

# Community and Staff Initiated Schools

## Definitions

**Community and Staff initiated schools** are optional schooling alternatives for students which are initiated by community and staff members within the auspices of the Washington School District.

A “**school**” is defined as a group of students, staff and parents who have their own organizational structure, philosophy and program design. Schools can be housed on the same campus or site as other school and/or be housed within an existing school.

## Guiding Principles

- Goals of the school are congruent with district vision, mission, goals and curriculum framework; with flexibility allowed.
- Community and staff initiated schools are optional alternatives for students, subject to student and parent choice from schools across the district where space exists.
- Schools are open to all students at the targeted grade level(s).
- Choice Schools’ communication and outreach efforts will strive for diversity in the student body and staff. Through these outreach efforts, Choice Schools will strive to promote their programs to a diverse demographic of students in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, ability, and socio-economic status.
- Community and staff initiated schools are funded and staffed at comparable levels to other school programs at the same grade level(s).
- The educational program or structure is significantly different from other programs offered in the school district.
- Community and staff initiated schools are sited on a space available basis. Community and staff initiated schools are evaluated against goals and objectives including enrollment targets and student achievement as a basis for continuation. An annual evaluation will be completed to assure that schools are meeting stated objectives.
- Schools-within-schools shall be developed in cooperation with the building principal of the school in which they are sited.
- Schools fall under the leadership of a responsible administrator.
- Assignment of staff members and students to a CIS or SIS will be voluntary, but can be recommended from any source.
- Each CIS and SIS should develop its own program, management, operation and staffing pattern to meet its special purpose.

## Schooling Options

District Philosophy:

- The Lake Washington School District believes in a continuum of schooling options to meet the needs of students and parents. These options include alternative schools and programs, schools-within-schools, home schooling partnerships, alternative structures and program innovations. We are committed to the practice of school choice by parents, students and staff and to the evaluation and development of effective schooling options for the improvement of student learning. The continuum below represents the range of options currently provided and/or envisioned.

### Continuum of Options

Traditional Systems	Open Enrollment	Schools-Within-Schools	Alternative Structures	Community Initiated Schools	Staff Initiated Schools	Schools-Beyond-Schools	“Virtual” Schools	Home Schooling Partnerships
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## ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Lake Washington School District shall provide programs for all its students. When particular goals of the district are not being met through the regular program, or when there is a demonstrated need, alternative programs may be established.

Teachers, administrators, parents, and students shall be given as much freedom as possible to develop alternative forms of education and shall be encouraged to propose programs which may be chosen by the student and his/her parents. Groups who wish to make proposals shall be provided the necessary guidelines for developing their proposal and shall be informed of the necessary steps for seeking approval.

An alternative program may be a special offering which a student opts to take as part of his/her regular program or it may be a total, or essentially total, program which is significantly different from the standard offerings of the district and is open to students on an optional basis.

The goals of alternative programs shall be congruent with state requirements and with the basic educational goals of the district, recognizing the need to provide some flexibility in interpretations of the methods used to achieve those goals.

Alternative educational programs must include a method of evaluating their effectiveness. Programs may be continued if they are achieving their objectives and purpose. Alternative programs not meeting their objective shall be modified; they shall be discontinued if they lack significant overall value.

Alternative programs shall be funded in accord with district budget procedures and shall receive monies which are comparable in range to those provided for students in other approved programs of the district.

Adopted 6/5/78  
Revised 5/7/90

LEGAL REF.:  
RCW 28A.04.127  
WAC 392-121-107  
WAC 392-121-182  
WAC 392-121-188  
CROSS REF.: IGA, Basic Instructional Program

## PROCESS FOR APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY AND STAFF INITIATED SCHOOLS

1. Parent, community, and/or student group develops a written proposal including rationale for the need and the objectives of the schooling option being proposed.
2. Proposing group submits proposal to review board composed of staff, administrators and parent representatives.
3. Review board approves, rejects, or modifies, proposals using, defined criteria, guiding principles and procedures.
4. Review board submits approved proposals for superintendent.
5. Final decision on proposal.
6. Approved proposals referred to district administrator for implementation.

## GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY INITIATED/STAFF INITIATED SCHOOLS

1. Parent, community, staff and/or student group shall follow the defined process for application; develop a written proposal including rationale for the need and the objectives of the school or program being proposed.
2. When the proposal is approved, the group should prepare evidence of interest and commitment to the proposed alternative by enough students and parents to justify the space, time and financial investments proposed.
3. Administrators and teachers in schools affected by the formation of a Community Initiated School (CIS) or Staff Initiated School (SIS) will be informed as early as possible of the proposal and progress of development and will help communicate with the school community about the school or program.
4. The responsibility for planning a CIS or SIS will be shared among parents, student, school community, and staff. The administrator is responsible for the administration and supervision of the CIS/SIS as well as the rest of the school. CIS and SIS shall establish guidelines for decision-making roles and processes. Teaching staff and administrators have ultimate responsibility for educational program decisions.
5. Other than the necessary "start-up" costs, the district portion of the CIS or SIS budget should be commensurate with current per pupil costs in the regular program.
6. Each CIS or SIS will be assigned responsibility of an administrator.
7. The designation or selection of staff will follow established district processes.
8. Each CIS and SIS will develop its own program, management, operation and staffing pattern to meet its special purpose. Such patterns are not to establish precedent for the district or any other school.
9. New CIS or SIS will receive equipment and materials required to meet the objectives of the educational program and comparable to that of schools at the same grade level.
10. A design for evaluation must be included in all CIS, SIS and alternative programs.

## Proposal Process

### Community and Staff Initiated Schools

1. A Review Board composed of staff and parent representatives shall be responsible for selecting schools. They will then make final recommendations to the Superintendent. They will use the criteria outlined in the Guiding Principles as a general framework for decision making.
2. Parent, community and/or student groups shall make application to the Review Board by sending an initial proposal to Dr. Traci Pierce, who will be responsible for convening the board to consider applications.
3. The initial proposal should include:
  - Statement of purpose/rationale
  - Objectives/goals of the CIS or SIS
  - Names of interested/involved participants
4. The review Board will schedule a meeting with the individual and/or group making the proposal to discuss the proposal.
5. The Review Board will make a final recommendation to the superintendent.
6. When the proposal is approved, the individual and/or group will be asked to prepare evidence of sufficient initial interest and commitment to the proposed alternative by enough students and parents.
7. The individual and/or group will begin implementation planning with school district staff.