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HIGHLAND - San Bernardino City Unified School officials are determined to help every student graduate - even those who have dropped out of school.

AdvancePath is the district's latest effort to get students who have wavered back into the classroom.

The AdvancePath Academy, on the San Andreas High School campus in Highland, offers a spacious room filled with computers that allow students to catch up on their high school credits - at their own pace.

Located at an alternative high school, AdvancePath is yet another alternative for students who haven't found a fit in other settings.

"It truly is an alternative program," said Superintendent Arturo Delgado. "Even kids at San Andreas who begin to falter are given the opportunity to attend AdvancePath."

Eighteen-year-old Arlena Izquierdo, a fifth-year senior who is behind 75 credits after dropping out in ninth grade and then moving to Texas, said she heard about AdvancePath from her brother, who attends San Andreas.

"I heard it helps people catch up on their credits," said Izquierdo, who was looking over computerized maps for her government class, which she is taking along with Algebra II.

Izquierdo, who also needs to take biology and chemistry to earn her high school diploma, said it's easy to learn using the system provided by AdvancePath.

Students clock in when they get to school and earn one credit per six-hour session. A personalized learning path is created for each student, based on the subjects they need help in.

"I'm trying to graduate by the end of the year," Izquierdo said.

Her goal is to get into the Air Force.

The attraction of AdvancePath, Delgado said, is the ability to make quick progress at a student's individual pace.

The program takes those who have dropped out or who are in danger of not graduating for a lack of school credits.

Two weeks ago, the academy started taking in students rounded up in the district's Student Recovery program, where Delgado and other administrators went door-to-door looking for students who had been truant since the beginning of the school year.

Eighty percent of the kids now in AdvancePath were "gone from the system," said resource teacher Alice Scruggs.

They had dropped out, or were on the verge. But once back in, they seem ready to adapt and get with the program.

The academy now has 82 students enrolled, with the purpose of making up lost credits so they can graduate.

"We're trying to provide a safety net for these kids," Delgado said. "AdvancePath is a way to capture these kids."

Fifty percent of young people who drop out of school drop back in, in some capacity, Delgado said.

Eighteen-year-old Kevin Jones, who said he failed Algebra I as a freshman but passed geometry at San Geronio High, dropped out of the system when he moved to Victorville.

On Wednesday, he was logging into an algebra program at his work station, confident he could get a better handle on it.

Jones said he heard about AdvancePath when he came back to school at San Andreas and decided to give it a shot.

Now, he comes to school every day, ready to learn.

The Rev. Reggie Beamon, a San Bernardino activist who serves as community outreach liaison for the program, said it is his job to hit the streets and find young people who belong in school - and find ways to get them there.

The AdvancePath has a lot to offer kids who don't function well in a traditional setting, Beamon said.

Classroom instruction is four hours a day; kids learn at their own pace, and the small student-to-teacher ratio allows for a more personal, hands-on approach.

If the kids enrolled in AdvancePath tried to make it in a traditional classroom, it would take them until age 20 to graduate, said Narciso Cardona, the district's assistant superintendent of student services.

But one of the key features of AdvancePath is that it offers instruction online, Cardona said, so students can take it home with them, or learn at their own speed.

Parent Teresa Savala said the program is working out well for 18-year-old daughter Miyonna Bell, who is taking math and English, though she's already passed the exit exam.

AdvancePath also tutors students for the two-part exit exam, which students must pass to get a high school diploma.

"Miyonna's doing really well," Savala said. "She's actually participating. I don't think she'd be able to graduate if it wasn't for this place right here."

Bell was supposed to graduate last year, Savala said, but personal issues kept her from doing well at school in Ontario.

"Here, she's comfortable and adapting really well," Savala said.

The program, run through Williamsburg, Va.-based AdvancePath Academics Inc., is at virtually no cost to the district, Delgado said.

The company, which paid for the academy's desks and computers, is reimbursed through the Average Daily Attendance money retrieved when the students who have dropped out return to the system, Delgado said.

On Tuesday, AdvancePath Academics Chairman and CEO John Murray announced the company would be offering two \$2,500 scholarships a year to students who graduate from the district's AdvancePath program.

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