

# **Alternative Education and Accountability: An Exploration**

by

Kate Storks

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Capstone Project Facilitator(s): Dr. Jennifer Carlson and Dr. Kelly Killorn

Content Expert: Kristin DeSanti

Peer Reviewer: Cindy Rowan

The last nine months of research and work have culminated in an extended literature review that answers the question: *What accountability frameworks are most appropriate and can be most beneficial for alternative education campuses?* This research investigates the measures by which alternative schools are held accountable at the state and federal level to discover the measures that are most appropriate and effective at assessing those public programs that serve students 16-24 years old.

Findings demonstrated the lack of uniformity within this country with regards to the definitions and education opportunities offered to the young adult population in alternative public schools as well as the diverse ways in how these schools are held accountable and the gaps that exist in measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of these schools. There is limited research that demonstrates the growth of alternative students on standardized tests; the results show the students in alternative schools do grow but at a slower rate. There is also some research from two states that shows the limited effects of using traditional accountability frameworks in alternative schools.

Despite the overall limited body of research, the little that is available validates the need for a separate and more uniform way of evaluating the effectiveness of alternative schools. Alternative schools serve a population of students who have encountered and persisted through incredible obstacles. They do not generally follow a traditional educational pathway, and the schools that serve this population have had to operate differently to meet the needs of these students and still hold them to rigorous standards.

This extended literature review was meant to provide space to bring together the existing research that studies accountability frameworks how those frameworks might better serve alternative schools and the populations they serve. This research is important because, as a

society, we must find ways to equalize the education that our young adults receive.

Accountability systems are not currently equitable in the way schools are held deemed good or bad, and effective systems will ensure that schools are receiving appropriate support and identification.

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