



## Calaveras County Office of Education

### **CALAVERAS COUNTY PLAN FOR EXPELLED YOUTH**

Calaveras County is served by four public school districts, including one high school district, one unified K-12 school district and two K-8 school districts. Calaveras County is home to approximately 5,596 students (2016-17 count) who attend public schools. These young people have special talents, interests and needs as diverse as the county in which they live.

Educational programs within Calaveras County provide numerous opportunities for students who are in need of traditional and/or alternative education programs. School districts operate educational alternatives and the County Office offers a community school program.

A student who is in need of an educational alternative may access these programs through a designated referral process.

#### Education Code §48916.1

*Each county superintendent of schools in counties that operate community schools pursuant to §1980, in conjunction with superintendents of school districts within the county, shall develop a plan for providing education services to all expelled pupils in that county.*

#### Education Code §48916.1

*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 pupil who is subject to the expulsion order for the period of the expulsion, but only to the extent funds are appropriated for this purpose in the annual Budget Act or other legislation or both.*

#### Education Code §48926

*Provides specifically that: The plan shall enumerate existing educational alternatives for expelled pupils, identify gaps in educational 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.*

## **Overview**

School districts within Calaveras County are limited in respect to providing educational alternatives to expelled youth. All school districts have experienced many of the student behaviors that were once attributed only to students who attended schools in large urban school districts. Our school districts, however, are not experiencing large numbers of students who are exhibiting behaviors which result in expulsion.

The fact that large numbers of students are not being expelled from small school districts is naturally quite positive; however, it does create a situation where the development of either district or county specific classes or programs for these students is difficult financially and/or geographically.

Early intervention strategies or pro-active strategies are the major focus of the small district programs and the subsequent student success. Small school districts within Calaveras County provide early intervention strategies which include, but are not limited to, one-on-one counseling, student study teams, academic and emotional assessments, parent support meetings, in-school suspension, off-campus suspension, special education services, after-school activities, conflict management, student behavioral discipline contracts.

## **Existing Educational Alternatives for Expelled Youth**

School districts located within Calaveras County offer the following options for expelled youth:

- Behavior intervention practices at the site and district levels, and options used to:
  - Minimize the number of suspensions leading to expulsions
    - Tiered Discipline Ladder
    - Counseling or counselor on campus
    - Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
    - Multi-Tier Systems of Supports (MTSS)
    - Drug Prevention Counselor
    - Admin focus on strategic check-ins w/students receiving discipline points, consequences for behaviors.
    - Foster Youth Liaison
    - SST Process
    - Site Contract Process
    - District Contract Process
  - Minimize the number of expulsions being ordered
    - Use of school support staff to make sure due diligence is practiced and supports in place to be proactive vs. reactive.
    - School Counselors, School Psychologists, Admin Check-ins, Site Behavior Contracts

- Support students returning from expulsion
  - Supports in place before return.
  - Continuous monitoring of effect on student returning as well as others.
  - Use of support staff
  - Use of SST process
- Explanation on how those practices relate to any disproportionate representation of minority students in such interventions.
  - There has not been any disproportionality realized by any districts within Calaveras County. Districts monitor their data to identify any potential trends.
- Educational Alternatives currently available to expelled students.
  - Suspended expulsion with placement on the same school campus under the directive of a rehabilitation plan;
  - Suspended expulsion with placement on district or county contracted independent/home study, if the parent agrees; or
  - Expulsion with referral to the Calaveras County Office of Education Court/Community School.

### **Gaps in Educational Services**

There are five major gaps that exist in respect to providing educational services to expelled pupils:

- 1) A student could be expelled from a district under Education Code §48915 and referred to either a community day school or Court/Community School program. The student could then commit another violation of Education Code §48915, or simply not attend and ultimately be referred back to the original district.
- 2) School districts within Calaveras County generally expel very few students during the course of a school year; however, a special class or program for such students at each district is not financially possible (especially community schools which are funded based on ADA).
- 3) Students who are expelled by individual small school districts and by the combined school districts within Calaveras County vary as to age, grade level and expulsion offenses. The age and grade span alone, under current California Education Code, would require separate community day school sites for the limited number of expelled students in grades K-6 and 7-12. Schools within Calaveras County have only expelled one student in grades K-5 in recent history, Calaveras River Academy is the Community School providing a solution for grades 6-12. If a solution in grades K-5 is needed it will be provided on an individual basis by the expelling district (see EC 1981).

- 4) There are significant geographical distances between local districts, thus district or county operated classroom sites/programs for school districts would require either extensive busing, which is financially difficult for the district, or parent provided transportation, which is often impossible for the parents.

### **Strategies for Addressing Identified Gaps in Services**

The strategies for addressing the identified gaps in educational service for expelled youth are:

- 1) Use existing district educational strategies to meet the needs of students who are under suspended expulsion (*not all interventions are offered at all school sites*).
  - a. Implement a tiered discipline system that provides behavioral intervention options
  - b. Teacher/student conferences; parent contact; conferences with admin; site expectations contract that outline expectation for behavior.
  - c. Tiered system also provides consequences such as detention; alternate classroom time; and Saturday school participation in lieu of out of school suspension.
  - d. In addition to tiered discipline policy, teachers are provided specific guidelines for addressing classroom misconduct - communication with students and parents is key with regard to all policies and practices in place.
  - e. Student team meetings to address any academic, behavior, or attendance concerns – use of informal behavior support plans with the help of counseling staff to address poor behavior as well as recognizing positive behavior.
  - f. School Counselor provides support and social skill education to students identified as ‘at risk’ behaviorally.
  - g. Calaveras County Mental Health referrals
  - h. Referrals to the Calaveras County Office of Education School Attendance and Review Board (SARB) are made to access county services and support for students who are out of control behaviorally.
  - i. Student and family referrals to the Calaveras County Office of Education Mentor Program.
- 2) To refer expelled students to the Calaveras County Court and Community School for grades 6-12. Community School will be an option for those students who have transportation to school sites and contracted independent/home study may be an option for those students who cannot arrange transportation.

### **Placement/Rehabilitation Plans**

Students who are expelled (and then the expulsion is suspended) will be provided with the following educational options: The school district of residence continues to maintain responsibility for developing a rehabilitation plan for the student, referring the student to an

appropriate educational setting and ensuring that an educational program is provided to the student.

Expelled students who are referred to the Calaveras County Office of Education's Community School will have an Individual Learning Plan developed with staff. Part of this plan will include a review of what is needed to return to the school district of residence. Student study teams, alternative placements, and alternative strategies will be developed with the court and community school staff for those students who have difficulty meeting the terms and conditions of their district-directed rehabilitation plan.

Calaveras River Academy is the school of referral for expelled youth. Calaveras River Academy (CRA) serves as an alternative school for students in grades 6-12 who reside in Calaveras County. The focus of the Community School is to remediate identifiable weaknesses with the students known strengths while building self-image and personal worth.

CRA believes in the worth of each student and strives to meet each individual's needs. Emphasis is also placed on community services and numerous activities are organized that involve students directly with community projects.

### **WASC Accreditation**

Calaveras River Academy is WASC accredited.