



PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

Excellence by Design:
**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING, AND
EXPANDING/REPLICATING
LARGE-SCALE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS**

KEY CONCEPTS

- Alternative programs to support teaching and learning have long been a part of the PAUSD culture.
- Alternative programs must support the District's mission and goals and the purpose of public education—to educate all students to become positive contributors in a democratic society.
- The guidelines apply to those programs that represent a distinctive instructional strategy or educational delivery model to achieve the District's educational mission and goals.
- These guidelines will help to ensure that necessary planning has taken place before programs are initiated.
- Alternative programs shall not require additional ongoing funds and shall meet all District standards.

**PROCESS AND KEY QUESTIONS FOR
DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING, AND EXPANDING/REPLICATING A
LARGE SCALE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM**

STEP 1: THRESHOLD ANALYSIS

- The applicant prepares a mini-proposal for review by the Superintendent and staff and approval of the School Board

STEP 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

- The applicant prepares response to Key Questions

STEP 3: DISTRICT REVIEW

- Within 10 weeks of receipt of the proposal:
 - District staff will review the proposal and clarify components of the proposal
 - Staff reviewing the proposal will prepare a recommendation for the Superintendent

STEP 4: BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVAL

- The Superintendent will review the staff recommendation and prepare a recommendation to the Board of Education

STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION

- If the proposal is approved, staff and program applicants will finalize and begin the process of implementation

STEP 6: PROGRAM EVALUATION

- If the program is implemented, plans will be made for interim and in-depth evaluations to assess the program, student achievement, and the impact of the program on the organization

STEP 7: PROGRAM REPLICATION AND/OR EXPANSION

- Based on the evaluation of the program and with approval of the Superintendent and Board of Education, programs that have proven to have value may be expanded or replicated, as appropriate, to more students

<h3>STEP 1: THRESHOLD ANALYSIS</h3>
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<p><i>TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PROGRAM APPLICANT</i></p>
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- The Threshold Analysis will help to determine if the District can realistically support the development, implementation, and maintenance of a new alternative program before a complete program proposal is developed.
- The Threshold Analysis consists of the following steps.
 - The applicant will submit a preliminary proposal that will include:
 - Responses to selected Key Questions (Selected Key Questions for the preliminary proposal can be found in Step 2 and are in boldface type.)
 - A proposed timeline for implementation.
 - An estimate of the time required for the applicants to develop a complete program proposal.
 - The Superintendent and staff will review the preliminary proposal and prepare an analysis of the proposal. The analysis will include an estimate of staff time and District resources required to assist the applicant in the development of a more comprehensive proposal.
 - The Superintendent will submit the preliminary proposal and staff analysis to the Board of Education for discussion and action.
 - If the preliminary proposal is approved, the applicants can proceed with the development of a program proposal by answering all the Key Questions in Step 2. Steps 3-7 will then follow.
 - Approval of a preliminary proposal does not necessarily mean a final program will be approved.

STEP 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PROGRAM APPLICANT

PURPOSE

- What is the core philosophy or underlying purpose of the program?
- Are there other existing ways to meet the intent of this program?
- How is the purpose of the program consistent with the mission of public education, the District's mission and Board of Education policy?
- In what new ways will students benefit from this program, as opposed to programs currently in existence?

COSTS

- Describe the short and long-term fiscal plan to support the program including:
 - Anticipated start-up costs ("Start-costs" are those expenditures necessary to begin a new program, but which will not continue after the program becomes fully operational. Start-up costs may include, but are not limited to, such items as renovation of facilities, purchase of an initial inventory of equipment and supplies, payroll and travel expenses for program planning and staff development.)
 - Anticipated ongoing costs (The District budget for an alternative program shall not exceed the District per-pupil cost of educating students unless a waiver has been approved by the Board of Education.)
 - Resources needed, but not limited to, personnel, training, equipment and technology, to successfully implement the program
 - If fundraising activities are being considered, are the efforts consistent with Board policy?
 - If staff believes the program is viable and resources are not available, are alternative instructional delivery systems available in the community?

(The District will analyze the fiscal plan in terms of costs for facilities, staff, materials / supplies, start-up activities and other costs.)

TEACHERS AND STAFF

- Will additional teachers and/or staff be needed? If so, what are the needed qualifications for these teachers and/or staff?
- Does PAUSD currently have teachers and/or staff with the needed qualifications and interest to teach in this program? If not, are qualified teachers and/or staff available and do their qualifications meet State and District standards? What are the recommendations for recruitment of needed personnel?

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Describe the program and provide an overview of the curriculum objectives. (The curriculum of the alternative program must conform to the District's educational goals and the required District curriculum.)

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CONTINUED)

- Briefly outline the instructional methods to be used, including any distinctive instructional techniques to be employed. Is the instructional methodology consistent with PAUSD teaching standards and practices?
- Are instructional materials for the program available and do they meet State and District standards? If not, how will instructional materials be developed?
- What is the estimated cost for purchasing / developing instructional materials for this program?
- Describe how students will, at minimum, participate in State and District assessment programs.
- What evidence suggests that the alternative program will enhance the District's educational program?
- How will the program impact the curricular offerings at other schools or grade levels?

STUDENT SELECTION

- What is the target student population to be served? Will this program primarily serve students at a particular site or is this a "choice" program that will draw students from other schools?
- If the program will be phased in, what is the anticipated enrollment per grade level per year? How many parents have agreed to enroll their students in the program, if approved?
- If the program is a K-5 program, what are the implications for the secondary schools?
- After students exit / complete this "specialized" program, how will they integrate into the PAUSD program?
- Who will be responsible for recruiting and selecting students for the program?
- How will students be selected? Is the selection process consistent with Board Policy and Administrative Procedures?
- What steps will be taken to reach students representative of the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in the community?
 - Describe how the program will meet the needs of students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), students with a 504 Plan and Limited English Proficient students.

Location

- Does the program require its own separate classroom space? If so, how many classrooms are needed?
- Does the program require dedicated space other than classrooms, e.g. labs, studios, performance areas? If so, please describe and indicate possible needs for renovations of existing facilities.
- What is the proposed location of this program? Why has this site been selected?
- How will the program impact the neighborhood school concept?
- Will current attendance boundaries be impacted?
- Will the proposed program bring an increase in commuter traffic? If so, what is the impact on neighborhood traffic and school parking facilities and how will this be addressed to offset the impact?

COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING

- Provide a comprehensive timeline that will include, at a minimum, when and how the following activities will occur:
 - Finalizing the location of the program (if applicable)
 - Involving teachers, administrators, staff, School Site Council and PTA at the proposed site in the planning process
 - For secondary school programs: Involving the Educational Council and appropriate Steering Committee(s) in program planning
 - Surveying parents and/or students to determine if there is sufficient interest to warrant offering the program
 - Selecting students for the program
 - Recruiting and selecting credentialed and support staff (if applicable)
 - Selecting and/or developing instructional materials
 - Providing staff development to teachers and staff at the site
 - Evaluating the program

(The proposed timeline must conform to applicable District policies and practices.)

EVALUATION

- How will the program be evaluated?
- What formative and summative evaluation mechanisms will be used?
- Will a control group be used?
- What will happen to the program if students do not perform?
- What will happen if the cohort of students is not retained and the class size of students in the program is well below the District average?

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- In considering the above questions, what are unintended consequences that might occur as a result of this program, e.g. equity within a school or among schools?

STEP 3: DISTRICT REVIEW

*TO BE COMPLETED BY DISTRICT STAFF, WITH CLARIFICATION, AS NEEDED
BY THE PROGRAM APPLICANT*

- Staff will prepare a response to the program applicants.

STEP 4: BOARD APPROVAL

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION

- The Superintendent will review the staff recommendation and prepare a recommendation to the Board of Education

STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY DISTRICT STAFF AND PROGRAM APPLICANTS

- If the proposal is approved, timelines for program implementation will be finalized and implementation will begin and the Board of Education and community will be kept apprised.

STEP 6: PROGRAM EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY DISTRICT STAFF AND PROGRAM APPLICANTS

- If the program is implemented, plans will be made for
 - An interim evaluation at the end of Year 1
 - An in-depth program evaluation at the end of 18 months to address:
 - Implementation of the program
 - Student achievement
 - Impact of the program on the organization
- Continuation of the program will be based upon program evaluation findings.

STEP 7: PROGRAM REPLICATION AND/OR EXPANSION

TO BE COMPLETED BY DISTRICT STAFF AND PROGRAM APPLICANTS

- Programs that have proven to have value may be expanded or replicated, as appropriate, to more students based on the evaluation of the program and with approval of the Superintendent and Board of Education.
- Considerations will include:
 - Availability of funding
 - Outcome of program evaluations
 - Impact on the organization