

Signature/Specialized Programs Study Session

Educational Services
September 9, 2026

Purpose/Outcomes of Today's Study Session

1. Define the term SRCS will use to refer to signature/specialized programs
2. Grapple with some opportunities and dilemmas associated with signature/specialized programs
3. Consider policy implications

Definitions

Signature- local SRCS term, used to highlight the variety of programs offered at each secondary school

Specialized- Very broad definition from the California Department of Education (CDE) encompassing many types of programs, including charter schools, magnet schools, multilingual programs, IB, GATE, and adult education.

Alternative- Subset of specialized programs that provides a different means of attaining grade level objectives; where or how you attend school, like continuation or independent study programs

CTE- considered an integrated core curriculum framework, not a specialized or alternative program

Specialized vs. Alternative Programs

Feature	Specialized Programs (CDE Umbrella)	Alternative Education / Educational Options
CDE Definition	A broad branch of the CDE designed to oversee distinct student populations, student-parent partnerships, and unique federal/state grants.	A specific sub-branch under Specialized Programs providing flexible learning environments and instructional styles.
Primary Goal	Supporting specific student demographics (e.g., language, culture, exceptional needs) or specialized instruction.	Providing a different means of attaining regular grade-level objectives and preventing dropouts.
Core Examples	• Special Education • Multilingual Learners • Gifted & Talented Education (GATE) • Adult Education	• Independent Study • Continuation Education • Community Day Schools • Magnet Programs
Curriculum Flex	Driven by individual frameworks (e.g., IEPs for Special Education) or enrichment (GATE).	Uses alternate delivery strategies but must meet the <i>exact</i> same state curriculum and graduation standards.

Existing SRCS language from AR 5116.1

Introduced to address declining enrollment and to retain neighborhood students

The following programs are listed as “specialized programs” in AR 5116.1:

- Art Quest, Santa Rosa High School, 1994
- Early College Magnet, Piner High School, 2006
- University Center, Elsie Allen High School, 2005
- International Baccalaureate Program, Montgomery High School, 1995

What opportunities could Signature/Specialized or Alternative Programs create?

- Keep students at their neighborhood school
- Provide attractive options for parents to choose across the city
- Attract to students from other districts
- Offer more differentiated programming and alternative pathways for students

What dilemmas could Signature/Specialized or Alternative Programs create?

- Protected programs that serve a small number of students
- Enrollment impact across the city
- Specialized staffing, resource demands and curriculum, training and program costs
- Results from facilities and feasibility analysis

Resources for Sustainability

- School leadership support
- Section allocation aligned to program design
- Program coordinators
- Community partnerships, MOUs and agreements
- Special training and faculty buy-in
- Special credentials or certification
- Special facilities or transportation
- School site investment on top of district investment

Key Discussion Questions

1. What defines a specialized program in SRCS?
2. What are dilemmas and opportunities considered when developing policy?
3. What outcomes are the board is seeking from this policy?

Discussion



Appendix

Resources

[Signature program Board presentation, March 25, 2026](#)

[BP 6141: Curriculum Development and Evaluation](#)

[AR 6141: Curriculum Development and Evaluation](#)

[AR 6140.2: Curriculum and Curriculum Project Development](#)

[BP 6140.2: Curriculum and Curriculum Project Development](#)

[BP 6141.4: IB Program](#)

[BP 5116: Intradistrict Open Enrollment](#)

[AR 5116: Intradistrict Open Enrollment](#)

Enrollment Impact: 2026 - 2027 SY

How do our programs impact our internal enrollment or draw from outside the district?

Program	Resident	In District	Out of District	Total
Art Quest	124	202	35	361
Early College Magnet	348	115	1	464
University Program	58	20	1	79
International Baccalaureate	167	48	3	218

Enrollment Impact: 2025 - 2026 SY

How do our programs impact our internal enrollment or draw from outside the district?

Program	Resident	In District	Out of District	Total
Art Quest	219	219	34	355
Early College Magnet	332	100	2	434
University Program	67	27	1	95
International Baccalaureate	140	41	5	186

Enrollment Impact: 2024 - 2025 SY

How do our programs impact our internal enrollment or draw from outside the district?

Program	Resident	In District	Out of District	Total
Art Quest	71	164	22	257
Early College Magnet	242	70	2	314
University Program	49	12	2	63
International Baccalaureate	101	40	3	144

Enrollment Impact: Independent Study (ISP/AVISPA)

How do our programs impact our internal enrollment or draw from outside the district?

Independent Study	Resident	In District	Out of District	Total
2026-2027	61	17	1	79
2025-2026	84	35	1	120
2024-2025	53	15	2	70

Counts include students who are currently enrolled in ISP or who finished the school year in ISP