



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 preschool and 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, preschools, afterschool programs and health centers reflect, holistically, the developmental needs of children and youth and that afterschool programs complement the teaching and learning happening during the core school day. It also helps preschool programs prepare children to participate to the best of their advantage in the schools and afterschool programs they will soon attend.

Background. In the spring of 2001, the Seattle School District invited 31 preschool and/or 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 Schools’ Office for Community Learning** (initiative lead), the City of Seattle, School’s Out Washington and school-based afterschool and preschool program providers then reviewed plans. Approved plans 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 **86 school-based** pre-k, school age licensed childcare providers (**56**), Community Learning Center (CLC) sites (**16 CLCs**; 6 elementary and 10 middle school) and Out-of-School-Time programs, as well as the middle-school School Based Health Centers (**4**), and On-site Teen Health Centers (**10**) in the Seattle School District Community Alignment Initiative develop their alignment plans each spring for implementation in the fall.

When looking at the numbers in terms of schools, rather than programs, **75 schools** have alignment programs in 2009-2010: **55** elementary schools, **10** middle schools and **10** high schools.

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, \(Link update 09/25/11\)](#) which in summary allows for rent, or a portion thereof, to be waived to out-of-school time (OST) providers (childcare/pre-k, early learning programs, before and after school programs, community learning centers, summer enrichment programs and

health centers) that can demonstrate alignment of their programs with school curriculum and thus increase standards-based instructional time to Seattle Public Schools students.

The Vision of the Alignment Program

Children participating regularly in aligned school-age afterschool programs and health centers 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, family and provider.

Children participating regularly in aligned pre-k programs will experience....

- ✓ Being prepared to succeed in, and enter, school day kindergarten and afterschool programs.
- ✓ Increased social emotional development.
- ✓ Greater support in their growth and learning through increased collaboration and communication between the school, family and provider during transition into kindergarten and afterschool programs.

In the 2010-2011 school year, the Seattle Public Schools' Office for Community Learning, Full Service Community Schools and Early Learning Leadership team is planning in consultation with the Learning Partners Group to strengthen alignment partnerships and strategies between schools and programs. We will further refine and revise the indicators of success for early learning and afterschool programs. Principal and Provider input will be invited during this planning process.

Evaluation Findings

[2008 – 2009 Alignment Summary and Data Report](#)

In spring, 2009, the SPS Office for Community Learning surveyed providers to collect data on children served by the Community Alignment Initiative and program impacts on the District's goals of academic achievement and family engagement. The 2008- 2009 Alignment Summary and Data Report summerizes those findings. Evaluation results from Families and Education Levy-funded and OSPI-funded alignment programs are also included in this report.

Alignment Partnerships Terms and Conditions

Assessment supports quality of partnership. Seattle Public Schools recognizes the importance of quality preschool and afterschool partnerships to student success and is committed to supporting its partnerships with aligned providers. It is because of this commitment that we conduct 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 identify the types of support and training to schools and providers for successful alignment implementation.

Strong plans result in continuation of partnership. Teams that can clearly articulate, with specific examples, 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 July. 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, and/or designate a school staff preschool liaison and a school-age liaison to participate, in all aspects of the alignment implementation.
- The school principal and provider will share alignment goals/plan with school staff at a staff meeting in spring and/or fall.
- The school principal or liaison 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 to share information about student/child academic and social needs.
- Information will only be exchanged about student/child academic and social needs, as approved by the parent or guardian within the existing FERPA confidentiality laws and policy.
- The school 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 and/or preschool program (including non-dedicated program space) prior to a decision being made or actions taken.
- The school principal will share the Continuous-School Improvement Plan (C-SIP) with the program to discuss and support the provider partnership developing a plan for addressing the school’s key academic strategies.

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, School's Out Washington (SOWA) and Seattle Early Education Collaboration (SEEC) where applicable.

Elementary school-based non-CLC sites are expected to meet WA State child care licensing requirements as well as program requirements for the City of Seattle, Human Services Department Comprehensive Child Care Program (or, in the case of Parks and Recreation sites, Parks and Recreation Department requirements). These programs are also expected to accept WA State and HSD child care subsidies (or Parks and Recreation scholarships in Parks and Recreation sites) for eligible parents who need assistance affording 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 and the Provider, 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. The organization's Director will also promptly notify the SPS Office for Community Learning of the new Director's name and contact information including email address. 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 (OCL), in consultation with the School Principal, will initiate an open childcare selection process in partnership with the City of Seattle, Human Services Department Child Care Program.

If a school has an existing on-site child care program, the school principal may make a request to the appropriate SPS Director to continue services with the existing on-site child care program if the existing provider 1) meets specifications of child care model

(state licensing requirements, etc) 2) can demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity and 3) meets state and city program requirements for 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 aligned partner that proves a barrier to alignment, the Principal and Provider will, of their own volition or by request of the OCL, attempt to resolve the issue.

If the issue remains unresolved the Office for Community Learning will conduct an appropriate review, meet with the parties and make a recommendation for a solution and timeline which may include any or all of the following in progression of increasing authority:

The Office for Community Learning;

- will facilitate discussion(s) between the Principal and Provider using appropriate conflict resolution practices.
- will request support services such as training from SOWA or SEEC and/or reports from and coordination with state and local government licensing/monitoring agencies.
- in consultation with the school's Education Director, will identify a person or team to determine appropriate steps to resolve the issue. This team commonly includes the school's Education Director, the agency Program Director, the OCL, other SPS personnel and one or more representatives of the Learning Partners Group (LPG).
- will seek input from parents and guardians with children enrolled in the aligned program
- with the Principal's permission will seek input from school teachers and other staff as appropriate
- will consult with/involve other members of the Learning Partners Group (LPG) and provide technical assistance and issue resolution support independently or in partnership with the LPG.
- in collaboration with the school's Education Director and the provider's Program Director, will facilitate issues resolution, and development of an issues resolution plan at a District Administration level
- will request the school's Education Director develop a plan including the consequences of non-compliance if the school, provider and OCL cannot mutually agree on an issues resolution plan within a reasonable amount time frame.

Interventions and Corrective Actions

In the event that the provider/school team is not meeting the expectations of the initiative as specified in the "Alignment Partnership Agreement" or 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:

- 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, but is not limited to, the school’s Education Director, the agency Program Director, and the OCL
- The Office for Community Learning will arrange and facilitate a program status meeting(s) with the Principal and Program Director which may include: WA State Department of Early Learning Child Care Licensor, City of Seattle, Department of Human Services, Manager of Early Learning and Education Programs and/or the Education Specialist, School’s Out Washington Trainer and/or Training Director, and from the provider organization the Executive Director, Child Care Program Manager, Site Supervisor or staff representative in equivalent positions.
- Taking into consideration the outcome of the program status meeting, the team may seek input from those parents/families currently being served in the program.
- The team will determine the appropriate plan for corrective action, which may include technical assistance, training, mediation and/or conflict resolution.
- 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.
- 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 and Office for Community Learning) 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 caregiving roles in the lives of children and provider termination could result in great disruption to families.

Once termination has been decided:

- 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 timeline, 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, existing school partner organization members, the school Principal and Staff which may include a Family Support Worker, Teachers and others with relevant experience or position, 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:** WA State child-care licensing requires a minimum of 90 days post-selection to authorize new program's opening.

The terms and conditions in this document are valid and current up to the effective date of a posted document revision.

*March 2010
Seattle Public Schools
Office for Community Learning
Susan Hall, Community Learning
Training, Outreach and Initiative
Lead*

This document is available on the web @

<http://www.seattleschools.org/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/1583136/File/Departmental%20Content/ocl/partner%20renewal/termsconditions.pdf>

Partnership materials and CAI documents may be accessed on the web @ [Seattle Public Schools - Community Alignment Partner Renewal Materials](#) or <http://www.seattleschools.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?sessionId=9bf665c143f060563f33353e315627f6&pageid=229776>