

# Introduction

The Kern County Superintendent of School's Alternative Education *K-12 Course of Study* represents a standards-based approach to curriculum development and deliverance. It was produced through a collaborative effort of court and community schools' teaching staff and administration. It is a living document that will be updated and refined as the foundation of standards-based textbooks is expanded. It includes all core content areas, as well as high school electives.

## Content Areas

- English-Language Arts
- Mathematics
  - K-6 Mathematics
  - Pre-algebra
  - Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II
- History-Social Science
  - K-8 Social Science
  - World History and Geography
  - United States History and Geography
  - Principles of Democracy (government)
  - Principles of Economics
- Science
  - K-8 General Science
  - Earth Science
  - Life Science
  - Physical Science
- Fine Art
- Physical Education
- Health
- Electives
  - Career Skills
  - Computers
  - Job Skills
  - Life Skills
  - Vocational skills
  - Work Experience

## Course Listing and Textbook Matrix

A "Course Listing and Textbook Matrix" for each content area precedes the Course Descriptions and Course Outlines, listing the textbooks and credit values for each course and textbook within the respective content area. A course may have more than one textbook option that will fulfill the course's content standards. Each matrix begins with the primary-grade courses and proceeds through intermediate, middle school and high-school level curriculum. **Note:** only courses designed for high school students have a course number, with related credit values.

## **Course Descriptions and Course Outlines**

All content areas contain a Course Description and Course Outline, if applicable, for each K-12 course included in that content area. The **Course Descriptions** define the grade-level, the content-area standards and objectives contained in a particular course, as well as the resources and evaluation procedures for that course. Frequently, there is more than one textbook option to address the standards to be achieved in a course. The **Course Outlines** describe the assignments for each textbook option listed for a course. The Course Outlines, while maintaining continuity throughout all programs as students transition, also allow for teacher discretion by providing the option of teacher-generated activities. If a student, for example, has an area of interest within a subject or course, the teacher may create a specific assignment directed toward that interest instead of having the student complete one of the suggested activities.

**Course Titles:** reflect the **subject matter**, **ability level** and **time frame** of a course.

- **Subject Matter:** The Course of Study contains all courses required by the California Department of Education, as well as various elective courses for the high school students.
- **Ability Levels:** The court and community school programs are committed to the success of all students. Providing students access to the content standards in the core curriculum, regardless of ability level, is of primary importance. Therefore, court and community schools maintain an individualized approach in all educational settings. Curriculum is offered, to the greatest degree possible, in each content area, at five ability levels. Teachers are trained to evaluate assessments and place students in the most challenging curriculum commensurate with each student's ability level. The following is a description of each of the ability levels:
  - I: Grades 2-3 reading/mathematics ability
  - II: Grades 4-6 reading/mathematics ability
  - III: Grades 7-8
  - High School: Grades 9-12
  - College Prep: Advanced work for Grades 9-12
- **Time Frame: Independent study** courses that are two-semester in length are designated with an "A" for the first semester and a "B" for the student's second semester. Regardless, of the time period of enrollment, if a student had already received 5 credits in a course, that student should be placed in the "B" semester (second semester) for that course. Similarly, if a student enrolled late in the school year, but never completed credits in a course requirement for that year, the teacher should begin the student in the "A" course.

- **Time Frame: Classroom Instruction** and the *Sequenced Pattern of Instruction*

The Course Descriptions for classroom-based instruction focus on the delivery of the content standards as outlined in the *K-12 Sequenced Pattern of Instruction*, for each semester during the school year. An “A” course refers to the fall semester, the “B” course to the spring semester, and, at the high school level, the “C” course refers to the summer school session. Instruction is based on grade-level standards, but teachers use strategies such as “backwards mapping” and “layered curriculum” to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. All classroom teachers should have a copy of the *Sequenced Pattern of Instruction* for their respective grade levels. Copies are available from the site administrator.

- **Course Titles: Summary**

Examples of **Independent Study** course titles and their respective explanations follow:

- 1) English IA=*Subject: English, Level: I (2-3), A: first semester*
- 2) Mathematics IIIB= *Subject: Math, Level: III (7-8), B: second semester*
- 3) Principles of Economics II: *Subject: Economics, Level: II (4-6) (one semester course)*

Examples of **Classroom-based** instruction course titles and their respective explanations:

- 1) High School Social Science A= *Subject: Social Science, Level: 9-12, A: fall semester*
- 2) Intermediate English B= *Subject: English, Level: 4-6, B: spring semester*
- 3) High School English-Language Arts A=*Subject: English, Level: 9-12, A: fall semester*

### **Writing Rubrics**

During the WASC, Focus on Learning self-study process, it was determined that court and community school students generally need to improve their writing skills. Therefore, writing assignments have been infused throughout the curriculum, and teachers are provided with standards-based rubrics with which to evaluate all writing assignments. All teachers should have a copy of Alternative Education’s “Standards-based Writing Rubrics” booklet. If not, a copy is available from the site administrator.

### **Academic Credit**

With the transitory nature of the Alternative Education student population, students earn academic credit on a variable credit basis. For those students who enroll after the beginning of a semester, and who have work in progress from their school of residence, the credit value of time earned from their home school should be awarded in proportion to their time enrolled there. Teachers should strive to provide students the opportunity to

earn 5-credit blocks in required core content areas. Therefore, when appropriate, priority should be given to placing students in curriculum that will complete their grades-in-progress credit values to a 5-credit block.

For **independent study**, students earn credits upon successful completion of assigned work. Teachers should use the Course Outlines as their guide for determining the credit value of assignments.

Students enrolled in **classroom instruction** earn 1 credit in each content area offered for every fifteen days of enrollment (with satisfactory attendance) in the respective content area.

### **Course Numbering System**

The *Course of Study* provides course numbers for all grade 9-12 courses outlined, as well as for those courses for which teachers may want to write course contracts to provide for individualized or supplementary study in a content area. The numbering system, in general, was created to reflect the ability level of a course, as well as the subject area.

For **independent study**, the **first** and **third digits** reflect the ability levels:

**2X5X**=level I (grades 2-3)

**3XXX**=level II (grades 4-6)

**3X5X**= level III (grades 7-8)

**4XXX**=high school (9-12)

**4X5X**=college prep (9-12 advanced)

**Classroom-based instruction** course numbers begin with a 5: **5XXX**.

The **second digit** in all course numbers reflects the subject area:

1=English-Language Arts

2=Mathematics

3=Science

4=Social Science

5=Physical Education

6=Fine Arts

7=Health

8=Electives

The **fourth digit** in all course numbers represents the sequence of a course within a content area at a specific ability level.

Example:

4401: High School World History A

4x0x=high school level

x4xx=social science

xxx1=first course in social science series at the high school level