



Serving the Needs of Continuation High School Students through Afterschool Programs

What are Continuation High Schools?

- Provide an alternative path to high school graduation for students vulnerable to academic or behavioral failure
- Designed to meet the needs of each student, including independent study, regional occupation programs, work study, career counseling, job placement services
- Utilize more intensive services and accelerated credit accrual strategies so that students whose achievement in comprehensive schools has lagged might have a renewed opportunity to complete the requirements to graduate from high school
- Serve an extremely vulnerable student population who come both voluntarily and involuntarily

The History of Continuation High Schools

- Continuation high schools have been in operation in the state of California since 1919 as a mandated alternative for students who need a more flexible school day or week and a program different from that of the traditional high school
- Originally designed to provide a flexible schedule for working students, modern continuation high schools serve a highly vulnerable student population characterized by multiple risk behaviors and other nonacademic learning barriers
- Since 1965, state law has mandated that most school districts enrolling 100 or more 12th grade students must make available a continuation program

Continuation High Schools in California

- Enroll 116,000 students aged 16-18 in 520 continuation high schools across the state
- State imposes roughly the same graduation standards on continuation students (course of study; exit exam; mastery of curriculum standards)
- At local level, schools are highly variable in terms of their quality, focus and outcomes

Why are Continuation High Schools Growing?

- Emphasis on occupational orientation or work-study schedule
- Provide intensive guidance services to meet students' special needs
- Provide range of academic and non academic supports
- The size, scope and legislative design of the continuation high school program make it clear that these schools are a cornerstone of California's drop-out prevention strategy

McLaughlin, M., Ruiz de Velasco, J. (April, 2008). *Nobody's Kids: A Look at Continuation High Schools in California*. Education Writers' Association, Stanford University.

California Continuation Education Association. (2009) <http://www.cceanet.org/brochure/default.asp>

Continuation High School Afterschool Programs: Quality Distinguishers

- Distinguisher 1: **Authentic Learning, Teaching, and Performance Assessment**
- Distinguisher 2: **Personalized Afterschool Culture**
- Distinguisher 3: **Shared Leadership and Responsibility**
- Distinguisher 4: **Supportive Partnerships**
- Distinguisher 5: **Future Focus**