



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Alternative Education Department receives six-year WASC accreditation**

**SAN JOSE, CA** – Yvette Irving, Director of [Alternative Education](#), is applauding the hard work of her employees this week after her department received six-year accreditation status by the [Western Association of Schools and Colleges](#) (WASC).

“Six years is the best that you can get,” Irving said during the announcement of the accreditation at a staff meeting on Wednesday. “This is not only validation but a compliment to the program that we provide at the County Office of Education.”

She added what is especially “unique” is that both the high school and middle school programs will carry the WASC accreditation seal.

“We were prepared to just accept accreditation for grades nine to 12,” she said. “But the visiting committee had enough information in our written application and when they visited Sunol that they went ahead and recommended the accreditation for sixth through 12th grade.”

WASC accreditation is bestowed upon schools that demonstrate the capacity, commitment, and competence to support high-quality student learning and ongoing school improvement. Irving said the Alternative Education Department (AED) began the accreditation process three years ago with an initial self-study. The granted accreditation was based on testimony and supporting data in its application, and a visit from the WASC committee in March.

“Staff efforts were intense over the last 18 months and it involved all court and community schools and included classified, certificated, and management staff,” Irving said, adding that students played an important role as well. “I think what was most pertinent to the visiting committee was why the students thought they were successful here and couldn’t be in their regular comprehensive high schools.”

Because of the accreditation, students from the county's AED schools are now eligible to apply directly to the California State University and University of California systems for admission. WASC accreditation also allows those students who participate in AED for a limited amount of time to return to their home districts with credits that can be applied to local graduation requirements.

*AED provides educational programs for students under court supervision, and students who are expelled or lack credits and have experienced challenges in traditional school settings. The AED serves approximately 441 students at five community schools, two court schools, [Opportunity Youth Academy](#), and through independent study. AED’s initial WASC accreditation was in June 2013.*

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