

Alternative Education Fact Sheet
SRCS - Fall, 2025

Alternative Education Defined: Alternative Ed. is any program or school that is not the traditional comprehensive model. Everything from Santa Rosa Accelerated Charter, Art Quest, Ridgway Continuation HS, the Early College Magnet Program at PHS, the GRACE Program at PHS, to Cesar Chavez Language Academy all of these programs are alternative education.

Project Based Learning is a type of instructional strategy that takes considerable training. It can be done within different models of Alternative Education or at a comprehensive school site.

Alternative Ed. Models:

Community Day Schools	Serve high-risk youths, including those referred by expulsion, probation, or a School Attendance Review Board; provide challenging academic curriculum; and develop pro-social skills and resiliency. Run by school districts, meet 360 minute minimum requirement per day, low student to teacher ratio.
Continuation School	Serves students sixteen years of age and older who have not graduated from high school, are at risk of not graduating, and are not exempt from compulsory school attendance. Students attend for at least 15hrs per week or 3hrs per day, receive guidance and career counseling, and often provide flexible schedules for students with jobs.
Independent Study	Can serve students from K-12th grade. Independent study is an alternative to classroom instruction consistent with a local educational agency's course of study and aligned with State content standards. It is designed to respond to the pupil's unique educational needs, interests, aptitudes, and abilities within the confines of legal authority and school board policy.
Community School	Serves prekindergarten through grade twelve and has community partnerships that support improved academic outcomes, whole-child engagement, and family development. Community school partnership strategies include integrated supports services, extended learning time, and collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators.
Diploma Plus	Serves students fifteen years of age and older who have not reached their potential in a traditional secondary school setting and are at risk of not graduating from high school. Must meet all state requirements for graduation, program focused on development of life skills, work experience, and college credits.

Magnet Programs and Schools	Programs or schools offered through school districts to meet students' choice and enrollment needs. Focus on a special area of study like arts, science, or career education. These are meant to offer unique educational choices, to create a more balanced student populations, and/or to provide specialized instruction at one or more schools. These are open to enrollment by the entire district.
Opportunity Education	Serves students who are habitually truant, irregular in attendance, in need of behavioral supports, academically unsuccessful, or in need of a smaller and more individualized learning environment. Provides a supportive environment with specialized curriculum, instruction, guidance and counseling, psychological services, and tutorial assistance. Should not be viewed as a permanent placement for resistant learners but as a short-term intervention.
Charter	A charter school is a public school that may provide instruction in any combination of grades. The specific goals and operating procedures for a charter school are detailed in the agreement (charter). Legislature under state law that charter schools operate independently from the existing school district structure as a method to accomplish all of the following: improve pupil learning. increase learning opportunities for all pupils (with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving), encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, create new professional opportunities for teachers, provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities available, etc.
County Community	Run by County Offices of Ed. Serves students who are referred by a parent or a School Attendance Review Board, paroled, on probation, expelled, homeless, or not attending school.