

SESEC Glossary

A plain-language guide to key terms, programs, and ideas used in Southeast Seattle education justice work

81 terms | organized by theme | working resource for interns, staff, partners, and community members

Purpose

This glossary helps new interns, staff, partners, students, families, and community members understand the language used in SESEC's work. The definitions are intentionally plain-language and include SESEC-specific context so the glossary is useful in meetings, outreach, writing, onboarding, and program support.

How to use this glossary

- Use the Term column to quickly identify a word, acronym, program, or concept.
- Use the Plain-language Definition column for a simple explanation that avoids unnecessary jargon.
- Use the SESEC Context column to understand why the term matters in SESEC's coalition, programs, and advocacy work.
- Treat this as a working resource that can be updated after staff, partner, or community feedback.

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Quick Acronym Guide

Acronym	Full Name
APC	Advocacy and Policy Cohorts
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DEEL	City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning
FEPP	Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy
FPB	Family Power Building Initiative
SEED	Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity
SESEC	Southeast Seattle Education Coalition
SPS	Seattle Public Schools
SRO	School Resource Officer
YLAP	Youth Leadership & Advocacy Program

Core Values & Equity Language

Term	Plain-language Definition	SESEC Context / Why It Matters
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The term highlights communities that have experienced systemic racism and exclusion.	SESEC uses BIPOC-centered language because its work prioritizes students, families, and community leaders who are often left out of education decision-making.
Educational Equity	The idea that every student should receive the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed, not just the same resources as everyone else.	This is one of SESEC's central goals. SESEC connects schools, families, and community partners to push for fairer access to funding, services, leadership, and voice.
Educational Justice	A deeper form of equity that focuses on changing the systems, policies, and practices that create unfair outcomes in education.	SESEC describes its work as fighting for educational justice for Southeast Seattle students. This means addressing root causes, not only short-term gaps.
Liberation	The process of freeing people and communities from oppressive systems so they can lead, thrive, and shape their own futures.	A liberation framework helps SESEC center community power, long-term change, and the leadership of people most affected by education inequity.
Racial Equity Lens	A way of reviewing decisions by asking how race and racism affect access, power, resources, and outcomes.	SESEC programs like APC and YLAP use a racial equity lens to help participants understand education policy, data, budgets, and advocacy more clearly.
Culturally Responsive Education	Teaching and learning that recognize students' cultures, languages, histories, and identities as strengths.	SESEC supports culturally responsive practices so schools better serve Southeast Seattle's diverse students and families.
Language Justice	The belief that people should be able to understand, participate, and lead in the languages they are most comfortable using.	Language justice matters because many Southeast Seattle families are multilingual. SESEC's family and community work often needs language-specific outreach and workshops.
Disability & Accessibility	Disability refers to physical, mental, sensory, or learning differences. Accessibility means designing spaces, materials, and programs so people with different needs can participate.	SESEC has included Disability & Accessibility as a discussion topic, showing that inclusion must consider race, language, disability, and other identities together.
Inclusion	The practice of making sure people are welcomed, respected, and able to participate meaningfully.	For SESEC, inclusion is not just inviting people into the room. It also means changing the room so community members can shape the conversation.
Opportunity Gap	Unequal access to strong schools, programs, resources, relationships, and support.	This term helps explain why student outcomes differ across neighborhoods and communities. SESEC focuses on changing the conditions that create these gaps.
Achievement Gap	A measurable difference in academic outcomes between student groups.	SESEC is careful to connect achievement gaps to unequal systems and opportunities, instead of blaming students, families, or cultures.
Interest Convergence	A Critical Race Theory concept that says social progress often happens when the interests of powerful groups align with the interests of marginalized communities.	SESEC's academic blog discusses this concept as a way to understand why racial equity work can gain support during some moments and lose support during budget or political shifts.
Students of Color	Students who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/e, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, multiracial, or another non-white racial or ethnic group.	SESEC centers students of color because Southeast Seattle schools serve many students whose experiences are shaped by race, immigration, language, and unequal access to resources.
Multilingual Families	Families who use one or more languages at home or in daily life.	Many Southeast Seattle families are multilingual. SESEC materials, workshops, and outreach are stronger when they make space for language access and family knowledge.

Community & Coalition Work

Term	Plain-language Definition	SESEC Context / Why It Matters
SESEC	Southeast Seattle Education Coalition, a coalition of community organizations, community leaders, and allies working for educational justice.	The glossary supports SESEC by helping interns, staff, partners, and community members understand common language across the coalition.
Southeast Seattle	A diverse area of Seattle with many immigrant, multilingual, and BIPOC communities.	SESEC focuses on Southeast Seattle students, families, schools, and community organizations because this region has specific strengths, histories, and education needs.
Community	A group of people connected by place, identity, experience, relationships, or shared goals.	In SESEC's work, community includes students, families, educators, organizers, nonprofits, schools, and partners working toward educational equity.
Community-Rooted	Grounded in the voices, experiences, needs, and leadership of the community.	SESEC's work is community-rooted when it is shaped by Southeast Seattle families, youth, and partners, not only by institutions.
Community-Based Organization (CBO)	A local nonprofit or organization that works directly with a specific community or neighborhood.	SESEC partners with CBOs because they often have strong relationships with families, youth, and schools in Southeast Seattle.
Coalition	A group of organizations or people who work together toward a shared goal.	SESEC is a coalition because no single organization can create education justice alone. Coalition work builds shared power across partners.
Coalition Building	The process of forming, maintaining, and strengthening relationships across organizations and communities.	SESEC builds coalitions by convening partners, sharing information, supporting advocacy, and aligning community priorities.
Collective Impact	A model where different groups coordinate around a shared goal, common agenda, and mutually reinforcing work.	SESEC uses collective impact by connecting schools, nonprofits, families, and community leaders to improve education outcomes.
Collective Voice	A shared message or position created by many people or organizations together.	SESEC emphasizes collective voice because education systems are more likely to respond when community priorities are organized and visible.
Partner Organization	An organization that formally works with SESEC and supports its mission, values, and strategies.	SESEC partner organizations may attend meetings, join programs, participate in advocacy, and help strengthen education work in Southeast Seattle.
Ally	A person or organization that supports a community's goals while respecting that community's leadership.	SESEC includes allies in its coalition, but the work should still center BIPOC students, families, and community leadership.
SESEC Membership	A way for organizations to formally join SESEC's coalition and participate in its meetings, programs, and advocacy efforts.	Membership helps organizations stay connected, build visibility, and contribute to shared education equity work.
Coalition Meeting	A regular gathering where community-based organizations and community leaders discuss education topics, hear from speakers, and build relationships.	SESEC coalition meetings help partners stay informed about Seattle Public Schools and strengthen the Southeast Seattle education network.
Convene	To bring people together for discussion, learning, planning, or action.	SESEC often acts as a convener by bringing educators, policymakers, families, youth, and CBOs into the same conversation.
Community Engagement	The process of building relationships with community members and involving them in decisions that affect them.	SESEC's engagement work includes listening sessions, programs, coalition meetings, family workshops, and leadership opportunities.
Families/Caregivers	Parents, guardians, relatives, and other adults who support a student's learning and well-being.	SESEC uses family-centered language because students' education is shaped by the people and communities around them.
Community Partnerships Reform	Changes to how schools and districts build, manage, and support partnerships with community organizations.	SESEC names community partnerships reform as a major advocacy priority because CBOs need clear, consistent, and equitable ways to work with Seattle Public Schools.
Centralized Partnership Model	A coordinated system where one clear office or structure helps manage school and community partnerships across a district.	SESEC advocates for stronger partnership systems so families, youth, schools, and CBOs do not have to navigate fragmented or unclear district processes.
Town Hall	A public meeting where community members can ask questions, share concerns, and speak directly with leaders or decision makers.	SESEC uses forums and town-hall style spaces to connect community members with policymakers and make public accountability more visible.

Advocacy, Organizing & Systems Change

Term	Plain-language Definition	SESEC Context / Why It Matters
Advocacy	Speaking up, taking action, or supporting a cause to influence decisions, policies, or practices.	SESEC advocates for education policies and practices that better support Southeast Seattle students and families.
Policy Advocacy	Advocacy focused on changing laws, rules, budgets, institutional practices, or public decisions.	SESEC engages in policy advocacy at the school district and local government level to improve education equity.
Education Advocacy	Action that seeks to improve schools, learning conditions, funding, programs, and student supports.	SESEC's programs help parents, youth, and community leaders build education advocacy skills.
Education Policy	Rules, laws, budgets, and decisions that shape how schools operate and how resources are distributed.	Understanding education policy helps SESEC partners connect community concerns to decision-making spaces.
Grassroots Organizing	Local organizing led by community members who are directly affected by an issue.	SESEC uses grassroots strategies to elevate community voices and push for change from the ground up.
Mobilizing	Organizing people to take action around a shared issue or goal.	SESEC mobilizes families, youth, and partners to participate in advocacy, meetings, testimony, and community campaigns.
Movement Building	Long-term work that connects people, organizations, stories, and actions to create social change.	SESEC's work contributes to broader education justice movements by linking family power, youth leadership, data, and advocacy.
Collective Advocacy	Advocacy carried out by a group instead of by one person alone.	FPB and other SESEC programs strengthen collective advocacy so families and CBOs can influence Seattle Public Schools together.
Community Power	The ability of community members to shape decisions, set priorities, and influence institutions.	SESEC programs build community power by developing leadership, shared knowledge, and collective action.
Decision Makers	People or groups with authority to make choices about policy, funding, programs, or school systems.	SESEC helps community members understand how to communicate with decision makers such as school board members, district leaders, and elected officials.
Public Testimony	A spoken or written statement shared at a public meeting to influence decisions or place community priorities on the record.	FPB names public testimony at the Seattle School Board as one way families can make their priorities heard.
Seattle School Board	The elected body that helps govern Seattle Public Schools through public meetings, policy decisions, and budget oversight.	SESEC families and partners may use School Board testimony or meetings to advocate for community priorities.
Seattle Public Schools (SPS)	The public school district serving students in Seattle.	Many SESEC programs focus on helping families and partners understand SPS systems, budgets, policies, and decision-making processes.
Systems Influence	The ability to shape how institutions, policies, and public systems work over time.	FPB uses this idea to describe how families can move from navigating systems to influencing and changing them.
Leadership Development	Building skills, confidence, relationships, and knowledge so people can guide change.	SESEC develops leadership among youth, families, community organizers, and emerging community leaders.
Strengths-Based Thinking	An approach that starts from the strengths, knowledge, and expertise people already have, instead of treating them as lacking.	FPB names strengths-based thinking as a goal so family engagement does not blame families for barriers created by systems.
Deficit Thinking	A harmful way of explaining inequity by focusing on what students or families supposedly lack.	SESEC's equity work pushes against deficit thinking by recognizing systemic barriers and community expertise.
Storytelling	Sharing lived experiences to build understanding, connection, and action.	In advocacy, storytelling helps families and students connect personal experiences to broader policy and system issues.

Advocacy, Organizing & Systems Change (continued)

Term	Plain-language Definition	SESEC Context / Why It Matters
Media Advocacy	Using media, communication, and public messaging to raise awareness and support for a policy or cause.	APC includes media advocacy so community members can amplify their education justice priorities beyond meetings.
Restorative Youth School Safety	A school safety approach focused on racial justice, community care, positive relationships, and repairing harm instead of relying mainly on punishment or policing.	SESEC lists restorative youth school safety as a 2026 advocacy priority and connects it to community-led safety, violence prevention, and student support.
Restorative Practices	Relationship-based practices that respond to harm by repairing relationships, listening to people affected, and rebuilding trust.	SESEC advocates for restorative practices as part of a safer and more supportive school climate for students, especially students most impacted by discipline and policing.
Positive School Culture	A school environment where students feel safe, respected, supported, and connected to adults and peers.	SESEC connects positive school culture to safety because prevention is not only about security; it is also about belonging, care, and strong relationships.
School Resource Officer (SRO)	A law enforcement officer assigned to work in a school setting.	SESEC discusses SROs in school safety advocacy and raises concerns about relying on policing-based models, especially because discipline and policing can disproportionately affect Black students, male students, and students with disabilities.
Violence Prevention	Strategies that reduce harm before it happens by addressing root causes, building relationships, and supporting young people and families.	SESEC frames violence prevention as part of restorative youth school safety and community care, rather than only as a security or enforcement issue.
Accountability	The practice of making sure leaders and institutions follow through on promises, respond to community concerns, and explain their decisions.	SESEC identifies holding policymakers accountable as a 2026 advocacy priority and uses meetings, testimony, forums, and follow-up conversations to track progress.

Programs, Projects & Learning Spaces

Term	Plain-language Definition	SESEC Context / Why It Matters
Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED)	A peer-led seminar and discussion program that helps participants reflect on identity, equity, and inclusion.	SESEC's local SEED Project supports emerging community leaders, nonprofit professionals, parents/guardians, and allies working toward educational equity.
Advocacy and Policy Cohorts (APC)	SESEC's flagship cohort program for developing stronger education advocacy and policy skills in Southeast Seattle.	APC helps emerging community leaders and parents/guardians learn policy work, racial equity, media advocacy, school budgets, educational data, and decision-maker engagement.
Data Cohorts Project	A data literacy workshop series for community-based organizations and nonprofits.	The project helps participants access data, analyze data, and build strategies for using data in community engagement and advocacy.
Data Literacy	The ability to find, understand, question, analyze, and use data responsibly.	SESEC treats data literacy as a tool for community engagement, partnership building, and advocacy rather than only a technical skill.
Data Analysis	The process of studying information to find patterns, ask better questions, and support decisions.	For SESEC partners, data analysis can help show needs, strengths, inequities, and the impact of community programs.
Education Data	Information about schools, students, outcomes, enrollment, programs, budgets, and other education conditions.	SESEC partners may use education data to better understand SPS systems and advocate for students and families.
Youth Leadership & Advocacy Program (YLAP)	A paid cohort for Southeast Seattle high school youth of color to build leadership, education advocacy, and grantmaking skills.	YLAP supports youth in understanding local education policy, social justice philanthropy, and advocacy through a racial equity lens.
Youth of Color	Young people who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.	SESEC centers youth of color because students are often affected by school decisions but excluded from decision-making power.
Participatory Grantmaking	A process where people affected by an issue help decide how funding should be distributed.	YLAP uses a participatory model so youth can help allocate funds toward education-related causes they value.
Social Justice Philanthropy	Giving or distributing resources in ways that address inequity and support community-led change.	YLAP connects philanthropy to youth leadership by teaching students how funding can support education justice.
Family Power Building Initiative (FPB)	A SESEC initiative that strengthens families' power to shape Seattle Public Schools through organizing and collective advocacy.	FPB partners with CBOs to train family organizers, lead culturally and language-responsive workshops, and support family-led advocacy.
Family Navigator	A role or approach that helps families understand and move through school systems.	SESEC describes FPB as the next phase after piloting a Family Navigator program, shifting from helping families navigate systems toward building collective power to shape systems.
Family Organizer	A trained person who supports families in building relationships, leadership, and collective action.	In FPB, partner CBO staff are trained as family organizers who lead workshops and support family advocacy.
Family Engagement	Meaningful collaboration between schools, organizations, and families to support student success and decision-making.	SESEC supports family engagement by helping families participate in education systems and by recognizing family expertise.
Capstone Project	A final project that applies learning from a program to a real community goal or action.	FPB includes a family capstone project, such as public testimony or an open letter, to demonstrate collective power and leadership.
Cohort	A group of participants who move through a program together over time.	Many SESEC programs use cohorts because relationships, trust, and shared learning are central to community-based leadership development.
Speaker Series	A sequence of sessions where invited speakers share knowledge or experience on a topic.	APC uses a speaker series to help participants learn about policy, advocacy, media, budgets, youth power, and educational data.
Research Fellow	A person who contributes research, writing, or analysis to help a community understand an issue more deeply.	SESEC's academic blog features research fellows who connect education research to questions of justice, equity, and local systems.

Programs, Projects & Learning Spaces (continued)

Term	Plain-language Definition	SESEC Context / Why It Matters
Academic Blog	A public writing space that translates research ideas into accessible reflections and questions.	SESEC's academic blog helps coalition members engage with education theory, racial equity concepts, and current issues in schools.
School Budgets and Funding	The money, formulas, and decisions that determine how schools and programs are paid for.	APC includes school budgets and funding because budget decisions often reveal priorities and affect educational equity.
Community-Led Structures	Systems, programs, or decision-making processes guided by community members rather than only institutions.	FPB aims to create sustainable, community-led structures so families and CBOs can continue education advocacy beyond one program cycle.
Sustainable Leadership	Leadership that can continue over time because knowledge, relationships, and responsibility are shared.	SESEC builds sustainable leadership by training youth, families, organizers, and partners who can keep leading after a program ends.
Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy	A Seattle public funding measure that supports education-related programs such as preschool, K-12 supports, and college or career pathways.	SESEC follows FEPP Levy implementation because funding decisions affect school safety, student support, family engagement, and equity in Seattle education.

Source Notes

This glossary combines the original SESEC glossary intern guide with public SESEC website materials. It should still be reviewed by SESEC staff before being shared as an official resource.

Source	How it was used
Intern Assignment-Onboarding Guide for Interns	Used for the glossary goal, required format, plain-language writing style, feedback process, and living-resource purpose.
SESEC homepage	https://www.sesecwa.org/
About SESEC	https://www.sesecwa.org/about/
Programs overview	https://www.sesecwa.org/programs/
SESEC Membership	https://www.sesecwa.org/sesec-membership/
Coalition Meeting	https://www.sesecwa.org/coalition-meeting-registration/
SESEC 2026 Advocacy Priorities	https://www.sesecwa.org/sesec-2026-advocacy-priorities/
Program pages	SEED, APC, Data Cohorts Project, Youth Leadership & Advocacy Program, and Family Power Building Initiative pages on sesecwa.org .
SESEC academic blog pages	Used for selected equity and research-related concepts that appear in SESEC public writing.