

COUNTYWIDE PLAN FOR PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO EXPELLED STUDENTS

2024-2027

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Plan Requirements

California Education Code 48926

California Education Code Section 48926 requires that each County Superintendent of Schools in counties that operate community schools pursuant to Section 1980, in conjunction with Superintendents of the school districts within the county, develop a plan for providing education services to all expelled pupils in that county. The plan shall be adopted by the governing board of each school district within the county and by the County Board of Education.

The plan shall enumerate existing educational alternatives for expelled pupils, identify gaps in education services to expelled pupils and strategies for filling those service gaps. The plan shall also identify alternative placements for pupils 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 pupils, as determined by the governing board.

Each County Superintendent of Schools, in conjunction with the superintendents of the school districts, was required to submit to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the county plan for providing education services to all expelled pupils in the county no later than June 30, 1997, and shall submit a triennial update to the plan to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, including the outcome data pursuant to section 48916.1, on June 30th thereafter. This document is the triennial update for 2024-2027.

California Education Code 48916.1

California Education Code Section 48916.1 states that at the time an expulsion of a pupil is ordered, the governing board of the school district shall ensure that an educational program is provided to the student who is subject to the expulsion order for the period of the expulsion. Educational programs pursuant to this code section may be operated by the school district, the County Superintendent of Schools, or a consortium of districts. This code section further states that if the pupil who is subject to the expulsion order was expelled from any kindergarten or grades 1 to 6, inclusive, the education program may not be combined or merged with educational programs for students in grades 7 to 12. It also delineates the data regarding expulsion to be maintained by school districts.

CHARTER SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING EXPULSION

Charter schools are exempt from Education Code provisions with respect to student discipline and are required to describe their suspension and expulsion procedures in their charter. The charter's procedures may or may not mirror the policies of the charter-authorizing entity. However, once a pupil is expelled, he or she returns to the jurisdiction of the school district that he or she would be eligible to attend prior to enrolling in the charter school. Once a charter school student is expelled, rules of district residency would apply. The district should treat a charter-expelled student the same as a district-expelled student and comply with

Education Code Section 48915.1, which provides that the district of residence holds a hearing to determine whether or not the student poses a continuing danger. If the student is found not to pose a continuing danger the district of residence could allow attendance by the expelled student. Charter schools are required to give 30-day notice to the district of residence for an expulsion of a student it enrolls in the charter.

Current Status

Education programs within Marin County continue to provide opportunities for students who need alternative education programs. Individual school districts offer a broad spectrum of services, and the Marin County Office of Education offers additional options, thus providing a continuum of alternatives to suspended/expelled students. Districts of residence provide a rehabilitation plan for students whose behavior has resulted in expulsion. The plans may involve one or more of the options outlined below. A student who has not been expelled but who needs an educational alternative may also access these programs through a district and/or county referral process.

The district of residence maintains responsibility for their expelled youth. Every Marin County school district governing board 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 offense, available educational alternatives, and other related factors. County-level alternatives for expelled students will remain available to all expelled students. District-level alternatives for expelled students, if district level alternatives exist, vary from one district to the next depending on the characteristics and resources of that district.

Marin County had a larger number of expulsions in the 2022-2023 school year with a continued increase in violence and crime in the community. Despite the increase, the overall expulsions remain very low. The very low rate is attributable to a concentrated effort by all school districts to minimize or eliminate expulsions. Successful strategies include: adoption and implementation of continued restorative practices at most all middle and high schools; strategies such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), bullying-prevention programs, and Social Emotional Learning programs; and, the introduction of the California School Dashboard and Accountability system which has specific expanded emphasis on monitoring and reviewing student group data related to school climate and school engagement.

School	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Year						
# of	43	21	8	8	1	4
expulsions						

School	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Year						
# of	6	3*	4*	1	12	**
expulsions						

*Data for the 19-20, and 20-21 school year will yield only partial information due to school closures and the pandemic.

** Year end data available in August, 2024.

Marin County Office of Education Overview

The Marin County Office of Education provides the following educational options for expelled students.

MARIN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Marin's Community School is an educational program that provides local school districts with an additional educational option for expelled youth in grades 7-12. Marin's Community School's facility is located adjacent to the County Office of Education in San Rafael. The school's educational program provides individualized education support as well as social and emotional support to enable students to follow their passions and lead purposeful lives. Services within the program include individualized, standards-based academic instruction and a culturally competent curriculum; bilingual/bicultural learning coaches and mentors; workplace learning and internship opportunities through the Learning Through Interest and School to Career programs; guidance on post-secondary pathways; Special Education services on site; and many on- and off-campus learning opportunities through field trips and partnerships with community organizations. Marin's Community School partners closely with the Marin Juvenile Probation Department and other community-based organizations to provide services and support in a positive, nurturing environment. Students attending Marin's Community School receive highly individualized attention oriented toward helping them to reach their goals for high school and beyond.

ORACLE INDEPENDENT STUDY

The Marin County Office of Education's voluntary independent study program offers weekly instruction while students complete their learning independently, for grades 7-12. The Oracle Independent Study program offers a wide range of support to its students including individualized instruction, work-experience opportunities through collaboration with local agencies including the Marin County Office of Education's Regional Occupational Program, and college and career guidance as needed. Special Education services for Oracle Independent Study students are provided by the district of residence unless otherwise negotiated.

The philosophy of each individual school district affects how the Marin County Office of Education community school program meets district needs. Some school districts use Marin's Community School as an educational option for their expelled students, while others use this program as a student assistance or placement alternative. If a student's expellable offense is serious and violent, students will often attend Oracle as an intermediary step while they access counseling and mentoring services.

Marin County School Districts Overview

Local school districts within Marin County offer the options outlined below for expelled youth, depending on the specific offense and the Education Code violation. Referrals vary and recommended placements are made by the district governing boards, generally with recommendations from the district Administrative Review Board or the School Attendance Review Board or a similar district referral process.

- 1. Expulsion, suspended order with placement on the same school campus.
- 2. Expulsion, suspended order with placement on a different school campus within the district.
- 3. Expulsion, suspended order with placement in district Independent Study, with parental consent.
- 4. Expulsion, suspended order with possible transfer to another district.
- 5. Expulsion with referral to a district community school program, if available.
- 6. Expulsion with possible transfer to another district.
- 7. Expulsion with referral to Marin County Office of Education alternative education programs.
- 8. Expulsion, but not permitted to attend the Marin County Office of Education alternative education programs.

Expulsions between 2021-2024 occurred in the districts below. As required in the triennial plan, the district that have expelled students must summarize steps they are taking to reduce expulsions and their plans for providing education services to expelled students.

NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Novato Unified School District serves 7,100 students in seven TK-5 elementary schools, one TK-8 school, two middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, one alternative education school and one independent study program.

Recently, NUSD's school board approved a new Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Matrix which outlines interventions and consequences for students when an infraction occurs. Administrators use this matrix across the district to help guide them when a student comes into their office for a disciplinary reason.

Restorative practices are used at every school site in Novato. This year, school administrators were trained in Restorative Practices and each school site was able to send up to three staff members to a two-day Restorative Practice training so that they can bring that restorative work back to their campus.

NUSD also received a Community Matters Restorative Practice grant that will provide additional training in the fall. These trainings will be for up to 100 additional staff members to be trained in Restorative Practices and Community Circles.

At the elementary level, North Bay Security has been doing G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) presentations to all the 5th graders in the district. These presentations include lessons on:

- Violence Prevention
- Decision Making and Resources for Help
- Effective Communication Skills
- Anger Management and Strategies
- Respecting One Another
- Being a GREAT Citizen

The intent of the program is to reach students when they are young before they enter middle school when choices become difficult due to peer pressure.

At the elementary and middle school level, NUSD partnered with Kirsten Grimm from the San Diego Office of Education to bring in DCAN (District Chronic Absenteeism Network) to every school. Each school's DCAN team (which usually consists of an administrator, data specialist, attendance technician and one more support staff) looks at student attendance data each week. This team specifically looks at students that were chronically absent last year and works on making sure that support is put in place for those students to come to school more often. The DCAN team does this by offering school-wide incentives to students/classes that have the highest attendance and to students that have shown growth in their attendance from last year. By having the student in school more often, their academic performance and their feeling of being part of the community should increase.

Also, NUSD has two community specialists that mentor students that are deemed to be highrisk by administration. These specialists talk to students about what has been happening in their lives and how to make good choices moving forward. These same specialists run a program called "The Turn" that is available to middle and high school students that are on probation, truant, at risk of not graduating, seeking additional support, referred to the office repeatedly or referred by an administrator. This program offers small group discussions about tough issues, has an opportunity to visit a local prison where inmates explain about their own poor lifestyle choices, and help the students "turn" their behavior around.

This year, NUSD hired a substance abuse specialist that has been working with high school and middle school students. To date, the specialist has worked with over 250 students that have been either caught vaping/smoking or has admitted to wanting to get services for vaping/smoking addiction. In addition, our substance abuse specialist has been able to work with families on getting them the resources that they need to help their student. For any bullying incidents, students/families are aware that they can fill out an online bullying complaint form that goes directly to the administrator of the school and the Director of Student Services. For middle school students, they also can report anything that they would like through the anonymous Stop-It app. Administrators take these reports and investigate the incident to make sure that the victim is feeling safe on campus. They will also communicate to families what steps were taken to ensure that the bullying is not continuing.

For the past two years, our Wellness Coordinator has been working with our three high schools and two middle schools on a COST (Coordination of Services Team) referral system to help support students. Our Wellness Specialist, Administrators, School Counselors, Data Specialists and School Psychologist come together to talk about students that are in need of interventions. These interventions could include a counseling referral, a referral to a Student Study Team or 504 eligibility meeting, or a check-in, check-out with the student.

Last year, NUSD opened two Wellness Hubs at Novato High School and San Marin High School. This year, Sinaloa Middle School just opened up their Wellness Hub as well. These Wellness Hubs are staffed by a Wellness Specialist and a Wellness Navigator. Referrals to the Wellness Hubs can be made by COST teams, staff, parents and students themselves. Students can also visit the Wellness Hubs to just take a break from their day if they feel the need to do so. These hubs have been a great resource for students to utilize throughout the course of their day when necessary.

Finally, NUSD has partnered with Novato Police Department in bringing in the Vigilant Parent Initiative. This workshop is a two-hour presentation that informs parents about the social media apps that students use the most. These apps include Snapchat, Instagram, Discord, Tik Tok and Roblux. During the training, parents are issued an iPad where they can (with the direction of the presenter) navigate each app and see how their students are using them. This workshop also allowed parents to ask questions about these apps as well.

SAN RAFAEL CITY SCHOOLS

San Rafael City Schools (SRCS) is committed to addressing student behavioral and socialemotional needs and prioritized systems and structures to support student behavior in our Strategic Plan, "Together 2024." The district serves 7,000 students and consists of six TK-5 schools, one TK-8 school, a middle school, two comprehensive high schools, and one continuation high school. To reduce suspensions and recommendations for expulsion, SRCS's School Board approved a Student Behavior and Intervention Matrix which standardizes interventions and consequences offered across the district. Sites rely on restorative practice strategies as a first approach to student discipline related to Education Code violations. To support this work on secondary school campuses, Administrative Deans were hired at San Rafael High School, Terra Linda High School, Venetia Valley TK-8 Schools and continued at Davidson Middle School. The Administrative Deans lead the student behavior and discipline process for behavioral incidents and rely upon the matrix for reliability and consistency. As part of our suspension diversion program, students may be referred to one or more interventions such as a student-led peer mediation, an accountability learning project, small group or individual counseling, or a referral to a 12-week substance abuse prevention family training through a local community-based organization.

Another key role, Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, was brought on to develop staff's capacity to support students with high behavioral needs in the classroom. This has reduced classroom referrals to the office as well as suspensions.

Students and families are more aware of how to report incidents related to Title IX, racial bias, bullying and safety. An online reporting form was developed and widely communicated with the community including scan codes on all district websites.

A Coordination of Services (COST) referral system was developed as part of the district-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support. COST reviews at-risk student cases and triages new referrals. MTSS Instructional Coaches, Wellness Coordinators, School Counselors, Bilingual Community Liaisons, Administrators, and other staff participate. A few examples of the support offered because of COST team meetings: targeted academic interventions, family meetings, Student Study Teams, small group counseling, and individual therapy sessions, and attendance meetings. The Care Solace referral system assists with connecting families with outside community resources.

To address a rise in student mental health needs, Wellness Centers opened at four school sites, San Rafael High School, Terra Linda High School, Davidson Middle School, and Bahia Vista Elementary School. Staff include a fully licensed Wellness Coordinator and associate/trainee therapists. Students may be referred for services through the COST teams,

parent referrals, or - at middle and high school - self-referrals. High School students may take "brain breaks" in the Wellness Centers which reduces stress during the school day.

The district's Strategic Plan calls out Student Voice as critical as we address issues affecting their health, welfare, and educational experience. The Peer Solutions class at SRHS and peer solutions teams at TLHS and DMS provide peer mediation training to students, some of whom have been through the process as part of a disciplinary incident. Peer mediation has

helped us reduce suspensions by teaching harm reduction skills to students. In addition, the district contracts with the local community-based organization, Youth Transforming Justice, which provides bilingual small group support and individual counseling targeted for at-risk youth

SHORELINE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Shoreline Unified School District has a small student to staff ratio, and a core value of our district is our focus on developing relationships with our students. We have only had two students expelled from our district in the last eight years. Our success in addressing student needs before they result in more risky behaviors is based on a few key strategies. To begin, we have spent a great deal of time focusing on training staff in restorative practices and responses to student needs. Our classes routinely employ restorative circles and questioning to address behavioral concerns, or even just process conflict before concerns arise. In addition, we have trained our teams of teachers and students from grades 6-12 in a peer-to-peer mediation program to not only develop student's conflict mediation skills, but also promote a culture of community support and repair.

Furthermore, we have a robust counseling program that helps to support students at a variety of levels. We have school-based counselors at every school site, as well as a bilingual mental health clinician that supports all students with tier 2 counseling needs, as needed. In addition, the district's Wellness Coordinator leads our Wellness Team in developing and implementing a social and emotional learning curriculum that spans TK-12th grade. Our Wellness Coordinator also leads a team of high school students as part of our School Wellness Ambassador Program, to support peer-to-peer education around a variety of wellness issues.

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

In today's educational landscape, it has become increasingly important to implement effective strategies to reduce expulsions and create a positive school community. By focusing on behavioral intervention practices at both the site and district levels, schools can minimize suspensions leading to expulsions, decrease the number of expulsions ordered, support students returning from expulsions, and implement restorative practices that promote a culture of respect and understanding.

One key strategy for reducing expulsions is to minimize the number of suspensions that act as precursors to severe consequences. This can be achieved through:

- Early Intervention Programs: Providing support before behavioral issues escalate.
- Counseling Services: Offering professional guidance to address students' emotional and psychological needs.
- Behavior Modification Plans: Tailoring strategies to individual students to promote positive behavior.

At the Tamalpais Union High School District (TUHSD), Deans of Students play a critical role in these efforts. They coordinate campus supervision and safety, advise parents on student behavior, and implement effective discipline programs. Post-COVID, TUHSD noted an increase in student substance use and responded with restorative practices that include harm reduction education, enhancing students' sense of safety on campus, and providing mental health support.

To decrease the number of expulsions, TUHSD focuses on:

- Fair and Consistent Disciplinary Policies: Ensuring all cases are evaluated equitably.
- Restorative Justice Approaches: Moving away from punitive measures to solutions emphasizing healing and reconciliation. Suspension incorporates loss of privileges, consideration of disciplinary records, and mandatory education, though restorative conversations require mutual agreement.

These practices hold students accountable while providing opportunities to learn from mistakes and make amends, fostering a sense of community and responsibility.

Reintegrating students' post-expulsion is crucial. This involves:

- Personalized Reentry Plans: Developing specific strategies for each student's return.
- Counseling Services: Offering ongoing emotional support.
- Academic Assistance: Providing help to catch up on missed work.
- Monitoring Progress: Regularly assessing the student's adjustment and progress.

By creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, TUHSD schools assist returning students in rebuilding trust and relationships with peers and staff.

Restorative practices are essential in shaping positive student behavior. These include:

- Empathy and Accountability: Encouraging students to understand the impact of their actions.
- Dialogue and Conflict Resolution: Promoting open communication to resolve disputes and prevent future issues.

By focusing on these areas, TUHSD works to reduce expulsions and create a supportive, inclusive learning environment for all students.

In conclusion, proactive behavioral intervention, restorative justice approaches, and comprehensive support for students are key to reducing expulsions and fostering a positive educational community. Through these strategies, TUHSD aims to create a more inclusive and understanding school environment.

Progress toward Addressing Gaps in Educational Services to Expelled Students 2021 - 2024

The triennial update of the Countywide Plan for Provision of Educational Services to Expelled Students must address the progress made in providing education placement options and services to high-risk youth since the last plans were submitted. Specifically, the updated plan should address whether the strategies were successful and identify the obstacles that resulted in any unsuccessful strategies.

1. GAP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE: PROXIMITY, SIZE AND PROGRAM OPTIONS IN DISTRICTS

Marin County comprises of 17 school districts of varying sizes including small and rural districts. District size can make it challenging to offer the range of alternative education programs or programs for expelled youth found in larger districts.

The strategy for addressing this gap is to maintain a county community school program that is committed to providing educational services to all school districts in the county and that employs a variety of instructional strategies including those that are capable of overcoming obstacles associated with providing educational services to diverse student populations.

This strategy has been effective in addressing this gap. Referrals from districts have been made to Marin's Community School or other MCOE alternative education programs from multiple districts for students from 7th to 12th grade where students have access to new and individualized education opportunities. An indicator of success is that many students are choosing to stay at Marin's Community School (MCS) even after they are allowed to return to their home districts.

In addition, vans were purchased to transport students to and from Marin's Community School and the home communities of students in our larger Districts. Students in the rural community often take advantage of the independent study program so that they can travel only one time per week.

2. GAP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE: SECONDARY PLACEMENT FOR EXPELLED STUDENTS UNABLE TO BE SERVED IN MARIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Marin's Community School program students who commit an expellable offense while in the county office program, and those who commit a second expellable offense during an expulsion period, have limited alternatives available for secondary placement. These students will be referred to a countywide Expulsion Review Panel on a case by case basis for review and determination as to educational placement. While there were no second expulsion offenses from Marin's Community School or other MCOE alternative education programs during the triennial reporting period of 2021-2024, this potential gap in services could occur and would be addressed by the process below.

A County Expulsion Review Panel will review these cases and will be responsible for the expulsion appeal process. The County Expulsion Review Panel will include:

- a) A site administrator from the student's grade level;
- b) A site administrator from the next grade level; and
- c) A school board member.

The members of the County Expulsion Review Panel will be selected from a list of administrators and board members in alphabetical order by district on a rotational basis and will not include representatives from the student's district of residence. Staffing assistance to the Panel will be provided by Marin County Office of Education.

As in existing appeal procedures, the grounds for an appeal are limited to one or more of the following:

- a) Did the County Expulsion Review Panel act without or in excess of jurisdiction?
- b) The appellant was denied a fair hearing before the County Expulsion Review Panel.
- c) There was a prejudicial abuse of discretion in the hearing.
- d) There is relevant and material evidence which, in the exercise of reasonable diligence, could not have been produced or which was improperly excluded at the hearing before the County Expulsion Review Panel.

3. GAP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE: SERVICES FOR K-6 STUDENTS

Students in grades K-6 are rarely expelled in Marin County. There were no expulsions of students in grades K-6 during the triennial reporting period of 2018-2021, nor in 2021-2024. Expelled students in grades K-6 do not have the same educational options available as do their grades 7-12 counterparts. In addition, educational services for students in grades K-6 cannot be merged or combined with services in grades 7-12 and independent study is not considered an appropriate option for younger students. If in the future a K-6 expulsion occurs, the district of residence will work with the family and other key stakeholders to determine the education plan and best placement for the student.

Strategies for Addressing Gaps in Educational Services to Expelled Students 2024-2027

As identified in the prior section, gaps exist in respect to providing educational services to expelled pupils in Marin County. These gaps and available strategies for addressing them are listed below:

1. GAP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE: PROXIMITY, SIZE AND PROGRAM OPTIONS IN DISTRICTS

Marin's Community School and the other MCOE Alt Ed programs have been committed to creating restorative practices that allow expelled youth to find their strengths, re-engage in school, and set goals for their futures, whether it is returning to their home Districts, attending community college, or participating in job training. The programs have expanded to include more on-site therapeutic services, co-enrollment in community college classes, and a Work Experience Education program that allows students to earn credit for internships and experiences beyond the school walls, including programs in conjunction with the MCOE College and Career readiness team. As the program continues to expand, it will serve more students from throughout the county, helping to mitigate the gap in service created by the large number of small Districts in our county.

2. GAP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE: SECONDARY PLACEMENT FOR EXPELLED STUDENTS UNABLE TO BE SERVED IN MARIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Students in Marin's Community School or other alternative education programs of the Marin County Office of Education who commit a second expellable offense during an expulsion period have limited alternatives available for secondary placement. These students will be referred to the county expulsion panel on a case-by-case basis for review and determination as to available placement. The process described in the prior section will be followed.

3. GAP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE: POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Over the past triennial reporting period 2021-2024, significant gains have been made in ensuring that school climate remains a feature in student program design and development. A considerable and concerted effort has been made across all districts to understand more about bias and the impact on all students, but most especially the underserved.

Building on this foundation, this work will continue to be a focus for the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) and Marin school districts. In this reporting period, MCOE has convened District representatives to Professional Networks that convene partners to work on Countywide efforts to align programs through an equity lens to address issues such as chronic absenteeism, increased suspension rates, and social and emotional learning as we see the evidence of the fallout from the pandemic. All of these interventions will serve to reduce the pre-conditions that lead to expulsions. Working closely with partners such as public health, law enforcement and community agencies, there must be a countywide effort to reduce disproportionate contact of students of color with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.

Youth voice will be an essential part of this strategy, especially youth who our schools have failed to successfully serve or who have been through the expulsion process. We have seen the positive results at Marin's Community School when youth voice is empowered and will build on that success. MCOE has convened the Student Wellness Ambassador Program (SWAP), helping empower students to make positive changes on their campuses across the county.

Marin County schools will continue their efforts to collaborate and maintain strong partnerships within and across districts as well as with community partners.

Alternative Placements for Expelled Students Placed in Community School Who Fail to Meet the Terms of Rehabilitation Plans or Pose a Danger to Others

The district of residence will always maintain responsibility for their expelled youth. If the district refers to a neighboring district or county office program, they will maintain close communication with the educational entity serving the student. Expelled students who fail to meet the terms and conditions of the district rehabilitation plan may be referred to a different district school, another district program, a district community day school program (if available) or a Marin County Office of Education Alternative Education Program. Regardless of student placement, the district of residence maintains responsibility for the student.

If an expelled student enrolled at Marin's Community School or other Marin County Office of Education alternative education programs does not meet the terms or conditions of their expulsion, commits a second expellable offense, or is deemed to pose a danger to others, the student may be removed from county programs and referred back to the district of residence for an alternate placement.