

## Preface

### Rationale

The Kern County Superintendent of School's Alternative Education Program has prepared this Course of Study to be used as a planning reference for educators engaged in curriculum development and implementation. It will also serve as a report to the Board of Education as well as a guidebook for administrators and teachers. The Alternative Education Program's curriculum is influenced by two variables common to the students served by the program: varying enrollment patterns and the at-risk nature of its students. Therefore, all courses are designated as open entry/open exit with variable credit for high school students. Curriculum is also layered to address content standards at five different ability levels that include college preparatory work. The Documents used in the development of the Course of Study include: K-12 California State Content Standards adopted by the State Board of Education, content *Frameworks for California Public Schools*, and contributions of teachers, principals, as well as other Alternative Education administrators.

### Format

The Course of Study is a living document meant to be revised and updated as more standards-based textbooks are incorporated into the curriculum and as more depth of courses are added to curricular areas. The course descriptions and course outlines for each content area are preceded by a textbook list for that content area that has been adopted by the Kern County Board of Education. The K-12 disciplines included in this document are the following:

- English Language-Arts
- Mathematics
- History/Social Science
- Science
- Physical Education
- Fine Arts
- Health Education
- Electives

### Disciplines

- **English-Language Arts:** Reading, writing, listening and speaking are connected and related skills. These skills should be taught in unison with one another. The course of study strives to develop each of the skills in a unified context so that students will learn to apply language arts skills to success in other curricular areas. This course of study also reflects the requirements of special needs students, such as English Language Learners, disabled students, and at-risk learners. In the primary grades, the focus of language arts instruction is on building fundamental skills that provide the foundation for success in the upper grades. This instruction continues during the middle grades with increased focus on advanced skills that serve as the key to understanding multiple viewpoints, complex vocabulary and syntax, and the construction of new knowledge in preparation for entering higher institutions of learning or the workplace.

- **Mathematics:** A solid foundation in mathematics is critical for each student's future success in everyday life as well as preparation for the study of advanced mathematics, science and technical careers. In the Alternative Education Course of Study, mathematics instruction is equally balanced between the refinement of basic skills and the development of grade-level content standards. Instruction is delivered in a manner designed to meet the identified needs of individual students.
- **History-Social Science:** The history/social science Course of Study provides students with a grasp of the importance of social, economic, and political issues of the local, state, national and world arenas. The K-12 instruction is delivered on a continuum from more simple, community-oriented issues to more advanced knowledge and understanding of culture, civic values, democracy and skills required for social participation.
- **Science:** The content includes the study of life, earth, and physical science. During the elementary years, the content is balanced between the three science strands. At the intermediate level, the science curriculum transitions to the more specialized study of each strand. High school students gain in-depth knowledge of each strand and students learn to understand that the basic principles of physics, chemistry, and biology have a common foundation and that applications of these principles constitute most of modern-day science and technology.
- **Fine Art:** Alternative Education provides a balanced curriculum with the arts as a part of the core content for all K-12 students. The focus of the curriculum is on the visual arts due to the transitory nature of the students, and the limitations of school facilities.
- **Physical Education:** A physically educated person is one who can plan a lifelong fitness and wellness program, develop a learning plan for acquiring a new motor skills, and analyze a movement performance by applying biomechanical principles. The Alternative Education physical education curriculum is designed to provide the basis for its students to become physically educated.
- **Health:** To learn well, to be successful citizens and productive members of society, individuals need to be healthy. Many alternative education students are particularly at risk of incorporating unhealthy behaviors as lifestyle components.
- **Electives:** Alternative education high school students are required to complete 70 elective credits to receive their high school diploma. Students may complete additional core courses or any of the following subject-specific elective courses to satisfy these requirements:
  - Career Skills
  - Computers
  - Job Skills
  - Life Skills
  - Vocational skills
  - Work Experience