

Satellite/Umbrella School Partnerships

The Satellite/Umbrella School Program is an exciting opportunity for creative teachers who have a passionate desire to start their own schools that support independent learning, homeschooling/unschooling, and life-long learning. We find that teachers are happier people, too, when they can successfully empower their students to be truly self-directed.

The Alger Learning Center/Independence High School has been in business for over 30 years, facilitating student-centered learning. We have a local program in which we have direct physical contact with students, a distance learning program, and the Satellite School Program. Through the years we have had satellite school partnerships throughout the United States and around the globe, and began a revolutionary one in Japan over ten years ago that continues to help the young people of that country achieve success, and continue their education at a higher level.

We feel that part of the success of many of these partnership programs is due to allowing teachers the freedom to have a different relationship with students than the traditional style and model of public schools. Teachers in our satellite schools, working with individualized instruction, provide students many optional ways of learning, and numerous choices in curriculum. The freedom of choice in ways to learn is essential for motivation and self-direction. As John Holt said, in so many words, teachers should be more like travel agents, helping students reach their own self-determined destinations.

The function of the Satellite School is to help students and families design and select curriculum, monitor and document the time and quality of learning, along with offering support and tutoring, while encouraging independent learning. The Satellite School teachers carefully interview students to learn about their interests and goals. They facilitate diagnostic testing --- standard or informal. By understanding the student's goals, interests, skill levels and learning styles, the teachers are able to customize curriculum for the individual student in order for the student to have a successful learning experience. Satellite School teachers should strive to be sensitive to each student's self esteem, and help them become self-confident, self-reliant and happier students.

We are enthusiastic about encouraging teachers who are dedicated, creative, flexible, and totally student-centered, but who also may be disenfranchised, disappointed, or philosophically at odds with a compulsory, overcrowded, curriculum-based and over-structured learning environment such as public and many private schools commonly offer.

We expect our ALC teachers to become completely familiar with the homeschooling laws in their individual states or countries, along with that state's educational guidelines. We also expect our teachers to be familiar with current journals, and issues pertaining to homeschooling and independent learning. We also strongly suggest that our teachers become familiar with the work and writings of such authors as John Holt, Frank Smith, John Taylor Gatto, and Thomas Armstrong (for starters), and the learning model of Summerhill, if they are not already.

Your first step in starting your own Satellite School is to call and set up a telephone interview (1-800-595-2630). If you are in our local area, we would like an opportunity to meet you for an in-person interview (call 360-595-2630).

The next step is to pay an initial application/startup fee.

The next step is to send us by fax, email or postal mail photocopies of teachers' certificates or other evidence of qualifications, and a resume to include areas of endorsement and/or teaching experience, and at least three non-family character references, including phone numbers.

To complete the application process, applicants should print and sign a copy of the Joint Operating and Responsibilities Agreement (JOA), and mail, email, or fax it to us (fax: 1-360-595-1141). Upon the completion of the application process, a copy of the JOA, signed by both parties, will be provided to the Satellite School applicant.

Please don't hesitate to call or email us at orion@nas.com with your questions.