



# School-Based Recovery Support: A Framework

This analysis is intended to assist families, professionals, researchers and policymakers with understanding the differences between school choices for students in recovery from substance use or co-occurring disorders. The framework is organized with the schools closest in type to recovery high schools through those having the least in common with a recovery high school.

School Types	Definitions	Comparative Operating Characteristics
<p>Recovery Schools</p>	<p>Secondary schools designed specifically for students recovering from substance abuse or dependency. Also known as “sober schools.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Primary purpose is to educate students in recovery from substance use or co-occurring disorders.</li> <li>B. Meet state requirements for awarding a secondary school diploma, i.e. school offers credits leading to a state-recognized high school diploma, and student is not just getting tutored or completing work from another school while there.</li> <li>C. Intend that all students enrolled be in recovery and working a program of recovery for substance use or co-occurring disorders, as determined by the student and the school.</li> <li>D. Available to any student in recovery from substance use or co-occurring disorders who meets state or district eligibility requirements for attendance, i.e., students do not have to go through a particular treatment program to enroll and the school is not simply the academic component of a primary or extended-care treatment facility or therapeutic boarding school.</li> </ul>
<p>Therapeutic Boarding Schools</p>	<p>Schools and programs offering a curriculum integrating physical, emotional, behavioral, familial, social, intellectual and academic development. Includes outdoor behavioral health and wilderness programs with enrollment that typically ranges from 1 to 2 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Primary purpose is to provide emotional growth through designated therapeutic programs.</li> <li>B. Grant high school diplomas or award credits that lead to a secondary school diploma.</li> <li>C. Therapeutic boarding schools with a substance abuse recovery emphasis typically provide primary or extended care treatment and have specific services available for substance use and co-occurring disorders. The school likely will not intend that all students enrolled be in recovery and working a program of recovery for substance use or co-occurring disorders. Students will usually be co-mingled with many students not in active recovery from a substance use disorder.</li> <li>D. The school is usually only available to students who have participated in a particular treatment program, and the school is essentially the academic component of a primary or extended-care treatment/therapeutic program.</li> </ul>

<p>Alcohol &amp; Drug Treatment Center Schools</p>	<p>Residential or day-treatment programs in which minors are admitted for 10 days or more and often provide a certain level of schooling for their patients. Medication management and medical monitoring is generally available on-site. Facilities treat adolescents with serious psychological and behavior issues and most are Joint Commission accredited. Services are highly structured.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Primary purpose is clinical treatment and/or extended care with included academic and behavioral support.</li> <li>B. May request homework from the student's school to keep the student on-track academically or, in the instance of long-term treatment or extended care, the treatment center may have a school on-site that provides academic instruction leading to credits awarded by the school, a local district or the student's home district. Some on-site schools may have authority to grant diplomas as well.</li> <li>C. Facilities provide individual, group and family therapy sessions. Specialty residential treatment centers can include psychiatric and behavioral hospitals that will provide a description of their services.</li> <li>D. The school is not available to any student in recovery from substance use or co-occurring disorders who meets state or district eligibility requirements for attendance, as students must go through a particular treatment program to enroll, and the school is the academic component of a primary or extended-care treatment facility.</li> </ul>
<p>Non-Traditional Schools of Choice</p>	<p>A variety of non-traditional public and private educational options exist and schools of choice with targeted substance abuse programming have an explicit substance abuse prevention/recovery support programs/curricula. The modalities most likely to include a therapeutic component are:</p> <p><b>Alternative schools</b> – Traditionally set up for disciplinary purposes, most blend a variety of student populations and are time-limited rather than open-ended</p> <p><b>Charter schools</b> – Schools that are granted a charter by the state or local district that exempts them from certain rules and regulations (such as teacher credentials or facility requirements).</p> <p><b>Contract schools</b> – States or districts “contract” with an organization or private group to provide education and/or therapeutic services.</p> <p><b>Home schools</b> – Students receive academic instruction at home. Some families choose to form “cooperatives” with other home-school families to pool services, often under the umbrella of an independent school.</p> <p><b>Virtual/Online schools</b> – Academic coursework, usually accredited through regional accrediting bodies, available through the Internet.</p> <p><b>Area Learning Centers</b> – Also known as “Alternative Education Programs”, Area Learning Centers (ALCs) offer individualized programs focusing on academics and workforce preparation, rather than traditional disciplinary alternatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Primary purpose is to provide options for parents desiring an alternative to their school-of-zone.</li> <li>B. Meet state requirements for awarding a secondary school diploma, i.e. school offers credits leading to a state-recognized high school diploma.</li> <li>C. Non-traditional schools may include a therapeutic component, which may or may not emphasize substance abuse recovery support. Most of these schools will not require that all students enrolled be in recovery from substance use or co-occurring disorders. Working a program of recovery as determined by the student and the school is likely not the intention for all students.</li> <li>D. The school is open to any student who qualifies for enrollment at that school, and most non-traditional schools are not exclusive to students in recovery from a substance use or co-occurring disorders.</li> </ul>

<p>Traditional Secondary Schools</p>	<p>Public or independent schools providing academic curriculum, most commonly in grades 9-12, leading to a regular education diploma. Most traditional schools offer some level of substance abuse programming, including:</p> <p>General, targeted and indicated prevention;</p> <p>Early identification and intervention for substance abuse;</p> <p>Low-intensity, brief intervention/treatment for substance use and co-occurring disorders; and/or</p> <p>Recovery support through individual and/or group counseling for students in recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Primary purpose is to prepare students for post-secondary careers and education.</li> <li>B. Meet state requirements for awarding a secondary school diploma, i.e. school offers credits leading to a state-recognized high school diploma.</li> <li>C. School staff (such as counselors, chemical health specialists and social workers), community agencies with school contracts, and peers provide recovery support services. The intensity of recovery support may vary and might include a recovery classroom or homeroom or dedicated chemical dependency counselor. Students in recovery are blended with students actively using and/or not in recovery for most, if not all, of the school-day.</li> <li>D. The school is open to any student who qualifies for enrollment at that school, and most non-traditional schools are not exclusive to students in recovery from substance use or co-occurring disorders.</li> </ul>
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