

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Utah State Board of Education

FROM: Aaron Brough
Data and Statistics | Chief Privacy Officer

DATE: May 12-13, 2016

DISCUSSION: Rubric for Process of Designating an Alternative or Special Needs School

Background:

R277-497-6 allows for an exemption to School Grades for Alternative and Special Needs schools. The Standards and Assessment Committee requested staff to present reworked rubrics to use when considering a school for an alternative school designation.

Board Strategic Plan:

This item supports the following imperative(s) and strategies in the Board's strategic plan:

- Imperatives: I. Educational Equity, II. Quality Learning
- Strategies: Accountability and Educational options

Anticipated Action:

It is anticipated the Standards and Assessment Committee will review and the rubric and make recommendations to the Board for approval of the process.

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R277-496-6 Procedure to Designate an Alternative or Special Needs School



Prepared by the
Utah State Office of Education

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Defining Alternative Schools

The large and/or traditional school environment are becoming less effective for increasing numbers of students. Research shows this is especially true for at-risk, vulnerable, and disengaged students.

Alternative schools are schools established for the purpose of serving youth who are not succeeding in a traditional school environment. These schools have instructional programs that utilizes successful alternative or adaptive school structures and teaching techniques. Alternative schools are commonly described as having smaller enrollments and are primarily designed for high school age students, (although they may be designed to serve younger students).

District School

District have historically developed and designated one or more schools as their alternative school(s) and have put in district wide policies and procedures to refer a student by school administrators, counselors, or another designated school team.

Local district boards designate their alternative schools. District School Board and Superintendent should submitted once every three years to the State Board of Education the list of schools designated as "Alternative School" for the School Grades exception.

Charter Schools

Charter schools that are seeking "Alternative School" designation need to present to the State Board of Education the reason why the Board should consider accepting the application. The Charter representative should attempt to answer the following:

- How the school is designed to meet a variety of needs including preventing students from dropping out of school, providing another educational option, serving as a disciplinary consequence, or providing academic/behavioral remediation.
- What are the criteria for enrollment (e.g., students may be admitted as a result of suspension or expulsion or they must meet some form of at-risk criteria).
- How and if the school is designed to serve students for varying amounts of time (e.g., short- term placement and transition back to traditional school; long-term commitment through graduation).
- If the school has educational programs that typically include one or more of the following:
 - an emphasis on individual instruction,
 - a focus on basic academic skills,
 - Social services (e.g., counseling or social skills instruction),
 - Community or work-based learning.

Once a Charter school is accepted as an "Alternative School", a renewal application will need to be submitted to the State Board of Education every three years with the reason the school should remain being classified as an alternative school.