

# Alternative School Status

## Annual Application Guidance Document

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January 28, 2014  
Arizona Department of Education  
Research & Evaluation Division



## Alternative School Status Annual Application Guidance

*This guidance document was devised to provide additional information and context for the Alternative School definition based on anticipated approval by the Arizona State Board of Education on February 24, 2014. Alternative School status qualifies a school and/or LEA to be held accountable for the Alternative School A-F Letter Grade model for state accountability purposes and may qualify them as eligible for an exemption from the traditional Title I high school low graduation rate criterion for federal accountability. The suggestions that are listed in this document are not exhaustive; instead, they should be viewed as examples that can provide verification of student eligibility for an alternative school setting.*

The following are the criteria that all schools will have to meet in order to be granted Alternative School status:

### Criteria

1. A district school has adopted a mission statement that clearly identifies its purpose is to serve a specific student population that will benefit from an alternative school setting or a charter school that expressly states in their charter that its purpose is to serve a specific student population that will benefit from an alternative school setting.
2. The educational program and related student support services of the school must align with the mission and charter (if applicable) of the school.
3. Schools offering secondary instruction for academic credit used to fulfill the Arizona State Board of Education graduation requirements (in part or in full) must offer a high school diploma of graduation.

### Guidance/Evidence

This is a required document for both district schools and charter schools. The charter holder's sponsor (e.g., ASBCS, local school district, university or community college) will verify that a charter school's mission and charter coincide and that the charter specifically states serving this student population prior to receiving alternative status.

Supporting documentation of this criterion may be the school report card, the school's charter contract, the strategic plan, the school Improvement Plan, a Student-Parent Handbook, various school marketing materials (e.g., webpage or brochure), etc.

An entity shall not be considered a school for accountability purposes when offering secondary instruction unless this criterion is met and shall not be eligible for Alternative School status.

4. The school will receive current year state assessment scores for their students.

In order for a school to apply for Alternative status it has to be in operation and must administer the state assessment annually. Please note: You shall not be granted alternative school status until the first year of operation.

5. The school must intend to serve students in one or more of the following categories:

Seventy percent of the students enrolled by October 1 of the application year (new status only) and each recertification year, shall have been listed in at least one of the categories of students served in an alternative school setting upon *initial* enrollment.

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<b>a) Students who have a documented history of disruptive behavioral issues.</b>	1) Suspension records 2) Expulsion records 3) Referrals – Threat of Suspension 4) Documented relevant IEP 5) Transcript 6) Behavior Report 7) Behavior Intervention Plan 8)
<b>b) Students who have dropped out of school and are now returning.</b>	This can be verified by identifying a withdraw code from the previous school and a corresponding 'E' code at the current school. The timeframe from the student dropping out of school and returning shall be no less than 30 days.
<b>c) Students in poor academic standing as demonstrated by being at least one year behind on academic credits or grade level performance.</b>	1) Measured on the Reading and/or Mathematics portions of the state assessment. 2) Measured on a valid and reliable pre-test for reading and/or mathematics. The administration of this test typically occurs upon intake. 3) Academic transcripts
<b>d) Students who are primary caregivers or are financially responsible for</b>	1) Signed and dated documentation from parent, guardian, or student of legal age.

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**dependents that may require a flexible school schedule.**

2) McKinney-Vento form

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**e) Students who are adjudicated.**

Documentation provided by the Arizona justice system or the probation officer (e.g., enrollment form, enrollment hearing).  
Request for records from a juvenile detention center school.  
Transcript showing credits from a juvenile detention center school.

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6. All new and converted schools shall be audited for student enrollment verification prior to confirmation of alternative status. All other alternative schools will be subject to an audit of enrollment counts as deemed necessary by the ADE and/or ASBCS.

“New” alternative school means that the school has acquired an entity ID number for the first time. “Converted” school is an indication that the school has an entity ID but was not listed as an alternative school the year prior.

Based on the audit report schools could be denied alternative status.

**To be eligible for the exemption from the traditional Title I low graduation rate criterion for federal accountability, a school MUST click the ‘Credit Recovery’ button. This will not exclude the school from the Alternative School Title I criteria for federal accountability. A school must be able to demonstrate that it is a credit recovery school through student enrollment verification and by providing the school mission statement.**

**Existing alternative schools (schools with alternative status in the prior year) must recertify each fiscal year.**

**If a school does not meet the criteria it will be denied alternative status. The school may appeal the decision by submitting its appeal through the Common Logon application during accountability season. This would be considered a substantive appeal and would be heard before the A-F Letter Grade Appeals Committee. Schools denied alternative status in the current year may apply in following years.**

Timeline of Application and Process:

<b>FY14</b>	
March 1 – April 1	Online annual application will be posted. (Contingent upon State Board approval to move forward.)
April 1 – May 15	Enrollment verification audits will be conducted of new schools, converted schools, and any existing schools that the ADE and ASBCS

	deem necessary. <i>Please note: In FY14, failure to meet the 70% enrollment criteria will result in a 'probational' alternative school status and will prompt an audit the following year to confirm the enrollment for FY15.</i>
May 1 – May 31	Schools will be notified of their status for the FY14 accountability season.

<b>FY15 and beyond</b>	
October 1 – November 1	Online annual application will be posted.
November 1 – February 28	Enrollment verification audits will be conducted of new schools, converted schools, and any existing schools that the ADE and ASBCS deem necessary.
March 1 – March 30	Schools will be notified of their status for the current school year accountability season.

If you have any questions regarding this document, email [Achieve@azed.gov](mailto:Achieve@azed.gov).