



Since 2011, the Arizona Alternative Education Consortium has served as a voice for alternative schools in Arizona. These schools must renew their status annually through the Arizona Department of Education demonstrating their continued commitment and sole purpose of serving populations of at - risk students.

158

Public Alt Schools in Az

+26,300

Active Alt School Students

\$1 to \$20

ROI in AZ Alt School Investment

Alternative schools must annually certify with ADE that over **70%** of their students...

- have a documented history of disruptive behavior issues.
- have previously dropped out of school
- are in poor academic standing as demonstrated by being at least one year behind on grade level performance or academic credits.
- are primary caregivers or are financially responsible for dependents and, therefore, may require a flexible school schedule.
- are adjudicated.
- are wards of the state and are in need of an alternative school setting.

At Risk student populations in AZ Alt Schools vs. other AZ schools

13% English Language Learners (AZ 5%)

13% Special Education (AZ 11%)

79% Free/Reduced Lunch (AZ 47%)

**Contact us for more information
about Arizona Alternative Schools:**

www.AzAEC.org
azaec2011@gmail.com

Data Sources: Arizona Department of Education (2024), Public School Review (2024), Arizona Charter School Association (2017) *Alternative Schools, Just the Facts*, WestEd (2014) *How Arizona's Dropout Crisis Affects Communities, Creates Economic Losses for the State of Arizona*

The AzAEC is affiliated with the
National Alternative Education Association

As an affiliate of the **National Alternative Education Association** we support the Grad Rate position statement that has been summarized below.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

“Congress demonstrated its commitment to making the United States a Graduation Nation when it reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2015. Statute requires that **any high school in the nation with a graduation rate lower than two-thirds, 2/3 , be identified for low graduation rate.**”

IMPACT ON ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

“This use of traditional cohort graduation status is a pain point for high school Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) throughout the country. It is illogical that an AEC focused on dropout recovery, over-aged, and/or under-credited students, and other students for whom traditional high schools do not work, should be held accountable to the same standard as traditional high schools, whose typical students follow a normal trajectory through high school. Moreover, holding AEC schools accountable to a standard that the majority of their students have already failed to meet **creates strong disincentives for K-12 districts to create and invest resources in re-entry or credit acceleration programs** for youth vulnerable to leaving K-12 permanently without earning a high school diploma.”

PROPOSED SOLUTION

“Many states have an application process for a school to qualify as an AEC or alternative high school. Alternative school status is awarded to schools that document a very specific mission to serve a high percentage of students, ranging from 20 to 90% averaging 67% (Momentum Strategy & Research), who meet the state-established criteria for AEC eligibility. The criteria for eligibility include a number of life circumstances, including being over-aged and under-credited, a returning dropout, pregnant or parenting, adjudicated, in the foster care or court system, and/or homeless, to name some of the most commonly identified circumstances. **These circumstances require that schools be able to give students more time to learn standards and graduate than their mainstream high schools peers.**

We propose that high schools recognized as AECs in their respective states be held accountable for **graduation rates recognized for AECs in their state**. To honor the statutory requirement of two-thirds graduation rate, state education agencies (SEAs) would identify schools, recognized by that state as AECs that need assistance reaching a two-thirds graduation rate according to their own definition.”

A full copy of the NAEA Position Statement can be found below:
<http://www.the-naea.org/naea-position-statements.html>