

Supplemental Memorandum

To: STATE BOARD MEMBERS

Date: April 25, 2003

From: Susan M. Bennett

Re: ITEM # 14

Subject Review of Entry Requirements for Alternative Schools Participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model

[Attachment I](#): Reconsideration of Entry Requirements for Alternative Schools Participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model (Pages 1-3)

Members of the State Board have requested that the criteria for alternative schools participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) be reviewed and made more rigorous. The Superintendent's Advisory Committee for the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) has reviewed the criteria and developed recommendations for Board information.

Reconsideration of Entry Requirements for Alternative Schools Participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model

Background. The Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) is a multiple-indicator system. By design, schools participating in the ASAM are held accountable not only for performance on the STAR Indicator/Academic Performance Index (API), but also for performance on several additional performance indicators. ASAM schools select the additional indicators appropriate to the student populations they serve from a list of 15 indicators approved by the State Board of Education (State Board). These additional indicators include, for example, measures of attendance, credits completed, courses completed, suspension, and – beginning in 2003-2004 – pre-post tests of achievement.

Under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act the ASAM schools, like all other schools, will be held accountable for adequate yearly progress (AYP) based on the percent of students who are proficient in reading and in mathematics. (See attached chart for a comparison of accountability as provided under NCLB for schools that are held accountable through the ASAM and for non-ASAM schools.)

A variety of schools serving high-risk students, including Community Day Schools, Continuation Schools, Opportunity Schools, Juvenile Court Schools, County Community Schools, and California Youth Authority (CYA) Schools are eligible to participate in the ASAM as it was established with State Board approval in 2000. These types of schools are all defined by the California Education Code. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) also specified that other “alternative schools” would be eligible to participate in the ASAM. The PSAA Committee recommended, and the State Board approved, participation of alternative schools in the ASAM if their school principal, district superintendent and local board president certified that they served a majority of students characterized by one or more of the following¹:

- classified as being at high risk for behavioral or educational failure,
- expelled or under disciplinary sanction,
- wards of the court
- pregnant and/or parenting,
- recovered dropouts.

The first of these criteria – high risk for behavioral or educational failure – has been further defined as follows:

“This refers to the characteristics of students served by Continuation Schools, Opportunity Schools, Community Day Schools, and County Court and Community Schools as distinguished from students served by low-performing schools.”

¹ The school principal, district superintendent and local board president must also certify that the school serves a majority of students that meet these criteria.

Questions have recently been raised about the appropriateness of the ASAM for certain of the “other alternative schools.” The concern is whether the criteria that “other alternative schools” have had to meet in order to participate in the ASAM have been sufficiently well defined and rigorous.

To address these concerns, the Subcommittee on Alternative Accountability considered the option of limiting participation in ASAM to only the following types of schools: Continuation Schools, Opportunity Schools, Community Day Schools, Juvenile Court Schools, County Community Schools, and CYA Schools. These specific types of alternative schools, their mission, and the student populations involved are defined by Education Code (“defined alternative schools”). The Subcommittee rejected this option because it would exclude “other alternative schools” that serve the same types of students that are served in the “defined alternative schools.”

The Subcommittee instead recommended revised entry requirements for “other alternative schools” to participate in the ASAM, as described below. The full Superintendent’s Advisory Committee on the PSAA unanimously concurred in this recommendation.

Recommendation for the State Board to Consider: Allow “other alternative schools” to participate in the ASAM if they meet the following two conditions:

1) Their specific mission is to serve high-risk student populations, defined as students who are or were²:

- expelled, suspended, or under disciplinary sanction,
- wards of the court,
- pregnant and/or parenting,
- recovered dropouts or at risk of dropping out,
- habitually truant or referred by a school attendance board (SARB) or other district-level referral process,
- one or more semesters behind in credits, or have been retained, or
- probation-referred.

2) Require that 70 percent (rather than a majority) of students meet these criteria.

These requirements would exclude those “other alternative schools” that couldn’t meet the newly tightened criteria, but would allow “other alternative schools” that serve the same types of students that are served in the “defined alternative schools” to participate in the ASAM.

² Notes that some of these criteria will require more explicit definitions. For example, “dropout” is defined for purposes of the California Basic Educational Data Systems (CBEDS) as a student who has left school for 45 consecutive days.

| Comparison of Accountability Requirements for ASAM Schools and Schools Non-ASAM Schools | | |
|--|--|--|
| School Size | ASAM Schools | Non-ASAM Schools |
| Schools of Sufficient Size for CDE to Determine AYP¹ | AYP API and ASAM Indicator data | AYP API |
| Schools Too Small for CDE to Determine AYP² | API ^{*3} Test results incorporated into district AYP and CDE provides technical support for district to determine school-level AYP using ASAM Indicator data | API ^{*3} Test results incorporated into district AYP and CDE provides technical support for district to determine school-level AYP |
| Schools Too Small for CDE to Determine AYP or Report API⁴ | Test results incorporated into district AYP and CDE provides technical support for district to determine school-level AYP using ASAM Indicator data ⁵ | Test results incorporated into district AYP and CDE provides technical support for district to determine school-level AYP ⁵ |

¹ Following California's *Accountability Workbook* proposal, the school must have at least 100 valid test scores from 100 or more students eligible for testing to meet annual measurable objectives in mathematics and English language arts.

² The school had fewer than 100 valid test scores for purposes of determining AYP, but for purposes of calculating an API it had more than 10 valid test scores and tested 85 percent of the eligible students in each content area.

³ API* published for disclosure purpose only.

⁴ The school had less than 11 valid test scores.

⁵ Data may need to be rolled up for two or three years.