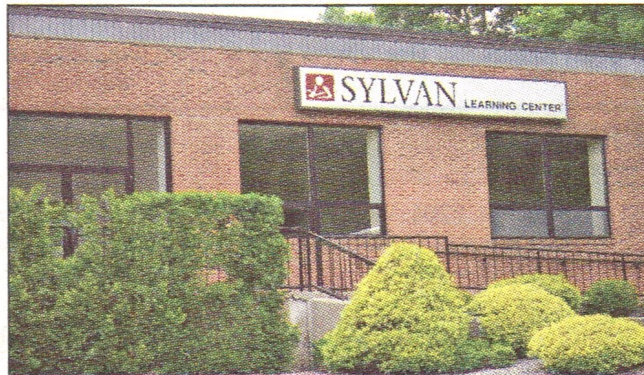
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COVENTRY— The Coventry School Committee approved the building lease during Tuesday night's meeting for the future alternative high school, which will be home to at-risk students.

The building, located at 1193 Tiogue Ave., will now be used for the Coventry Alternative Resource for Education (CARE) program.

During previous years, if a Coventry High School student was in need of an alternative program because of educational or social disadvantages, they had to be sent to out-of-district institutions at the expense of the school administration.

Superintendent Michael Almeida ex-



The building, located at 1193 Tiogue Ave., is now home to the Coventry Alternative Resource for Education (CARE) program. This program was created to assist at-risk students at the high school within town, instead of sending them to out-of-district institutions.

Jessica Boisclair. Daily Times

plained that it cost between \$40,000 and \$60,000 per student to send them out of town.

School Committee Chairwoman Kathy Patenaude said the lease for the building

would cost approximately \$40,000 per year, the same amount it would to send one student to another school.

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# Coventry CARES opens 2nd location

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She said the district used to have a similar program but it lost its funding many years back.

"This program would be the same concept and I know when we had the other program kids were very successful in it," she said. "I think we have a need for that, and outside the fact it'll be a win-win financially."

Director of Special Services Susan Lyons explained that the district's administration has been looking into creating a new program for several years.

The high school currently provides other programs — such as the Coventry Learning Academy (CLA) — for students with

behavioral and emotional challenges, but CARE will target students who have not succeeded in those.

Under the CARE program, she said, two admission requirements would be applied. First, students who typically do not find themselves in disciplinary trouble, but suffer from emotional problems will be referred to the CARE program by Individualized Education Program (IEP) placement teams.

The second process would focus on students who have been suspended multiple times, or who are involved with drug abuse, weapons and aggression.

She said these students would be referred to the program by administration, rather than being

sent to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), for a minimum of 45 days.

During this time, she explained, these students will also be placed on social suspension, meaning they cannot partake in any extracurricular activities.

"For the kids who many have drug or alcohol abuse problems and might need treatment, we typically send them to day programs," Patenaude said. "Also, some kids who aren't thriving at the high school, something about the way we try and teach them isn't a good fit for them; maybe they need a smaller group with a different kind of approach."

The program would not require additional staffing either,

he said, only the reorganizing of existing staff members — two teachers and a part-time nurse.

Administration is working alongside the Department of Human Services to provide counseling and Kent County Mental Health to provide psychologists.

Patenaude explained that the committee and the superintendent hope to have the building open by the beginning of school in September.

"For me, it's about making something for kids who are not thriving at our high school," Patenaude reiterated. "It's our responsibility to do something alternative for them. So this program could be a Godsend for some of them."