

Mariposa County Office of Education



Mariposa County Unified School District

Plan for Provision of Educational Services to Expelled Students

**Triennial Update
June 30, 2015**

MARIPOSA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
MARIPOSA COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EXPELLED YOUTH

**TRIENNIAL UPDATE
2015-2018**

The Mariposa County Unified School District and the Mariposa County Office of Education are separate Local Educational Agencies. However, Mariposa County Unified School District is the only district served by the Mariposa County Office of Education. The services described below address the needs of expelled students from both MCUSD and MCOE.

OVERVIEW

The Mariposa County Unified School District fosters a learning environment which reinforces the concepts of self-discipline and the acceptance of personal responsibility. We recognize that not all students will adhere to district rules for appropriate behavior. Sufficient support services shall be provided so that continually disruptive students will not be returned to regular classes without some modification of behavior.

The administration, teachers and classified staff share the mutual responsibility for student conduct and safety and the enforcement of district policies and regulations. Discipline is handled equitably throughout the school district. Corrective action is taken whenever a student violates a discipline rule of the school or district. Various levels of consequences may be implemented prior to suspension. Consequences may include conferences, behavior contracts, recess restriction, detention, and on-campus suspension. Continued violations or acts of a severe nature may lead to suspension or expulsion.

All students who are involuntarily transferred or expelled to the Alternative Education Complex are placed under a Discipline Contract which is written by the Director of Human Resources and Student Services. The contract specifies behavioral and performance standards established for the student. When the circumstance of the contract is based on an expulsion, the contract will include the terms of the Rehabilitation Plan of the pupil's Expulsion Order. Sanctions for failure to meet the contract standards are also specified in the contract. A copy of the Discipline Contract is attached (Attachment A).

2015-2018 EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EXPELLED PUPILS

The Mariposa County Office of Education provides educational options for students who are expelled from district or county schools. No programs are currently offered through the Mariposa County Unified School District. The following programs are available for students when it is determined that students will need an alternative placement under the terms of their expulsion order.

❖ County Community School

Students Served: Grades 7-12

Serving students in the grades 7-12, County Community School provides a daily program of 240 instructional minutes for as a placement option for students who may be referred through expulsion or other means. Instruction is provided through a seat-based model where students are given course assignments on a daily basis. This program is based on MCUSD curriculum and academic graduation requirements to maintain continuity for all students regardless of their placement. The educational progress of each student is identified by the completion of assignments as determined by the teacher. An independent study model is also available for students being served in this program, when the placement is deemed suitable.

Instruction for students who are receiving Special Education services are also provided by the County Community School and have two components: the Independent Study model and a seat-based program. Program placement is carefully evaluated and implemented through staff and county processes for the Special Education program to ensure the appropriate setting and individual educational services. Under the direction of the Director of Special Education, supplementary instructional support is provided to each student based upon his/her IEP and is provided by the regular classroom teacher in conjunction with the District RSP teacher.

Aligned with Mariposa County Unified School District transportation system practices, transportation is provided for eligible seat-based students. Transportation is not provided for the independent study model of the County Community School.

❖ Elementary Opportunity Class

Students Served: Grades K-8

MCOE Elementary Opportunity Class (EOC) provides a daily, seat-based program founded on MCUSD curriculum and academic requirements. The EOC program specifically allows for the distinction of younger students from the high school populace, providing services in relation to age, maturity, and educational content. Although this program serves grades K-8, the program supplies a placement for students who are expelled from grades 4-8. Students enrolled in grade 3 and under are not subject to expulsion proceedings and other strategies are implemented when incidents occur.

Under the direction of the Director of Special Education, instruction for students who are receiving Special Education services is based upon the student's IEP, and is provided by the classroom teacher in conjunction with the District RSP teacher.

Transportation is provided for the EOC student body via the Mariposa County Unified School District transportation system.

❖ Community Day Schools

Special Notation on Community Day Schools: Mariposa County Unified School District has suspended the use of the Community Day School Program. The district is reconfiguring the alternative education program for 2015-2018 goals. In line with this evaluation, the district is evaluating expulsion proceedings for more serious violations and alternative strategies for

education code violations that are minor offenses and discretionary in nature. A district goal is to reduce the overall expulsion rate in Mariposa County.

❖ Other Educational Options: *Suspended Expulsion Enforcement*

The Mariposa County Governing Board of Trustees authorizes suspended enforcement options upon the ratification of an expulsion, as prescribed by education code and when warranted. A suspended enforcement may result in the following educational options:

- ◇ Suspended enforcement of the expulsion with the placement of the student at their current school site under a rehabilitation plan.
- ◇ Suspended enforcement with a placement at the County Community School or Elementary Opportunity Class under a rehabilitation plan.
- ◇ Suspended enforcement through an independent study option and under a rehabilitation plan, if allowed by the Administrative Hearing Panel and chosen as an option by the parents of the pupil.

Special Education services are based upon the student's IEP and are incorporated in to the educational program and rehabilitation plan.

2015-2018 BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PRACTICES & STRATEGIES

The Mariposa County Unified School District and Mariposa County Office of Education acknowledges that suspensions and expulsions may be required; however, neither are the primary tactic when looking for a positive school climate or in maximizing educational opportunities. The district and county aspire to incorporate behavior prevention and intervention strategies and practices as the first step in reducing the rate of suspensions and expulsions at all schools in county and district jurisdiction.

❖ Best Practices of Behavioral Intervention Approaches at District and Sites

Mariposa County Unified School District and County Office of Education work closely together with school sites, the Special Education Department, and with county agencies to help support students and their learning environment. MCUSD and MCOE utilize multiple support strategies to minimize the number of suspensions and expulsions in the district through prevention and intervention strategies.

- ✓ Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, the school district has partnered with the Mariposa County Probation Department to receive the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, a federal grant that is designed to fund projects that will reduce school violence, reduce gang involvement, provide detention alternatives to low-risk juveniles, and to increase graduation rates. These funds will assist in Project School Climate and the probation department drug task force. This grant funding will allow the district to fund one full-time Behavior Specialist and two full-time elementary counselors for 2 ½ years. The district plans to maximize individual student services with a focus on students with intensive needs. The addition of this staff will help provide consultation and training to parents and staff and to assist the leadership team in developing school-wide systems of positive behavior support. The district feels that this strategy will greatly increase intervention practices in all schools.
- ✓ The addition of a Director of Human Resources and Student Services in the 2014-2015 school year along with plans to hire a full-time coordinator as support staff for the Human Resources and Student Services Departments in the 2015-2016 year will establish staff dedicated to the Student Services Department, which has not been an option for the district in recent years. The concentrated efforts of both staff members will provide more focus on alternative education programs, student assistance, intervention, and efficient and effectual SARB and expulsion processes to minimize suspensions and expulsions and to maximize support. In the 2014-2015 school year, no new expulsion recommendations were brought to the school board for review. This was a direct result of changes being implemented through the Student Services department review of site-level incidents and discipline procedures.
- ✓ At the site level, Student Study Teams (SSTs) are created when a student's behavior warrants site intervention. SSTs involve multiple personnel and staff at the site level, including administrative staff, the student's teacher or teachers, counseling staff, and Special Education staff as applicable. County representatives may also be present to help provide additional services. The SST involves both the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) to create a collaborative effort to help the student and the negative behavior. A series of SSTs may follow depending on the student.

- ✓ Each site allows for parent/guardian meetings throughout the school year to help work with families outside of SSTs to encourage the lines of communication to remain open between the school and home.
- ✓ A uniform Behavior and Discipline Contract is utilized by school sites when needed, usually in conjunction with an SST meeting or as a result of the outcome of the meeting. The contract is meant to create concrete guidelines for the student to understand and abide by.
- ✓ When a meeting, contract or change in placement becomes necessary for a student, an academic assessment is made to help best determine the needs of the student academically. This information and evaluation is provided by staff at both school sites to ensure the best collaboration in planning and assistance.
- ✓ Whether a student currently requires an assessment for Special Education Services or is already receiving services, the Special Education Department works with the student, family and school to help accommodate the individual needs of the student and help with additional behavior intervention strategies.
- ✓ An Indian Education Liaison is available in the district to provide additional support to families of American Indian heritage and to bridge cultural gaps.
- ✓ The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The Student Services Department provides support and resources to the school districts in the Mariposa County Unified School District to implement McKinney-Vento. The Student Services department facilitates enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth. Liaisons are provided throughout the district to assist homeless youth while enrolled in Mariposa County schools.
- ✓ Additional support is provided for foster youth in the Mariposa County school system with the aim to also facilitate the enrollment, attendance and success of foster youth.
- ✓ MCUSD and MCOE has also adopted a county-wide program, Project Respect, which works in the schools and in the community to reduce bullying and conflicts among youth and to promote positive social relationships. Project Respect continues to be a powerful prevention strategy for student behavior for the district.
- ✓ When a student does require suspension or expulsion in spite of site and district practices, each student is given an individual transition plan and contract to help the student take responsibility for their actions and education. Additional support staff is available to help during this transition.
- ✓ In the 2012-2013 school year, the county expanded Behavior Intervention Class (BIC) opportunities to reach a broader range of the student body. The BIC program is provided to students in grades 4-8 and grades 9-12 in separate classroom settings in order to provide more grade-specific and age-appropriate educational focus. Students with more intensive behavior monitoring needs may be placed in one of the BIC classrooms. The BIC program has assisted in the reduction of suspensions and expulsions and has multiplied alternative disciplinary options county-wide.

❖ Best Practices: Support for Minority Students

These combined approaches serve to affectively improve negative behavior in many cases, and the strategies are used to minimize expulsions and to strongly support students before and after expulsions.

including the minority student population. These programs and procedures are provided to all students in the district and school sites unilaterally. While disciplinary decisions remain individualized depending on the gravity of the circumstances, consideration of how to maximize student success is a priority. Policies and practices to prevent, intervene, suspend and expel are uniformly applied and students are given fair and equitable educational services and opportunity to succeed. Intentional discrimination is prohibited in any form and consistency in policies will at all times be enforced through sites and be under review of the Human Resources and Student Services departments through the county office regularly. Assessment of programs and policies are regularly conducted.

The methods of investigation used in all situations that may lead to discipline measures will be applied by well-trained administrative staff and only sufficient evidence will be used in discipline determination. When infractions of equal caliber and unvarying circumstances occur (for instance, number of past offences, age at time of offence, and when and where the offence occurred and the relation it has to the disruption of the educational process does not differ), the method of determining discipline will also not vary and students will be fairly treated. To ensure compliance in these procedures, administrative staff (“leadership”) meets at least monthly and is trained in these procedures throughout the year so that best practices are well-understood. Administration is responsible to train staff at their school site(s) so that all staff is trained appropriately.

❖ Supplemental Programs

When supplemental programs are available and relevant, the Mariposa County Unified School District integrates community agency services to assist in the rehabilitation plan of a pupil. The following programs or services are available throughout the county and/or district:

- ◇ Mariposa County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services individual and family counseling services.
- ◇ Mariposa County Probation Department programs, including supervision, alcohol and drug awareness for parents and teens, and a truancy intervention program.
- ◇ Regional Occupational Programs classes.
- ◇ Additional community services for specified students and for those who are on probation.

The district continues to seek new resources and alternative options through community, state and federal options to provide supplemental assistance.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT GAPS AND STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Mariposa County has experienced increasing success through the identification of educational gaps and the evaluation of necessary strategies and outcomes.

❖ Special Education Students

◇ **GAP Identified in 2009:**

Alternative Education programs do not offer a wide variety of placement options for Special Education students recommended for expulsion or suspended expulsion.

◇ **2009 Strategy Implemented:**

The Alternative Education Site works closely with the Mariposa County Office of Education Special Education Department to develop objectives for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to meet the student's needs in the placement that is determined by the Administrative Hearing Panel. The Special Education Department will allocate resources for students as specified in the IEP. Special Education students may be referred to an appropriate placement in a neighboring district.

◇ **2012 Outcomes:**

Mariposa County schools continue to lack a wide variety of placement options for Special Education students; however, the current program structure has been successful in integrating student's needs as specified in the IEP.

◇ **2012 Strategies Implemented:**

The Alternative Education program was restructured and relocated to create an Alternative Education Complex. This complex allowed for more coordination and to pool resources to help all students in the Alternative Education setting. Special Education staff and Alternative Education staff became more readily able to work in conjunction with each other based on IEPs, student contracts and determinations of placement.

Mariposa County was also planning on creating a Behavior Intervention Class (BIC) for students at the high school level (BIC already existed for students below the 9th grade, for grades 4-8). Students with more intensive behavior monitoring needs had an option to be placed in one of the BIC classrooms.

◇ **2015 Outcomes:**

Mariposa County has successfully implemented the BIC program for students grades 4-12, with students divided by grade levels 4-8 and 9-12. The BIC program has been highly successful in diverting students who would have been on a traditional expulsion pathway due to specific behaviors and instead allows students to enter a program with specified approaches and a stronger support team through teachers and counselors. This strategy has kept students in a seat-based classroom and has increased educational opportunities while reducing expulsions.

◇ **2015 Strategies Implemented:**

Through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, the addition of a Behavior Specialist will provide behavior support at all sites, for special education students as well as the entire student populace. The specialist will enhance staff trainings and provide positive behavior support. The overall expansion of behavior support programs throughout the county and the partnership that has been gained with the Mariposa County Probation Department is valued to provide ever-growing community support.

❖ Programs for Young Expectant Minors / Pregnant Teens

◇ **GAP Identified in 2009:**

No specific programs exist in MCUSD/MCOE for pregnant teens.

◇ **2009 Strategy Implemented:**

- Students may remain in their current placement.
- Students may enroll at the continuation school.
- Students may enroll in independent study if the student's parent or guardian chooses this optional program.
- Students may be referred to Mariposa Counseling Center or other county agencies.

◇ **2012 Outcomes:**

The Mariposa Counseling Center ceased to exist in the area; however, the Mariposa County Human Services Department continued to offer counseling services for residents of Mariposa County. County agencies remain a valuable and helpful resource in such cases, and continued outreach and partnership with county agencies is beneficial to MCUSD and MCOE students.

◇ **2012 Additional Strategies Implemented:**

A full time Alternative Education counselor became available for all students attending the Alternative Education/continuation school in the Fall semester of 2012. Both the district and county foresaw that this would become strategically successful for students in need of counseling services at the Alternative Education programs.

◇ **2015 Outcomes:**

Over the 2012-2015 period, the full time counselor was placed part time for the Alternative Education program and part time for the Special Education Department. This had become necessary in order to assist students through the BIC program, while still providing adequate support to expectant minors.

◇ **2015 Strategies Implemented:**

Mariposa County plans to continue the employment of the full time counselor and to have services reach both the Special Education Department and the Alternative Education Program. This position has been successful and will continue to be successful when working in conjunction with the Behavior Specialist in the 2015 school year. Evaluation at the end of the JAG grant will determine if a restructure of counseling and behavior services will be warranted at the time of the next triennial.

In 2015, expectant teen mothers will enroll at the continuation school on a modified schedule in order to provide educational support and expand support strategies to assist teen mothers.

❖ Expelled students who are elementary school age (limited numbers)

◇ **GAP Identified in 2009:**

Due to the small and scattered numbers, no Community Day Class (District-operated) exists. K-8 Community School (county-operated) serves some students.

◇ **2009 Strategy Implemented:**

In cases involving expelled or suspended expulsion students in grades K-8, pupils were placed in the Mariposa County Office of Education Elementary Opportunity Program located on the Alternative Education Site. The Alternative Education Principal/Categorical Programs Director prepared a Discipline Contract for the

expelled student. The expelled student was enrolled in the Elementary Opportunity Class for the time period stated in the Discipline Contract. Transfer back to the regular instructional program at the receiving school was dependent on the fulfillment of the conditions in the Discipline Contract.

◇ **2012 Outcomes:**

In general, the 2009 plan implementation had successfully assisted students in matriculating back in to their regular education program. The Elementary Opportunity Class (EOC) was successful in working with students who had different age-related needs from those at the high school level. The numbers continued to remain small and scattered for students in these grade levels and the EOC remained a more appropriate setting for elementary age school children.

◇ **2012 Strategies Implemented:**

Community Day School was restructured to include grades 7-8 in appropriate cases/circumstances. Data showed that this change was beneficial for some students. Only K-6 students remain without a Community Day School, and the numbers of students at this grade level remain small and scattered in the county.

◇ **2015 Outcomes:**

As of the end of the 2014-2015 school year, expulsions became incredibly infrequent for students in grades K-8. Furthermore, Mariposa County does not expel students in grades K-3 and continues to foresee this as district/county practice. As such, an expulsion plan is only needed at the 4-8 level.

◇ **2015 Strategies Implemented:**

As part of a restructure plan in January 2015, Mariposa County no longer provides the option of a Community Day School program for students. County Community has been restructured to include grades 7-8 should there be the need due to the expulsion of a student, and EOC options remain available; however, the strategy of minimizing expulsions county-wide to only the most severe offences requires that expulsions of students in grades 4-8 continue to be managed under additional scrutiny through the Student Services Department to ensure that it is warranted. Considerations for alternative placements and increasing support are strategized to minimize expulsions and disruption to the educational services provided to each student.

❖ NEW GAP: Administrative Inconsistency

◇ **2015 GAP Identified:**

Due to cuts in the administrative department in previous years, MCUSD/MCOE has not had a designated Director of Student Services and has dealt with more recent administrator turnover at the Alternative Education Complex. This has not allowed for focused effort and consistency in the review of discipline, student behavior, and rehabilitation of students on expulsions.

◇ **2015 Strategy Implemented:**

Starting in January 2015, MCUSD/MCOE has restructured staffing to designate a full-time Human Resources and Student Services Director. In 2015-2016, a rollout of a fully-staffed department of staff dedicated to both Human Resources and Student Services will be a strategy to provide much stronger support services to students. Mariposa County aspires to reduce total expulsions in the district, to implement preventative and interceptive strategies, and to promote a more positive behavior support environment for all students. The restructure of the Student Services Department and the increase in staff designated to these services is a strategy to provide consistent services and better oversight.

FAILURE TO MEET THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF A REHABILITATION PLAN
OR
POSING A DANGER TO OTHER DISTRICT PUPILS

Though no longer providing the educational option of a Community Day School, Mariposa County continues to plan for situations in which a student may fail to meet the terms and conditions of a rehabilitation plan or who may continue to pose a danger to other pupils. All expelled student placements are evaluated at the end of each school term. In order to enroll in a regular school placement at the end of the expulsion period, the student and parent must enter into a Discipline Contract with the Director of Human Resources and Student Services.

Students who have failed their placement/rehabilitation program within county programs, or who continue to pose a danger to other pupils are recommended for an expulsion extension to the board in the same placement for an additional term, with supplemental support systems in place and a revisitation of the rehabilitation plan in order to assist the student in being able to return to their regular educational placement.

The Mariposa County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services staff remains available for visits to the Alternative Education Complex on an as-needed basis. Where appropriate, the student's Probation Officer is consulted to provide input and interventions to ensure the student's success. Based on court action, the expelled student may be placed in a group home setting in another county.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE FOR MARIPOSA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Regionally, Mariposa County Office of Education (MCOE) consists of one school district, the Mariposa County Unified School District (MCUSD). The Superintendent of Mariposa schools is the Superintendent for both the county and district schools. Due to the smaller nature of the district and county, communication is expedited between schools, the district and the county to ensure more collaboration and response for expelled students. Also due to the smaller nature of the district and county, Mariposa works closely in collaboration with county representatives and private agencies to provide as many services as possible and to create a support network for the students who are expelled from Mariposa County Schools.

Mariposa County Unified School District
5082 Old Highway, P. O. Box 8,
Mariposa, California 95338

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE CONTRACT

The terms and conditions of this contract have been determined by the District Hearing Officer resulting from the recommendation of the identified student for violation of district discipline and attendance policies.

Student Name _____ Grade ___ DOB _____
Parent Name: _____
Address: _____ Phone _____

Date of violation: See Discipline History Dates of Suspension: _____
Prior suspensions: EC Violation Date of Suspension

Contract Terms and Conditions:

The District Hearing Officer of MCUSD has determined that the above-named student shall be permitted to begin attendance at the School based on compliance with the following conditions:

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES		PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	
X	1. Attend all classes	X	1. Ensure student attendance at school
X	2. Follow all school rule and district policies	X	2. Provide verification of all student absences.
X	3. Demonstrate respect for students and school personnel.	X	3. Cooperate with school officials by following directions and providing information requested.
X	4. Cooperate with school officials by following directions and providing information requested.		4. Arrange for required counseling and student support services.
	5. Attend conflict resolution and/or anger management program.		ADDITIONAL CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS
	6. Obtain counseling services for identified conditions	X	1. Receive no site or bus discipline referrals or suspensions.
X	7. Complete all class assignments in a timely manner.	X	2. Maintain adequate progress towards graduation with a minimum "C" average in all classes.
X	8. Other student requirements	X	3. Maintain good attendance with no unexcused tardies or absences.

Comments: _____

This contract shall be in effect for the period of _____

Violation of one or more of the above-identified conditions will result in an immediate recommendation for expulsion or retention of the student at School for a period to be determined by the Director of Human Resources and Student Services.

I agree to the terms and conditions of this contract. I understand that my failure to comply with this contract will result in my being recommended for expulsion from the district.

Signatures

Student Date Parent/Guardian Date

Principal Date District Hearing Officer Date