

Kern County
Superintendent of Schools
Office of Mary C. Barlow ...advocates for children

**KERN COUNTY PLAN
for
PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
to
EXPELLED YOUTH**

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024

**APPROVED BY THE
KERN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

May 11, 2021

**Mary C. Barlow
Kern County Superintendent of Schools**

Office of Mary C. Barlow

Kern County Superintendent of Schools

'Advocates for Children'

2021-2024

**Countywide Plan for Provision of Educational
Services to Expelled Students**

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

Contact

Carlos Rojas, Administrator, Alternative Education

carojas@kern.org

(661) 636-4714

Overview

The Kern County Superintendent of Schools, in conjunction with school districts in Kern County developed the Countywide Plan for Provision of 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. Finally, the plan also addresses the plan to serve expelled youth both during and post COVID-19.

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 very 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:

- 1) The seriousness of the offense
- 2) The available educational alternatives
- 3) The individual needs of the student
- 4) Other related factors.

County level alternatives for expelled students will 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 special education student. 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, 2021 shall satisfy requirements associated with the "Countywide Plan for Provision of Educational

Services to Expelled Students.” In addition, this plan shall be posted on the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office website (www.kern.org) and distributed to every district superintendent in Kern County prior to the 2021-2022 school year.

I. CURRENT EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE FOR EXPELLED STUDENTS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT DURING THE NEXT THREE YEARS

A. CURRENT 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:

- Expulsion, suspended order, with placement on the same school campus and/or alternative education program within the district [E.C. 48917 (a)].
- Expulsion, suspended order, with placement on a different school campus within the district [E.C. 48917 (a)].
- Expulsion, suspended order, with voluntary enrollment in District Independent Study, if the parent and student consent (Classroom instruction must be available upon parent or student request).
- Expulsion with referral to a District Community Day School, if available [E.C. 48660; E.C. 48915.01].
- Expulsion with subsequent transfer to another district. [E.C. 48915.1]
- Expulsion with subsequent transfer to a charter or private school.
- Expulsion with referral to the Kern County Community School [E.C. 1981].
- Involuntary transfers to another school site within the district or alternative education program within the district
- Online distance learning with parental agreement

County Level Educational Alternatives for Expelled Students - (KCSOS)

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 diverse needs of students by providing an alternative method of delivering instruction and monitoring academic success. Rigorous curricula, intervention programs, extended learning opportunities, career exploration and industry recognized certifications, and safe environments are characteristics of the Kern County Alternative Education program. Collaboration with partner agencies and school districts is integral to providing available resources to the students of Kern County.

The Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office 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. The county operated Community School may not be the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment for some special education pupils, even if they are expelled from their district. Some pupils 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.

The Kern County Superintendent of Schools WASC Accredited Alternative Education program offers the following instructional options for expelled youth. Parents indicate their choice of instructional option by completing the Method of Instruction form at the time of enrollment.

- Classroom instruction is scheduled Monday-Friday with 270 instructional minutes per day. Credentialed teachers provide direct instruction in all content areas.
- Independent Study instruction is scheduled with 270 instructional minutes per week. Credentialed teachers provide small group direct instruction in English Language Arts and Math. Individual support is provided in all other content areas via office hours, online learning management systems, or telephone. Students are required to attend school a minimum of 4.5 hours per week and be responsible for 30 hours of educational product per week.
- Online learning through the implementation of Odysseyware and/or Edmentum is designed to meet the unique individual needs of students who may benefit from this instructional method.

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

Community Learning Center-34th 222 34th St.
Bakersfield, CA 93301
PH: (661) 852-5500 FAX: (661) 324-0922

Community Learning Center, Elementary 222 34th St.
Bakersfield, CA 93301
PH: (661) 852-5530 FAX: (661) 324-0922

Community Learning Center-Tech 300 E. Truxtun Ave., Suite A
Bakersfield, CA 93305

PH: (661) 852-5600 FAX: (661) 852-5696

East Kern Community School 3200 Pat Avenue
Mojave, CA 93501
PH: (661) 824-3111 FAX: (661) 824-3122

Lake Isabella Community School 6504 Lake Isabella Blvd.
P.O. Box 3431
Lake Isabella, CA 93240
PH: (760) 379-1020 FAX: (760) 379-1021

North Kern Community School 1915 Cecil Ave.
Delano, CA 93215
PH: (661) 721-2130 FAX: (661) 721-8618

West Kern Community School 301 North St.
Taft, CA 93268
PH: (661) 763-3612 FAX: (661) 763-3648

B. BEST PRACTICES OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION APPROACHES AND OPTIONS USED TO MINIMIZE THE NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS LEADING TO EXPULSION, EXPULSION ORDERS, AND SUPPORT FOR PUPILS RETURNING FROM EXPULSION

- Establish multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to address academic, behavioral and social-emotional issues which may lead to expellable offenses
- Implement district wide PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports)
- Development of pre-expulsion Student Study Teams
- Utilization of In-School Suspension
- Alternative to Suspension Program
- Employ school district Social Worker, Masters of Social Work (MSW) Interns, AmeriCorps Mentors, School Psychologist, and School Counselor on campus
- Provide parent/guardians and students with a comprehensive orientation upon initial enrollment, which outlines program policies, procedures, and behavioral expectations.
- Implement Parent & Family Centers to enhance efforts around family and community engagement
- Encourage strong collaboration between site administration, counselors, and community agencies to address the specific needs identified to be factors contributing to the student's behavioral issues
- Employ school district Resource Officers on campus
- Employ a Student Affairs Specialist – SAS Program
- Identify and train Safe School Ambassadors
- Increase Mental Health services to students on campus

- Employ Behavior Intervention Specialists on campus
- Utilize a progressive discipline system which includes counseling, detention at lunch and after school, behavior contracts, in-house suspensions, and Saturday school
- Increase on-site counseling at elementary and middle schools
- Increase student referrals to counseling services
- Development and implementation of social/emotional learning curriculum
- Increase parent involvement in Parent Project
- Utilize Project Alert on campus
- Increase TUPE Intervention efforts on campus
- Student participation in Social Skills group
- Implement Restorative Practices
- Provide Culture of Response (COR) training for staff
- Utilize weekly, monthly, and quarterly assemblies for rewarding positive behavior
- Use of student “reflection sheets” or “think sheets” as an intervention
- Ensure Aggression Replacement Training is offered on campus
- Consistently utilize Academic Review Board hearings
- Utilize Student/Parent conferences
- Monitor student progress with an academic advisor
- Utilize the Coordination of Services Team (COST)
- Employ a Youth Services Supervisor to coordinate interventions
- Train staff to provide conflict mediation
- Provide Drug and Grief Counseling with community counselor
- Train students to provide peer mediation
- Provide Forward Thinking workshops to teaching staff
- Utilize a Pre-expulsion panel
- Invest in AmeriCorps workers on campus to support student interventions
- Develop District Opportunity class
- Expel students only as a last resort
- Positivity Project
- Advisory Classes
- Implementation of School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to collect, summarize, and use student behavioral data for decision making

And for students with an IEP/504 plan, implementing the following when appropriate:

- Completion of a Functional Behavior Analysis and implementation of Behavior Intervention Plans
- Employ Behavior Aides to support behavior interventions
- Make appropriate referrals to ISES – Intensive Emotional and Emotional Services

C. HOW BEST PRACTICES RELATE TO DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN EXPULSION DATA

Kern County student enrollment as reported by the CDE in 2018 - 2019, indicates 65% Hispanic, 23% White, and 6% African American. The best practices include evidence-based intervention strategies, and through School Community Partnerships, training is provided geared toward educating the instructional staff on cultural and socio-economic factors that impact the minority pupils. Districts provide their boards with an analysis of disaggregated data to be reviewed on an annual basis and every possible option is explored for a student prior to recommending expulsion.

II. SERVICE GAPS IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. SERVICE GAPS IDENTIFIED IN THE 2018 PLAN

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 difficult to offer the range of alternatives often found in the larger urban districts. The strategy for addressing this problem is to maintain a county community school program that is committed to providing educational services to all 47 school districts in the county and one that employs a variety of instructional strategies, including those that are capable of overcoming obstacles associated with providing educational services to rural, often isolated, settings. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office will continue to work with referring districts to explore the need to increase services by establishing smaller satellite sites in the more rural areas of the county where and when feasible. Online learning opportunities are also being explored as means to provide services to students in geographically inaccessible areas when appropriate for the student and agreed on by the parent/guardian.

Transportation – The absence of transportation funding, and the geographic obstacles and challenges, continue to be an issue for referring districts and the county community schools. Strategies for addressing this problem continue to include ensuring that the community school program is regionalized geographically to serve the greatest number of students countywide. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools Alternative Education program accomplishes this through maintaining community school sites in Delano, Taft, Lake Isabella, and Mojave in addition to two sites in Bakersfield. When families communicate that they are experiencing a short-term transportation barrier, the community school program will continue to temporarily provide bus passes when feasible. The addition of online learning opportunities during the term of the last countywide plan has assisted in addressing this issue and is a strategy for continuing to address it.

Lack of Curricular Cohesion Between District and County Programs – Some districts have expressed the concern that although the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Alternative Education program and methods of instruction enable each student to continue academic work leading to the completion of a regular high school program, there is a lack of UC a-g approved courses offered while students are enrolled in a community school to keep them UC eligible. In addition, the graduation requirements between the county operated programs and a district may vary. The Kern County Superintendent of School works diligently to establish open lines of communication and collaboration with referring school districts to address this issue and to ensure the needs of each student are met while enrolled in the county program. For example, the Math curriculum was recently selected and designed to mirror the one being used by the districts from which many students are referred to the county. Furthermore, the county operated Community School program implemented the CANVAS Learning Management System to align with many of the local school districts and thereby providing a cohesive learning environment as students transfer to and from the county Community School. In addition, the implementation of the Kern Integrated Data System (KiDS), allows for real-time sharing of student outcome data to assist all stakeholders in making informed decisions about what is best for students.

Special Education Services are Limited – The spectrum of needs of students with disabilities are vast. Some school districts have communicated that the ability of the county operated community school to meet the IEP needs for every student is inconsistent. To address this issue, students with an IEP that are referred to the county go through a thorough review to ensure that placement in the community school is the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment and will meet the unique needs of that student. An IEP meeting is held within the first 30 days of enrollment to which a representative from the referring district is invited. In most cases, the county is able to meet the needs of a student with an IEP. In those rare cases in which the IEP team determines that the students' needs would best be met in another placement, the IEP team collaborates 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 Community School employs a Special Education Principal to oversee and monitor the daily operations of the Special Education program to ensure student's IEP needs continue to be met during their transition to and from the county operated programs.

B. SERVICE GAPS IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO EXPELLED STUDENTS AND STRATEGIES FOR FILLING GAPS IN THE 2021 PLAN

Geographic Area, District Size, and Rural Challenges – Geographic area, district

size, and rural challenges continue to be a challenge. 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 difficult to offer the range of alternatives often found in the larger urban districts. However, the local districts and the County Office of Education continue to collaborate to determine how to best fill this gap.

Strategies for filling this gap:

- Utilizing nearby charter schools
- Online distance learning
- Increase educational options to include daily programs at community schools in rural areas

Transportation – The absence of transportation funding, and the geographic obstacles and challenges, continue to be an issue for referring districts and the county community schools.

Strategies for filling this gap:

- Utilizing nearby charter schools when possible
- Online distance learning
- Pre-expulsion student supports including
 - MTSS
 - Student mentors
- West Kern Community School and Lake Isabella Community School now offer daily online instruction on campus for districts in rural communities as well as the traditional Independent Study program.

Lack of Social/Emotional Education – More emphasis on the social and emotional development of our students is needed especially in light of the impact of COVID-19 on students and their families.

Strategies for filling this gap:

- Identify and implement research based SEL curriculum to meet student needs
- Incorporate SEL into the daily instructional schedule
- Increase counselor support

- Partner with AmeriCorps Mentors
- Trauma Informed Care

III. ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS FOR PUPILS WHO FAIL TO MEET THE TERMS OF REHABILITATION PLAN IN DISTRICT COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

The Community School program operated by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office 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 special education student. 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 shall review the plan of rehabilitation that was established at the time of expulsion and make the adjustments necessary. If there is no educational alternative in the school district, the pupil may be referred to the county community school program. When appropriate and with student and parent consent, students between the ages of 16-18 who fail the terms of the district operated community day school may be referred to character building academy's such as Grizzly Youth Academy.

IV. SERVICES PROVIDED TO EXPELLED YOUTH DURING AND POST COVID-19

County operated Community School programs resumed in-person instruction for all students on February 9, 2021. Expelled youth that are referred to the county Community School have the option of attending school daily, enrolling voluntarily in an Independent Study program, or participating in distance learning. In the event that in-person instruction is no longer a safe option, or parents elect to not participate in person, distance learning will be offered as well. Communication with the local school districts indicates that they will also continue to offer distance learning options to expelled youth during the COVID-19 pandemic and when appropriate, will refer to the county Community School.

Many students have experienced some degree of learning loss due to the pandemic and plans are being developed to offer learning loss mitigation opportunities through extended learning opportunities once it is safe to do so. Strategies include but are not limited to, extended school year, robust summer school options, increased instructional minutes, and others.

V. COORDINATED EFFORTS BETWEEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

In Kern County, discussions on this subject between district and county superintendent of schools' staff happen on an ongoing basis for the entire three-year period between triennial updates of this plan. The topics of these discussions include district/county offerings, progress in addressing the needs of these pupils, 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 Provision of Educational Services to Expelled Students. On January 20, 2021, the triennial update process was reviewed with the superintendents of Kern County districts at the monthly Superintendents Meeting. Superintendents were also provided a survey designed for their input on the key components required in the plan. On February 18 and 19, 2021, a meeting was held with superintendents/designees to review information gathered from the survey. On February 24, 2021 the proposed triennial language was presented to the superintendents of Kern County districts at the monthly Administrative Advisory Committee and Superintendents Meeting. Following the presentation and a subsequent discussion, the language contained in this 2021-2024 triennial update represents the coordinated effort of the county superintendent, in conjunction with the superintendents of the school districts in Kern County. Finally, this document was taken to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools on May 11, 2021 for approval.