



**ALTERNATIVE  
EDUCATION**

C54.00  
Adopted  
June 21, 2006

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**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Seattle School Board to affirm our commitment to academic achievement for all students by offering a system of traditional and alternative education within the Seattle School District. These offerings will enable students to maximize their opportunities for meeting high standards and to develop their potential in the most effective education settings for the individual student.

In order to affirm and strengthen alternative education throughout the District, the District will provide assistance in areas such as communications, budget, or technology, designed to maintain and expand effective alternative schools at all grade levels.

While alternative schools share many values with other schools the following characteristics in combination define alternative schools as unique:

- 1. Students, families and staff share and support the school's philosophy, values, practices and mission to educate the "whole" child in a community based on a high degree of personalization.**

**Indicators:**

- Students and families have informed themselves about an alternative school and requested placement.
- Instructional, support and administrative staff are at the school by choice.

- 2. Program design includes a shared decision making model.**

**Indicators:**

- School community participates in the selection of instructional, support and administrative staff.
- Students, families, instructional staff and principal collaborate in decision making about the school's vision, mission, policies, rules, budget and curriculum.
- Families, staff and students, as age-appropriate, have equal voice.
- Students, families and staff participate throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation processes.



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- Structures are in place to provide equal access to information and decision-making to all stakeholders.
- All school community members have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in decision-making.

**3. Utilization of alternative assessment, which meets district requirements, that is tailored to the individual student and avoids grades, marks or labels that compare and stratify students.**

**Indicators:**

- Is based on competencies (academic, social and emotional) that are worthwhile, teachable and socially valued.
- Is based on high standards that value both common and individual needs.
- Uses multiple forms of qualitative and quantitative evidence from both academic and non-academic areas.
- Includes descriptive and formative assessments that allow students to communicate or display mastery in different forms to authentic audiences.
- Provides for the student's collaborative participation in self-reflection and evaluation, goal setting and ownership of the assessment process.
- Depends upon the observations of familiar adults (teachers, families) in the child's life to provide convergent data on real-life functioning.

**4. Curriculum is guided by the learning interests, strengths, style and needs of individual students.**

**Indicators:**

- Teachers design instruction according to the developmental, emotional, cultural and social characteristics of their students that make each learner unique.
- Students and teachers collaborate to define learning outcomes and curriculum products.
- Students have opportunities to develop the skills of independent learning.
- Curriculum is integrated, inquiry-based, and linked to the investigation of projects.



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- Teachers seek opportunities to include service learning and leadership development in the curriculum.
  - Fieldwork supports and enriches building-based learning activities.
  - Learning draws upon community-based resources and learning experiences beyond the school walls as needed to meet student needs.
  - Class configurations designed to accommodate developmental differences such as looping or multi-aged.
  - Learning is collaborative, cooperative and interactive; developing students' intrinsic motivation.
5. **The program includes a focus on social justice and equity by actively recognizing the talents and hopes of all students and actively addresses issues of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and other issues of discrimination.**