

**Statement of Unity Regarding the Washington Home-Based Instruction Law
and Public School Alternative Learning Experience Programs**

**This statement is made by the following statewide independent homeschool organizations
As of January, 2009**

**Washington Homeschool Organization (WHO),
Christian Heritage Home Educators of Washington
Christian Homeschool Network (CHN)**

Independent homeschooling, under the Washington State Home-Based Instruction Law RCW 28A.200, clearly places responsibility for all aspects of a child's education in the control of parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Since the RCW, signed into law in 1985, those who select home-based instruction have consistently been referred to by media, academia and themselves as homeschoolers. These homeschoolers are identified by their choice to take full responsibility for their child's education and the requirements outlined in the Home-Based Instruction Law.

In contrast, Public School Alternative Learning Experience Programs (PSALEP) defined in WAC 392.121.182, are government public school programs where the local school district retains control of student learning. Formation of these escalating programs began in 1996 with the introduction of the PSALEP's rules by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Of concern to the Washington Homeschool Organization, Christian Heritage Home Educators, and Christian Homeschool Network is the blurred distinction between Home-Based Instruction (homeschoolers) and participation in a PSALEP government-defined school. Additionally, troubling aspects involve the marketing of PSALEP's to already-declared homeschoolers and the use of the *Declaration of Intent to Provide Home Based Instruction Form* as a marketing tool to solicit enrollment.

Currently, a growing number of public school districts throughout Washington are creating Alternative Learning Programs that target homeschoolers for enrollment and thereby funding. Additionally, existing programs are changing part-time enrollment requirements to necessitate nearly full-time participation, even requesting oversight of education in the home. We believe PSALEPs are redefining and undermining the Home-Based Instruction Law and placing the nature of independent homeschooling in Washington State at risk.

While styles may vary, all major Washington State homeschool organizations agree that maintaining the strength and understanding of our Home-Based Instruction Law is vital to the health of independent homeschooling in Washington State. The term "homeschooling" must remain identified, at its core, with families who have chosen to take upon themselves the responsibility for their child's education and not identified with a state government-operated program.

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