

# R.E.A.C.H.

Respecting Educational Alternatives & Choices in Homeschooling

## HOMESCHOOL / CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

### Policies and Procedures Handbook

(Updated June 2007)

#### Enrollment Requirements:

- Must be a resident of Alaska (Proof of residency is required: AK Driver's license and a voter's registration card.)
- Sign a verification that student is not enrolled in any other public school in the State of Alaska.
- Take any assessment required by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development of public school students.
- Participate in initial planning meeting and complete these forms:
  - Educational Learning Plan - due Oct. 15
  - Mid-Year Summary - due Jan. 15
  - Year End Summary - due May 15
- Make regular contact (frequency is dependant upon grade level) at least monthly.
- \$50.00 enrollment fee is required for each family (formerly called a curriculum deposit) at the beginning of initial enrollment. This fee is carried over until the student withdraws. This enrollment fee is refundable when all materials are returned.

#### Curriculum:

1. **Allotments:** Parents/Guardians are allocated specific amounts to spend on curriculum materials that support the student's Educational Learning Plan. Allocated funds may be used to support a variety of activities that support the child's educational plan, as well as educational materials. Possible activities may include ballet, community schools activities, swimming lessons, or music lessons. On-line courses, cyber-school classes, and advisory services, which may be a part of, purchased curriculum, on-line classes or cyber school classes (example: Calvert and Oak Meadows, and other curriculums like these have optional advisory services which can offer additional support for the parent/student.) are also options for allotment funds. All student activities should be outlined in the student's E.L.P. Non-consumable items from the lending library may be used without charge. Used curriculum materials may be purchased at a reduced price (as available). Family accounts will be charged for consumed items from supply shelves.

Materials **that are re-usable** are the property of the R.E.A.C.H. Program and should be either returned when parents are no longer using them or when the student withdraws. These materials will be placed in the lending library.

2. **Allotment Allocations:** Our allotments are \$1000 per full time student. Partial enrollment allotments are available depending on the number of courses a student is enrolled for.

3. **Allotment Disbursements:**

**Fall:** Two thirds of the yearly allotment will be allocated at the beginning of the school and one third in January. Beginning-school allotment/curriculum materials will be available at the time an Educational Learning Plan is turned in to the homeschool office. **E.L.P.**'s are due by Oct. 15. (We are available to assist you in this process, if needed.)

**January:**

The mid-year summary and portfolio samples are due prior to remaining allotments being available in January.

4. **Content:** Curriculum material shall be of the same quality offered by the district in all other programs and are in compliance with AS 14.18.060.

AS 14.03.090 states: Partisan, sectarian or denominational doctrines are prohibited with regards to use of public school funding. Therefore, curricular materials purchased by R.E.A.C.H. must be neutral in religious perspective. (While R.E.A.C.H. values a parent's choice to include religion into a complete education, state law prohibits us from providing funding for this.)

**Technology:**

1. **Computer for Loan:** The REACH office has computers available for check-out. These computers include both MAC and PC. These lending library computers are available for a \$100.00 deposit. Computers should be returned in the original box and in good working order. Any damage sustained, will result in a loss of deposit.

**General:**

1. **Immunizations/Birth Certificates:** All State of Alaska guidelines for immunizations apply to R.E.A.C.H. students. Waivers for religious reasons are available. Birth certificates are required for all Kindergartners, First Graders, and any student new to the district. Kindergartners must be 5 years old by August 15.

2. **Enrollment Period:** Students may enroll in the R.E.A.C.H. Program through the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development count period (9/30). Families, who move into the Sitka School District after September 30, may enroll, but may only borrow materials from the lending library shelf. Additional support may be provided, as the district is able.

3. **Deposits/Fees:**

**Enrollment Deposit:** A \$ 50.00 refundable deposit **is required** per family for R.E.A.C.H. enrollment. (A sliding scale for financial hardship is available.) This deposit is refundable when materials are returned and coursework is completed. This guideline includes single course enrollments. Curriculum materials that are reusable should be returned to the R.E.A.C.H. office when families are no longer in need of them.

**Loaner Computer Deposit:** A \$100.00 deposit is required per computer that is borrowed from our resource library. Loaner computers are available in both PC and Mac platforms. Deposit is refundable, provided the computer is returned in good working order. Any damage sustained to the computer will result in the loss of this deposit.

4. **Private School Enrollment:** State Law allows students who are enrolled in a private school, to also enroll in Homeschool/Correspondence Programs and receive supplemental assistance as needed. Allotment amounts are allocated as a part-time student (50%).

5. **Contact:**

a.) **Initial Planning Meetings** are required to go over each student's educational learning plan (E.L.P.). At this time a list of curriculum materials and resources may be identified and approved by the R.E.A.C.H. teacher of contact. It will be the parent's responsibility to complete this list on an ordering form following ordering procedures on #6:

1.) **Educational Learning Plan's (E.L.P.)** (see the E.L.P.) must be in place at the beginning of the school year and may be written either by the parent or with assistance from the R.E.A.C.H. staff. E.L.P.'s can be accomplished at the initial planning meeting. E.L.P.'s may be amended at any time. E.L.P.'s can be structured or unstructured to meet the needs of your family.

b.) **Regular Contact Meetings** are held depending on grade level of the student as outlined below:

K-8 grade parents will meet at least monthly.

9-12 grade students/parents will meet at least weekly.

("AT-RISK" students may be required to meet more frequently.)

A REACH teacher is available to team with parents in meeting their child's educational needs. Parents may choose to check in by phone, e-mail, by form, or in person.

6. **Ordering Procedures:** Materials may be purchased from a previously approved vendor list (a list is available on the Internet) or from other vendors with approval

from the R.E.A.C.H teacher. Materials must be approved as being a part of the student's E.L.P. plan. Unfamiliar materials may need to be previewed by R.E.A.C.H. teacher, School Board Rep., or Administration for purchase with allotted funds. Orders should be submitted to the R.E.A.C.H. Office for approval and then will be handled using the regular purchase order procedure. Allow 6-8 weeks for materials purchased through our office to arrive. Materials may be drop- shipped at the parent's request to make delivery faster.

**Purchase order forms must be turned into the REACH office by March 30.**

a.) Reimbursement Procedures: Parents may purchase materials directly from the approved vendors and submit receipts for reimbursement. Please follow these guidelines:

**Prior approval is required** to ensure timely and accurate reimbursement. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to submit a list of specific materials that accurately reflect the students E.L.P. and that are neutral in religious perspective. Parents should list material that they plan to purchase on a reimbursement form, or they may fill out the ordering form from the catalog and copy that for the R.E.A.C.H. office. This list should be given to the R.E.A.C.H. office for approval prior to ordering materials. The R.E.A.C.H. office will go over this list and, if all items meet the above criteria, will sign the form and return it to the parent. Parents may then order materials. After receiving materials, parents should keep all original receipts/invoices and turn these into the R.E.A.C.H. office along with the signed reimbursement form or catalog order form. Reimbursement requests will be aligned with the original approved list. There are no exceptions to this procedure.

**Reimbursement forms must be turned into the REACH office by April 30 along with original receipts.**

7. **Cumulative Records:**

1.) The R.E.A.C.H. Office will keep all student records including tests, Educational Learning Plans, specific work samples along with mid-year and end-of-the-year summaries. Parents may review cumulative files at any time. Cumulative folders are considered confidential. Yearly portfolios are kept on each student and should include:

2.) Portfolio Requirements:

**Grades K – 1:** Self-portrait and writing sample.

**Grades 2 – 6:** Writing sample and one other student choice.

**Grades 7 – 11:** Writing sample, one example of another discipline area, and one student choice.

**Grade 12:** Completion of a Senior Project

Other Work Samples may be included at each grade level, at the parent's discretion.

Oral Presentations: Sitka School District encourages students to complete a minimum of 2 oral presentations yearly.

(Note: Portfolio work may be collected digitally for those interested, please check with our office for details, advice, and/or specifics.)

3.) **Grades 5 and 8** should complete a project and a summary sheet to include in the student portfolio. A photograph could also be included to document project completion. 12<sup>th</sup> graders will be required to complete a Senior Project as part of the final graduation requirement. Senior Project information packets are available upon request from our office. We are happy to discuss project options with parents and students if needed.

8. **Assessments/Summaries:** Students are expected to take part in state mandated district assessments. If the student does not take the state-mandated test(s); a parent or guardian must sign a refusal to participate form. Students who do not take the state mandated tests will be refused participation in the REACH program.

**Mid-Year and End-of-Year Summaries** are required of all K-12 students. (See also Portfolio Requirements above.)

Mid-Year Summary: Due January 15

End-of-Year Summary: Due a week prior to the last working day for the homeschool staff.

Students will not be allowed to enroll the next year if students do not take assessments and progress is not reported.

9. **Special Needs - Locating and Identifying Exceptional Children:** Participants are encouraged to take advantage of all early screening tests in their district of residence. These are available for all pre-school aged children free of charge.

During initial contact with parents, discussion of the child's strengths and weaknesses will take place. R.E.A.C.H. Coordinators will discuss with parent suggestions and ways of working with their child to help with any deficit or strength area(s). If, at this time, a concern is apparent or the child's needs are unable to be addressed, the child may be referred for additional testing through. Once testing results are returned, a plan will be made, as part of the IEP process, to meet the needs of the child and show what areas the district will address.

Students who are certified as needing a special program (special needs or enrichment students) will be enrolled in Home School/Correspondence only if an IEP makes provisions for such services. Testing and placement must be done through the regular educational programs of the District. Members of the IEP team will be comprised of individuals according to state special education law.

The steps for serving a student with special needs include:

- 1.) Initial contact and discussion with the parent (as outlined above). This may include initial screening by the Sitka's R.E.A.C.H. Special Ed.

Coordinator. If a referral is deemed necessary, the Sitka School District will take the following steps:

a.) Contact with a teacher who last worked with the student (if any).

b.) A team will be formed (including, but not limited to: parent(s), homeschool coordinator, special education representative from Sitka, and administrator of the REACH program.) This team will advise the parent in regards to homeschooling including interpreting test data, etc. The final decision to homeschool will be the parents.

c.) The Sitka R.E.A.C.H. Sp. Ed. Coordinator is available to assist parents in addressing their child's educational needs.

d.) It is the parent's job to make sure students who receive special education services are brought to the proper location for these services. Services are provided at a Sitka School District school.

10. **Extra Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities:** Homeschool/Correspondence students who reside in Sitka may participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities at Blatchley Middle School if he/she is enrolled in a minimum of one (1) course at Blatchley. Participation in extracurricular activities at the high school level is limited to students who are enrolled in at least 5 semester credits either through the homeschool program, Sitka High School, or Pacific High (university classes may be used provided the transfer credit ensures the 5 semester credit minimum). Participation in extra-curricular activities at Keet Gooshi Heen and Baranof Elementary Schools will be determined on an individual basis and with permission by each school's administration.

Extra Curricular activities including: sports, drama & debate, academic decathlon, etc.

Co-Curricular activities including: school plays, music festival, spelling bees, geography bees, etc.

11. **Inner-Sitka Transfers:** Students currently enrolled in Sitka's educational programs (Baranof, Keet Gooshi Heen, Blatchley Middle School, Sitka High School, Pacific High) **are allowed** to transfer to the R.E.A.C.H. Program with special permission by the superintendent. Tuition-based enrollment will be available for these students after 9/30. Alternatives to this policy will be considered on an individual basis.
12. **Students who are officially expelled** from the Sitka School District will not be allowed to enroll in the R.E.A.C.H. Program. Prior to an expulsion, Home School/Correspondence may be offered as an alternative to expulsion, but only at

the discretion of the administration, R.E.A.C.H. coordinator and with direct supervision by the parent/guardian.

13. **Notification of plans to withdraw** for any reason, including re-entering public school or moving out of the Sitka School District need to be shared with the R.E.A.C.H. Office. Cumulative folders for students will not be released until materials/computer are returned. Deposits will be refunded as soon as possible upon return of materials. Lost or damaged material costs will be reflected in the amount of deposit refunded. Materials that are re-usable are the property of the R.E.A.C.H. Program and should be either returned when parents are no longer using them or when the student withdraws. These materials will then be placed in the lending library. All records will remain in our office until a request is made from another school.
14. **Input:** Comment forms for parent/student feedback regarding the R.E.A.C.H. Program/staff are available in the R.E.A.C.H. office. The R.E.A.C.H. program has an Advisory Board that meets quarterly. Parents are welcome to participate on this board. The board will review spring evaluations of the program and regularly team with the R.E.A.C.H. staff and School District Administration on issues pertinent to a successful Correspondence/Homeschool Program. Contact the R.E.A.C.H. office to determine advisory meeting dates or to add items to the agenda for discussion.

**General Information Specific to Middle School and High School:**

1. **Full-time Plus Enrollment:** Any special circumstance under which a student is allowed to enroll in a REACH Homeschool/Correspondence course(s) (in addition to his/her full-time status at the middle school or a high school) requires prior approval of the R.E.A.C.H. Office and/or principal, or superintendent. The cost of full-time plus enrollment will be the price of all necessary materials for the specific course the student has chosen and a \$50.00 per class tuition fee. These fees will be paid for prior to receiving materials and beginning the course.
2. **Full-time/Part-time Enrollment:** Students enrolled in the R.E.A.C.H. Program for the majority of their coursework **may** enroll as part-time students in the regular education programs of the Sitka District as well. However, students enrolled in the regular education programs of the District for the majority of their course work **may not enroll as part-time students** in the R.E.A.C.H. Program unless they have received special permission from the principal. In both circumstances, prior approval by the administration of both programs is required.

Students approved for single class enrollment through the REACH Program must pay the fees associated for that class. This includes materials cost, \$50.00 per course tuition through the REACH office, and a \$50.00 refundable deposit.

(Students who enroll with REACH by the necessary deadlines and are taking 5 or more classes with the R.E.A.C.H. program and who are enrolled in another Sitka School for the remaining 2 classes will receive allotment as a full-time student would.) Seven classes are considered full-time.

3. **High School Work:** High School students should complete all lesson work at home. Lessons will be graded by the parent/supervisor. Scores for lessons completed prior to each test should be given to the R.E.A.C.H. Office. Tests and finals will be taken in the R.E.A.C.H. Office and a certified teacher will grade and evaluate.

All scores for lessons, tests, and finals must be submitted by the advertised deadline. No classes will be allowed to carry over from one school year to the next without special permission.

**NOTE:** Supervisors must be 21 years of age and has a high school diploma or GED and may not be involved with the student romantically.

The REACH office reserves the right to deny access to students who do not have an acceptable supervisor or to students who have not had a history of successfully completing a correspondence course.

4. **High School credit for Non-High School Students**

- A student that resides in Sitka may take a high school class through the high school prior to their 9th grade year. Permission to take a high school course must be granted by the principal at each respective school.
- Students may take a high school course through R.E.A.C.H. prior to becoming high school age and with permission of the homeschool administrator.
- Students will be given high school credit, provided they complete the course with a passing grade. The course will be credited toward graduation requirements.
- This does not affect eligibility for high school extra-curricular activities, since student eligibility will start when students are officially enrolled at Sitka High or are listed as a 9th grader on enrollment records. (Students may participate in 4 years of high school extra-curricular activities.)

5. **Graduation Requirements** from the R.E.A.C.H. Program shall be the same as for all other Sitka School District schools. A "*Sitka School District High School*" diploma will be awarded to each R.E.A.C.H. student following completion of the graduation requirements.

- 23 credits
- Completion of a Senior Project
- Passing a swim competency test
- Passing any state mandated graduation tests