

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION

Curriculum and Instruction
Branch

Secondary, Postsecondary,
& Adult Leadership Division

Educational Options Office

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Visit the Educational
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Educational Options Schools and Programs

School and program alternatives that provide students with the environment, state standards-aligned curriculum, and support systems needed to ensure that they have the best range of choices to achieve their full academic potential.

California's public education system includes more than 3,000 schools that offer educational options programs serving approximately a half million students per year, including about 114,000 students who participate in independent study and more than 71,000 students in continuation schools. Many California public school students have some involvement with educational options, including up to fifteen percent of high school students. Educational options schools and programs include:

- **Alternative Schools and Programs of Choice**

Provide a variety of voluntary educational options to match different student needs, interests, and learning styles. Foster student engagement by offering a different instructional strategy, philosophy, focus, or organizational structure. *Education Code (EC) Section 58500-58512.*

- **Community Day Schools (CDSs)**

Serve students referred by expulsion, a school attendance review board or probation, and other high-risk youth. CDSs provide challenging academic curriculum, a longer day, and also support socio-emotional development and resiliency. *EC 48660 et seq.*

- **Continuation Education**

Provides a high school option for students aged 16 and older with emphasis on academic achievement plus career or work-study. The Model Continuation High School Program recognizes continuation schools with exceptional performance. *EC 46140, 48200 et. seq., 48400 et. seq., and 51720.*

- **Correctional and Institutional Adult Education**

Provides federally-funded educational programs for students in state hospitals, developmental centers, on parole, or in correctional institutions as required by the Workforce Investment Act, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Section 225 and Section 231.

- **County Community Schools**

Serve students expelled or referred by juvenile court, probation, or a school attendance review board when community day schools may not be appropriate or are unavailable. *EC 1980-1986.*

- **Diploma Plus High Schools**

Serves students fourteen years of age and older who have not reached their potential in a traditional secondary school setting and are at risk of not graduating from high school. Students progress as they demonstrate mastery and competency. Promotion is performance-based using a web-based assessment system aligned to state standards.

**EVERY STUDENT NEEDS ACCESS TO THE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS
THAT ENABLE THE STUDENT TO SUCCEED**

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Educational Options Schools and Programs (continued)

- **Independent Study**

A voluntary alternative instructional strategy that enables students to work independently under the general supervision of a credentialed teacher. Offers flexibility to meet individual student interests, needs, and styles of learning. May include both site-based and non-classroom-based instruction in accordance with *EC 51745-51749.3* and other related sections including 46300(e).

- **Juvenile Court Schools**

Provides alternative education to students who are under the authority of the juvenile court system and are incarcerated in juvenile halls, ranches, and camps. *EC 48645-48645.7*.

- **Magnet Schools and Programs**

Voluntary options that attract students with specialized programs to match student needs and interests, and sometimes to foster needed population balances, as required by law or local governing board decision.

- **Opportunity Education**

Provides an alternative learning environment for students in grades one through twelve that includes specialized curriculum, guidance and counseling, and transition support services to help them overcome barriers to learning. *EC 48460 et. seq.*

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL (ASAM)

Provides a separate accountability system for over 1,000 alternative schools serving high-risk students. *EC 52052(h)*. In the 2005-06 school year, 1,007 schools participated in ASAM, serving more than 322,000 students. Visit the ASAM Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/am>.

BEST PRACTICES PROJECT

The Educational Options Best Practices Demonstration Project is a coordinated effort jointly underway with the Educational Options Office, San Diego County Office of Education, and the El Dorado County Office of Education. Best practices in Court, Community, Community Day Schools, and other alternative education programs throughout California have been identified through peer review. Visit the Web site at <http://www.sdcoe.net/edoptions>.

DROPOUT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A research project investigating the student dropout problem and exploring promising practices related to the prevention, intervention, recovery, and retention of dropouts, as well as the relationship of the dropout issue to closing the achievement gap.

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