

Santa Clara County
Alternative Schools Collaborative

ASC Final Report

February 24, 2004

Charge:

The Santa Clara County Alternative Schools Collaborative is an officially appointed committee of the Santa Clara County Board of Education. This report is prepared for presentation to the Santa Clara County Board of Education, and to the community of Santa Clara County.

Mission Statement:

The Alternative Schools Collaborative will develop a comprehensive alternative schools plan for Santa Clara County that includes (1) an examination of existing and prospective student audiences, (2) current and exemplary student programs, (3) recommendations for effectively serving targeted students, and (4) an outreach and advocacy strategy.

Purpose Statement:

To develop a long-term cooperative countywide system that is committed to serving, and advocating on behalf of, students in need of alternative educational placements, and which is designed to restore, maintain, expand and promote alternative educational programs.

Time Line and Benchmarks:

The Alternative Schools Collaborative recommends that the Santa Clara County Board of Education provide leadership in incorporating the best practices, vision statement and recommendations from this report in shaping the individual action plans at school districts, the Santa Clara County Office of Education, and other agencies that serve youth in need of alternative education. The Alternative Schools Collaborative recommends that beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, the Santa Clara County Office of Education and districts collaborate to decrease the number of drop-outs and students not in school by ten percent each year countywide. The Alternative Schools Collaborative recommends that the Santa Clara County Office of Education and districts collaborate to increase annually by ten percent the student enrollment at any given time served in alternative schools and programs countywide.

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Section I. Introduction

1. Background on the Formation of the Alternative Schools Collaborative

The Alternative Schools Collaborative (ASC) was brought together in the spring of 2003 by the Santa Clara County Board of Education, in response to community interest in issues impacting alternative education throughout the county. The purpose of the collaborative is to develop a long-term cooperative countywide system that is committed to serving, and advocating on behalf of, students in need of alternative educational placements, and which is designed to provide and promote alternative educational programs. The collaborative is comprised of members of the Santa Clara County Board of Education (SCCBOE), the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) staff, Office of the District Attorney, institutions, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, Santa Clara County Offices, California Teachers Association, school district board members and staff, special education, probation, students, and the general community.

2. ASC Membership

LEON BEAUCHMAN, ASC Chairman, *Santa Clara County Board of Education*

MARGARET ABE-KOGA, *Santa Clara County Board of Education*

BLANCA ALVARADO, *Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors*

MAXINE AMUNDSON, *Director of Alternative Schools, Santa Clara County Office of Education*

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MARC BULLER, *Assistant District Attorney, County of Santa Clara*

MIKE CARR, *Director of Student Services, San Jose Unified School District*

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LISSETTE MOLINA, *Student Representative, East Side Union High School District*
SANDRA NATHAN, *Deputy County Executive, County of Santa Clara*
REV. STEVE NORMAN, *People Acting in Community Together*
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DOUG SOUTHARD, *Director, Children's Shelter*
JENAPHER TOLLER, *Former Foundry School Student*
MARY TOLLER, *People Acting in Community Together*
LAURA VILLAGRAN-TRAYLOR, *People Acting in Community Together*
RON WOLSFELD, *People Acting in Community Together*

Group Facilitator: LARRY CARR, *Director of Governmental Affairs, Stanford University Medical Center*

Staff Support: Dennis Cima and Porter Sexton, *Santa Clara County Office of Education*

Section II. Students in Need of Alternative Educational Placements

1. Circumstances that Determine Need for Alternative Placement

Various circumstances place a student at risk of not succeeding in regular school programs, and may warrant consideration for placement in alternative programs. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Poor school attendance
- Poor grades
- Lack of grade appropriate skills
- Emotional or behavioral difficulties
- Personal circumstances that require greater flexibility in a school program
- Parenthood or expected parenthood
- Behind in credit for graduation
- Repeated failure to pass the high school exit exam
- Dropped out of school
- Dissatisfaction with regular high school program
- Incarcerated youth
- Removed, suspended, or expelled from school
- Limited extracurricular participation
- Failure to see the relevance of education to life experience
- Boredom with school
- Inability to tolerate structured instruction
- Feeling of alienation

- Mental health difficulties
- Foster youth
- Shelter children
- Different learning styles which fall short of eligibility for special education services

2. Demographics

The following table shows countywide high school-age enrollment in four categories: alternative (including institutional schools, continuation, community, teen parent, and independent study programs); public high school (including comprehensive, magnet, school-within-school, charter, and other high school programs); private high school (including parochial, non-parochial, and home school); and high school-age youths estimated to be not in school in Santa Clara County.

High School Enrollment	1999	2000	2001	2002	* 2003 (estimates)
Alternative	5,280	5,317	4,597	4,100	4,169
Public High	67,724	67,755	66,991	68,255	70,831
Private High	8,918	9,271	9,407	8,902	9,000
Not in School (estimates)	8,650	7,740	6,670	6,280	6,000
Total	90,572	90,083	87,665	88,308	90,000

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

Over the past few years, there have been enrollment increases at public high schools in the county. There has been a decrease in the number of high school-age youth in alternative programs. Current approximations also show a decline in the number of out-of-school high school youth, but these figures are more speculative, and still represent a significant portion (estimated over six percent) of our high school-age youth.

Of the over 70,000 students in public high school (not alternative high schools) it is estimated that as many as twenty percent, over 14,000 students, have one or more of the risk factors that indicate the student might benefit from an alternative placement or approach. The 2000 Census indicated that just under 80 percent of Santa Clara County residents obtain a high school diploma by age twenty-five.

3. Types of Alternative Placement and Students Served

Alternative programs such as institutional schools; high school continuation classes; academy, community, and teen parent programs; and independent study serve as linkages between the public high schools and the population of children not enrolled in school. While enrolled in these programs, these youngsters are counted as enrolled in public school. Various other programs such as magnet programs are sometimes referred to as alternative programs, but they do not serve this linkage function, and are therefore included above with comprehensive high school programs. The following table shows the approximate enrollment counts of students by program type as collected each fall on the date when all districts report enrollment.

Public High School	1999	2000	2001	2002	* 2003 (estimates)
Alternative Programs					
- Institutional Schools	520	511	459	440	369
- Continuation Classes	2,320	2,384	2,279	2,300	2,300
- Academy/Community/Parent	1,321	1,258	937	500	600
- Independent Study	1,119	1,164	922	860	900
Total	5,280	5,317	4,597	4,100	4,169

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

Institutional Schools – serve incarcerated youth and youth housed at institutions, foster care, and shelters.

High School Continuation Schools, Academies and Classes – serve youth with these circumstances:

- Poor grades
- Lack of grade appropriate skills
- Behind in credit for graduation
- Repeated failure to pass the high school exit exam
- Dissatisfaction with regular high school program

Community Schools and Community Day Schools – serve youth with these circumstances:

- Poor school attendance
- Lack of grade appropriate skills
- Behind in credit for graduation
- Emotional or behavioral difficulties
- Personal circumstances that require greater flexibility in a school program
- Dropped out of school
- Dissatisfaction with regular high school program
- Limited extracurricular participation
- Failure to see the relevance of education to life experience
- Boredom with school
- Inability to tolerate structured instruction
- Feeling of alienation
- Mental health difficulties
- Foster youth
- Shelter children
- Different learning styles which fall short of eligibility for special education services

Teen Parent Programs – serve youth who are parents or expectant parents.

Independent Study Programs – serve youth with these circumstances:

- Personal circumstances that require greater flexibility in a school program meeting an array of needs such as mental health, recovery, financial, transportation, family circumstances, etc.
- Behind in credit for graduation
- A bridge to enrollment in a day class school to include but not limited to group home and foster care youth
- Unable to enroll in a school due to unavailable program placement or funding
- Inappropriate behavior
- Inability to tolerate structured instruction
- Feeling of alienation
- Mental health difficulties

Section III. Alternative Educational Placements

1. Current Alternative High School Placements in Santa Clara County

Community Schools serve students at risk of not graduating from high school due to behavioral problems, often associated with involvement with drugs or alcohol. Generally they provide a social structure in a small school setting, providing focused intervention and counseling services to support behavioral improvement as well as academic growth. Community Day Schools are similar to Community Schools, but offering an extended instructional day by providing 120 additional minutes of instruction daily.

Community School	High School District	Fall 2002 Enrollment *
Community Day	Fremont Union	17
Gilroy Community Day	Gilroy Unified	14
Crossroads Community Day	San Jose	14
Middle College High	San Jose	63
San Jose Community High	San Jose	60
County Community Schools	Santa Clara COE	226
Foundry Community Day	Santa Clara COE	52

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

Continuation High Schools serve students who are not succeeding in school or who have dropped out of school. They generally offer a broad-based curriculum that includes personalized instruction, work experience, vocational classes, mentoring, counseling, service learning and a variety of delivery systems, and often have a personalized learning plan for each student. Continuation High Schools are often provided as “school-within-a-school” on the campus of a comprehensive high school. Continuation High Schools also include academies. Academies are small, highly structured schools targeting students with behavioral issues and/or students who prefer (or whose parents prefer) a more structured atmosphere. The structured day provides students with educational and vocational programming, life skill education, counseling and recreational activities. An emphasis is placed on practicing behaviors that lead to personal and academic success.

Continuation High School	High School District	Fall 2002 Enrollment *
Blackford High	Campbell	116
Apollo High	East Side Union	78
East Side Cadet Academy	East Side Union	79
Foothill High	East Side Union	522
Genesis High	East Side Union	71
Pegasus High	East Side Union	121
Phoenix High	East Side Union	71
Cupertino High	Fremont Union	14
Fremont High	Fremont Union	23
Homestead High	Fremont Union	14
Lynbrook High	Fremont Union	9
Monta Vista High	Fremont Union	2
Mount Madonna High	Gilroy Unified	178
Saratoga High	Los Gatos-Saratoga	12
Calaveras Hills	Milpitas	217
Central High	Morgan Hill	91
Alta Vista High	Mountain View-Los Altos	139
Broadway High	San Jose	190
Community Career Academy	San Jose	12
Gunderson Plus	San Jose	39
Leland Plus	San Jose	40
Pioneer Plus	San Jose	40
San Jose High Academy Plus	San Jose	40
Willow Glen Plus	San Jose	41
New Valley Continuation High	Santa Clara Unified	153

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

Independent Study Programs target students who are unable to attend a comprehensive high school by providing an individualized program of study. Students must voluntarily choose independent study as their educational program and are generally required to meet individually with a credentialed teacher for at least one hour per week. Coursework is completed on a contractual basis and credits may be awarded for subject mastery as well as project completion. Independent study is sometimes assigned for those who are unable to enroll in high school or alternative schools due to timing in mid-semester, unavailability of program placement or funding, and inappropriate behaviors.

Independent Study Program	High School District	Fall 2002 Enrollment
Blackford High	Campbell	56
Piedmont Hill High	East Side Union	12
Independence High	East Side Union	24
James Lick High	East Side Union	13
Mount Pleasant High	East Side Union	7
Oak Grove High	East Side Union	15
Overfelt High	East Side Union	13
Piedmont High	East Side Union	9
Santa Teresa High	East Side Union	3
Silver Creek High	East Side Union	3

Yerba Buena High	East Side Union	5
Gilroy High	Gilroy Unified	34
Mount Madonna High	Gilroy Unified	2
Los Gatos High	Los Gatos-Saratoga	3
Calaveras Hills	Milpitas	14
Milpitas High	Milpitas	59
Live Oak High	Morgan Hill	42
Moffett High	Mountain View-Los Altos	40
Gunn High	Palo Alto	1
Palo Alto High	Palo Alto	18
Liberty High	San Jose	208
County Community School	Santa Clara COE	13
Wilson Alternative	Santa Clara Unified	235

Juvenile Justice Institutions serve students in juvenile facilities and licensed children’s institution and provide a structured educational program that combines basic academics, counseling, and targeted instruction coordinated with the student’s home school district. The SCCOE operates an institutional school for incarcerated youth – the following are SCCOE school sites accounted for in the enrollment figure for Juvenile Hall listed below: Juvenile Hall, Holden, Wright, Blue Ridge, and Alternative Placement Academy. The SCCOE also operates an institutional school at the county’s children’s shelter, which offers an alternative educational program to children residing there.

Institutional School	High School District	Fall 2002 Enrollment *
Juvenile Justice Institutions	Santa Clara COE	557

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

Opportunity Schools provide additional opportunities for students to pursue alternative approaches to learning and earning high school credits within the high school setting. These are generally “on campus” programs that provide core courses to a group of students within the regular high school. Students are there by request and often transition back into the comprehensive high school program.

Opportunity School	High School District	Fall 2002 Enrollment *
Prospect High	Campbell	8
Cupertino High	Fremont Union	31
Fremont High	Fremont Union	6
Homestead High	Fremont Union	8
Lynbrook High	Fremont Union	39
Monta Vista High	Fremont Union	30
Los Gatos High	Los Gatos-Saratoga	19
Murphy Middle	Morgan Hill	6
Alta Vista High	Mountain View-Los Altos	18
Gunn High	Palo Alto	13
Palo Alto High	Palo Alto	3
New Valley Continuation	Santa Clara Unified	2

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

Teen Parent Programs are specialized programs serving youth who are parents or expectant parents. They provide a broad academic program, often coordinated with the student's home school district, as well as instruction in life skills and family skills.

Teen Parent Program	High School District	Fall 2002 Enrollment *
Foothill High	East Side Union	3
Piedmont Hill High	East Side Union	1
Mount Madonna High	Gilroy Unified	39
Calaveras Hills	Milpitas	9
Moffett High	Mountain View-Los Altos	5
Teen Parent Program	Santa Clara COE	20
Wilson Alternative	Santa Clara Unified	21

(* Based on enrollment counts in October of each year. Official 2003 figures will be inserted when available.)

2. Characteristics of High Quality Alternative Placements

The first essential element of a high quality alternative placement should be a focus on the student's individual needs. Provisions should be made to help the student overcome barriers to success. According to *Educational Options – California Department of Education*, (<http://goldmine.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/essdiv/edoptshome.html>, updated July 15, 2002):

We believe that all students can succeed when learning environments are created that help to focus on academic achievement, when provision is made for psychological, familial, societal, and cultural barriers to successful achievement; when all of the stakeholders are held accountable for providing optimal conditions for learning, and when all of the stakeholders are held accountable for their success.

Children and youth enrolled in alternative educational programs may exhibit a full range of at-risk behaviors, poor self-concepts, and histories of school failure. Program design elements that have been validated through research and practice are essential to support students and create an optimal learning environment.

Excerpts from *Alternative Education: From a "Last Chance" to a Proactive Model* (Peter Leone and William Drakeford, December 1999, University of Maryland) show:

Essential elements:

- Clear focus on academic learning – combines high academic standards with engaging and creative instruction
- Ambitious professional development – stimulating, ongoing professional development activities that help teachers to maintain an academic focus, enhance teaching strategies, and develop alternative instructional methods

- Strong level of autonomy and professional decision-making – effective schools provide autonomy that builds trust and loyalty among staff; giving staff a voice in decision-making promotes creativity and instructional excellence
- Sense of community – students and staff share expectations for learning and students are encouraged to take a variety of courses and activities that enable them to pursue their interests and aspirations.

Rethinking Assumptions:

- In addition to a progressive education orientation that has problem solving as an organizing framework, alternative education programs need to identify essential elements of curriculum and how the program links with other agencies and services for youth.
- Alternative education programs need to find ways of linking their classrooms and instructional experiences to the community.
- Alternative education should have a well-defined place within public schools and within communities. Enrollment in alternative education programs should be an option for students who, for whatever reason, experience difficulty with large, and sometimes impersonal, middle schools and high schools.

Section IV. Best Practices

1. Best Practices in Santa Clara County and in Other Counties

An ASC Budget and Finance Work Group was formed, and developed the following descriptions of best financial practices after reviewing financial data supplied by the SCCOE, East Side Union High School District and San Jose Unified School District.

- The work group found that the SCCOE cannot operate community schools without additional funds. These funds could be generated by a variety of revenue sources including but not limited to districts paying a per student allotment to make up the cost differential and grant money. However, in 2003 the SCCOE received a funding surplus from the school districts with which it contracted and thus returned that portion of the funding. **RECOMMENDATION:** the SCCOE offer its allocations at as low a cost as possible without compromising services to students.
- The work group has found that, from a fiscal perspective, independent study programs are cost effective. **RECOMMENDATION:** consider utilizing independent study programs that are accountable and which are effectively educating alternative schools students as part of the continuum of services offered to students.

- The work group found that the state's current funding mechanism for alternative schools is inadequate and members have contacted members of the local legislative delegation to advocate for reinforcing alternative schools funding.
RECOMMENDATION: develop an advocacy strategy with specific solutions to bring to the State Legislature and advocate on behalf of changing the funding model to increase revenue streams.
- The work group has found that not all programs are the same and the more components (e.g., counseling, drug and alcohol treatment) a program has, the higher the cost to operate. RECOMMENDATION: use community-based organizations (e.g., non-profit, volunteers, university/graduate school interns) to bolster or increase program components and thus reduce cost per student.

2. Vision of Best Practice in Santa Clara County

An Exemplary Schools Work Group was formed, and developed the following vision of best practice in Santa Clara County.

The work group looked at exemplary programs for the SCCOE. The SCCOE needs to specialize in serving students whose needs are not met by the comprehensive school system. Districts need to continue development of alternative educational options for children within their district.

A continuum of services is critical to meet student needs. Programs need to be tailored for the students in a particular region. The work group outlined a regional plan starting with therapeutic schools, with expansion for specialized schools (teen parenting, business based, cultural based) based on the need of the region.

The impact of the federal No Child Left Behind Act cannot be ignored. It is the intent of this legislation that all students in the nation be equally educated – high school level proficient by 2014. To succeed in this nation-wide endeavor all key agencies must participate and collaborate to meet the Act's mandates.

- Basis of the Program -- The main goal of the program is the education of the student. The program, from intake and assessment through the educational experience, should recognize and build on each student's strengths. A strong emphasis must be placed on correcting social and behavioral deficits that impact the student's ability to learn. Youth Development is the way to correct those areas. (See Deficits, 20 At-Risk Indicators, Developmental Assets, The Impact of Developmental Assets in Section VI. Supporting Materials, 4. Project Cornerstone, Santa Clara Valley's Developmental Assets Movement.)

The basis of the alternative school/program model is to have a student focus, to evaluate the student's needs, strengths and interests and to provide an appropriate program placement. The program must provide instruction and information to build developmental assets.

Comprehensive counseling-based programs providing intensive therapeutic emphasis should be implemented in four regions by the SCCOE and/or districts to provide equal access to students in Santa Clara County:

North County – Los Altos-Mountain View-Sunnyvale area.

South County – Morgan Hill-Gilroy area

Central County – West San Jose

Eastern County – East San Jose

Students in need of these types of programs typically do not travel too far to attend school. The school needs to be located where the students live.

Students would be referred by:

School or district counselor

Social Services

Probation

Psychologist or psychiatrist

SARB officer

Parent/student referrals

An intake person would identify the appropriate placement to meet the needs of that student.

- Elements -- Elements of alternative schools include having a standards-based curriculum that is varied to allow a continuum of educational support from remedial to gifted and to English Language Learners (ELL). The class offerings should include a full range of special education supports and services. Students identified as eligible to receive special education support and services under the federal law “Individuals with Disabilities Act” (IDEA) will receive specially designed instruction in Special Day Classes or in regular classes in alternative schools with the support of appropriate credentialed personnel. These services are identified through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Some students may not qualify for services under IDEA, but may require additional classroom support due to a “handicapping condition” as identified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These students may require program accommodations and modifications in the classroom. These services will be documented on a 504 Accommodation Plan and are provided by the general education teacher.

Other class offerings available to students in alternative schools include, but are not limited to, vocational education and work experience options, arts and music, physical education, recreational activities, and independent study.

A small school atmosphere with a low student/teacher ratio is essential to foster the sense of community for students who are disengaged.

Independent study is a voluntary program for those students who would benefit for a variety of reasons: varied learning styles, flexible schedule, General Equivalency Diploma or California High School Proficiency Exam preparation, a stop gap for students needing immediate placement if there are no current openings, a re-introduction for drop-outs who are returning to the educational system, and completion of a few more units to earn an alternative school diploma.

Youth Development assists students in learning to be healthy, caring, and responsible. (See Section VI. Supporting Materials, 4. Project Cornerstone references to Developmental Assets.)

A focus on therapeutic counseling in a group setting is necessary to assist these students in overcoming social skills deficits. These would include recovery (drug and alcohol abuse), gang abatement, teenage parent education, life skills education, and family problems.

Family support for the student is one of the most important assets a student can possess. It is also critical to support the family by inclusion in a parental involvement component where parents can have support from staff and each other.

Staffing of the school is a critical component of the program. Selected, motivated, and well-trained teachers and counselors are needed. One way to keep teachers motivated and to learn new teaching skills is to provide ambitious professional development.

Site autonomy is critical to maintain the teamwork necessary to keep the teachers and students motivated, to have a feeling of it being their program. This autonomy needs strong administrative support and services, with strong program evaluation.

A dirty, unsafe, and poorly maintained facility conveys a lack of caring about students. A clean, safe, and well-maintained facility helps a student to care about their school and feel that they are cared about by the educational system.

Funding would be provided through Community Day School Average Daily Attendance (ADA) allocations, grants, stipends and services in-kind; county, city and community based organizations collaborating with university and college education and counseling departments.

A Community Day School model provides six hours of class time per day and additional funding (approximately \$11,000 total per student). The six hours would provide the time for the continuum of care services needed to enable these students to succeed. These services would include therapeutic counseling in a group setting covering topics such as grief, domestic violence, family problems, and gangs.

A summer school component is important for remedial or accelerated education and to minimize regression. It also has the added benefit of maintaining the student's connection to their school.

Academic counseling will help a student set realistic academic goals with a plan to achieve them.

A physical education component is essential for overall mental and physical health.

Fine arts are significant to certain students but also assist in the brain development of all the students. Many students express themselves through music or art.

Vocational education and work experience show a student how education and their vocation work together through the application of educational skills in the workplace.

Community service is necessary to help promote positive attitudes and behaviors.

- Progress -- Teacher and multi-disciplinary teams should evaluate student progress, covering academic achievement, attendance, grades, participation, and social skills.
- Communication -- Communication with districts, agencies, potential students, and families can be enhanced by way of a website specifically for alternative schools and programs countywide and related agencies. This website should include contact information for all parties involved, the entire list of alternative schools and programs available in the county (including information about availability and registration) and program descriptions, research references, and state and federal legislative information. An additional section secured by password would allow teachers, administrators, and youth personnel to communicate with each other to share information and experiences that are not for the general public. This website should be a portal for the SCCOE to post all things related to alternative education.
- Partnerships -- There are many partnerships needed to make a school or program successful. The school should be the hub with administrative support from its district or SCCOE office. The ASC can be the format for continued collaboration among the school, the SCCOE, districts, governmental agencies, community-based organizations, colleges and universities, parents, and students. The ASC must actively recruit members from the various districts, agencies, and entities for true collaboration. Community-based organizations and county agencies provide additional services for students in need of a continuum of care services.

Community colleges have programs for students to take individual classes and integrate them into their high school program. Local colleges and universities would be the source of therapeutic counselor interns, which would enhance the ability of these programs to provide services within budget.

Student-family partnerships are vital to better support the student. Families are also a source of volunteers.

Community partnerships are vital to engaging students in need of alternative education programs. This would include volunteers from the community working in the school, being present on campus to provide mentoring, making presentations, etc.

Business community partnerships aid in reducing pricing for classes (art workshops, dance workshops, etc.), mentoring, and providing a source of equipment and grants.

Section V. Recommendations

The Alternative Schools Collaborative brings forth the following recommendations.

1. Schools, districts, and the SCCOE should employ the best practices and vision from this report (Section IV) to create and expand programs for students in need. The schools, districts and SCCOE should work collaboratively with other agencies that serve youth to pursue the following objectives:

- Improve the attendance of habitually truant students.
- Ensure an appropriate and timely placement for every student who is expelled from school.
- Improve the capability and opportunity for earning high school credit for students who are substantially credit deficient.
- Reduce the number of students who leave school without graduating.
- Provide additional alternative educational opportunities for students who have dropped out of school.
- Provide appropriate in-school intervention for students who have demonstrated non-productive behavior in school.
- Improve outreach and placement services for all alternative school programs.
- Employ best practices in the development of new alternative programs.
- Expand the numbers of appropriately identified youth served in appropriate independent study programs.
- Provide full-time counseling and independent studies at community day schools.
- Increase the number of exemplary alternative schools and programs, both new programs and improved programs, as close to where the student lives as possible.
- Ensure special education services at every alternative school and program are appropriate and meet the agreed upon goals of each identified special needs student.

2. Schools, districts and the SCCOE should employ the best practices from this report (Section IV) to develop and implement financially viable models for alternative education programs. The schools, districts and SCCOE should work collaboratively to pursue the following objectives:

- Work with other agencies serving youth in alternative programs to employ best practices in financing alternative education, and develop financial models that can improve offerings for students.
- Look for creative opportunities to optimize cost containment, provide multi-agency cost sharing, use volunteer and intern staff, seek additional revenue sources, and otherwise improve financial viability.
- By March 31, 2004, evaluate sliding scale fees for non-independent study and other programs and services and the elimination of fees for independent study, and review the results with the ASC fiscal committee.
- Increase the length of the school year to as many educational days as possible based on student needs at those alternative programs that can enhance revenue over expenditures by doing so.

3. The SCCOE should continue to develop a long-term cooperative countywide mechanism for coordinating services and advocating on behalf of students in need of alternative educational placements. The SCCOE should provide leadership in pursuit of the following objectives:

- Annually review progress and outcome data with responsible agencies, including school districts, county and city agencies, and community-based organizations, toward achievement of these recommendations.
- Work with the school districts to establish a coordinated tracking system that monitors and reports the attendance, academic and other progress of alternative school students.
- Work with the school districts to provide the public with access to a comprehensive data-based description of all alternative school opportunities for youth in the county.
- Continue facilitating an ASC to monitor implementation of these recommendations, increase collaboration, and advocate for improved policies on a quarterly basis.

4. The SCCOE should provide leadership in pursuit of the following objectives:
- Determine who will be responsible for carrying out the actions necessary to obtain commitment.
 - Provide copies of the final ASC report to all stakeholder groups, including school district boards and superintendents, the SCCBOE, the County Board of Supervisors, and others.
 - Schedule meetings and/or presentations to stakeholder groups to gain understanding.
 - Ensure that meetings between and among stakeholder leadership, including regular meetings of the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools and the superintendents of the school districts, are informed of the progress toward implementing these recommendations.

Section VI. Supporting Materials

During the months that the Alternative Schools Collaborative worked on this report, a number of documents were developed and/or referenced. The following documents were used in the development of this report.

1. PACT Recommendations, Ron Wolsfeld, PACT, 1-19-2004
2. Glad 2B Back, Margaret Abe-Koga, Santa Clara County Board of Education, 1-17-04
3. Exemplary Schools Workgroup Survey Results, Mary Toller, PACT, 11-19-2003
4. Project Cornerstone; Santa Clara Valley's Developmental Assets Movement, Akemi Flynn, Project Cornerstone, 1-13-04
5. Recommendations for Developing and Establishing Middle and High School Alternative Programs, John Malloy, PACT, 12-08-2003
6. Exemplary Schools Workgroup Research Summary, Mary Toller, PACT, 12-06-2003
7. Foundry Philosophy and Foundry Philosophy 2, Bob Edwards, The Foundry, 12-09-2003

Copies of these materials, and copies of this ASC Final Report, are available through the Center for Educational Planning, Santa Clara County Office of Education, 1290 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose CA 95131.