

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLAN FOR PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES &amp; SUPPORT TO ALL STUDENTS EXPELLED IN ORANGE COUNTY 2024-2027</b></p>
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### **General Provisions**

As required by California Education Code section 48926, the Orange County Superintendent of Schools has developed an expulsion plan in conjunction with the Superintendents of the school districts in Orange County. The plan provides educational services to all expelled students in the county for school years 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27. The current plan has been adopted by the governing boards of each school district in Orange County and the Orange County Board of Education (OCBE). A student whose behavior has resulted in an expulsion is provided a rehabilitation plan that ensures placement in the appropriate educational program. All educational alternatives at Orange County school districts are not available to all students who are expelled. The **type of offense, location of offense, grade level, and nature of the student's individualized needs** all have the potential to affect the educational alternatives available to the student during the period of expulsion. Students expelled for any of the offenses listed in subdivision (a) or (c) of Section 48915 of the California Education Code shall not be permitted to enroll in:

- any district-operated program during the period of expulsion *unless* it is a county community school according to subdivision (c) of Education Code Section 1981,
- or a juvenile court school, as described in Section 48645.1,
- or a community day school according to Article 3, (commencing with Section 48660 of Chapter 4 of Part 27 of the Education Code).

All students who are expelled shall be referred to an educational placement that is:

- 1) appropriately prepared to accommodate students who exhibit discipline problems;
- 2) not situated at a comprehensive middle, junior, or senior high school, or any elementary school, and
- 3) not housed at the school site attended by the student at the time of the offense (E.C. section 48915).

In addition to the requirements stated above, such factors as **district size, district-level alternatives, county-level alternatives, Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP), and district vision/mission statements (values/philosophy)** can influence the decisions by a school district board of education regarding which educational alternatives are appropriate for the students who are expelled.

## **Educational Alternatives for Students Who Are Expelled**

The governing boards of each school district will determine which educational alternatives are appropriate and available under Education Code section 48916.1. Educational alternatives throughout Orange County for students recommended for expulsion include, but are not limited to the following options:

1. Expulsion, suspended order, with placement on the same school campus [E.C. section 48917 (a)].
2. Expulsion, suspended order, with placement on a different school campus within the district [E.C. section 48917 (a)].
3. Expulsion with referral to a district community day school program, if available [E.C. section 48660].
4. Expulsion with subsequent transfer to another district subject to acceptance by the district of proposed enrollment [E.C. section 48915.1].
5. Expulsion with referral to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), Division of Alternative, Community and Correctional Education Schools and Services (ACCESS) [E.C. section 1981].

A specific referral to a district community day school or county community school is made by the school district with recommendations from the district discipline review board, School Attendance Review Board (SARB), or by another established district referral process as required by statute.

The school district of residence is responsible for developing a rehabilitation plan for expelled students and referring students to an appropriate educational setting. The school district reviews the rehabilitation plan obligations of students who are expelled to determine completion for a possible return to the school district of residence. The expelled students who fail to meet the terms and conditions of the district rehabilitation plan for readmission/re-enrollment may continue to be referred to an appropriate educational setting within another district alternative program, district community day school program, or the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS program until the conditions of rehabilitation are met.

## **Charter School Requirements and Expulsion**

Charter schools develop their policies and procedures regarding student expulsion and student dismissal subject to the requirements of Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J). They are not required to follow Education Code section 48900 et seq. as the basis of their discipline or expulsion policy, although by regulation, petitioners must demonstrate familiarity with these provisions. Charter schools have the option to adopt their chartering district's policy and procedures regarding expulsion.

A student who is expelled from a charter school may return to the school district of residence. As outlined in Education Code Section 47605(e)(3), if a pupil subject to compulsory full-time education under Education Code section 48200 is expelled or leaves a charter school without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days; and shall upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil including a transcript of grades or report card and health information. Once the school district has documentation of the expulsion order, the provisions of Education Code sections 48915.1 and 48915.2 are used to determine whether or not the pupil may enroll in a district school or must be referred to a county community or district community day school (EC section 48915.2).

### **Expelled Students Who Commit Subsequent Violation(s)**

The placement of expelled students who commit subsequent expellable violations will be placed in one of the following options:

- If the student commits a subsequent violation of Education Code section 48900 and following, the student may be referred to another school district alternative program or the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS program.
- If the expelled student commits another violation of the Education Code while enrolled in the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS program, the student will be placed at another community school site within the ACCESS Areas or transferred to another ACCESS Area operated by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) per Orange County Department of Education Policy and Procedures.

### **Expelled Students Who Fail District Community Day School**

An expelled student who fails his/her placement in a district community day school program may be placed in one of the following options:

- Other existing district educational alternatives.
- Orange County Department of Education, ACCESS program, or a program operated by the Orange County Department of Education Division of Special Education Services.
- Non-public school (NPS) placements for students with disabilities may be considered by school districts if the IEP team determines an NPS is appropriate.

### **Special Education Students**

Students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) may be referred to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS program under the Individualized

Education Program (IEP) process outlined in Education Code section 48915.5 and Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) procedures. Students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may also be referred to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) per Section 504 procedures. School districts must take into consideration the contents of the student's IEP when making placement recommendations. **Any change in placement requires the school district to convene an IEP meeting.** The IEP team identifies a special education program and related services appropriate for the student. Placement options may include district, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), or county-operated programs.

- If the district refers an expelled student to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), the district shall convene an IEP meeting before the referral to jointly identify an appropriate special education program and related services. A representative from the Orange County Department of Education shall participate in the IEP meeting. The district or Orange County Department of Education may provide special education services per the student's IEP.
- When the IEP cannot be implemented within the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), the district of residence is responsible for providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the continuum of program options identified in its SELPA local plan.
- The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) may also provide an interim alternative educational setting while a school district locates an educational placement for students eligible under the IDEA (not excluding county options) [34 C.F.R. section 300.530(g)].

### **Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Options**

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) is committed to providing a spectrum of educational options for students expelled from Orange County school districts. Educational options are provided through the Division of Special Education Services which operates the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Special Schools Program for students with disabilities and the Division of Alternative Education, known as Alternative, Community, and Correctional Education Schools and Services (ACCESS), a *Western Association of Schools and Colleges-accredited* (WASC) program serving general education and special education students. The Orange County Department of Education's (OCDE) VISION is Orange County students will lead the nation in college and career readiness and success; and, its MISSION is to ensure that all students are equipped with the competencies they need to thrive in the 21st Century. In addition, its mission is to care for, teach, and inspire all students to discover their potential as well as develop their character by empowering every learner to become successful contributors to society. As demonstrated by its VALUES, the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) is dedicated to the fundamental human values of respect, responsibility, integrity, and professional ethics. Our priority is service to students, schools, districts, families, and community members. Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) provides a safe, caring, courteous,

and professional environment that fosters collaborative work and individual employee development. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for the highest level of performance, efficiency, resource management, and professionalism.

The policy of each school district affects how the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) will meet the needs of that particular school district. Some districts use the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) programs as educational options for those students expelled under Education Code section 48900. The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) also works with Orange County school districts to provide information and data in support of Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals and priorities, including but not limited to learning conditions, pupil engagement, school climate, and pupil outcomes.

### **Referral Process to Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) – Division of Special Education –Special Schools Program**

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Division of Special Education Services provides special education programs and services to individuals with exceptional needs requiring intensive educational services including a Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program. The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Special Schools Program operates 48 classes on 13 different school sites throughout Orange County. Students are referred by their district of residence through the IEP process. Referrals to the Division of Special Education Services are made following current Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) procedures.

### **Referral Process to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Alternative Community and Correctional Education Schools and Services (ACCESS)**

The ACCESS program provides options for expelled youth at over twenty-five (25) sites contained within nine (9) Areas located throughout Orange County. Regional options may include:

- Classroom instruction serving grades 9-12, delivered daily for 240-270 minutes aligned with the State Frameworks/Standards.
- Classroom instruction serving grades 6-8, delivered daily for 240-270 minutes aligned with the State Frameworks/Standards.
- Contracted learning/independent study (IS) programs are available for whom traditional seat-time programs are not feasible. These contracted learning/independent study (IS) programs require students to complete a minimum of 20 hours per week of educational work products. For students with disabilities, this would be considered and discussed at an IEP meeting.

- Parent-directed home instruction/independent study programs through the Community Home Education Program (CHEP) serving students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through grade 8.
- Pacific Coast High School is a University of California (UC) approved and National Collegiate Athletic Association-accredited program serving students in grades 9-12. For students with disabilities, this would be considered and discussed during an IEP meeting.

ACCESS Administrators regularly meet with school district representatives and agency partners to collaborate and coordinate the placement of students who are expelled. Regional meetings of the Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) Administrators and school district Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) members provide an avenue for school districts and Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) representatives to discuss potential placement challenges, explore regional options, and address the needs of expelled students.

Referrals to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS program may be made directly to the ACCESS Areas listed below. However, referrals of students eligible under the IDEA shall be made through the IEP process as per ACCESS Special Education Procedures. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will be developed for expelled students referred to ACCESS. Part of this plan includes a goal of assisting the student with meeting the requirements stated in the school district's rehabilitation plan to facilitate returning the student to the school district of residence at the completion of the school district expulsion. A Supplemental Referral Form and a Return to School District Form are developed with support from the School District Student Services Administrator to improve communication. Districts will use the Supplemental Referral Form to highlight the unique needs of students, interventions in place, and rehabilitation plans for students. When returning to the district of residence, ACCESS will use the Return to District Form to communicate student progress on the district rehabilitation plan as well as share important contact information in case questions may arise. This process addresses a service gap in previous triennial countywide plans regarding students completing the required courses before graduation during the expulsion term. ACCESS and the Orange County school districts will continue to consistently improve communications to further address all service gaps.

ACCESS and school district programs have implemented online programs that provide "a-g" approved courses, credit recovery options, and electives, including career technical education. These programs have expanded the options available to expelled and returning students seeking to satisfy the "a-g" requirements or other college-preparatory courses. ACCESS continues to provide professional development for teachers to utilize their online programs effectively. In addition, Pacific Coast High School (Administrative Area 5) offers a full range of college-preparatory courses satisfying the "a-g" requirements. *GradPoint*, the online course option with "a-g" approved courses utilized by ACCESS, satisfies the subject requirements for admission into the University of California and California State University Systems.

**ALTERNATIVE, COMMUNITY, AND CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS (ACCESS) AND SERVICES ACCESS**  
(Updated 9/21/23)

<b>Division of Alternative Education Administration</b>	ACCESS Administration 601 S. Lewis Street Orange, CA 92868	(714) 245-6402	Vern Burton Assistant Superintendent, Alternative Education <a href="mailto:vburton@ocde.us">vburton@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 1</b> Harbor Learning Center – South	ACCESS– Area 1 Administration Office 15872 Harbor Blvd. Fountain Valley, CA 92708	(714) 245-6535	Ken Ko, Ed.D., Principal <a href="mailto:Kko@ocde.us">Kko@ocde.us</a> Jim Perez, Interim Asst. Principal <a href="mailto:jperez@ocde.us">jperez@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 2</b> Harbor Learning Center – North	ACCESS– Area 2 Administration Office 1240 N. Harbor Blvd. Anaheim, CA 92801	(714) 245-6700	Gilbert Sanchez, Ed.D., Principal <a href="mailto:gsanchez@ocde.us">gsanchez@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 3</b> Argosy	ACCESS– Area 3 Administration Office 601 S. Lewis Street Orange, CA 92868	(714) 245-6680	Ken Ko, Ed.D., Principal <a href="mailto:Kko@ocde.us">Kko@ocde.us</a> Spencer Gooch, Interim Assistant Principal <a href="mailto:sgooch@ocde.us">sgooch@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 4-A</b> Juvenile Court Schools	Otto Fischer School 331 City Drive South Orange, CA 92868	(714) 935-7651	Dave Connor, Principal <a href="mailto:dconnor@ocde.us">dconnor@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 4-B</b> Juvenile Court Schools	TBD	TBD	Aja Cordova-Couso, Principal <a href="mailto:acordova-couso@ocde.us">acordova-couso@ocde.us</a>

<b>ACCESS– Area 5</b> Community Home Education Program (CHEP), Pacific Coast High School (PCHS), Skyview	ACCESS– Area 5 Administration Office 14262 Franklin Ave. Suites 100 and 200 Tustin, CA 92780	(714) 327-1010	Machele Kilgore, Principal <a href="mailto:mkilgore@ocde.us">mkilgore@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 6</b> Sunburst Youth Academy	Los Alamitos National Guard Base 4022 Saratoga Ave. Building 25 Los Alamitos, CA 90720	(714) 796-8780	Dinah Ismail, Principal <a href="mailto:dismail@ocde.us">dismail@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 7</b> College and Career Preparatory Academy (CCPA)	ACCESS– Area 7 Administration Office 1277 S. Lyon, Ste. 501 Santa Ana, CA 92705	(714) 796-8795	Fatinah Judeh, Interim Principal <a href="mailto:fjudeh@ocde.us">fjudeh@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 8</b>	ACCESS– Area 8 Administration Office TBD	(714) 800-4234	Ruth Ramirez, Principal <a href="mailto:rramirez2@ocde.us">rramirez2@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS– Area 9</b>	Administration Office 2428 Grand Avenue Suite G Santa Ana, CA 92703	(714) 227-8789	Chris Alfieri, Principal <a href="mailto:calfieri@ocde.us">calfieri@ocde.us</a>
<b>ACCESS STUDENT SERVICES</b>			
<b>Student Support Services and Special Education</b>	ACCESS Administration 601 S. Lewis Street Orange 92868	(714) 647-2596	Amita Cloke, Psy.D., Director <a href="mailto:acloke@ocde.us">acloke@ocde.us</a>



<b>District Partnerships and Operations</b>  <i>(ACCESS Staffing &amp; Operations, Attendance &amp; Records, Foster Youth Services, Health Services, Safe and Healthy Schools and Services)</i>	ACCESS Administration 601 S. Lewis Street Orange, CA 92868	(714) 245-6404	Dennis Cole, Director <a href="mailto:dcole@ocde.us">dcole@ocde.us</a>
<b>Educational Programs and Services</b>  <i>(Assessment, Accountability and Intervention, Educational Services, Title III – English Language Learner Services)</i>	ACCESS Administration 601 S. Lewis Street Orange, CA 92868	(714) 647-2593 (714) 543-8962 fax	Katy Ramezani, Ed.D., Director <a href="mailto:kramezani@ocde.us">kramezani@ocde.us</a>
<b>Title I Programs and Services</b>	ACCESS Administration 601 S. Lewis Street Orange, CA 92868	(714) 836-0468	Lisa Lanier, Senior Administrator <a href="mailto:llanier@ocde.us">llanier@ocde.us</a>
<b>Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program</b>	William Lyon School 401 City Drive South Orange, CA 92868	TBD	Deana Mulkerin, Program Specialist
<b>Attendance and Records</b>	ACCESS Administration 601 S. Lewis Street Orange, CA 92868	(714) 547-2859	Tamara Fetto, Supervising Program Data Technician <a href="mailto:tfetto@ocde.us">tfetto@ocde.us</a>

## **Summary of Gaps in Education Services to Expelled Students and Strategies for Filling Those Gaps**

Previously identified gaps from the previous triennial cycle have been examined and considerable improvements have been made through a collaborative process between the twenty-eight (28) Orange County school districts and the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE). The twenty-eight (28) school districts in Orange County and the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) have committed themselves to an ongoing process to resolve the noted service gaps.

### **Service Gap 1: Expelled Students in Grades K-5**

Education Code sections 48900(v) and (w) encourage Other Means of Correction (OMoC), rather than suspension or expulsion, to be used to bring about appropriate conduct as part of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This Multi-Tiered/Multi-Domain System of Supports includes Restorative Justice practices, trauma-informed practices, Social and Emotional Learning, and schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, which may be used to help pupils gain critical social and emotional skills, receive support to help transform trauma-related responses, understand the impact of their actions (on themselves and others), and develop meaningful methods for repairing harm to the school community. This also includes referral to a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) for students who are habitually insubordinate or disorderly during school attendance (Education Code Section 48263). Education Code Section 48900.5 lists many other means of correction that may be documented before a suspension or expulsion recommendation. While several California Education Code sections prohibit the expulsion of students in lower grades for various offenses, a student in grades K-3 can be expelled for violations of any of the other offenses. Specifically, Education Code section 48900(k) prohibits the expulsion of any student for disruption/defiance and Education Code 48900.2 prohibits the expulsion of a student in K-3 for sexual harassment. Education Code 48900.3 (hate violence) and 48900.4 (harassment, threats, or intimidation) pertain only to students in grades 4-12. As identified mainly by elementary schools and smaller districts, students in grades K-5 who are expelled do not have as many educational options available as do expelled youth in grades 6-12. In some instances, it has been difficult to place elementary school students who are expelled, especially at the K-4 level. The number of community day schools at the elementary school grade level is very limited.

### **Progress since 2021**

Orange County school districts have made gains in the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning curriculum (SEL) and Restorative Practices (RP) district-wide to develop more positive, pro-social school cultures/climates by strengthening relationships between staff and

students, staff-to-home relationships, student-to-student relationships, and increase students' sense of belonging to prevent the occurrence of negative behaviors that may lead to suspensions and expulsion. School staff receive training in Restorative Practices (RP). Restorative Practices have been integrated with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to ensure student expectations are taught and reinforced positively to increase students' social and emotional skills and a sense of relationship/belonging to the community. Professional development on topics such as Trauma Informed Education, SEL Classroom Management, and universal screening of Second Step Integration will continue to be presented to school staff. In addition, school site/classroom visits by district-level administrators are conducted regularly with feedback to support and improve the implementation of SEL and PBIS and collaboratively develop the next steps with school site administrators, teachers, and staff.

A common practice for students expelled in grades K-5 is for the school district to suspend the expulsion order and refer the student to another school within the district of residence. School districts may also collaborate in the facilitation of enrollment of an expelled elementary school student into a different school district, when appropriate. School districts continue to have the option of referring expelled students to Skyview Elementary and Middle School, an Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS program serving grades K-8. Skyview is a community elementary/middle school program designed to meet the needs of all *at-promise* children and offers community support programs for both the students and their families.

### **Ongoing Strategies for Addressing This Gap**

Students in grades K-5 who are expelled may be served through the following school district or Orange County Department of Education alternative (OCDE) education programs:

- Transfers within the home district (offered through suspended expulsion) to another school site.
- Transfers to another school district.
- Private school/Non-Public enrollment/placement may be appropriately offered.
- Virtual/Remote Learning school is available in some school districts.
- Skyview Elementary and Middle School, located in the city of Orange, is operated by the OCDE ACCESS program and serves students in grades K-8.
- Students in grade 5, on a case-by-case basis, may be referred to other ACCESS school sites depending upon class composition at the time of referral.

The Orange County Department of Education continues to review the ongoing need for an elementary-level regionalized community school program to serve elementary-aged students who may be expelled from their school district. Since 2017-18, the number of expulsions for Orange County students in grades K-6, as reported to *DataQuest*, are as follows:

Year	K-3	4-6
2017-18	0	9
2018-19	0	9
2019-20	0	0
2020-21	0	0
2021-22	0	3

Orange County school districts continue to support one another and offer alternative placement options whenever possible, taking students who were expelled for non-mandatory expellable offenses, especially in larger districts with community day school options or special classrooms on their sites. School districts are also expanding interventions through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework with evidence-based programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, Restorative Practice (RP), Mindfulness Practice, Trauma-Informed Care Perspective and Resources, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) resulting in reduction of expulsions at the elementary grade level. In addition, the tiered interventions and strategies of the Student Attendance Review Team (SART) and Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) processes are being implemented as preventative/early warning measures to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions through a strength-based approach focusing on students' behavior (academic, attendance, social-emotional) challenges and family support.

### **Challenges to Addressing This Gap**

- The location of the Skyview Elementary and Middle School site in proximity to the district of residence may pose a challenge to student attendance.
- To attend Skyview or other schools in neighboring school districts, students may require transportation. However, neither the districts nor ACCESS provide transportation which is a challenge for some students to attend schools outside of the boundaries of the district of residence.
- Though the number of expulsions at the elementary level is low, finding suitable school placements for students who are expelled continues to be a challenge/service gap for some elementary school districts.
- The low number of elementary students in grades K-5 who need alternative placements as a result of expulsions continues to make it impractical and cost-inhibitive to sustain the operation of multiple school sites/programs throughout the county and provide mental health resources, staff, and services.

## **Service Gap 2: Limited Special Education Placements in ACCESS**

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) is committed to expanding program options for students with exceptional needs expelled from school district programs. As identified through communications with SELPA and District-Special Education Directors, programs for emotionally disturbed and dual diagnosis (Emotionally Disturbed and Developmentally Delayed) students have been developed in some school districts as well as the OCDE Special Schools program. In addition, ACCESS continues to evaluate its Special Education services to provide a continuum of placement options. When a student's unique needs cannot be accommodated through existing OCDE program alternatives, the district of residence will continue to facilitate placement to support the unique needs of individual students through district and non-public agency/non-public school (NPS) placements.

### **Progress from 2021**

Orange County school districts have continued to expand efforts to provide services to students within their attendance area reducing the need for referrals to ACCESS and the OCDE Special Schools program. The Orange County School Districts and OCDE will provide ongoing monitoring of the need for additional Special Education services for expelled students. The ACCESS program is prepared to respond to increased demands as conditions warrant in the future.

Orange County school districts have increased the number of mental health staff independently and in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) to provide more resources for students who may be experiencing social and emotional issues, including students with disabilities. To promote belongingness, inclusion, and educational equity, Orange County school districts have expanded recruitment and retention of students with disabilities for athletic programs and co-curricular engagement. For more inclusive classroom instruction, the blending of co-teaching and General-Special Education collaborative classes for students with disabilities have continued to increase to destigmatize the services and supports of students with IEPs which has resulted in healthier and safer school cultures and climates. Unified Sports programs are available in all Orange County school districts. This program focuses on the inclusion of students with disabilities in athletics and has helped change the culture on the campuses. Students with disabilities continue to be included in more school-wide programs.

#### *Programs for Students with Intensive Mental Health Needs:*

- ACCESS and Orange County school districts have been able to expand the number of licensed mental health clinicians and assistants over the past several years even though finding qualified candidates has been a challenge. This has allowed for increased support during the school day while students are on campus. Continued expansion of programs for students with intensive mental health and behavioral needs is contingent upon the location of school sites that can accommodate such programs and sufficient enrollment to maintain such programs. Additional training in various behavior management strategies

for both general education and special education teachers can support the increased needs of students with mental health and behavioral needs.

*Programs to Expand Continued Services for Special Education Students:*

- Expanding program options for special education students continue to be evaluated through OCDE, Orange County SELPA Directors, and Orange County School Districts.
- OCDE Special Schools and ACCESS provided a joint survey to the OC SELPA Directors in Spring 2023 seeking information on special education program needs.

ACCESS will continue to utilize its Director of Student Services as well as Special Education Administrative Liaisons/Coordinators to facilitate participation in district IEP team meetings when a referral for an expelled student is made to ACCESS. In addition, ACCESS has continued to increase its special education staff including a focus to address the increased mental health needs of students with disabilities. ACCESS can provide intensive counseling services by licensed mental health professionals who will continue training in Trauma Informed Care, Crisis Response, and Restorative Practice (RP). Small group therapy programs have also been developed to address issues that impact social functioning within the classroom and community, such as social skills, anger management, and various coping skill strategies.

All ACCESS mental health clinicians will continue to receive training in the most current evidence-based protocols in various therapeutic therapies to address the changing needs of our students.

### **Ongoing Strategies for Addressing This Gap**

To help address gaps/needs, the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Special Schools and ACCESS plans to provide a joint survey to the Orange County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Directors in the future seeking additional information on special education program needs. In addition, school districts continue to create, expand, and have success with community day school programs for expelled students with special needs as an option to county-operated and non-public school placements. ACCESS provides an inclusive educational setting with students mainstreamed into general educational programs. Placement at non-public schools (NPS) continues to be an option for school districts as well. In addition, districts are utilizing various flexible scheduling opportunities along with alternative education options to meet IEP goals, provide related services, and fulfill the requirements of the rehabilitation plan.

### **Challenges to Address This Gap**

- Establishing a regionalized program in an alternative school setting to support the academic and socio-emotional needs of students with disabilities that can be operated and

maintained based on an unpredictable number of student referrals as well as transportation barriers poses ongoing challenges. These challenges impact the sustainability of regionalized special education programs operated by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE). Although some school districts have expressed a need for a self-contained special day class (SDC) for students with intensive emotional and/or behavior disorders, this has not been sustainable for the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS programs due to the minimal number of students being referred and the cost to staff and maintain such a program. Challenges to addressing Service Gap #1 may also have been a contributing factor to the limited number of referrals for establishing such a program.

- Placement in a non-public school due to the limited space and program offerings at the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS, *when there is capacity*, is a financial strain for Orange County school districts.
- Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS providing *Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)* for all students with disabilities continues to be a concern expressed by some school districts. Based on the smaller class sizes in ACCESS and the individualized instructional model through contracted learning, the structure of the school day differs from a traditional school schedule and often requires modification of the IEP.
- Combined programming of middle school and high school programs continues to be an ongoing challenge. There is a desire to provide separate classes/programs for middle school students to better address their unique developmental and social-emotional needs, however, the low numbers of referrals/enrollment of middle school students make it difficult to maintain separate programs.
- Promoting (appropriately messaging) the positive advantages and supportive benefits of the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS to parents and caregivers of students with disabilities who have been expelled continues to be a challenge as they may view the program as a punitive/juvenile detention measure with a shortened school day. Their (*mis-*)understanding of the program leads to apprehension and rejection of accepting the offer to engage in the program.

### **Service Gap 3: Rehabilitation Failures**

Students who are expelled fail, at times, to satisfy/fulfill the school district expulsion rehabilitation/readmission plans during the expulsion term continue to be a concern for reentry to the school district in conjunction with general issues about student transition. On occasion, students do not meet the provisions of the expulsion rehabilitation plan and fall behind in their academic studies. In these cases, students are at higher risk of not completing their necessary credits and risk of school drop-out.

### **Progress since 2021**

Over the past three years, the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) has continued collaboration and ongoing engagement with the Orange County school districts to identify systematic approaches to facilitate the regular transfer of the rehabilitation/readmission plan upon referral of an expelled student, as well as identify community resources available to support students in meeting their district rehabilitation plan requirements.

Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) ACCESS/Division of Alternative Education Administration helps to promote frequent, ongoing communication between the parents/caregivers, school districts, the county community schools, ACCESS directors, coordinators, principals, and assistant principals. In addition, the ACCESS Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) process continues to undergo improvement and ACCESS utilizes one of its staff members in truancy court to make sure students attend school and are connected to community resources and social services.

### **Ongoing Strategies for Addressing This Gap**

Orange County school districts will provide ACCESS a copy of the rehabilitation/readmission plan when referring an expelled student. ACCESS staff will review the rehabilitation/readmission plan with the student and, as appropriate, the student's parents, and will assist the student in completing his/her plan requirements. Orange County School Districts and ACCESS have implemented the use of a supplemental referral form when students are referred to an ACCESS program. This form includes specific information about a student's needs as well as progress and action items needed to complete the rehabilitation/readmission plan requirements. School district staff will continue to monitor student achievement toward rehabilitation/readmission plan requirements throughout the term of expulsion while educational services are provided by ACCESS or private agencies. For students struggling to meet rehabilitation/readmission plan requirements, the student consultation team process may be considered to provide additional support. The continued two-way communication and collaboration between ACCESS and school district personnel will remain a priority. Enhanced communication promotes student success and allows for early intervention when students are falling behind in/not meeting the rehabilitation/readmission plan terms. In addition, communication is vital between the school districts and ACCESS regarding the status of students who are returning to the school district. When returning to the school district, ACCESS staff will continue to use the Student Transition form to communicate information on the student's completion of the rehabilitation/readmission plan.

School districts continue to expand their programs and services to support expelled students by hiring additional staff and assigning specific duties to staff to monitor the completion of the student's rehabilitation/readmission plan and to communicate/collaborate with ACCESS and other programs. In addition, to meet the academic needs of the students and to ensure that they acquire the necessary credits to meet the graduation requirements, districts have expanded their instructional programs to include enhanced Summer School and after-school programs, district online instruction, and tutoring support for expelled students. Furthermore, upon re-entry to the



school district, students will continue to be closely monitored and supported by school staff through the creation of a behavior contract, needs assessment survey, and the opportunity for alternative placement at a different school site within the district.

Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) will continue to explore with districts how to utilize and expand existing interventions/supports to ensure student success with the completion of the rehabilitation/readmission plan by hosting networking opportunities through the Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA)/School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Network Meetings series and conducting an interactive Expulsion Supports training in addition to a Student Discipline Investigations training. This includes the inclusion of community non-profits and private agencies/programs to assist in carrying out individual student rehabilitation/ readmission plans.

### **Challenges to Address This Gap**

- Communication between the school districts and Orange County Department of Education ACCESS in ensuring that the student completes the school district's rehabilitation/readmission plan continues to be a challenge. In some cases, the challenge is evident when school districts do not directly or promptly share the student's rehabilitation/readmission plan with ACCESS, thus leaving this task to parents and students to provide.
- There continues to be a need to identify additional intervention services for students to meet the specific requirements of their rehabilitation/readmission plans especially when involving mental health services and attendance supports.
- During the expulsion term, students may not be offered the classes that are required for high school graduation or are unable to successfully/pass the high school required courses. Because of the limited offer of the high school graduation required course load, some students are credit deficient upon return to the school district's traditional program.
- For students with IEPs, coordinating the successful completion of the rehabilitation/readmission plan and obtaining school board approval before conducting the transition IEP meeting continues to be a challenge.

### **Service Gap 4: Mental Health Services**

Orange County school districts continue to experience an increased need for mental health services and a shortage of affordable and accessible student options for services. Notwithstanding, the progress the OC school districts have made in addressing student mental health services by hiring additional district and site-based personnel, providing ongoing training, establishing/extending provider contracts, providing telehealth services, and securing additional funding, the growth in the need for student services continues to outpace the provided services of the school district.

### **Progress since 2021**

The Orange County Department of Education will continue to work to promote school and community partnerships and professional development to address the mental health needs of students, especially in light of the effects of COVID-19. The development of Local Control Accountability Plans gives greater attention to the mental health needs of students and the county office will assist districts as they strive to find ways to address the social-emotional needs of their students and support the “*whole child*”. This is one of OCDE’s strategic initiatives articulated in its 2016 -2019 Strategic Plan. OCDE, which heads the California SUMS (Scale Up Multi-Tiered System of Support) initiative, continues to provide technical assistance to many Orange County School Districts in the areas of Academic, Behavioral, and Social/Emotional support. Orange County Department of Education continues to share local resources through network meetings, emails, and PADLETS. The Orange County Department of Education ACCESS program will continue to work with districts to identify and assist expelled students who have mental health needs and whose family needs resources to care for the whole child. To this end, ACCESS has several mental health clinicians. Orange County Department of Education ACCESS will continue to provide more intensive counseling services by licensed mental health professionals trained in **Trauma Informed Care** and Restorative Practice. In addition, Orange County Department of Education ACCESS mental health clinicians are trained in **Trauma-Focused Therapy**. The OCDE, Orange County SELPAs, and school districts continue to assess any gaps resulting from changes in the funding structures to ensure the availability of appropriate mental health services for all students expelled from school.

### **Ongoing Strategies for Addressing this Gap**

OCDE was awarded the **Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) Grant** in partnership with Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) through December 2024, to strengthen mental health partnerships between county mental health or behavioral health departments, community-based organizations, and Orange County school districts to increase access to mental health services and remove barriers to better serve our students and families in their mental health needs. Expected outcomes related specifically to serving and supporting expelled students are as follows:

- Improving timely access to services (*Coordinating services for school districts with other county-wide K-12 services providers, including OCDE, and County Mental Health and Recovery Services*)
- Reducing barriers to needed services (*Supporting in the development and revision of district mental health processes and protocols and guiding improvements to district protocols*)
- Vetting and creating resources and tools for school staff

- Increasing linkages to mental health services for districts
- Increasing training on mental health topics for educators, administrators, parents/families, and students (*Trainer of trainer opportunities for school-based mental health staff utilizing evidence-based approaches*)
- Improving awareness and understanding of mental health topics and knowledge of how to navigate services
- Reducing negative student outcomes (*e.g., effects of suspensions/expulsions on mental health, chronic sadness/depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, suicide rates, chronic absenteeism, school failure, etc.*)
- Providing Crisis response to support students, families, and school staff in collaboration with the Crisis Response Network Team
- Supporting Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) panels
- Conducting Group counseling and education for students (*e.g., Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in Schools [CBITS] and Bounce Back training for staff*)
- Hosting student presentations through WellSpaces
- Providing and Training for care coordination for individual students

To accomplish these goals as a Community of Practice, the grant provides funding for Regional Mental Health Coordinators (RMHC), Behavior Intervention & Mental Health Services Coordinator, Wellspace Coordinator, and Substance Use & Mental Health Services Coordinator under the supervision of an MHSSA Grant Program Manager.

In support of the school district's efforts to build infrastructure and staff capacity within the best practices according to the School-Based Mental Health Alliance, the MHSSA Grant Team has identified fully-vetted tools and provided support for the following school-based mental health programs:

- Trauma-informed schools that promote feelings of physical, social, and emotional safety in students. These resources will help develop a shared understanding among staff about the impact of trauma and adversity on students and staff.
- Suicide Prevention resources to assist with compliance with AB 2246 and AB 1767.
- School-Based Health Centers offer a full range of age-appropriate healthcare services, typically including primary medical care, mental/behavioral health care, dental/oral health care, health education, substance abuse counseling, case management, and nutrition education.
- The SHAPE System has the tools teams need to improve school mental health programming by providing school mental health quality assessment, a resource library,

custom reports, and a library of free and low-cost screening and assessment measures. The following guides align with the MHTTC National School Mental Health Curriculum.

- School mental health screening is a systematic process to identify the strengths and needs of students. It supports student identification who may be experiencing or are at risk of experiencing social, emotional, and/or behavioral difficulties. The following national resources provide screening measure examples and guidance on how to support youth with early identification strategies.
- School-Based Mental Health Programs from the county, state, and national resources guide the development, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of student mental health programs and services.
- Medi-Cal-funded services to fund and sustain school-based mental health services.

Moreover, to lower the student-to-mental health staff ratio and increase students' access to services, school districts have continued to hire more counselors, therapists, psychologists, social workers, clinicians/specialists, administrators/coordinators and increase the number of partnerships with community agencies to expand student access to mental health services, crisis response services, and special education services. Some school districts have shifted the duties and responsibilities of staff and provided additional training to include the delivery of mental health support services, threat assessment protocols, student safety plans, and community coordination/partnerships for mental health services for students. School districts have placed particular focus on at-risk students, low socio-economic students, Homeless and Foster Youth, LGBTQIA students, and students with irregular school attendance. Collaboratively, OCDE and Orange County school districts will continue to address the need for additional student mental health training and technical assistance for implementing behavior supports and strategies. To improve the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) strategies schoolwide, some districts have established School Climate Lead Teachers and Teams at each school site to enhance the collaboration and coordination of the multi-tiered framework of support for which they receive Team Booster Training, PBIS Technical Assistance, and Active Supervision from OCDE Systemic Leadership and Continuous Improvement Unit.

### **Challenges to Address This Gap**

- The distribution of community mental health resources and services, specifically mentorship services, are not equitably dispersed or available throughout the communities within the Orange County school districts.
- The rate of increase in the need for student mental health services continues to rise steadily; keeping pace with the need for services and support continues to be a budgetary and human resource challenge.

- Maintaining consistency and adequate staffing at the county level, district level, and school sites continues to be a challenge.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COUNTYWIDE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND BEST PRACTICES TO PREVENT &amp; ADDRESS SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS</b></p>
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Orange County schools seek to minimize the number of expulsions by establishing prevention and early intervention practices. School districts pursue a variety of strategies to educate students and establish a safe and caring climate to prevent student misconduct. When warranted, disciplinary measures are implemented consistent with district policies and procedures to ensure fair and consistent disciplinary measures. These efforts will continue to prevent any disproportionate representation of minority students recommended for expulsion.

Expulsions occur when student and campus safety is threatened or when other means of correction have not been successful. School districts engage in several preventive and proactive strategies including but not limited to the following:

- Adult Mentoring of Students
- After-school programs that address specific behavioral issues or expose pupils to positive activities and behaviors, including, but not limited to, those operated in collaboration with local parent and community groups.
- Alternate Suspension Classrooms (ATS)
- Annual Notice of Parent Rights and Responsibilities
- Anti-bullying Programs
- Any of the alternatives described in Section 48900.6 related to community service
- Athletic Drug Testing
- Automated Telephone Notifications
- Behavior Skills Group
- Brief Intervention Counseling (Substance Abuse Counseling)
- Canine Solutions for Contraband Canine School visits
- *Care Solace*, a mental health concierge service
- Character Counts
- Check-in, Check-out

- Classroom Management training for administrators and teachers
- Clifton Strengths Finder
- *Come Walk In My Shoes* (abilities awareness)
- Community Partnership
- Conferences between school personnel, the pupil's parent or guardian, and the pupil.
- Conflict Mediators/Conflict Resolution Services
- *Connect4Kids Psychological Services*
- *Coordinated Approach to Children's Health* (CATCH)
- *Crisis Response Network* (CRN)
- *Everfi* for restorative practices and modules to address student mental health and wellness
- Enrollment in programs for teaching prosocial behavior or anger management
- *Every 15 Minute Program*
- *Friday Night Live*
- *Gang Resistance Intervention Partnership* (GRIP)
- Grad Night Activities
- Hazel (Tele-) Health
- Homework Clubs
- In-school Suspensions
- Juvenile Alcohol and Drug Education (JADE), PRYDE Program, Outreach Concern, Straight Talk, Western Youth Services and Other Community Counseling Partnerships
- Kindness Assemblies
- Link Crew
- Mindfulness practice/implementation of Mindful Mondays
- Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework (MTSS Continuum of Support)
- Online Classes and Credit Recovery Opportunities
- Other Means of Correction (OMC) and early intervention training for administrators and teachers
- Outreach Concern
- Parent Meetings and Information Nights

- *Pathways* program through California Youth Services
- *Peace Week* (Anti-bullying week)
- *Peer Assistance League* (PAL)
- Peer Court
- Police Cadet Programs
- *Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports* (PBIS)
- Random Acts of Kindness
- *Red Ribbon Week*
- Referrals for comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment, including for purposes of creating an individualized education program, or a plan adopted pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794(a)).
- Referrals to the school counselor, psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, or other school support service personnel for case management and counseling.
- Restorative Practices (RP)
- *Robyne's Nest*
- Safety Task Force
- St. Jude Hospital Grant
- Saturday School
- *Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System
- School-based Trauma-Informed Care Perspective and Resources training for school personnel
- School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
- School Attendance Review Team (SART)
- School counseling website with online counseling for self- and peer-referral services
- School Postings and Notices
- Seneca Family of Agencies
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum vetted CASEL such as Second Step and Sanford Harmony
- Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit

- Student Behavior Contracts
- *Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program (SBHIP)*
- Student Clubs and Organizations
- Student Safety Plans
- Study teams, guidance teams, resource panel teams, or other intervention-related teams that assess the behavior, and develop and implement individualized plans to address the behavior in partnership with the pupil and his or her parents
- Successful Mind for School, Work, and Life
- Text-A-Tip
- *Thrively* (as an interests/strengths assessment and career explorer curriculum)
- *TUPE/DATE* activities
- Tutoring
- *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*
- Villages of California
- Violence Prevention Curricula
- Violence Prevention Education Services
- *WellSpace*
- Western Youth Services
- WEB (Where Everybody Belongs)

***In the unforeseen occurrence of school building closures, additional proactive and preventative strategies to address student disciplinary incidents while undertaking a Remote and Hybrid Learning model is as follows:***

- Care and Support Hotlines to share need-based district and community resources
- Distance Learning for credit recovery for students to meet the academic objectives of the Rehabilitation Plan
- District virtual calming rooms with multifaceted approaches to reduce stress, improve mood, and assist with academic functioning by addressing social emotional barriers
- Online Needs Surveys for staff, students, and families
- Teletherapy/telehealth for social-emotional support and stress reduction for students
- Virtual small group counseling sessions for students