

**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN  
SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1  
AND  
CITY OF SEATTLE**

This Partnership Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into effective June 1, 2015 between Seattle School District No. 1, a Washington municipal corporation ("District") and the City of Seattle, an incorporated city in Washington State ("City") for the purpose of outlining the roles and responsibilities of the parties' cooperative relationship. The overriding goal is to provide access to quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-old Seattle children through the successful implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program ("SPP").

**Background**

In May 2014, Mayor Edward B. Murray and the Seattle City Council proposed a taxpayer-funded levy (Ordinance 124509) to support the Seattle Preschool Program, a four-year demonstration project to provide "accessible high-quality preschool services for Seattle children designed to improve their readiness for school and to support their subsequent academic achievement" (City of Seattle Proposition 1B, preamble). The Mayor also submitted an Action Plan that describes the demonstration project and its core guiding principles.

In November 2014, Seattle voters approved the demonstration project that will build toward serving 2,000 children in 100 classrooms by the 2018-2019 school year through a mixed-delivery contracting model. The vision of the City is to contract with the Seattle Public Schools, community-based organizations, and preschool provider cooperatives to provide preschool services and to braid and blend publicly-supported funds to create a high-quality, voluntary, accessible preschool program for Seattle's children.

Section 12 of Ordinance 124509 requires that there be a Partnership Agreement between the City of Seattle and Seattle School District as the District chooses to participate in this program.

"The Partnership Agreement shall set forth the parties' roles and responsibilities for achieving the desired outcomes for Preschool Services.<sup>1</sup> It shall outline how the City and the School District shall work collaboratively to the benefit of children in preschool."

The Agreement must be approved by the Seattle City Council and the Seattle Public Schools Board of Directors, and must be in effect before SPP levy proceeds may be spent on District programs or functions.

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<sup>1</sup> As per City of Seattle Ordinance 124509, "Preschool Services" means the array of programs and activities referred to in Section 1 and Section 5 of this ordinance as well as in both the Action Plan and Implementation Plan, with such modifications as the City Council may from time to time authorize by ordinance.

The SPP Implementation Plan was approved by the City Council on April 6, 2015 and signed by Mayor Edward B. Murray on April 10, 2015. As a companion to the SPP Action Plan, the Implementation Plan sets forth the principles and policies for the SPP and details requirements, application procedures, funding mechanisms, and evaluation criteria for SPP-funded programs and services.

Relevant aspects of the aforementioned requirements are restated herein to provide context for the terms of this Agreement.

## **Preamble**

We, the City and the District, embrace the understanding that quality early learning programs are critical for closing the readiness gap experienced by Seattle's students. We recognize that early learning programs are not at this time included in Washington State's kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade mandate to school districts. At the same time, the District has included early learning elements in its strategic plan in recognition of the importance of quality early learning to achieving equitable outcomes for our students.

By overwhelmingly passing the Seattle Preschool Program Levy, Seattle voters clearly expressed their desire that the community take broader responsibility for helping students achieve in school. They expect SPP to help accomplish the broad race and social justice equity goals adopted by the City and the District.

These goals can be accomplished only in partnership with the City, the District, and the community. Successful high quality early learning programs across the country have depended on such strong partnerships. Evidence from other cities clearly shows that school districts must be involved to ensure that the successful outcomes experienced by children in quality preschool environments sustain their long-term, positive impacts.

Collaboration means we agree to share resources and expertise through the preschool to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade continuum. The School District has expertise in instruction, assessment, professional development, and enrollment practices. Seattle early learning providers, as participants in the Seattle Early Education Collaborative (SEEC), have expertise with appropriate developmental practices for preschool age children, assessments of child development in multiple domains, professional development in curricula appropriate for preschool age children, and community engagement and family partnerships. By aligning these resources and expertise, we will increase the capacity of the City and the District to serve the growing number of families in our community and address the public demand for equitable educational outcomes for our children.

## **Results**

Funds are being invested to improve school readiness as measured by the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) and WaKIDS assessments. Additional measures will be developed as a

Comprehensive Evaluation Strategy<sup>2</sup> is adopted as required by the City Council. The ultimate goal is to improve school performance as measured by third grade reading, fourth grade math, and a reduction in the race-based disproportionalities in student achievement.

## **Principles**

All City SPP levy funds are awarded to achieve measurable outcomes.

### *Agreements and Funding*

#### Administrative Partners:

Whereas the City is responsible for the Seattle Preschool Program, the District and the City recognize their respective roles in the education of Seattle's children, and whereas the District and the City acknowledge their accountability to public funding sources and to the residents of Seattle, the City and the District agree that costs associated with the Seattle Preschool Program will be negotiated in formal agreements.

The parties agree that neither City nor District funds will be used in ways that divert funds from their intended purposes.

#### District as SPP Provider:

If the District opts to contract with the City to provide preschool services, the costs associated with these services shall be reimbursed in accordance with the City's standard reimbursement for providers of preschool services.

City funds will not be used to supplant state, District, or federal funds for District functions, nor will the District divert District funds intended for K-12 purposes to provide SPP services. Currently, the only funds available through the District for preschool services are:

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<sup>2</sup> As per City of Seattle Resolution 31527, "Section 3. If the ballot measure proposed in C.B. 118114 is approved or passed by the voters of Seattle, the Mayor shall submit a Comprehensive Evaluation Strategy ("Evaluation Strategy") to the City Council for review and approval by ordinance no later than ~~June 1, 2015~~ August 3, 2015.\* The Evaluation Strategy for the program shall be designed with independent evaluation experts. The Evaluation Strategy will use both process and impact evaluations, as well as on-going continuous quality improvement controls. The Evaluation Strategy shall address what, when, and how evaluations will be carried out and identify dates for submitting completed evaluations to the City Council. The Evaluation Strategy will also identify the key evaluation questions to be answered for each type of evaluation undertaken. In addition to outlining the types of process and impact evaluations that will be undertaken to gauge preschool and provider quality and child impacts, the Evaluation Strategy shall include a process evaluation specifically designed to assess the City's administration, oversight, scale up, and implementation of its Seattle Preschool Program beginning no later than the end of Year 1 of program implementation with an initial report due at the end of Year 2 and an update due at the end of Year 3. All evaluations shall be conducted by independent, external evaluation expert(s). Ideally, the Evaluation Strategy will identify on-going research partnerships with institutions with noted expertise in early learning and evaluation."  
\*City Council granted the Department of Education and Early Learning an extension to August.

1. Federal Title I, Special Education IDEA (for services and supports for qualified students), & Head Start funds;
2. State Early Childhood Assistance & Assistance Program funds;
3. Private foundation resources dedicated to preschool activities; and
4. Any Capital Levy preschool-approved funds.

If Federal or state laws change, these funds may no longer be available, which may have implications for the District's ability to serve as a SPP Provider. The parties agree to discuss these implications should they arise and explore possible funding scenarios.

### *Alignment, Educational Continuity, and Kindergarten Transitions*

The City and the District will work cooperatively to develop effective structures, procedures, and practices to promote positive preschool-to-kindergarten transitions for all SPP students in order to improve academic results for children.

### *Partnership and Collaboration*

Whereas the SPP Implementation Plan states that “[the City] will work directly with Seattle Public Schools to determine the District’s participation level each year” and consistent with Section 9 of Ordinance 124509, which states that the City may contract directly with the District, the City and the District, with the approval of District administration and Board of Directors, will negotiate the number of SPP classrooms the District will contract to manage annually.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### *City Responsibilities*

The City and the District will biannually assess the costs associated with the District’s administrative responsibilities in relation to SPP and negotiate an agreement. The City will reimburse all costs due to the District as negotiated through this biannual agreement. The aforementioned agreement will not include the costs of providing preschool services through SPP.

Whereas continuous quality improvements and evaluation of results are critical to the success of SPP, to the extent possible, the City will include district-appointed representatives in conversations about emerging policies, plans, and course corrections.

Whereas SPP requires a Comprehensive Evaluation Strategy designed in partnership with evaluation experts, due to City Council in August 2015, the City will ensure that all proposed evaluations: use approaches that lead to minimal disruption to students,

District staff, and classrooms; comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); and have institutional review board approval.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas SPP requires developmental screening, the City will work with the District to identify student special education needs and, with parent/guardian consent, communicate identified needs to the District to aid in planning. Additionally, the City will provide the District with summary reports (at the aggregate level) about children's SPP attendance and support District staff to plan for the needs of incoming students.

Though the City intends to centrally manage applications for and enrollment in SPP for the 2015–2019 SPP demonstration phase, it will work with the District to create enrollment access in district facilities. Additionally, the City will work with the District to create a plan for decentralized enrollment for SPP beginning in the 2019–2020 school year, or sooner if feasible.

Whereas participation in Early Achievers, Washington's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, is a prerequisite for SPP, the City will work with the District and the State Department of Early Learning to support a collaborative approach to involving the District in these quality systems.

The City agrees that throughout the term of this partnership, City employees with unsupervised access to children will have current records of a background check by the Washington State Patrol and Federal Bureau of Investigation, including fingerprint clearance per RCW 28A.400.303 and RCW 43.43.834. It is the responsibility of the City to make sure that all necessary background checks have been conducted before individuals are assigned to work in a District school or building. If a positive criminal history is reported, the City will share that with the District and the District shall make a final determination as to whether that particular employee may be assigned to a District school. All City employees, while working in or visiting District buildings, must comply with all District policies.

### *District Responsibilities*

Whereas access to professional development and planning time for teachers and staff is critical to the success of SPP, the District will work with the Seattle Education Association (SEA) to ensure the District can meet the requirements of SPP. The City will pay the costs related to the professional development of SPP teachers in District-operated sites.

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<sup>3</sup> The purpose of an institutional review board (IRB) is to assure, both in advance and by periodic review, that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of humans participating in a research study. The goal is to protect human subjects from physical or psychological harm. For more information, see: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/index.html>.

Whereas the City and the District intend to create a seamless system of publicly-funded education for all of Seattle’s children, the District will provide designated identification numbers to the City for assignment to preschool participants. If the children transition to Seattle Public School kindergartens, every effort will be made to use these numbers as their Seattle Public Schools student ID numbers.

Whereas continuous quality improvements and evaluation of results are critical to the success of the District, to the extent possible, the District will include City-appointed representatives in conversations about emerging policies, plans, and course corrections pertaining to early learning.

Whereas the District is the local education association (LEA) responsible for the provision of services to children under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(3)), the District will accept Child Find referrals from SPP programs to evaluate children for special education needs.

The District will communicate all relevant District policies pertaining to City employees and others working or visiting District buildings by August 1 prior to each school year.

#### *Districtas SPP Provider Responsibilities*

Whereas SPP provider agencies are required to adhere to program standards and requirements detailed in the SPP Action and Implementation Plans, as a provider of preschool services for SPP, the District will adhere to all SPP quality requirements including, but not limited to: participating in Early Achievers, requiring and reporting teacher qualifications in the MERIT system, and participating in the evaluation of SPP.

Whereas the City requires, funds, and provides training on either HighScope® or Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Fifth Edition, and, whereas the District currently uses the HighScope curriculum, the District will develop job categories for HighScope-trained and Creative Curriculum-trained teachers to ensure stable staffing of SPP teachers in District-operated classrooms.

Whereas the City requires embedded coaching in all SPP classrooms and professional development for all SPP teachers and assistant teachers, instructional staff from District-operated SPP programs will participate in professional development and coaching to the extent that the requirements do not violate District responsibilities under the law or collective bargaining agreement(s). Any conflicts shall be explicitly noted and addressed in the District’s preschool service provider contract, negotiated prior to becoming a preschool service provider for SPP. The District will work with the Seattle Education Association to negotiate coach access to preschool teachers in District-operated SPP classrooms. Coaching will not be used for District teacher evaluation purposes, but will be solely for the purpose of teacher growth and achievement of student outcomes.

Whereas the City and the District are acutely aware of District space-constraints and community concerns over the allocation of space in District-managed buildings, the District is eligible to apply for City funding for facilities improvements, expansions, and renovations for the purposes of providing City-funded early learning programs. Certain rules and restrictions will apply in the event that funds are awarded.

**General Provisions**

Unless otherwise amended, this Agreement shall be for the period commencing upon adoption by the Seattle City Council and the District and ending on August 31, 2019.

The City and the School District shall each act in good faith and shall carry out the terms of the Agreement as expeditiously as possible. The City’s responsibilities will be carried out through the Department of Education and Early Learning.

This Agreement and any subsequent amendments must be authorized by a resolution adopted by the Seattle City Council and by a resolution adopted by the Seattle Public Schools Board of Directors.

Either the City or the District may propose amendments to this Agreement consistent with the Seattle Preschool Program Levy Action Plan and Implementation Plan adopted by the City Council by ordinance; Seattle Public Schools Strategic Plan; and Seattle Public Schools Policies and Procedures.

By signing below, each signatory represents that it has the authority to execute this Partnership Agreement.

SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

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Signature

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Printed Name

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