

## **The Washington's Trojan Horse Workshop Handout Prepared by the Christian Homeschool Network-October 2008**

*The National Education Association says the following in their 2007-2008 NEA Resolutions: "Home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state curricular requirements, including the taking and passing of assessments to ensure adequate academic progress. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used".*

### **Public school-at-home programs give a distorted view of homeschooling by implying:**

- Homeschoolers are willing to accept more control by the public schools.
- Homeschoolers are willing to accept more regulations by the public school or government.
- Homeschoolers need financial assistance from the government.
- Homeschoolers need help from the public schools.

As more and more homeschoolers participate in the programs, the general public, media, educational establishment or the legislature may start to believe that this is the way homeschooling should be done. However, research shows that independent private homeschooling is thriving without public school oversight, regulations, or government money.

***Parent Partnership Programs in Particular:*** *These are a sub-type of ALE program that provide varying types of levels of educational and instructional assistance to families who wish to provide some of their children's education in the home. Parents typically provide a major portion of the student's instruction, while school district personnel are responsible for such things as developing the student's learning plan, monitoring progress and assessing performance. In all cases, school personnel retain ultimate supervisory responsibility for the entire instruction program, including the portion provided in the home, and this is what distinguished these programs from traditional home-schooling. (Source: Alternative Learning Experience Programs Study, October 18, 2005 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee)*

### ***What are alternative learning experiences?***

*A1. Alternative learning experiences (referred to as ALE throughout the remainder of this document) are learning experiences for public school students that are primarily characterized by learning activities that occur away from the regular public school classroom setting. The specific requirements and expectations of these away-from-school learning activities are detailed in a written student learning plan (WSLP) developed and supervised by a public school teacher. (Source: Implementation Guidelines for Alternative Learning Experiences, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, November 1, 2005)*

**Government school-at-home programs are funded under a state rule that governs alternative learning programs WAC 392-121-182. The purpose of this rule was to create guidelines for a school district to claim full-time funding for students that are educated off-site.**

WAC 392-121-182 Alternative learning experience requirements.

*....This section provides an alternative method of determining **full-time equivalent enrollment** and claiming state funding for public school learning experiences that are:*

- (b) Supervised, monitored, assessed, and evaluated by school staff.*
- (d) Provided in whole or part, outside the regular classroom setting...*
- (i) Responsibility for the parent(s) guardian to provide or implement a portion of the student's alternative learning experience under the **supervision of school staff.***

***What is a written student learning plan (WSLP)? (WAC 392-121-182(4))***

*The WSLP is the key document in an ALE program. It should include all information necessary to guide student learning and should be designed to meet the student's individual education needs. The plan must be developed, supervised, monitored, and evaluated by a certificated teacher. At minimum, the WSLP must include a beginning and ending date; an estimate of the average number of hours per week a student will engage in learning activities to meet the requirements of the plan; a description of how weekly contact will occur; a description of the specific learning goals and performance objectives for the student; identification of all instructional materials essential to successful completion of the learning plan; and a description of how student performance will be evaluated.* (Source: Implementation Guidelines for Alternative Learning Experiences, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, November 1, 2005)

### ***How is ALE different from home-based instruction?***

*Although ALE is similar to home-based education in that it is characterized by learning that occurs away from school, it is **not** home-based instruction. ALE is a public school learning experience which is planned, developed, and supervised by a public school teacher. Home-based education is subject to specific state laws (Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.200 and RCW 28A.225.010) and planning and supervision falls under the authority of the parent, not the school district. Home-based students may enroll part-time in public school classes and programs, including ALE.* (Source: Implementation Guidelines for Alternative Learning Experiences, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, November 1, 2005)

***Parent partnership programs***—these programs offer a significant role for parents in the development and provision of ALE. Because of this, many students in parent partnership programs may have been receiving home-based instruction prior to enrolling in the ALE program. But, as noted above, this type of ALE is **not** home-based instruction, because the school district is ultimately responsible for student learning, not the parent. (Source: Implementation Guidelines for Alternative Learning Experiences, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, November 1, 2005)

*The rules permits "..... a portion of the alternative learning experience...." to be provided by the student's parents or guardian, but only "under the supervision of the school district."..... "alternative learning experience" is a specifically defined term, and refers only to certain educational programs which are both planned and directly supervised by the public school district WAC 392-121-182 makes clear, any involvement by a student's parents or guardian in such a program is incidental and is subject to the direct supervision of the district. (Underlining added by presenter for emphasis only) source: June 11, 1998 Response from the Attorney General's Office to a state Senator*

**This should not be confused with independent home education (under RCW 28A.200 and 225.010) which gives the parents full authority and responsibility for their child's education without government oversight or intervention and is separate from the public school system.**

*RCW 28A.200.020 Therefore, all decisions relating to philosophy or doctrine, selection of books, teaching materials and curriculum, and methods, timing, and place in the provision or evaluation of home-based instruction shall be the responsibility of the parent except for matters specifically referred to in this chapter.*

**However, these programs are often confused with independent home education, and we believe some are trying to redefine home education.**

*...the rapid development of parent-partnership programs has clearly redefined not only this involvement, but also the number of people who view and use the term "homeschooling" and the perception of public education in many communities.* (Source: Office Superintendent of Public Instruction's Report on ALP 1998)

- The State Auditor's Office (SAO) shared some of these concerns. In their report dated August 27, 2004, they made the following observation: *Many districts operating parent-partner programs do not understand the difference between alternative learning experience (state-funded*

*education) and home-based instruction in which the students are not in the public school system and receive no state funding. We found through discussions with district staff that some school districts refer to state laws that govern home-based education when discussing their parent-partnered programs.*

- The latest Seattle Times School Guide lists homeschooling under public school alternative programs.
- Most newspaper articles reporting on home education feature families enrolled in government school-at-home programs
- Some policy makers and law makers think that homeschooling is conducted by local school district programs.
- Some school districts tell new homeschoolers they need to join a government school-at-home program in order to homeschool

***Given recent concerns over these programs, and the fact that the state currently invests about \$80 million in them per year, the Legislature may wish to consider establishing ALE programs in statute (assuming that the Legislature determines this type of public school programming should continue).***

(Source: Alternative Learning Experience Programs Study, October 18, 2005 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, page 17)

If the legislature decides to act upon this recommendation, we want to make sure they understand the difference between those in government school-at-home programs and independent home education.

**Home-based instruction is an exemption to the compulsory education law, and severs the relationship between the child and the local public school. The status of the child is not determined by his or her location but by who has authority. There are only three legal options to educate children in our state; public, private or home-based. The home-based instruction law applies only to parents/guardians who are teaching their child and assume full authority and responsibility of their child's education. (Source CHN [www.chnow.org](http://www.chnow.org))**

In the document titled, *Washington State's Laws Regulating Home-based Instruction "the pink book"* (published by the OSPI), question 11 (part three, page 17) states:

*Are there any circumstances by which a school district may provide the same model of instruction that home-based students receive to students who are full-time public school students?*

*No. The definition of home-based instruction found in RCW 28A.225.010(4) does not meet direct supervision requirements for the allocation of state funds. Full-time equivalent student is defined in WAC 392-121-121. However, WAC 392-121-183 Finance, General Apportionment: Alternative Learning Experience Requirements authorizes school districts to adopt rules by which a school district may receive full-time enrollment for teaching/learning experiences conducted off-campus. Under such rules a student is enrolled as a public school student. Alternative school district programs must meet minimum program hours and direct supervision requirements to receive state funds.*

**What do homeschoolers forfeit when they enroll a government school at-home program?**

- The right to make decisions about, what, how, and when to learn.
- Freedom to set goals and standards.
- Choices in curriculum.
- Freedom from constraints of teaching to the test, which will drive the curriculum
- Flexibility in matters of scheduling, testing, pacing, etc. Ability to teach in a Christ-centered way rather than compartmentalize subjects shutting God out of certain topics which is more consistent with a secular humanist view.

*What about religious curriculum/teaching? ....constitutional issues would arise if a school district included religious instruction in a course conducted or supervised by the district, even if taught outside the classroom, or in a student's home (Source: June 11, 1998 Response from the Attorney General's Office to a state Senator)*

When a parent joins a government school-at-home program they LOSE their freedom, control, and independence. **To lose your freedom is to lose the very breath of life in your homeschool!**

*"The soul of homeschooling has its foundation built on the incredible sacrifices of many parents who risked all in order to win the right to be free from suffocating government control and to be free to teach their children according to God's ways and in obedience to His commands. God honors those who honor Him and who trust in His sovereign love and power. We do not need the government's free money.*

(Source: The Court Reporter, The Price is too High." Christopher J. Klicka, Esq)

### **What can we do?**

- Rethink our priorities.
- Become informed and spread the word about the pitfalls of these programs.
- Build up the homeschool community- join your state support group (Christian Heritage)
- Make it clear to your state senator and state representatives that the majority of homeschoolers do not need or want these programs. Inform them on the misuse/overuse of funds.
- Stress to others that these programs are not representative of independent homeschooling.
- Challenge school districts to **not** use the term "homeschooling" or similar terms in the program name or program literature. This only creates confusion.
- Correct misinformation in the media.
- Do not file you declaration-of-intent at one of these sites, enroll in Running Start, use their free services, enroll part-time etc. This only implies that they are needed and allows them to claim the funding needed to operate their programs.

***Preserving homeschool freedoms for today and tomorrow!***

**Christian Homeschool Network**

**[www.CHNow.org](http://www.CHNow.org)**