

Alternative Perspective

Informing and proactively shaping the alternative education landscape.



New Legacy Charter School
Real World Learning

Measures, Assessments, and Tools You Can Use

Sharing helpful examples of AEC measures, assessments, and tools compiled by Momentum's AEC experts.

Expanded View of College and Career Readiness

This quarter we are sharing two tools, developed as a part of A-GAME that expand on many states' definitions of what it is to be 'college and career' ready. These tools (linked below) specifically include workforce readiness as a means to highlight students' choice to pursue more than college, and to incorporate measures to show how additional educational tracks are equally important.

[Workforce Readiness Rubric](#) – *Developed in collaboration with A-GAME, New Legacy Charter School (our featured school), and their authorizer, the Colorado Charter Schools Institute.*

This rubric can be used by students as a self-evaluation, as well as by educators and internship/job supervisors to evaluate students' readiness to enter and progress through workforce opportunities. The rubric evaluates students' workplace attendance, communication skills, the ability to work both independently and collaboratively, as well as students' leadership and mindset and other relevant areas. Schools offering workforce development programming, job shadowing, internships, and/or work for credit options may find this tool useful, and charter school authorizers or school districts may be interested in exploring this tool as a post-secondary readiness assessment to evaluate school quality.

[Expanded College & Career Readiness Flowchart](#) – *Developed in conjunction with A-GAME, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and two of their alternative charter schools.*

This flowchart took California's original accountability chart of college and career indicator (CCI) assessments and requirements and expanded it to include elements of workforce readiness and preparation that do not rely on test scores and completion of a college preparatory education track. For example, the updated flowchart incorporated a certificate of achievement or skills certificate from a community college, acceptance into trade school, and the completion of a cadet leadership program. Whereby, LACOE alternative charter schools who are preparing students for other post-secondary options can be credited for the work they do. Since publishing this updated flowchart, the California Department of Education has adopted two of the elements (Seal of Biliteracy and Military Science/Leadership) into its own CCI assessment. Other state departments, school districts, and charter school authorizers may find this tool helps to provide a more equitable lens for measuring the effectiveness of schools offering workforce development and certification opportunities.

Momentum Strategy & Research is a non-profit organization committed to strengthening all students' access to quality education.

Alternative Education Campuses are among the most under-supported schools serving some of our nation's highest-needs students. Much of Momentum's work focuses on improving opportunities for AEC students and the schools they attend. This newsletter disseminates information to strengthen and support AECs and the landscape they operate within.

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

[Measures, Assessments, and Tools You Can Use: Expanded View of College and Career Readiness](#)

[Accountability Reimagined: National Alternative Education Association's Letter to DOE on Graduation Rates](#)

[School Profile: New Legacy Charter School in Colorado](#)

[AECs in Context: AEC Students](#)

[Events and Resources](#)

Accountability Reimagined

Profiling innovative policies and practices aligned with Momentum's *Accountability Reimagined* efforts to strengthen AEC opportunities through improved policy.

National Alternative Education Association's Letter on Graduation Rate

In March 2023, the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) developed a position letter to the U.S. Department of Education in response to a call from one of the Department's Senior Advisors. The position letter proposes an alternative for the current Elementary and Secondary Education Act statute from 2015 that requires schools with less than two-thirds graduation rate (using 4- or 5-year rates only) be identified for low graduation rate.

When looking at the impact of this statute on Alternative Education Campuses (AECs), this requirement identifies a high proportion of AECs as low graduation rate schools, which can complicate meaningful differentiation and can potentially lead to the closure of some AECs. With AECs serving student populations that often include over-aged and under-credited students, returning dropouts, and other high-risk criteria, a 'one-size-fits-all' requirement does not account for students' needs, which may include attending school for longer amounts of time to meet all graduation requirements.

The NAEA proposes that state-approved definitions of graduation rates, for example Colorado's use of the best of the 4-, 5-, 6-, or 7-year completion rate or California's use of a 1-year graduation rate, should apply at the federal level for that state's identified AECs. States that have chosen to give credit to AECs for the work they do with the unique student populations they serve should be allowed to use those graduation rate definitions to identify priority schools with low graduation rates.

The position letter was signed by the NAEA Board of Directors and Officers, the Association's Regional Directors, the California Advisory Task Force on Alternative Schools, the Association of California School Administrators, a Senior Director from Government Relations and Legal Affairs at California County Superintendents, and Momentum Strategy & Research.

If you would like to learn more, you can find the full letter attached ([NAEA's proposed solution!](#)), or if you are interested in signing the position, you can contact your [NAEA regional representative](#) or the [NAEA Executive Director](#).

School Profile

Highlighting a noteworthy AEC and their innovative offerings, programming of interest, and lessons learned.

New Legacy Charter School

New Legacy (NLCS) is a charter school in Aurora, CO on the outskirts of Denver, serving approximately 95 high school students and 60 children ages 0-4. The school's mission is to provide their students with a safe and personalized education that is connected to the real world. New Legacy's targeted programming includes serving the unique needs of teen moms and dads and their children in a two generation, accredited school program under one roof. New Legacy focuses on post-secondary readiness with parenting curriculum, an extensive post-secondary prep program, and competency-based learning. New Legacy's intent is to graduate every student with a diploma plus a license, certification, or college completion plan in order to enter careers where they earn a family sustaining wage.

Sara Kahn, the school leader, says "our students want to graduate and have successful careers so they can provide for their young children. School should not be the barrier that keeps anyone from achieving their dreams and goals. We are fortunate to live in a progressive state that is removing barriers, allowing schools to be innovative and making graduation accessible to our diverse community."

KEY ELEMENTS OF NEW LEGACY

STUDENT POPULATION: New Legacy's student demographics include 100% FRL, 37% ELL, 87% students of color, and 54% are pregnant/parenting teens.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES: When students live in crisis, it can be hard enough to get to school and access even the best of opportunities. Transportation is an enormous barrier that compounds attendance problems. Simply giving a bus pass to every kid doesn't mean RTD is accessible to everyone, and many young people don't feel safe using public transportation with or without a baby.

KEY PROGRAMMING: As a Big Picture Learning School, NLCS is proud to serve one student at a time. Some key factors include: Advisors, Real World Learning (internships, college classes, or apprenticeships), and Competency Based Graduation requirements. NLCS allows students to learn about what they are passionate about gives meaning to learning. Learn more [here](#).

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE: In 2023-24, 100% of NLCS students will participate in internships 2 days per week and attend school 3 days per week to allow for more rigorous learning in professional industries with mentors.

AECs in Context

Improving our collective understanding of AECs and the students they serve through information updated annually by Momentum and project partners.

AEC Student Enrollment and Demographics

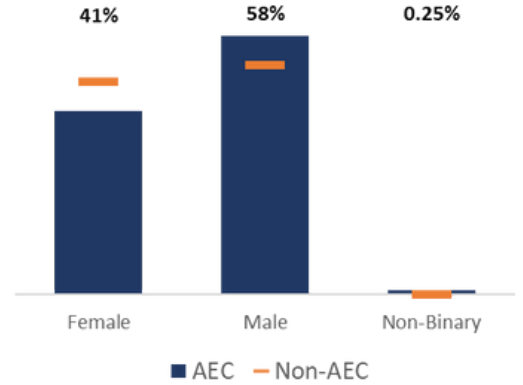
For nearly a decade, Momentum Strategy & Research has assembled the AEC School, Performance, and Policy Database (AEC Database), the most comprehensive national database about AECs, their students, and their performance data (where available). Momentum maintains and regularly updates the database to inform policy and practice to strengthen AEC opportunities. The AEC Database is the source of the following data.

Since the previous newsletter, we have been able to update the AEC Database with missing 2021-22 enrollment data, along with 2022-23 enrollment data (6 states are not yet available). The number of students in AECs in 2022-23 is around 425,000 and will be higher once the unavailable data is added in. Average AEC building enrollment was 134 in 2021-22 and 141 in 2022-23 (compared to 525 and 530 for non-AEC schools in the respective years).

When comparing AEC schools to non-AEC schools, the percentage of Hispanic, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native students is higher in AECs. There is also a higher rate of males and non-binary students in AEC schools (0.25% in AECs versus 0.09% in non-AECs).

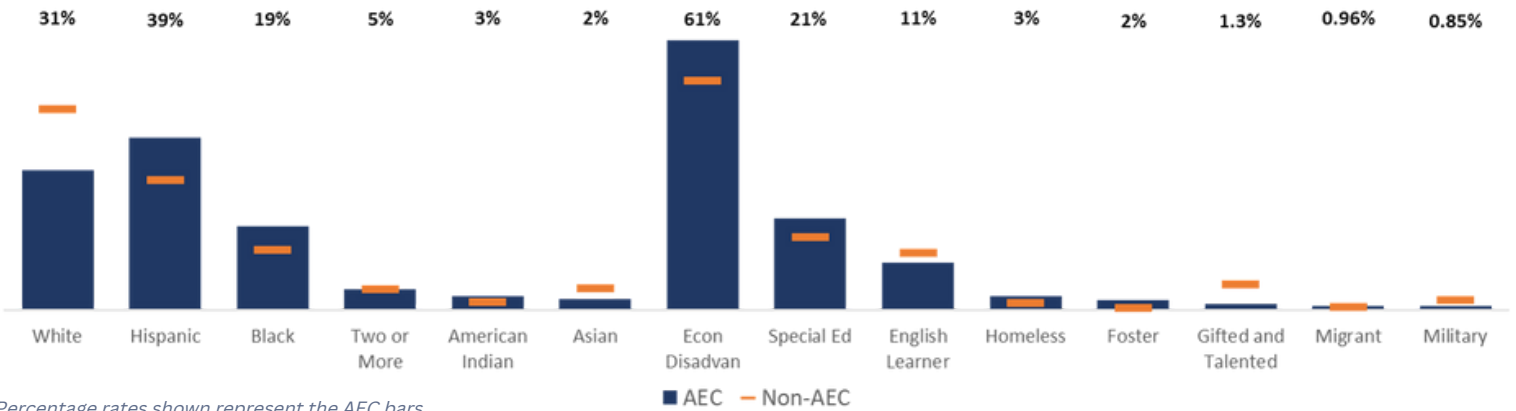
When looking at other demographics, AECs enroll higher rates of economically disadvantaged, special education, homeless, foster, and migrant students than non-AEC schools. However, AECs enroll lower rates of English learners, gifted and talented, and military-connected students.

Average Gender Rates for 2022-23
AEC vs Non-AEC



*Percentage rates shown represent the AEC bars.

Average Race/Ethnicity and Demographic Rates for 2022-23
AEC vs Non-AEC



*Percentage rates shown represent the AEC bars.

Events and Resources

Upcoming conferences

National Charter School Conference, June 18-21, Austin TX:
<https://ncsc.publiccharters.org/about-national-charter-schools-conference>

NAEA Conference, October 16-18th, Tampa FL:
<https://www.the-naea.org/2023-conference.html>

Resources

A-GAME Data Hub: <https://nationalcharterschools.org/agame/data/> **
 this tool will be updated with 2022 data in June 2023



Contact Momentum at:
www.momentum-sr.org

Jim Griffin: jgriffin@momentum-sr.org
 Dr. Jody Ernst: jernst@momentum-sr.org
 Liz Hackett: lhackett@momentum-sr.org
 Brooke Quisenberry: bquisenberry@momentum-sr.org

We would love to hear from you! Please reach out to the Momentum team if you have any resources or tools you want to share.