



## **Kern County Plan for Providing Educational Services to Expelled Students**

**July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027**

**Approved by the  
Kern County Board of Education  
June 6, 2024**

**John G. Mendiburu, Ed.D.  
Kern County Superintendent of Schools**

**Plan for Providing Educational Services to Expelled Students  
between the Kern County Superintendent of Schools  
and the following Kern County School Districts**

Arvin Union	Maricopa Unified
Bakersfield City	McFarland Unified
Beardsley	McKittrick
Blake	Midway
Buttonwillow Union	Mojave Unified
Caliente Union	Muroc Joint Unified
Delano Joint Union	Norris
Delano Union Elementary	Panama-Buena Vista
Di Giorgio	Pond
Edison	Richland
El Tejon Unified	Rio Bravo-Greeley Union
Elk Hills	Rosedale Union
Fairfax	Semitropic
Fruitvale	Sierra Sands
General Shafter	Southern Kern
Greenfield Union	South Fork Union
Kern High	Standard
Kernville Union	Taft City
Lakeside Union	Taft Union
Lamont	Tehachapi
Linns Valley-Poso Flat Union	Vineland
Lost Hills Union	Wasco Joint Union
Maple	Wasco Union

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## Overview

The Kern County Superintendent of Schools, in conjunction with school districts in Kern County, developed the Countywide Plan for Providing Educational Services to Expelled Students pursuant to Education Code 48926. The plan was adopted by the governing board of each school district and the County Board of Education.

The plan enumerates existing educational alternatives for expelled students, identifies gaps in educational services to expelled students, and strategies for filling those gaps. The plan also identifies alternative placements for students who are expelled and placed in district Community Day School programs, but who fail to meet the terms and conditions of their rehabilitation plan or who pose a danger to other district students, as determined by the governing board.

Pursuant to Education Code 48926, each county superintendent of schools, in conjunction with the superintendents of the local school districts, shall submit a triennial update to the plan to the Superintendent of Public Instruction by June 30th. Collaborating on the triennial update provides all districts and the county office an opportunity to review the current status of its educational offerings for this targeted population.

Kern County school district governing boards will refer each expelled student to an appropriate educational placement for the period of expulsion. The educational placement will be determined on an individual basis by the school district's governing board based on the seriousness of the offense, the available educational alternatives, the individual needs of students, and any other related factors.

County level alternatives for expelled students remain available to all expelled students unless such placement is determined not to be the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment for a student with disabilities. District-level alternatives for expelled students, if district-level alternatives exist, will vary from one district to the next, depending on the characteristics of that district.

The approval of the Kern County Board of Education and submission of the plan to the Superintendent of Public Instruction prior to June 30, 2024, shall satisfy requirements associated with the Countywide Plan for Providing Educational Services to Expelled Students. In addition, this plan shall be posted on the Kern County Superintendent of Schools website ([www.kern.org](http://www.kern.org)) and distributed to every district superintendent in Kern County prior to the 2024-2025 school year.

## **Current Educational Alternatives Available for Expelled Students and Strategies for Improvement During the Next Three Years**

### District Level Educational Alternatives

The governing board of each school district will determine which educational alternatives are appropriate and available. Educational alternatives offered at the district level include the following:

- Suspension of expulsion
- Referral to county Community School
- Expulsion held in abeyance with Independent Study
- District Continuation or Opportunity Schools
- District Independent Study program
- Alternative to expulsion classroom
- District operated Community Day School
- Formal Restorative Justice conference
- Parental request to transfer schools
- Parental request to attend a charter school

### County Level Educational Alternatives

The mission of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Alternative Education program is to meet the unique educational, social, and emotional needs of our diverse student population in a safe and nurturing environment to encourage students to develop an enthusiasm for lifelong learning and pursue post-high school opportunities. Alternative Education is a student-centered option that supports and embraces the varying needs of students by providing an alternative method of delivering instruction and monitoring academic success. Rigorous curricula, intervention programs, career exploration, industry recognized certifications, and safe environments are characteristics of the Alternative Education program. Collaboration with partner agencies and school districts is integral to providing available resources to the students of Kern County.

Kern County Superintendent of Schools provides educational alternatives to expelled students through its Community School. Kern County students who have been expelled from district programs may be referred to the county operated Community School when the district board of education determines this to be the most appropriate placement. In order to refer a student to the county operated Community School program, a referral must be completed by the student's referring school district or agency. The most current Community School Referral can be found at <https://kern.org/alted/documents/>. Mandatory information on the referral or to accompany the referral includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Reason for expulsion with relevant paperwork, including any stipulated expulsion or suspended enforcement agreements
- Attendance records from the current school year and previous school year
- Discipline records from the current school year and previous school year
- Information regarding the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan with relevant paperwork including, but not limited to, the current IEP or Section 504 plan, all assessment reports for assessments conducted over the past three years, progress reports for the past year, and all manifestation determination documentation related to the incident that is resulting in the referral to the county operated Community School program.
- The date on which the student will be eligible to return to the district of residence.

Referring districts are responsible for completing all sections of the Community School Referral, including parent/guardian and student signatures. Incomplete referrals will not be accepted.

#### County Level Educational Alternatives for Students with Disabilities

The spectrum of needs of students with disabilities are vast. To address this issue, students with an IEP that are referred to the county operated Community School program go through a thorough review to ensure that placement in the program is the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment and will meet the unique identified needs of each student. The review process also ensures that all procedural safeguards have been met regarding the discipline of students with disabilities including, but not limited to, a procedurally and substantively appropriate manifestation determination meeting.

Students with disabilities may be referred to the county operated Community School program when the referring district or agency has complied with all legal requirements regarding the education of students with disabilities. This includes meeting all procedural timelines regarding annual and triennial reviews and assessments.

An IEP meeting is held within the first 30 days of enrollment in the county operated Community School program to which a representative from the referring district can be in attendance. In most cases, the Community School is able to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In those rare cases in which the IEP team determines that the student's needs would best be met in another placement, the IEP team will collaborate with the referring district to identify such placement to ensure a meaningful opportunity to progress in the student's IEP goals as well as access and progress in the general education curriculum, as appropriate. The county operated Community School program employs a Special Education Director to oversee and monitor the daily operations of Special Education supports and services to ensure each student's IEP needs continue to be met during their transition to and from the county operated Community School programs.

The county operated Community School may not be the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment for some students with disabilities, even if they are expelled from their district. Some students may continue to require intensive services as provided by their district of residence due to the severity of their disability. In such cases, it is the programmatic and fiscal responsibility of the district of residence to continue to provide the intensive services and support. If placement is appropriate for the student with disabilities, but additional services and support, including transportation, are needed for student success, it will be the responsibility of the district of special education accountability.

#### County Operated Community Schools

County level educational alternatives are available at the following Community School sites:

##### **Community Learning Center – CLC Tech**

300 E. Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93305  
Phone: (661) 852-5600  
Fax: (661) 852-5696

##### **Lake Isabella Community School**

6504 Lake Isabella Boulevard  
Lake Isabella, CA 93240  
Phone: (661) 824-3111  
Fax: (661) 546-8789

##### **Community Learning Center - CLC**

330 E. Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93305

##### **North Kern Community School**

1915 Cecil Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93215

Phone: (661) 852-5500  
 Fax: (661) 324-0922

**East Kern Community School**

15926 K Street  
 Mojave, CA 93501  
 Phone: (661) 824-3111  
 Fax: (661) 546-8789

Phone: (661) 721-2130  
 Fax: (661) 721-8618

**West Kern Community School**

301 North Street  
 Taft, CA 93268  
 Phone: (661) 763-3612  
 Fax: (661) 763-3648

District Reported Best Practices of Behavioral Intervention Approaches and Options Used to Minimize the Number of Suspensions Leading to Expulsion, Expulsion Orders, and Support for Students Returning from Expulsion

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Restorative practices
- Alternatives to suspension
- Independent Studies program
- Check In Check Out
- Parent partnerships
- Parent volunteers
- Behavior Specialist
- Intervention Specialist
- School Social Worker
- In School Intervention
- Student Study Teams
- Trauma informed classrooms
- Professional development
- Social skills groups
- Skill based instruction
- Behavior Intervention/Support Plans
- Student incentives
- Schoolwide engagement activities
- Mentoring services
- Counseling services
- Relationship building
- Universal screening of students' social emotional health
- Recognition awards
- Field trip rewards
- Community support
- Substance abuse counseling
- Boys to Men program
- Additional staffing
- Student Affairs Specialist
- Behavior contracts
- Success plans

For students with an IEP or 504 plan, the following can be implemented in addition to the behavior interventions listed above:

- Completion of a Functional Behavior Analysis and implementation of Behavior Intervention Plans
- Employ Behavior Staff to support behavior interventions
- Make appropriate referrals to Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS)

#### How Best Practices Relate to Disproportionate Minority Representation in Expulsion Data

Kern County enrollment data during the 2022-23 school year as reported by the California Department of Education indicates students are 68.0% Hispanic, 19.5% White, and 5.1% African American. Best practices include evidence-based intervention strategies and, through the divisions of Instructional Support and School Wellness, training is provided geared toward educating instructional staff on cultural and socio-economic factors that impact minority students. Districts provide their boards with an analysis of disaggregated data to be reviewed on an annual basis and all possible options are explored for a student prior to recommending expulsion.

#### **Gaps in Educational Services**

##### Service Gaps Identified in the 2021-2024 Plan

###### 1. Geographic Area, District Size, and Rural Challenges

Kern County encompasses nearly 8,200 square miles. The average district enrollment in Kern County is approximately one third the state average. The large geographic area, smaller district size, and rural characteristics of the county continue to make it operationally and financially challenging to offer the range of alternatives often found in larger urban districts. The strategy for addressing this problem is to maintain a county operated Community School program that is committed to providing educational services to all 46 school districts in the county. Kern County Superintendent of Schools will continue to collaborate with referring districts to best determine how to serve all students in need of a county operated Community School setting.

###### 2. Transportation

County operated Community School programs do not receive funding for transportation. Geographic obstacles continue to be a concern for referring districts and the county operated Community School program. Strategies for addressing this problem continue to include school sites strategically located around the county to serve the highest number of students possible. Kern County Superintendent of Schools operates Community School sites in Bakersfield, Delano, Lake Isabella, Mojave, and Taft. When families communicate they are experiencing a short-term transportation barrier, the county operated Community School program will continue to temporarily provide public transportation passes.

###### 3. Lack of Social Emotional Education

The Alternative Education program has made the social emotional well being of students a priority. Staff have been trained in Trauma Informed Skills for Educators (TISE) and continue to receive training related to trauma informed practices. Training has also been provided in the areas of Restorative Justice Practices and de-escalation techniques. The program employs a MTSS Program Specialist to lead MTSS efforts, which includes school site MTSS leadership teams. The program employs six School Social Workers, four of which support county operated Community Schools, and contracts yearly for additional support through AmeriCorps mentors. For the past several years, Alternative Education has used RULER as its social emotional curriculum. On the 2023 LCAP survey,

83.3% of Community School students agreed with the statement, “The social emotional skills that I’m learning at school have been helpful,” with 10.6% of students disagreeing and 6.1% of students being undecided.

### Identified Gaps in Educational Services to Expelled Students and Strategies for Supporting Gaps in the 2024-2027 Plan

#### 1. Geographic Area, District Size, and Rural Challenges

Due to the size of Kern County, the number of small districts, and the rural characteristics of the county, it is challenging to offer educational alternatives that are compatible for all districts. Small school districts often lack the funding and space to operate their own community day programs and, therefore, must rely on the county operated Community School program.

Strategies for supporting this gap:

- Utilizing charter schools
- Smaller districts to form collaborative for alternative educational services

#### 2. Transportation

Given the absence of transportation funding and the size of the county, it is not feasible for the county operated Community School program to provide transportation for students to and from school. The county operated Community School program provides students with public transportation passes when a parent/guardian expresses a need.

Strategies for supporting this gap:

- Utilizing charter schools
- Providing public transportation passes

### **Alternative Placements for Students Who Fail to Meet the Terms of Rehabilitation Plan in District Community Day School Placements**

The Community School program operated by Kern County Superintendent of Schools maintains a standing policy of accepting all students who have been expelled from their district of residence unless such placement is determined not to be the most appropriate placement for a student with a disability. If an initial placement is made to a district operated community day school and the student commits an expulsion offense or otherwise fails to meet the terms of the rehabilitation plan or program, the school district board of education will review the plan of rehabilitation that was established at the time of expulsion and make any necessary adjustments. If there is no educational alternative in the school district, the student may be referred to the county operated Community School program.

### **Coordinated Efforts Between School Districts and Kern County Superintendent of Schools**

In Kern County, discussions between district and county office staff related to educational services for expelled students happen on an ongoing basis for the entire three-year period between triennial updates of this plan. The topics of these discussions include district and county offerings, progress in addressing the needs of students, and ongoing or emerging gaps in services. The topics of these discussions have been integrated into the structure of the current revision of the Countywide Plan for Providing Educational Services to Expelled Students. On February 7, 2024, the triennial update process was reviewed with the superintendents of Kern County districts at the monthly Superintendent’s Meeting. Superintendents were also provided a survey designed for their input on the key components required in the plan. On February 16, 2024, an optional meeting was offered for superintendents/designees to review information gathered from the survey. The updated plan was shared with superintendents of Kern County districts. The language contained in the 2024-2027 triennial update represents the coordinated effort of the county superintendent, in conjunction with the



superintendents of the school districts in Kern County. This document was taken to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools on June 6, 2024, for approval.