

REACH

Respecting Educational Alternatives & Choices in Homeschooling

HOMESCHOOL / CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

Policies and Procedures Handbook

(updated 11.28.17)

Enrollment Requirements:

- Must live in Sitka (Proof of residency may be 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 for public school students.
- Participate in an initial planning meeting and complete these forms:
 - Educational Learning Plan* (ELP) see below **Due September 15**
 - (4) Progress reports due October, January, March, and May.
- On months when progress reports or ELP's are not due, the REACH office will contact the family for an update (Nov., Dec., Feb., and Apr.)
- \$50.00 enrollment fee is required for each family at the beginning of initial enrollment. This fee is carried over until the student withdraws. This allows parents to borrow materials from the lending library. This enrollment fee is refundable when all materials are returned.

Education Learning Plan (ELP):

The ELP must be in place at the beginning of the school year and may be written either by the parent or with assistance from the REACH teacher. ELP's may be written at the initial planning meeting. ELP's must provide for a course of study for the appropriate grade level consistent with state and district standards and be specific in order to reflect the needs of the activities and materials being reimbursed. ELP's may be amended at any time. An ELP must have an on-going assessment plan that includes statewide assessments required for public schools under AS 14.03.123(f).

Allotments:

1. **Allotments:** Parents/Guardians are allocated a specific amount of money to spend on curriculum materials that support the student's Educational Learning Plan (ELP). Allocated funds may be used to support a variety of activities related to the child's ELP, as well as educational materials. Possible activities may include ballet, community schools activities, swimming lessons, or music lessons. On-line courses and advisory services, which may be a part of purchased curriculum (example: Calvert and other approved curriculums like these have optional advisory services which offer additional support for the parent/student) are also options for allotment funds. All student activities should be outlined in the student's ELP. 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. Tutoring is available for reimbursement, as long as service is *not* provided by a private school and is not a close relative of the student. Parents must designate on the ELP, the tutored courses along with the tutor's name. Tutors must be pre-approved by the REACH office.

2. **Allotment Allocations:** Our allotments for full time (all classes with REACH) students are:

K-5 = \$1600

6-8 = \$1800

9-12 = \$2000

Partial enrollment allotments are available depending on the number of courses in which a student is enrolled. Partial allotment amounts can be determined by contacting the REACH office. Partial enrollment allotments may not be based on the amounts listed above and are determined on a case by case basis.

Per state requirements, allotment allocations may *not* be used to pay a family member for services (lessons, tutoring, or classes). Family members include: student's spouse, guardian, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, step-grandparent, child, uncle or aunt.

To be eligible for full funding a student must enroll before September 30.

If an enrolled student withdraws before the end of the year, allotment funds will be pro-rated according to the number of days enrolled.

3. **Allotment Disbursements/Requirements:**

- Allotments are specifically assigned to a given student. (i.e. more than one student's allotment may not be combined.)
- Disbursements: **1/3** of the yearly allotment will be allocated at the beginning of the school year at the time the ELP is turned into the homeschool office (due by **September 15**); the second **1/3** of the allotment is available after the first Progress Report is submitted in **October**; the last **1/3** of the allotment is available in **January**, after the second Progress Report is submitted.

Allotment funds may be used for activities that will be occurring in the summer, but may not be used to pre-pay activities for the up-coming school year.

If enrollment registration has been completed in the spring for the next fall and the Educational Learning Plan (ELP) has been turned in, activities reflected on the ELP, which occur after July 1, may be reimbursed.

Curriculum:

1. **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 REACH must be neutral in religious perspective. (While REACH values a parent's choice in creating a complete education for their child, state law prohibits us from providing funding for religious materials/curriculum.) Additionally courses purchased by parents that are religious in nature cannot count towards the Department of Education and Early Development's (EED) FTE calculation. EED guidelines require that at least 50% of REACH-supported coursework be in a core curricular area (i.e. math, English, social studies, science). Funding is based on the state guidelines with four courses constituting full-time enrollment. Materials **that are re-usable** are the property of the REACH 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. **Ordering Procedures:** Materials may be purchased from a previously approved vendor list (a list is available on the REACH website) or from other vendors with approval from the REACH teacher.

Materials must be approved as being a part of the student's ELP. Unfamiliar materials may need to be previewed by REACH teacher or Administration for purchase with allotted funds. Orders should be submitted to the REACH 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.

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

2. **Reimbursement Procedures:** Parents may purchase materials directly from the approved vendors and submit receipts for reimbursement. Please follow the following guidelines:

*Quarterly progress reports must be turned in before reimbursements can be distributed.

*Prior approval is required and ensures timely and accurate reimbursement.

*It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to submit a list of specific materials that accurately reflect the student's ELP and which are neutral in religious perspective. Parents should list materials 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 REACH office. After receiving materials, parents should keep all original receipts/invoices and turn these into the REACH office along with the signed reimbursement form or catalog order form.

*With multiple students in a family, *please group each student's expenditures*

*Reimbursement for sales tax and internet fees are not allowed. See the REACH office if you have questions on this topic.

✚ Any expenditures over \$50 need to be paid with credit card, check, or money order (not cash).

✚ Products or services to be reimbursed must be reflected on the Educational Learning Plan (as per state guidelines)

✚ Reimbursement for *tutoring services* must include: month tutored, hours, \$ rate, subjects tutored, method of payment, name of student and parent.

Receipts need to be:

1. Official, not generic, including the name of organization (official letterhead, for example)
2. Proof of payment on receipt (for example, copy of check or money order)
3. Detailed - products purchased need to be detailed, similar to an itemized receipt from the grocery store, including the hours tutored and specific materials purchased (not generic school supplies)

*Reimbursements may take up to 30 days to process.

All reimbursement forms must be turned into the REACH office by April 30, along with the original receipt(s).

General:

1. **Immunizations/Birth Certificates:** All State of Alaska guidelines for immunizations apply to REACH 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 Sept. 1.
2. **Enrollment Period:** Students may enroll in the REACH program through the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development count period (September 30) to be guaranteed an allotment. Families, who move into the Sitka School District after September 30, may enroll, but may only be able to borrow materials from the lending library. Enrollment after Sept. 30 and any other financial support is by permission of the Superintendent of Schools.

3. Deposits/Fees:

Enrollment Deposit: A \$50.00 refundable deposit is due upon enrollment and **is required** per family for REACH 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.

Computer for Loan Deposit: The REACH office has a limited number of Lenovo ThinkPads (that operate on Windows) available for check-out. These lending library computers are available for a \$100.00 deposit. Computers should be returned in good working order. Any damage sustained will result in a loss of deposit and possibly the replacement costs depending on the nature and extent of the damage/loss. (See attached Computer Reimbursement Form and Tech Device Reimbursement Contract)

4. **Private School Enrollment:** State Law allows students who are enrolled in a private school, to also enroll in REACH and receive supplemental assistance as needed. Students may not enroll for the same course with REACH and the private school. Private school tuition is not eligible for reimbursement.

“The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.” Alaska Const. art. VII, § 1

Example: Math and Science at private school paid by parents. Parent may choose to enroll in REACH for Social Studies, Language Arts, PE, and Art. This would work because at least 50% of coursework is in a core subject area and they are not the same classes as student is taking at private school. Contact REACH about these situations.

5. Contact:

a.) An **Initial Planning Meeting** is required to go over each student's Educational Learning Plan (ELP). At this time a list of curriculum materials and resources may be identified and approved by the REACH teacher. Curriculum material needs must be reflected in the ELP. It will be the parent's responsibility to complete this list on an ordering form following ordering procedures on (See #6 Ordering Procedures):

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

K-8 grade parents:

- ELP's Due Sept. 15 or at time of enrollment, if after Sept. 15.
- Progress Reports and work samples Due: Oct. Dec., Mar., and May.
- Monthly Update by phone or email and initiated by REACH office Nov., Jan., Feb., Apr.

9-12 grade students/parents need to have weekly check – in/contact*.

- ELP's Due Sept. 15 or at time of enrollment, if after Sept. 15.
- High school students and/or parents give updates on their progress and test in our office weekly. They may also be required to submitted hours weekly as well.

*"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.

7. **Cumulative Records:**

1.) The REACH office will keep all student records including tests, ELP's, specific work samples along with progress report summaries (4 for the year). 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:

Work Samples are due for each subject each quarter. Each progress report should have work samples attached for each subject. Work samples may include photos or photocopies of work or projects, specific workbook pages, or written work. A student's summary of completed assignments or journal entry is also acceptable.

6. **Assessments/Screenings:** Students are expected to take part in state mandated district assessments, which include:

- 1) Kindergarten Development Profile
- 2) Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS):
English Language Arts and Math for students in grades 3 – 10
Science for students in grades 4, 8, and 10

Progress Reports (including work samples) are required of all K-12 students. (See also Portfolio Requirements above) and are due: **October, December, March, and May**

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. REACH teacher will share suggestions and ways of working with the student to help with any deficit or strength area(s). If a concern is apparent or the child's learning needs are unable to be addressed without supplemental support, additional testing may be an option, which will likely involve working with a variety of Sitka School District staff.

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 Team 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 a Sitka School District Special Education teacher. 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), REACH teacher, special education representative from Sitka, and a school district administrator.) 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 School District's Special Education Coordinator is available to make recommendations about needed accommodations and or services.

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 usually 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 with permission by administration. Participation in extracurricular activities at the high school level is limited to students who are enrolled in at least 4 semester credits either through the REACH homeschool program, Sitka High School, or Pacific High (university classes may be used provided the transfer credit ensures the 4 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. Students participating in extra-curricular activities at Sitka High, and who are taking a REACH class, must be passing their REACH course(s) to be cleared at eligibility checks.

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

Co-Curricular activities include: 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) **may be allowed** to transfer to the REACH program with permission from REACH principal and the school principal. Parents are responsible for the cost of any curriculum which is needed if enrollment is after September 30. Alternatives to this policy will be considered on an individual basis and approved by the Superintendent of Schools.
12. **Students who are officially expelled** from the Sitka School District will not be allowed to enroll in the REACH program. Prior to an expulsion, REACH Home School/Correspondence may be offered as an alternative to expulsion, but only at the discretion of the administration, REACH teacher and with direct supervision by the parent/guardian.
13. **Notification of plans to withdraw** for any reason, including transferring to a different Sitka public school or moving out of the Sitka School District need to be shared with the REACH office. Materials borrowed from REACH need to be returned. Deposit(s) will be refunded as soon as possible. Cost of materials that are lost or damaged will be deducted from the deposit refunded. Materials that are re-usable are the property of the REACH program. All records will remain in our office until a request is made from another school. Parents agree that any materials purchased with REACH funds, must be returned to the REACH office following the withdrawal of student.
14. **Input:** Comment forms for parent/student feedback regarding the REACH Program/staff are available in the REACH office, at the Superintendent's office, or online at www.sitkaschools.org

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 REACH 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 prior to receiving materials and beginning the course. (Waivers may be granted at the discretion of the administration.)
2. **Full-time/Part-time Enrollment:** Students enrolled in the REACH program for the majority (50% or more) 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 REACH program unless they have received special permission from the principal and/or counseling office at that school. 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. Exceptions to the tuition and deposit are available for students who are wishing to study math in a way different than offered at Sitka High School, seniors who need a specific class to meet graduation requirements and transfer students who experience a hardship due to missing the US History rotation at Sitka High School. Administration approval may be required.

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 REACH office. Tests and finals will be taken in the REACH office. A certified, highly-qualified teacher will grade and evaluate final tests.

All scores for classes 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.

Seniors will be expected to complete the class 2 weeks prior to semester's end, to meet deadlines for class rankings.

NOTE: Supervisors must be at least 21 years of age and possess 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 been unsuccessful with a correspondence course in the past.

4. **High School graduation credit**
 - Students may take a high school course through REACH prior to becoming high school age, with permission of the homeschool administrator, however, students will not be given high school credit, unless the course is started and completed after a student completes 8th grade. (Eligibility for high school extra-curricular activities 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.)
 - Students are able to “test out with credit” in classes. State adopted regulations allow students in grades 7 – 12 to challenge courses (test out of them) by demonstrating mastery of the course materials. Students

will receive full credit for a course which is successfully challenged. Courses which may be challenged include: math, language arts, science, social studies, and world languages.

5. **Graduation Requirements** from the REACH 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 REACH student following completion of the graduation requirements.

- **23** credits minimum

Credit Requirements:

Language Arts: **4** Credits

Social Studies: **3** Credits (1 credit U.S. History, 1 credit American Government, .5 credit Global issues or 1 credit A/P Human Geography, .5 credit of Alaska History)

Mathematics: **3** Credits

Science: **3** Credits (1 credit life science, 1 credit physical science, 1 credit science elective)

Physical Education: **2** Credits (Must include .5 credit Health) and must pass swimming competency

Electives: **7** Credits

Vocational: **1** Credit