



Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Model Community Day School and Model Continuation High School Application Webinar

2026–27 Program Year
Thursday, June 4, 2026
California Department of Education



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Outline (1)

- Background
- Purpose
- Eligibility Criteria
- Obligations of Model Schools
- Program Timeline
- Public Information
- Overall Content of the Application
- Narrative Statements
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accreditation
- Attachment Assistance



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Outline (2)

- Glossary
 - Assembling the Application
 - Submitting the Application
 - Evaluation Process
 - Reasons for Disqualification from the Reading Process
 - District Audit Report
 - Designation Period
 - Questions and Answers
- * This requirement is for Model Continuation High School (MCHS) applicants only.



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Background (1)

- The California Continuation Education Association Plus (CCEA Plus) is the merged organization of the CCEA and the Community Day School Network that occurred in 2019.
- Following the merger, discussions began about the possible development of a Model Community Day School (MCDS) Recognition Program and modification of the MCHS Recognition Program based on the priorities of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, through a co-sponsorship between the California Department of Education (CDE) and CCEA Plus.



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Background (2)

- The proposed application for the MCDS Recognition Program originally emerged at the end of July 2023.
- The MCHS application was simplified and patterned after the MCDS application for the 2024–25 program year.
- Both applications have been streamlined for the 2026–27 program year.



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Purpose

The MCDS and MCHS Recognition Programs:

- Identify and recognize exemplary programs.
- Create resource lists of outstanding programs and practices for school visitations and other forms of peer mentoring.



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Eligibility Criteria: Community Day Schools (1)

1. The school is established as a “community day school” according to California *Education Code (EC)* sections 48660–48666.
2. It is recommended but not required that the school be accredited by WASC. Educational institutions benefit from the stimulus for self-study and self-improvement provided by the accreditation process.



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Eligibility Criteria: Community Day Schools (2)

3. If accredited, the school's WASC Visiting Committee Report must verify that the school has completed a full self-study, which typically involves a three- and one-half-day visit.
 - a. Schools that are not WASC accredited **are still eligible to apply.**



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Eligibility Criteria: Continuation High Schools

1. The school is established as a “continuation high school” according to EC sections 48430–48438.
2. The school is accredited by WASC.
3. The school’s WASC Visiting Committee Report verifies that the school has completed a full self-study, which typically involves a three- and one-half-day visit.



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Obligations of Model Schools (1)

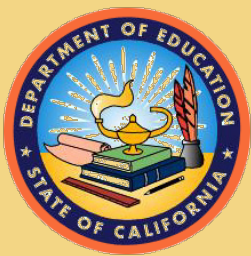
1. Provide examples of promising practices by serving as peer mentors, if requested by schools and districts in need of technical assistance (e.g., sample materials, telephone consultation, training and/or virtual website links).
2. Staff from schools selected as models will be asked to review and rate applications in the future and participate in Site Validation Visits. CDE may also ask models to participate as experts in webinars about exemplary practices.



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Obligations of Model Schools (2)

3. Agree to submit an Annual Assurance of Services Form by June 30 for each of the **second and third years** of designation to certify that the school meets or exceeds the recognition program standards as described in the 2026–27 application.

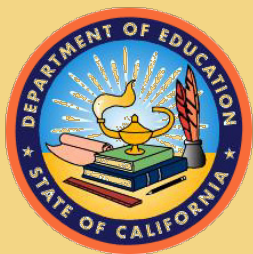


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Program Timeline (1)

Date	Activity
June 1, 2026	Applications available to the field
June 4, 2026	Application Webinar
August 28, 2026	Applications due
September 11, 2026	Northern Applications reviewed and rated
September 25, 2026	Central Applications reviewed and rated
October 9, 2026	Southern Applications reviewed and rated

The application due date has been extended until **Friday, August 28, 2026**, to accommodate the late release date of the application.



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Program Timeline (2)

Date	Activity
October 13, 2026– December 21, 2026	Site Validation Visits
December 15, 2026	District Audit Reports due (MCHS applicants only)
February 2027	Notification of recognition
April/May 2027	Awards Ceremony



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Public Information

Information about each MCDS and MCHS may be published online by the CDE and/or CCEA Plus for those interested in mentorship or information. This will include:

- School and principal contact information
- Narrative Statements
- Description of exemplary practices and program summary from the site visit report



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Overall Content of the Application

- There are three (3) pages/PDFs that a require signature(s) or basic school information, Attachments A–C.
- There are five (5) Narrative Statements that will be scored based on ratings of being exemplary (above the performance of normally effective community day schools and continuation high schools).
- There are six (6) appendices. Appendices 1, 2, and 3 **should be reviewed carefully**, as they will assist you in preparing your application.



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Narrative Statements

1. School Profile
2. School Leadership and Management
3. Educating “The Whole Child” (Instruction)
4. Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development)
5. School Evaluation of Effectiveness



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How to Prepare the Narrative Statements

- Review the guidelines for each statement.
- Each of the topics includes multiple elements, all of which should be addressed.
- The title of the statement must be included as the heading.
- Statements must be on 8 ½ by 11-inch white paper, typewritten, using 11 or 12-point Arial font, single-spaced, normal character spacing with one-inch margins.
- Each statement is limited to two pages.



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Sample Narrative Statement (1)

A sample narrative statement form on a white background. At the top center is the heading "School Profile". To the right of the heading is a teal-colored arrow pointing left towards the heading. To the right of the arrow is the text "The title of Narrative Statement 1 is listed as the heading." Below the heading and arrow is a paragraph of text: "You may begin your response to Narrative Statement 1 here. You do not need to list the bullet statements as subheadings. We want you to have as much space as possible to respond since each Narrative Statement is limited to two pages."

- The image above is of a half sheet of white paper. The heading at the top of the page is “School Profile.” To the right of the heading is a teal-colored arrow. To the right of the arrow is the statement, “The title of Narrative Statement 1 is listed as the heading.”



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Sample Narrative Statement (2)

The title of Narrative Statement 1 is listed as the heading.

School Profile

You may begin your response to Narrative Statement 1 here. You do not need to list the bullet statements as subheadings. We want you to have as much space as possible to respond since each Narrative Statement is limited to two pages.

- In the image above, one line below the heading, “School Profile,” is the following text, “You may begin your response to Narrative Statement 1 here. You do not need to list the bullet statements as subheadings. We want you to have as much space as possible to respond since each Narrative Statement is limited to two pages.”



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Underlying Questions When Writing Narrative Statements (1)

- Ensure that each of the five Narrative Statements focuses on the specific qualities and innovative characteristics that make the applicant school an exemplary model and that could be useful to other schools. **Summarize** the elements the school uses that have led to continuous school improvement. **Give examples and cite evidence** that your school performs above and beyond the performance of a normally effective community day school or continuation high school.



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Underlying Questions When Writing Narrative Statements (2)

Within the five Narrative Statements, keep in mind these four underlying questions:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- How will we respond when some students do not learn?
- How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?



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Central Theme: This Whole Child (1)

Within each application, you will find reference to the term, “The Whole Child,” which calls out that we do not work with generic students, we work with individual students who are unique individuals who have come together to comprise a learning community.

You do this by providing your students with myriad educational options, mental health resources, and other support services, through which you identify and address their unique needs, including valid and respectable goals, values, strengths, challenges, and pains that might be being expressed problematically, and elevate their unique strengths and assets.



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Central Theme: This Whole Child (2)

We need to listen “through this whole student’s ears” to understand their lived experience. The School Evaluation of Effectiveness Narrative Statement asks you to address and document both the individual progress of each student and a compilation of these individual findings.



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Narrative Statement 1: School Profile (1)

Please describe the following:

- The school, grade levels served, student demographics, community context, staffing, and district support.
- How does your school's daily schedule support learning for your student population? This includes the bell schedule and the schedule of classes and other activities being offered.



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Narrative Statement 1: School Profile (2)

- Planned times in which staff in all roles regularly come together as a full team and in smaller groups to discuss school and individual student success and challenges, significant events and student interests, family and community input, schoolwide practices, and district policy. The aforementioned gatherings are sometimes officially scheduled under the general term, “professional learning communities.”



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Narrative Statement 1: School Profile (3)

- Discuss how you prepare students to be ready for and successful in the next levels following participation in your school (another school, society, college and/or vocational schools, career readiness and other opportunities). How do you help them to be aware of and access the possibilities?
- Describe the overall culture and climate of your school in terms of how a visitor, student, family member or staff member might perceive it. How is it safe, celebratory, etc.?



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Narrative Statement 1: School Profile (4)

- Describe the use of professional development in response to identified needs and approaches to support continuous improvement for students and your school.
- Describe the practices that are in place to maintain safety for students and staff at your school overall and from their perspectives.



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Narrative Statement 2: School Leadership and Management (1)

Please describe the following:

- Describe your school's leadership structure. How does your school's leadership team coordinate and collaborate with staff, students, and other educational partners who are involved in collaborating and contributing to school management, including identifying challenges and the means for identifying and implementing needed changes.



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Narrative Statement 2: School Leadership and Management (2)

- How your school coordinates with the traditional schools and other alternative education schools within the district to provide for seamless and supportive transfer into and from your school, including how student assets are emphasized in addition to any challenges, the onboarding process, and how specific identified student populations are supported.
- How district leadership, other district schools, educational partners, families and community members are informed of the activities, successful academic, social and emotional progress of your students, and challenges within your school needing additional support.



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Narrative Statement 3: Educating “The Whole Child” (Instruction) (1)

Please describe the following:

- How instruction and curriculum are matched and adapted to student developmental levels, student learning strengths and interests, and the student’s lived-experience and identity. How does staff gather and use this information to inform their instruction and support student progress?
- The instructional delivery system (e.g., directed teaching, project-based assignments, group projects, and other modalities) and how this is monitored and supported.



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Narrative Statement 3: Educating “The Whole Child” (Instruction) (2)

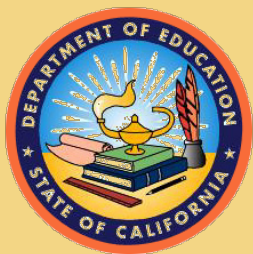
- What methods are used to identify, evaluate, and document student learning growth and success, and promptly communicate this to the student.
- All methods students may use to earn credits. Indicate the maximum number of credits that can be earned per quarter, semester, and year.
- Discuss if all credits and partial credits are transferable to other schools in the district and outside the district.



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Narrative Statement 3: Educating “The Whole Child” (Instruction) (3)

- If the number of credits to graduate from the school is less than the number required to graduate from the traditional high school(s) in the district, explain the differences and the rationale for requiring fewer credits if applicable.

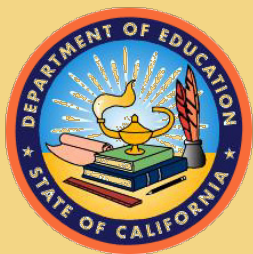


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Narrative Statement 4: Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) (1)

Please describe the following:

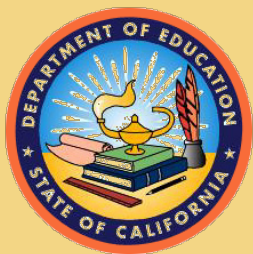
- How social, emotional and mental health needs and appropriate responses are identified and provided to students, including trauma-informed practices, and by whom. How are these elements integrated into the total school program?
- How the school culture, climate, practices and activities are supportive as a learning community, personally and culturally relevant, sustaining, affirming and revitalizing, respectful of the lived experience of the student and family, and how implicit and explicit bias are identified and addressed.



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Narrative Statement 4: Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) (2)

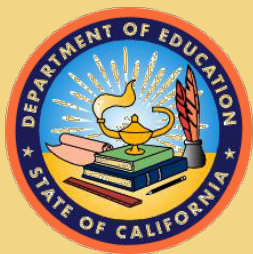
- How are your students actively engaged with and positively impacting their community? Describe how all students participate in service-learning, in which the service activity is directly integrated with the academic curriculum and content and students engage in reflection activities after the service experience and apply their learning in real-life activities. Include how the neighboring community is made aware of these contributions.



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Narrative Statement 4: Educating “This Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) (3)

- The alternative means of supportive improvement and intervention used to prevent or respond to behavioral and/or attendance challenges and barriers, and to minimize the use of exclusionary practices such as suspension, expulsion and other restrictions on students’ active engagement and opportunities within the learning community. These might include restorative practices, student success teams, social, emotional and mental health supports, and other positive, asset-based recommended practices per *EC* sections 48900.5 and 48900 paragraphs (v) and (w).



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Narrative Statement 4: Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) (4)

- (continued from previous slide) Provide a specific explanation of how those practices relate to any disproportionate representation of minority students and any other identified equity concerns in such interventions. [Reference 1](#)
- How you collaborate with the student in identifying valid and respectable goals, values, strengths, challenges, and pains that might be being expressed problematically, including those that the student identifies as a response to specific school practices, and in identifying positive, viable alternatives to the problematic behaviors and absenteeism.



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Narrative Statement 4: Educating “This Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) (Reference¹)

- For assistance in this area, you may review recent guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Justice on the ED School Climate and Student Discipline Resources web page at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>.

[Return to Slide 36](#)



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Narrative Statement 5: School Evaluation of Effectiveness (1)

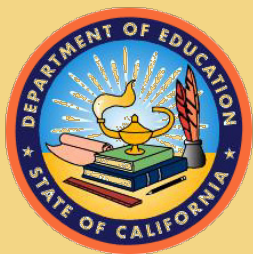
- How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its educational program, both on an ongoing basis and as measured over time. What procedures are used to determine what is working and what needs to be improved (e.g., formal and informal data including student, staff, family and other educational partners' input, and other examples). This includes information about students and also systemic practices.



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Narrative Statement 5: School Evaluation of Effectiveness (2)

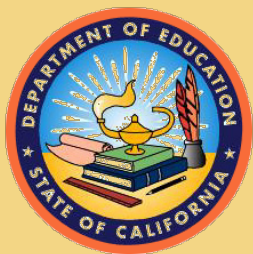
- How the school measures and records ongoing value-added academic, social and emotional progress, on an individual basis compared to from before the student entered this school, and throughout their participation in the school. And how these individual findings are also compiled as measures of the value added within the school. Include measures beyond the basics, such as school climate measures, number of books students have read, etc. We are looking for models that others might want to adopt.



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Narrative Statement 5: School Evaluation of Effectiveness (3)

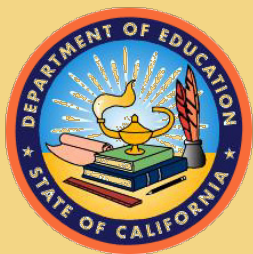
- Discuss how staff use these objective and formative data to support instructional and school culture improvement, and how this information is shared with the student, family members, school staff, district, educational partners, and community members.



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Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accreditation for Community Day Schools (1)

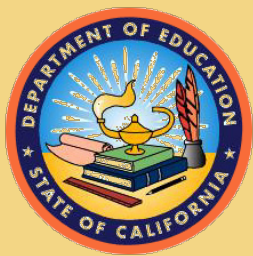
- It is recommended but not required that community day schools be accredited by WASC.
- If accredited, a copy of the WASC Accreditation Letter indicating the WASC accreditation period must be submitted along with an extension letter, if applicable, that lists the dates for which the community day school is accredited.



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Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accreditation for Community Day Schools (2)

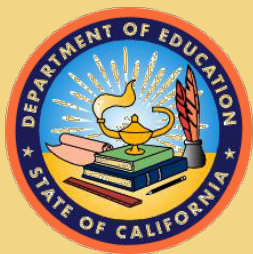
- If selected for a Site Validation Visit, if accredited by WASC, the applicant must prepare a digital copy of the most recent WASC Visiting Committee Report which must verify that the school has completed a full self-study, and provide it to the review team on the day of the Site Validation Visit.



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Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accreditation for Continuation High Schools (1)

- To be an MCHS, a continuation high school must be accredited by WASC.
- If accredited, submit a copy of the WASC Accreditation Letter indicating the WASC accreditation period must be submitted along with an extension letter, if applicable, that lists the dates for which the continuation school is accredited.



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Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accreditation for Continuation High Schools (2)

- If selected for a Site Validation Visit, the applicant must prepare a digital copy of the most recent WASC Visiting Committee Report which must verify that the school has completed a full self-study, and provide it to the review team on the day of the Site Validation Visit.
- **Disqualification from Eligibility:** Continuation high schools with Initial, Interim, Candidate status, or those that submit a certificate as verification of their WASC accreditation, **do not meet** the criteria to apply for recognition as an MCHS and are ineligible.



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Attachment Assistance (1)

Attachments A–C must be taken from the current year's application (2026–27), typewritten, and submitted in the exact format as provided in the application (on 8 ½ by 11-inch paper).

Attachment A: Application Cover Sheet

- Provide all requested information.
- Include the completed Application Cover Sheet as the first page of your application.

Attachment B: School Information Sheet

- Provide all requested information.
- Prompts have been included to identify what type of data is being required (e.g., number, percentage, response of “yes” or “no”)



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Attachment Assistance (2)

Attachment C: Certification Form

- **Applicant School's Certification**

- Review all of the information provided regarding the following content areas: (1) Site Validation Visit; (2) Application Review and Evaluation Fee; (3) Commitment to Promising Practices; and (4) Annual Assurance of Services
- The signature on this certification may be electronic or typed.

- **District's Certification**

- Review all of the information provided.
- The signature on this certification may be electronic or typed.



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Glossary (1)

- Create a glossary based on the specific instructions provided within each application.
- List all of the acronyms or initialisms used within the five **Narrative Statements**.
- Spell out the full name or term for the acronym or initialism used.
- This tool will assist reviewers of your application since they may not be familiar with the programs, tests, etc., utilized at your school site.



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Glossary (2)

The table below includes the first four acronyms/initialisms and their descriptions from **Appendix 1** of the application and provides an example of the required glossary **format**.

Acronym/ Initialism	Description
ADA	Average Daily Attendance
ASB	Associated Student Body
AVID	Advancement Via Individual Determination
BPL	Big Picture Learning



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Assembling the Application

The completed application is to be submitted as a **single PDF**. Each of the items listed below must be included for the application to be considered complete and must be assembled in the order listed below.

1. Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
2. School Information Sheet (Attachment B)
3. Certification Form for Applicant School and District (Attachment C)
4. Glossary
5. Narrative Statements (5 statements)
5. WASC Award Letter (including extension letter, if applicable); only required if the school is accredited



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Submitting the Application (1)

- Applications must be uploaded into the exFiles File Transfer System as a single PDF by 4 p.m. on **Friday, August 28, 2026**. If this presents a challenge, please reach out to discuss possible accommodations.
- You must contact the CDE High School Innovations and Initiatives Office (HSIIIO) by email to **request the Project URL, Project Code, and Password** needed to upload your application. This may be done any time prior to the day before the application deadline.
 - CommunityDaySch@cde.ca.gov
 - ContinuationEduc@cde.ca.gov



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Submitting the Application (2)

- Instructions for naming your PDF document and uploading your PDF document to the exFiles File Transfer can be found in each application. (See Appendix 2.)



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Evaluation Process (1)

Step 1: Application Screening

- Each application received by the application deadline, 4 p.m. on August 28, 2026, will be downloaded and screened by CDE staff to ensure it meets the minimum eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Application Review

- Applications that pass the screening process will be reviewed and rated using the Scoring Rubric.
- The application review process will occur during the months of September and October 2026.



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Evaluation Process (2)

Step 2: Application Review (continued)

- Each application will be read and scored by a minimum of two readers, recruited by the CCEA Plus based on their extensive field experience. Applications will be randomly assigned to two readers, taking into consideration any conflicts of interest. The two scores are averaged to determine the final initial score.



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Evaluation Process (3)

Step 2: Application Review (continued)

- A passing score is 75 points or above. In cases where one reader's score is at or above 75 and the other reader's score is below 75, and the resulting average of these scores is below 75, a third read will be required. Upon receipt of the third score, the lowest of the three scores will be discarded. The final score for the application will be calculated as the average of the two highest remaining scores and must total 75 points or more. Applicants that receive a final score of less than 75 points will be notified of their disqualification via email by HSIIO staff.
- An overall score of 75 points or more will lead to a site validation visit.



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Evaluation Process (4)

Step 2: Application Review (continued)

- Each Narrative Statement will be rated overall on a twenty-point scale, as follows, representing ratings of the depth and breadth of the extent and quality of the information for the school in describing specific qualities and innovative characteristics that make the applicant school an exemplary model and recommended mentor for other schools.



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Evaluation Process (5)

Step 2: Application Review (continued)

- The prompt for each Narrative Statement contains multiple elements, which are listed separately in the Scoring Rubric, along with the relative weight of each element in considering the overall score for the narrative. The relative weights of the individual elements within a narrative add to a total of twenty, but are only a guide as some, such as graduation for elementary students, might have no meaning for a particular school.



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Evaluation Process (6)

Step 2: Application Review (continued)

The table below provides the rating for the Narrative Statements.

Rating	Possible Score
Exemplary	15–20 points
Promising	10–14 points
Emerging	6–9 points
Limited or no Evidence of Exemplary	0–5 points



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Evaluation Process (7)

Step 2: Application Review (continued)

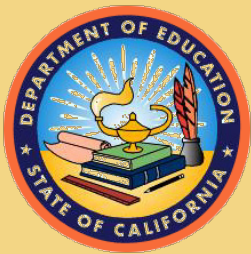
- Clearly, there is some overlap between narratives (e.g., between the instruction and the social, emotional and mental health and development narratives). Any relevant information provided in any narrative that applies to another counts towards scoring in that other narrative as well.



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Scoring Rubric

The detailed Scoring Rubric is found in **Appendix 3** of the application. We are presenting it during the webinar, but it is too detailed to do so within these PowerPoint slides due to format limitations of font size and available space.

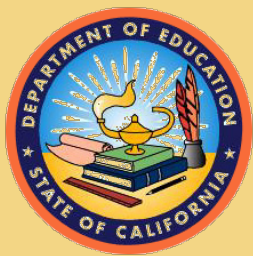


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Evaluation Process (8)

Step 3: Site Validation Visit

- A review team, recruited by CCEA Plus, will conduct a Site Validation Visit to applicant schools receiving a total score of 75 points or more.
- During the Site Validation Visit, the review team will interview the principal, teachers, students, guidance and support staff, stakeholders, and others familiar with the school. The review team may select teachers and students at random for brief interviews during the visit. The review team will share their recommendation for approval or reasons not to approve with the principal prior to the end of the Site Validation Visit.



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Reasons for Disqualification from the Reading Process:

- The due date for the application is **Friday, August 28, 2026**. If this presents a challenge, please reach out to discuss possible accommodations.
- Narrative Statements that exceed the maximum of two pages, are not formatted as outlined in each application, and do not include the title of the Narrative Statement as a heading will also be disqualified.
- If an applicant submits multiple PDF documents with only partial information, regardless of whether they comprise all the requirements in the 2026–27 MCHS Application, they will be considered two separate incomplete applications, and the application will be disqualified.



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District Audit Report (1)

The District Audit Report requirement pertains to MCHS applicants only.

- Pursuant to EC Section 41020(h), “Not later than December 15, a report of each local educational agency audit for the preceding fiscal year shall be filed with the county superintendent of schools of the county in which the local educational agency is located, the department, and the Controller...”



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District Audit Report (2)

- High School Innovations and Initiatives Office (HSIIO) staff will review the applicant school's District Audit Report provided to the CDE's School Fiscal Services Division. The purpose of the review is to determine if there are any continuation education attendance audit findings associated with the applicant. CDE staff will also review the District Audit Report to establish if there are any internal control findings or any other notes that may raise doubt as to the quality of the applicant's program.



Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

District Audit Report (3)

- Failure of a district's audit report to be submitted to the CDE's School Fiscal Services Division by December 15, 2026, will result in the applicant being considered ineligible for designation as a 2027 MCHS.
- However, if the district is granted an extension, the applicant may obtain a letter from the auditor. The letter must state that there are no audit findings related to the applicant. This document **must** be submitted to the HSIIO via email at ContinuationEduc@cde.ca.gov by January 4, 2027.
- It is up to the applicant to relay the importance of a timely submission to their district.



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State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

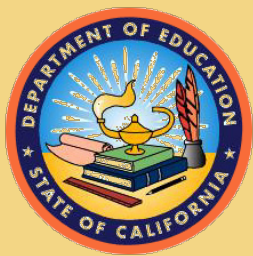
Designation Period

- Schools that are awarded MCDS or MCHS designation for the 2026–27 application year will be for the period of April 2027 through March 2030.
- Schools that receive the MCDS or MCHS designation in 2027 are encouraged to submit a new application in the 2029–30 application year to avoid a possible gap in model school designation status.



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Questions & Answers



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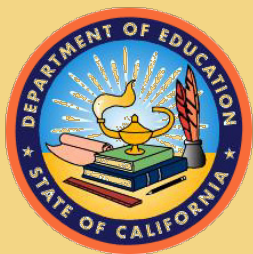


Tony Thurmond
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Listserv: Community Day School

Join the community day school listserv to receive timely information about the establishment and operation of community day schools. This includes professional development and funding opportunities.

To subscribe to the listserv, go the Community Day School Email List web page at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/cd/cdsmail.asp>. Provide your email address and name. Then, select the Join Community Day School E-mail List button.



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Listserv: Continuation Education

Join the continuation education listserv to receive timely information about the establishment and operation of continuation education schools and programs. This includes professional development and funding opportunities, opportunities for your students, and policy and best practices.

To subscribe to the listserv, go to the CDE Listservs web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/cd/listservs.asp>. Select the subscribe link for the Continuation Education listserv. This will cause your default email program to open a blank pre-addressed email. There is no need to include a subject or message content. Simply send this email in order to submit your subscribe request.



Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Contact Information

For application questions, please contact:
Dan Sackheim, Education Programs Consultant

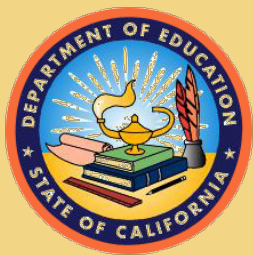
For technical assistance, please contact:
Darice Barefield, Analyst II

California Department of Education
Educational Options Team
High School Innovations and Initiatives Office

916-323-2183

CommunityDaySch@cde.ca.gov

ContinuationEduc@cde.ca.gov



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State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Thank You