

TULARE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS' PLAN FOR SERVING EXPELLED STUDENTS

Triennial Update
June 2012

In order to meet the needs of their expelled students, the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools and the Tulare County School Districts have collaborated to evaluate the status of educational alternative placements, examine best practices, and consider remediating educational gaps. This revision of the plan addresses strategies for minimizing the number of suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts while also diverting students with serious attendance and behavioral problems from the juvenile justice system..

Under the structure of the 2009 Triennial Plan, districts have aggressively adopted effective proactive approaches to minimize absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion, with some districts utilizing school-wide programs to develop a positive school culture while enhancing opportunities for social and academic success while other districts have undertaken significant programming and staffing to meet the desired results. Data tracking effectiveness of interventions indicate positive outcomes in reduced suspensions and expulsions. Demographically, those students involved in interventions at several larger unified districts have reflected a disproportionate number of minority students; however, all districts reported that their expulsion demographics have closely reflected their high school populations.

Through the Educational Options Coalition that is coordinated by Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE), alternative education administrators have met during the last three years to discuss district/site practices regarding career training, truancy intervention, effective curricular intervention, innovative charter Community Day School models, and mental health services for diagnosed students. The interface between these concerned parties regarding current issues has led to collaborative solutions. To better meet regional concerns, the Coalition will serve as the clearing house for effective professional training and intervention programs being implemented, host professional development, coordinate establishing placement committees, and facilitate smaller districts in developing customized placement options.

The Tulare County Superintendent of Schools and the Governing Boards of the School Districts within Tulare County intend to meet the educational needs of all expelled students by providing alternative educational services as described below:

1. Plan for providing alternatives to students prior to expulsions:

In proactive efforts to prevent expulsions, districts have heavily supplemented their academic programs with before/lunch/after-school tutorials, enrichment opportunities through reading labs, academic academies, on-line classes, summer and intercession school, CAHSEE boot camp, and expanded vocational education/ROP courses. Additional student services are included to support the social development of their students, providing county-wide character education through *Character Counts!*, building anti-bullying skills, developing gang prevention and drug awareness, and guiding students to positive educational choices. TCOE assists by offering other skill-building programs Friday Night Live, leadership courses such as Choices' Reconnecting Youth, Coping and Support Training (CAST), and After-School Programs, plus a variety of enrichment academic competitions (prose and poetry, academic decathlons, and Mock Trial.)

The utilization of specialized counseling has been identified by districts as an effective intervention; individual and group counseling administered by psychologists, interns, site counselors and deans, Mental Health agencies, clinical social workers, gang interventionists, prevention specialists, and behavioral specialists provides valuable student support. Similarly, districts have also contracted services to place School Resource Officers, Neighborhood Youth Counselors, Probation Officers, and police officers on campuses for direct interaction with at-risk students.

Resources have also been directed to providing associated family services to enable parents to more fully participate in supporting their student's success at school. Parenting workshops, support groups, and classes, particularly Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), ESL classes, and after-school programs such as Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) are intended to strengthen parenting skills and facilitate access to school support.

To support truancy prevention most districts have formed Student Attendance Review Boards (SARB) to confront attendance problems. Saturday School, peer review boards, conflict mediation training, and use of attendance/Student Resource officers/community liaisons all focus on diffusing truancy. One district is undertaking a series of steps to increase district-wide attendance which that administration correlates with higher academic achievement.

For students not responding to additional services, they may be offered counseling, academic intervention, transfer to another school or program within the district, or placement in another school district with the mutual consent of both districts and the approval of the parent. At the high school

level, students may be transferred involuntarily to the continuation school for one year.

2. Evaluation of gaps in educational services identified in the 2009 Plan:

- A. *There continues to be a need for alternative placement for elementary students who are expelled and who vary in age, grade level, and severity of offense.*

Although smaller districts have worked cooperatively to place expelled students in neighboring Community Day Schools, the limitations for determining appropriate placement of older elementary mandatory expulsions continue.

- B. *Alternative educational placements for Community Day School failures, deemed to have failed meeting the terms and conditions of their rehabilitation plans at their review hearings or who pose a danger to other district pupils as determined by their governing board, who have committed another expellable, offense have limited placement alternatives.*

Districts have extended additional supports to CDS students through their rehabilitation plans, behavior contracts, and input provided at review hearings. Stipulation in the 2009 plan that county-operated Community Schools would consider conditional enrollment under a Memorandum of Understanding has offered more flexibility in placing CDS failures; this gap has been eliminated.

- C. *Providing adequate transition support for returning students who have cleared their expulsions and been placed at comprehensive school sites is an on-going concern.*

Students with cleared expulsions have not generally succeeded on comprehensive sites despite specific transitional programs that have been attempted. This gap continues to exist.

2. Plan for providing services to students after expulsion:

The following services shall be available to students following an expulsion. The determination of which service(s) shall be based on the reason for the expulsion and individual needs of the student.

- A. The following services are available to students who are expelled for less serious offenses:

1. Suspended Expulsion¹

Enforcement of the student's expulsion is suspended, and the student is allowed to remain in the comprehensive school or another alternative program in the district on a behavior contract. While a student is on a suspended expulsion, the district may require participation in available services such as counseling, drug rehabilitation, gang counseling, tutoring, after school or weekend guided study program, or parent counseling.

2. Enrollment in another district

Attendance in another district under a behavior contract is determined by the receiving school district (EC 48915.1(d)(3)).

3. Independent Study Program²

Districts may provide this educational option to students if their parents consent to the placement. An individual learning plan can be designed to meet the particular academic needs of each student so that educational progress can be maximized in this setting.

4. Placement in a district-operated Community Day School or a Community Day School Program operated by another district

The development of consortiums is encouraged in order to accommodate expelled students from smaller districts. Currently Community Day Schools are operated by these districts: Burton, Cutler-Orosi, Earlimart, Exeter, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare City, Tulare Union, Strathmore, Visalia, and Woodlake.

5. Conditional placement in the Tulare County Community School Program of Community Day School failures who have committed another expellable offense

¹ It is important for the written terms of the suspended expulsion order to include a referral to either the District Community Day School Program or the TCOE Community School Program so that there will be a placement if the expulsion order is reinstated.

² Please note the Education Code on Independent Study states that a parent who places his/her student in independent study can request classroom instruction at any time and must be notified of his/her right to do so (EC51747(c) (7)).

Community Day School failures that commit another expellable offense and do not qualify for the county-operated Community School's Type C funding would be considered for enrollment on a case by case basis provided that the district agrees to pay the difference between the district revenue limit and the Community School's Type C funding. A Memo of Understanding regarding funding would be developed along with a behavior contract to delineate the transition procedure between district and Community School programs.

6. Placement in a charter or private school

Charter schools have been established to utilize different modes of instructional service such as home schooling, independent study, and internet-based instruction. Alpaugh Achievement Academy Charter School (K – 12), Connections Academy (K – 12), Crescent Valley Public Charter (9 -12), West Park Academy (K – 12), Crossroads (K – 12), Crescent View Charter High School (9 – 12), California Virtual Academies (K – 12), Dunlap Leadership Academy (9 – 12), John Muir Charter (CSET), and Eleanor Roosevelt (K – 12) all provide distinct options for expelled students in Tulare County.

B. For students who are expelled based on Education Code 48915(a) or (c), the following programs are available:

1. Placement in a district-operated Community Day School or a Community Day School Program operated by another district.
2. Placement in the Tulare County Community School Program (48915(c) only).
3. Placement in juvenile court school or camp (EC 48915.2).
4. Independent Study Program².
5. Placement in a charter or private school.

3. Identifying gaps in educational services available to expelled students.

- A. Determining alternative placements for expelled elementary students of varying grade levels and severity of offense remains challenging.

The strategy for addressing this gap:

Each district will review the available educational options to best provide a customized and appropriate program to meet the needs of its expelled students. Facilitation of placement between districts will be performed by the County Office of Education to support districts that are geographically isolated. For a mandatory expulsion student 48915(c) that is of elementary age, the district can best determine the program that would appropriately meet the needs of that individual student.

- B. Increasing support to transitioning students who have cleared their expulsions and have been placed on comprehensive school sites is needed.

The strategy for addressing this gap:

Examination of current practices with short-term self-contained programs will be evaluated in terms of reintegration effectiveness. Supportive services to identify student curricular needs and interests and to achieve appropriate class placement will be coordinated by referring and receiving staff. Ongoing mentoring and counseling plus intervention by the referring site through notice of reinstated student suspension will stabilize student progress

- C. The alternative placements will deliver services and provide opportunities to expelled students to support academic and social success, extended job training, and programming towards graduation.

Strategy for addressing this gap:

Those students identified through their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) as needing specific mental health services will be supported in accessing those services and be closely monitored. In providing appropriate educational services, possible modification of Career Technical Education (CTE) courses to provide mentorships and internships and online coursework would benefit these students in finding a vocational niche. The Educational Options Coalition would facilitate the cooperative development of such vocational options.