



Seattle Public Schools Community Alignment Initiative Overview, Terms and Conditions

What is the Community Alignment Initiative?

Alignment is a framework that guides how schools, school-based afterschool programs, families and communities work *collectively* to support the academic pursuits of children and youth. It is also a tool to ensure that schools and afterschool activities reflect, holistically, the developmental needs of children and youth and that afterschool programs complement the teaching and learning happening during the core school day.

Background. In the spring of 2001, the Seattle School District invited 31 afterschool provider / school teams to participate in phase one of the *Community Alignment Initiative*. Each team completed an alignment partnership plan which specified how they intended to work together to support children’s learning before, during and afterschool. A multi-disciplinary advisory committee, *Learning Partners Group*, made up of staff from Seattle Public School’s Office for Community Learning (initiative lead), the City of Seattle, School’s Out Washington and school-based afterschool programs then reviewed plans. Plans that were approved entitled the provider to receive a rent-free lease agreement with the Seattle School District with continuation pending demonstration of alignment per an annual evaluation.

Currently, all 80 school-based afterschool programs, as well as the middle-school Wellness Centers (4), and Teen Based Health Clinics (10) in the Seattle School District are engaged in alignment and will develop plans each spring for implementation in the fall. These include preschool, school age licensed childcare providers, Community Learning Center sites and Out-of-School-Time programs.

Alignment increases standards-based instructional time. The School Board signaled their support of the this effort via revisions made in 2001 to Board Policy E51.00, which in summary allows for rent or a portion thereof to be waived to school-based afterschool providers that can demonstrate alignment in their programs and thus increase standards-based instructional time to Seattle Public Schools students.

Core Outputs of Alignment to Date

- 90 school-based afterschool and health-care providers currently engaged in alignment
- Close to 10,000 children and youth served annually by aligned afterschool programs
- Over 125,000 hours of **additional** standards-based instructional time is provided **each year afterschool** – often to those children and youth at greatest risk of academic failure

- Over 500 afterschool program staff and SPS school staff trained in how to support learning afterschool
- 5,000 students are provided primary care services, including mental health counseling, each year through our alignment partners via the four middle-school based Wellness Center and the ten high-school based Student-based Health Clinics.
- Seattle Public Schools and Public Health & Seattle King County coordinate trainings for school nurses and school-based health center staff through out the year.

Expectations for Alignment and Indicators of Success

The Three Alignment Outcome Goals

Children participating regularly in aligned afterschool programs will experience....

- ✓ Increased success in school.
- ✓ Increased developmental assets/protective factors in their lives.
- ✓ Greater support in their growth and learning through increased collaboration and communication between the school and provider.

Evaluation Findings

Academic improvements. Evaluation findings of the Community Alignment Initiative suggest that, among other positive outcomes, children served regularly by aligned afterschool programs have increased rates of completing and turning in homework as well as improved reading and math skills as measured by school day teacher surveys, test scores and grades.

Increased developmental assets. Children who regularly attend aligned afterschool sites report increased connectedness to their school and their peers. For example, students report that they like their school, know there are clear rules at afterschool programs, and help their friends and teachers at afterschool programs.

Attendance and suspensions. In addition, *attendance* for those students is greater than that of the general school population. Furthermore, an analysis of *suspension rates* of those students suggests that they are less likely than the general school population to receive a long or short-term suspension.

Improvements seen by parents. It is estimated that the Community Alignment Initiative serves over 20,000 parents and family members through the provision of high quality, aligned before and afterschool care to their children. The initiative reinforces the value of such services for children, which is of great benefit to working families. A sampling of those parents and families served indicate that the afterschool program contributed to their child's improvement in reading and math as well as an increase in their child's social skills.

Quality of partnerships. As a critical piece of alignment is around the quality of the partnership between the school and the afterschool provider, we have attempted to capture the level of satisfaction between these parties. A sampling of participating schools and their afterschool partners indicate increased satisfaction in how the school

and provider team address key partnership issues as well as an increase in awareness of the learning needs of students served by the afterschool program.

Increased community awareness of importance of quality afterschool programs. Furthermore, participation in the Community Alignment Initiative serves to validate the professional expertise and collective experience of the afterschool field as it conveys to the broader community an understanding of the positive impact these programs have on student development and success.

Alignment Partnerships Terms and Conditions

Assessment supports quality of partnership. Seattle Public Schools recognizes the importance of quality afterschool partnerships to student success and is committed to supporting its partnerships with afterschool providers. It is because of this commitment that we will be conducting an assessment of each team’s annual “Alignment Partnership Agreement” to determine the extent to which a provider/school partnership can make progress towards the outcomes and criteria. This assessment will also help us provide the appropriate support and training to schools and providers during alignment implementation.

Strong plans result in continuation of partnership. Teams that can clearly articulate how they intend to deliver on expectations in their submitted “Alignment Partnership Agreement” will continue their partnership under a continued, rent-free lease arrangement for the provider. Provider/school teams will be notified of their status annually in June. Implementation of the plan occurs the following September.

Process if partnership plan is not submitted by deadline or is insufficient. If the Office for Community Learning determines that, in their “Alignment Partnership Agreement,” partnership teams are unable to demonstrate their intent and/or ability to agree to and implement sufficient alignment strategies:

1. The Office for Community Learning will offer technical assistance and support to these partnerships. One or more of the following courses of action may be taken: 1) guidance to the provider; 2) guidance to the school principal and key school staff and/or 3) joint discussions with the provider and principal.
2. After appropriate technical assistance, partnerships will have an opportunity to submit a revised “Alignment Partnership Agreement”.
3. In both cases of a late or insufficient submittal of the alignment plan or the space use application, providers may be subject to paying the full rent costs to Seattle Public Schools and, as a last resort, termination.

Accountability and commitments. Seattle Public Schools understands that the success of alignment is dependent on a strong provider/school partnership. Seattle Public Schools will hold school principals and providers accountable for their critical roles in achieving alignment goals and supporting student learning and success. This initiative will require

ongoing communication between the program and school. By engaging in this partnership agreement, the school principal agrees that:

- The school principal will participate, or designate a school staff person, in all aspects of the alignment implementation.
 - The school principal will share alignment goals/plan with school staff at a staff meeting in spring and/or fall, 2009.
- The principal or designee will meet at least monthly with the program provider.
- Schools will organize in a way to ensure that the provider has the opportunity to coordinate with school staff during the school day.
- Information will be exchanged about student academic and social needs, as is allowed under existing FERPA laws.
- The principal will consult with the Office for Community Learning as well as the Office for Program Placement regarding any space issues that may arise that might impact the afterschool program (including non-dedicated program space) prior to a decision being made or actions are taken.

Both schools and providers, who receive questions/concerns from parents/families about the other organization, will:

- Ask the parent/family to address those issues directly with the organization where they are occurring, or
- Arrange for the parent/family member to talk with both the school principal or designee and the provider.

Schools will include providers in school-based and district training opportunities when appropriate.

Both schools and their alignment partners agree to participate in all aspects of the initiative's evaluation.

Provider and school partners are invited to participate in training and take advantage of technical assistance offered through Seattle Public Schools and School's Out Washington.

Elementary school-based non-CLC sites are expected to meet state child care licensing requirements as well as quality guidelines for the City HSD Comprehensive Child Care Program (or, in the case of Parks sites, Parks quality guidelines). These programs are also expected to accept state and HSD child care subsidies (or Parks scholarships in Parks sites) for eligible parents who need help paying for child care.

Principal/Provider Changes

Providers and schools are expected to continue implementation of this alignment plan even if the principal or program director changes at the building. In the event of a principal change, the Office for Community Learning will brief the new principal within three months of his/her appointment.

If a program director changes in a multi-site organization, the organization's director will brief the new director. If there is a program director change in a single site organization, a member of the City of Seattle's Childcare Program team will brief the new director.

Building Excellence Construction Program

If dedicated childcare space is built through the district's Building Excellence capital construction program, the Office for Community Learning, in consultation with the school principal, will initiate an open childcare selection process in partnership with the City Human Services Department Child Care Program. However, if a school has an existing on-site child care program, the school may request continued services with the existing program if the existing provider (1) meets specifications of childcare model (state licensing requirements, etc.), 2) can demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity and 3) meets quality guidelines for city child care subsidy systems in order to ensure parent access to financial assistance.

Issues Resolution Process

If a conflict arises between the school and their afterschool partner that proves a barrier to alignment, the following process will be followed:

- 1). The principal and provider will attempt to resolve the issue, or the Office for Community Learning can ask the principal, afterschool provider or both to attempt to resolve the issue.
- 2). If the issue is not resolved, the principal, provider or both should notify the Office for Community Learning, thus activating an issues resolution process, at which time a timeline for resolution will be determined and action steps outlined if appropriate.
- 3) The Office for Community Learning will meet with the school principal, or designee, and provider to attempt to resolve the issue.
- 4) If resolution is not reached, the Office for Community Learning will notify the school's education director as well as the program's agency director, City of Seattle, School's Out Washington and others as needed.
- 5) The Office for Community Learning may seek input from parents with children in the afterschool program.
- 6) The Office for Community Learning may also consult with/involve other members of the Learning Partners Group.
- 7) The Office for Community Learning and the Learning Partners Group may provide technical assistance and support to resolve the issue.
- 8). Working with the school and provider, the Office for Community Learning, in collaboration with the school's education director and agency program director, will facilitate issues resolution, and development of an issues resolution plan if needed.

9) If the school, afterschool provider and Office for Community Learning cannot mutually agree on an issues resolution plan, the School's education director will develop the plan and the consequences of non-compliance.

Interventions and Corrective Actions

The Office for Community Learning will activate an intervention process if:

- A provider/school team is not meeting the expectations of the initiative as specified in the Alignment Partnership Agreement.
- A re-submitted "Alignment Partnership Agreement" does not demonstrate intent/ability to agree to and implement sufficient alignment strategies

The intervention process will include the following steps:

1. The Office for Community Learning, in consultation with the school's education director, will identify a person or team to determine appropriate steps to resolve the problem(s). This team will include the school's education director, the agency program director, and the Office for Community Learning. The team **may include** other Seattle Public Schools personnel and a Learning Partners Representative.
2. The team may seek input from those parents/families currently being served in the program.
3. The team will determine the appropriate plan for corrective action, which may include technical assistance, training, mediation and/or conflict resolution.
4. If the team cannot mutually agree on a corrective action plan, the school's education director will develop a corrective action plan, including the consequences of non-compliance.
5. The Office for Community Learning will work closely with the school's education director and the Learning Partners Committee in implementing the plan.

School Non-Compliance

If, after intervention including support, technical assistance and corrective action, a school principal still cannot demonstrate (to the school's education director) the desire or ability to effectively implement its responsibilities under alignment strategies and the team's "Alignment Partnership Agreement", the education director will determine the consequences for the principal and take all reasonable actions to allow the provider to continue under a rent-free lease agreement.

Provider Non-Compliance

If, after intervention including support, technical assistance and corrective action, a provider still cannot demonstrate (to the school's education director) the desire or ability to effectively implement its responsibilities under alignment strategies and the team's "Alignment Partnership Agreement", the provider's lease may be terminated by Seattle Public Schools and the provider would be required to stop operating at the site.

The provider would only be terminated if:

- It was clear that it was the provider (rather than the school) that was unwilling or unable to participate in the alignment process;
- Parents/families currently being served in the program had been asked for input (either in developing and implementing the plan, or during consideration of termination under this section; and
- The school's education director determined this was the last resort, since providers play significant care giving roles in the lives of children, and provider termination could result in great disruption to families).

If the education director determines that termination must occur:

- The termination clause in the existing lease agreement will be initiated.
- The school principal will notify parents of children enrolled in the program of the termination decision and will invite parents to serve on the child care selection process.
- The Office for Community Learning, in partnership with the City of Seattle Human Services Department Childcare Program, will initiate an open childcare selection process.
- A selection team, made up of parents/families, community members, the school principal and school staff will develop criteria for their provider, request and review applications and conduct interviews.
- Every effort will be made to provide continuous, uninterrupted service for children and families.
- **Note:** State child-care licensing requires a minimum of 90 days post-selection to authorize new program's opening.

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Seattle Public Schools
Office for Community Learning
Lisa M. Taylor, Manager and Initiative Lead*