Alternative school utilizes EmpowerU to help students make **meaningful progress in place of punitive discipline.**

SITUATION

Alternative learning programs have often relied on punitive discipline, including suspension, detention and alternative school stays. While consequences are sometimes necessary, punitive out-of-school consequences often perpetuate the cycle. Students continue to get in trouble over and over again because their needs are not met.

Many students internalize the message they are a "bad kid" and are not supported in recognizing their strengths. With only one district mental health coordinator, Fairfield City Schools searched for an improved and turnkey way to support these students.

PARTNERSHIP

Fairfield City Schools', Emily Herring, is an innovator who was looking to **propel student transformation** in her ALC. As the only mental health coordinator in her large district in Alabama, she saw a way for EmpowerU to build support capacity and effectively serve the students of Fairfield City Schools, specifically in the alternative program.

Now, **every student completes EmpowerU** during their stay in alternative school as a way to build resilience as a **pathway back to their home campus.** They utilize the 6-8 week course for students with a shorter stay, and EmpowerU's semester-course for those with a longer stay.

EmpowerU helps students realize that things ARE in their control. It provides the learning that students need to make sure they are able to handle things that come there way, and meets their needs to help them **grow the skills and the tools they need to return to school.**

Emily has successfully helped prepare students for the challenges that they'll face. "The reality is when students return to school there will be things and people that frustrate them - but armed with the skills and tools they need to come back. It changes everything."

> *"When we can meet their needs in that way to help them learn what they can control, we are restoring and incorporating them back into our school district in a way where they feel more confident and able to handle the problems that do arise."*
>
> **EMILY HERRING, MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR**

empowerU

Case Study:
Fairfield City Schools

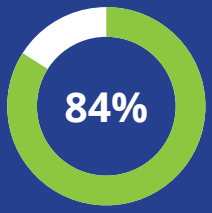
RESULTS

EmpowerU was able to help the Fairfield City Schools teams **expand capacity to serve students** in the ALC - helping to restore their confidence and improve their personal and academic success. With over 60 students served today, the outcomes are compelling.

Students feel so connected to their EmpowerU coaches. Most of these students struggle to see the positive attributes they possess. The EmpowerU coaches are **a trusted adult in their corner** to build them up and encourage them in their growth - which helps students be able to identify their own strengths and build an inner confidence.

Students reference the strategies they learn in EmpowerU to help them navigate back to a place of calm when they feel frustrated. These skills have helped students transition back into their home school within the district with the **confidence to face difficult situations** and overcome obstacles as they arise.

STUDENT OUTCOMES



of students made significant progress on their set goals

of students rated the course as helpful

of students rated their EmpowerU coach as a key factor of their success

TESTIMONIALS

"I know other kids need this. We all need this. We come to school every day but we never get a place to talk about life and all the things we're going through. EmpowerU is so important for us."

FAIRFIELD CITY SCHOOL ALC STUDENT

"To find ways that we can put restorative practices into our ALCs is crucial for the success of our kids and our school district. EmpowerU is such a great example of what it means to restore students to help decrease discipline referrals, and restore our schools and communities."

EMILY HERRING, MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR FAIRFIELD CITY SCHOOLS