



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Guide to Offering Alternative Learning Experiences

GUIDE TO OFFERING ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

2023–24

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UPDATES FOR 2023–24

Change	Page Number
Included existing rule language on the potential role of school-based support staff in developing an intervention plan for students with online courses only.	15
Added guidance on digital approvals and signatures.	26
Added guidance on documenting monthly progress reviews in the section on common questions regarding documentation and records.	34
Updated the ALE Year End Report section of the reporting guide in Appendix C to reflect information on accessing the reporting survey link.	64
Other minor formatting, hyperlink updates, and page numbering edits as needed.	Various

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This document provides guidance and considerations for offering Alternative Learning Experiences (ALE) within a public school district or charter school. It is not a step-by-step guidebook, but it is a tool when starting or expanding ALE options, onboarding new staff, evaluating current practice, or looking for answers to specific questions that may arise. Many decisions regarding systems, processes, staff roles and responsibilities, and policies may need to be decided at the local district level and this guide may be useful in making those decisions. If you are a new staff member to a school or program offering ALE courses, it will be important to know your role within the context of each of these considerations. Please discuss that role with your school and district leadership.

Definitions

Throughout this document, references are made to ALE and non-ALE courses or settings. A definition of ALE and non-ALE is included below.

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)

Courses or grade-level coursework where some or all of the instruction for the course takes place independent from the regular classroom or school setting.

Non-ALE

Any course or grade-level coursework where student FTE is based on daily classroom attendance.

THE BASICS

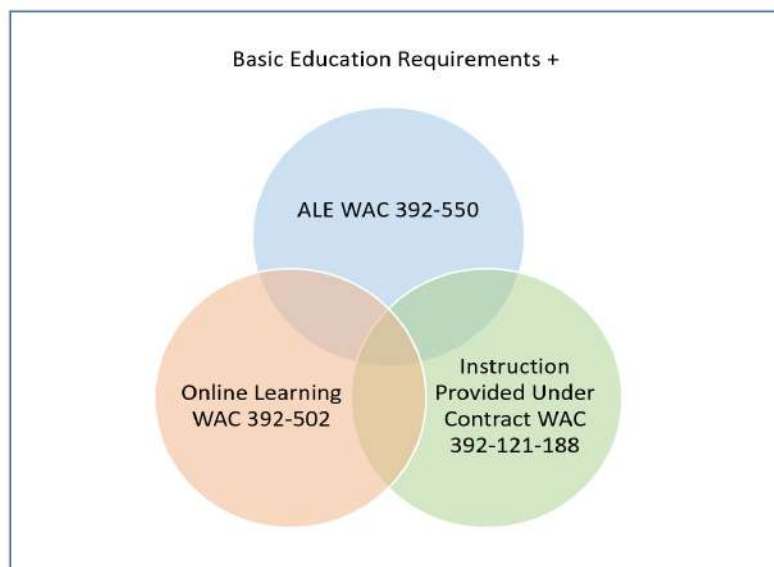
Overview

ALE is a funding and instructional model for providing basic education. It is available to all public school districts and public charter schools in Washington state. The intent of ALE is to ensure that students have educational opportunities designed to meet their individualized needs. WAC 392-550 outlines the rules for ALE implementation. It provides guidelines and program requirements for offering ALEs in addition to a standard method of determining full-time equivalent enrollment and a statewide reporting process for claiming funding for ALEs.

ALE options can be provided on a continuum through any public school district or charter school from something as simple as offering a student a single ALE course, to planning an entire instructional model around ALE that offers hundreds of students full-time ALE courses through a designated school site. Depending on the model and scale of the offerings, different considerations should be evaluated. Offering a course or two via an ALE model at a non-ALE school may be simpler than planning a large-scale implementation of an ALE model across a district. For additional guidance on developing new ALE models, review the New Program Development Tool found in Appendix E and contact Learning Options if you would like additional support.

Overlapping Rules

Regardless of the scope and scale, each school and school district offering ALE courses is responsible for meeting all basic education expectations in addition to ensuring compliance with potential overlapping rules including but not limited to ALE, Online Learning, and Instruction Provided under Contract.



ALE Rules

ALE allows school districts to claim apportionment for a course or grade level coursework where some or all of the instruction for the course takes place outside of a regular classroom or schedule. Instead of daily classroom attendance, compliance with [WAC 392-550](#) is expected.

Online Learning Rules

If a school is offering courses or grade level coursework and the course meets the definition of an online course, per [RCW 28A.250.010](#), then additional online learning rules outlined in [WAC 392-502](#) and approval from OSPI may be required.

Instruction Provided Under Contract

If a school district is interested in contracting for instructional services, they are subject to [WAC 392-121-188](#). Regardless of the contractor, the district maintains full responsibility for the education of all students in addition to meeting state and federal education requirements. Instruction provided under contract remains a school or program of the district.

Additional information and considerations regarding instruction provided under contract can be found in Appendix B.

Understanding Chapter 392-550 WAC

[Chapter 392-550 WAC](#) provides the rules and expectations when claiming apportionment for ALE courses or grade level coursework. Below is an outline of each section.

- Section [005](#). Purpose – This section outlines the intent of the WAC chapter.
- Section [010](#). Authority – This section links to the state statutes authorizing ALE.
- Section [020](#). Definitions – This section defines a variety of terms used throughout the WAC chapter.
- Section [025](#). ALE requirements – This section outlines each of the student-level monitoring requirements in ALE.
- Section [030](#). Program requirements – This section outlines all the programmatic expectations for schools and programs offering ALE courses.
- Section [035](#). Full-day kindergarten – This section outlines the programmatic and additional student-level expectations for offering full-day kindergarten in ALE.
- Section [040](#). Truancy – This section outlines the requirements of a school in monitoring and responding to truancy in ALE.
- Section [045](#). Required school district or charter school board policies for ALE – This section outlines the board policy requirements in order for a district or charter school to offer ALE.
- Section [050](#). Assessment requirements – This section outlines the assessment and accountability requirements for schools and programs offering ALE courses.
- Section [055](#). Enrollment reporting procedures – This section provides instructions on how and when monthly enrollment for an ALE course is claimed for funding.
- Section [060](#). Reporting requirements – This section outlines reporting requirements for offering ALE courses. This includes enrollment reporting, CEDARS reporting, and

additional annual reporting.

- Section [065](#). Documentation and Record Retention Requirements – This section outlines what documentation should be retained for record retention and historical purposes.

Requirements to Claim ALE Enrollment

The items included in this section should be in place in order to claim ALE apportionment for students in grades K–12. Please note the specific requirements for claiming kindergarten students at greater than 0.5 monthly FTE and review the section titled, "[School-based Support Staff](#)" for more information on the role these individuals can play.

Additional reporting, assessment, board policies, and documentation requirements for schools and districts offering ALE are located in [WAC 392-550](#). Additional compliance elements may be required if a model uses overlapping rules. It is important to explore all rules and compliance related to an educational model prior to claiming state funding, as compliance requirements are subject to audit by the State Auditor's Office.

Review the [record retention](#) section of this document for more information on documentation and retention requirements.

The first time a student is claimed for ALE enrollment, the following items must be in place:

- Enrolled Student
- Approved Written Student Learning Plan
- Evidence of Participation. Examples of participation include but are not limited to:
 - o In-person or synchronous conference with teacher to discuss the WSLP.
 - o Completion and submission of an assignment.
 - o Beginning coursework in a Learning Management System.
 - o Email exchanges between the student and certificated teacher related to courses or grade-level coursework on the WSLP that indicate progress towards or completion of an assignment.
 - o Participating in an on-site or synchronous orientation/workshop to discuss WSLP requirements.

For subsequent monthly enrollment counts, the following must also be in place:

- Weekly Contact
- Monthly Progress Review and Intervention Plan, if needed

Enrolled Student

1. Student must meet the definition of an enrolled student:
 - a) Be a resident of the reporting district or attending pursuant to a choice transfer or interdistrict agreement. All choice transfer requests must be approved prior to the first enrollment claim.
 - b) Under 21 years of age on September 1 of the current school year.
 - c) Enrolled on or before the monthly count day.

- d) Participated in the ALE program on or before the monthly count day.
- e) Has not been withdrawn before the monthly count day.
- f) Has not met the district's graduation requirements as of September 1 of the current school year.

Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP)

2. A WSLP is in place on the monthly count day. The WSLP must have:
 - a) Beginning and end dates.
 - b) Estimate of the student's weekly hours by a certificated teacher.
 - c) For online and remote courses, a description on how weekly contact will be met.
 - d) Description of the ALE course work and course type.
 - e) Responsible certificated teacher for each course.
 - f) Required instructional materials for each course.
 - g) Description on how and when the monthly evaluation will be provided.
 - h) Syllabus outlining whether the ALE course meets state academic learning requirements and other goals and objectives, including a course name and course code. This may be met through individual course syllabi or other similarly detailed descriptions of learning requirements. It should be easily accessible to all stakeholders (e.g., in student files, a centralized notebook, or online) and clearly identify the requirements a student must meet to successfully complete the course or coursework. State course codes are updated annually and can be found on the [OSPI CEDARS website](#).
 - i) Dated approval by a certificated teacher.
 - Approval may be by school-based support staff for a fully online student schedule.
 - j) For kindergarten students claimed at greater than 0.5 monthly FTE, the following must also be addressed in the WSLP and/or syllabi:
 - Developing initial skills in academic areas of reading, math, and writing.
 - Developing a variety of communication skills.
 - Experiences in science, social studies, arts, health, physical education, and world language.
 - Acquiring small and large motor skills.
 - Acquiring social and emotional skills.
 - Learning through hands-on experiences.
 - A description of learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity.

A WSLP must be in place and approved prior to claiming a student for apportionment. However, the WAC does not specify limits or time frames regarding how far in advance a learning plan can be approved. Beginning the WSLP development process as the student completes their current or previous WSLP allows the certificated teacher to make a more accurate determination regarding the student's next academic goals. Preparing a new

learning plan too far in advance may not accurately predict a student's learning needs. The WSLP should always be reviewed at the beginning of the new school year for potential revision based upon the student's gains or losses in skills over the summer.

Weekly Contact

3. Weekly contact between the student and certificated teacher for the purpose of instruction, review of assignments, testing, evaluation of student progress, or other learning activities or requirements identified in the WSLP.
 - a) For the first month, an ALE student must have evidence of participation on or before the count day.
 - b) For the subsequent months, an ALE student must have:
 - Two-way weekly contact with a certificated teacher related to the instructional goals outlined in the WSLP. Contact can be:
 - Direct personal contact, which is one-to-one contact with a teacher. Direct personal contact can be in person or by email, telephone, instant messaging, or interactive video.
 - In-person instructional contact, which is face-to-face contact with a teacher in a classroom. In-person instructional contact may be accomplished in a group setting between the certificated teacher and multiple students.
 - Synchronous digital instruction contact, which is real-time communication with a teacher using online, voice, or video communication technology. Synchronous digital instructional contact may be accomplished in a group setting between the teacher and multiple students.

For students participating in regularly scheduled classes, including in-person classes or synchronous digital classes, evidence of weekly contact may include attendance records. For students who are not participating in regularly scheduled classes, evidence of contact must include the date of the contact, the certificated teacher who made the contact, the method of communication by which the contact was accomplished, and documentation to support the subject of the communication.

Evidence of weekly contact may include:

- Attendance logs from a student information system, logbooks, sign-in sheets for in-person or synchronous classes.
- Asynchronous contact log or checklist supported by digital or printed copies of interactive digital communication, including email.
 - Use screenshots of communication, sent to a school email, for documentation purposes.
 - Consider using Remind, Google Messages, or other messaging system that is disconnected from a personal phone number and maintains

digital logs.

- In-person meeting or telephone logs.

Communication with families is highly encouraged as a best practice to support student engagement; however, documented weekly contact for the purpose of enrollment reporting must be with the student, not a parent or guardian. For younger students who do not receive in-person instructional contact, documented weekly contact might look like:

- Quoted exchange via parent's email indicating a direct exchange between student and teacher.
- SeeSaw, Skype, Google, or other digital student input software/app.
- Photos and videos via email or digital device.
- Phone calls.

Monthly Progress Reviews & Intervention Plans

4. Monthly evaluation to determine satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress completed during the month being reviewed or by the 5th school day of the following month. The evaluation must:
 - a) Be conducted by a certificated teacher. An exception is allowed for students enrolled in online classes only, where school-based support staff may conduct the evaluation and per district policy make a determination of progress based on progress grades in online courses and nonacademic factors or local school expectations.
 - b) Be communicated to the student, and for grades K–8, also to the student's parent(s).
 - c) Be based on the learning goals and performance objectives in the WSLP.
 - d) Be consistent with the district student evaluation and grading procedures and based on teacher's judgment.
 - e) Include direct personal contact unless the prior month's evaluation was satisfactory, or the evaluation is conducted in the final month of the year at which time it may be in the form of delivery of final grades.
 - f) Include an intervention plan within 5 days if progress is determined to be unsatisfactory. This should be a plan for success, developed in collaboration with the student, and parent(s) for students in grades K-8. If the WSLP includes online courses only, the plan may be developed by a school-based support staff in conjunction with the student and certificated teacher, however the intervention plan must be approved by the online certificated teacher. At a minimum, the intervention plan must include at least one of the following:
 - Increased contact with a teacher or change in the method of contact,
 - Modification of the learning goals or performance objectives, and/or
 - Modification of the WSLP course or content.

Definition of Satisfactory Progress

Each school or program determines a local definition of satisfactory versus unsatisfactory progress in ALE courses, according to board policy. The definition of progress may vary between districts but should include something measurable to guide the evaluation of whether the student is making satisfactory progress toward the learning goals and performance objectives defined in the WSLP. The definition should be clear to the student and outlined in the WSLP or in the monthly progress review. A determination of satisfactory progress must be consistent with school district student evaluation or grading procedures and be based on the professional judgment of a certificated teacher.

Continued Enrollment

If, after three consecutive calendar months a student has not made satisfactory progress, despite documented intervention efforts the student either needs (1) a substantial change to their WSLP, such as the student schedule, to more appropriately address their individual needs, or (2) to be transferred to a more appropriate educational program in the school district.

Examples of a substantial change to a WSLP might include but are not limited to student schedule changes:

- Split out courses so that the student is focused on one or two courses at an accelerated rate (e.g., completing a course per month), allowing them to focus on one or two subject areas at a time while still completing an appropriate grade-level course of study annually.
- Change the delivery model, for example:
 - o switch to site-based and remote courses, rather than online courses,
 - o switch to online courses instead of site-based courses, or
 - o blend course types so the student has site-based and online courses.
- Change out the curriculum or teaching strategies for the courses so that there is more connection to place-based learning or involvement in project-based or multi-disciplinary studies.

Full-day Kindergarten

5. Kindergarten students claimed at greater than 0.5 monthly FTE must have multiple weekly observations each week during the eight-week WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment window. Observations must take place either in person or through synchronous digital instructional contact and be conducted by certificated teacher(s) who have successfully completed the WaKIDS 101 training. For more information, review the Full-day Kindergarten section and Appendix D of this document.

Funding

Full-time Equivalency (FTE)

Student FTE for classroom instruction is traditionally based on the number of hours per week a student is enrolled to attend a school. Student FTE for ALE is based on the estimated weekly hours of learning in the WSLP. A full 1.0 FTE equals 27 hours and 45 minutes (27.75 hours) or 1,665 minutes of instruction per week.

See Appendix F for a breakdown of apportionment calculations.

Claiming Student Hours for State Funding

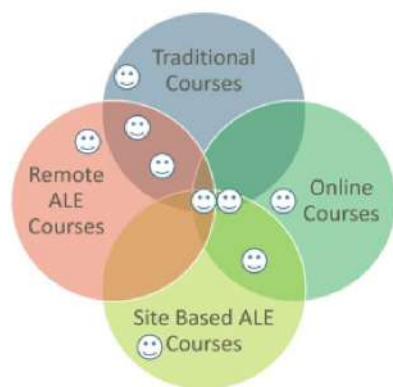
1.0 FTE for all grades (K–12) is 27 hours and 45 minutes (27.75 hours) or 1,665 weekly minutes. In order for a student to be claimed for a 1.0 ALE FTE, the WSLP must show at least 27 weekly hours and 45 minutes (27.75 hours) or 1,665 weekly minutes. This is outlined in Section (1)(b) of [WAC 392-121-122](#).

When reporting monthly enrollment on the P223 for students enrolled part-time in ALE courses, ensure that the portion of FTE claimed is based a calculation using 27 hours and 45 minutes (27.75 hours or 1,665 minutes) or 1.0 FTE regardless of whether the program requires full-time students to participate additional hours per week. This is to ensure that required enrollment reporting documentation aligns with the enrollment reported to the state.

When determining ALE hours, a school or program must consider instructional hour requirements, the definition of a full-time equivalent student, and an estimate by the certificated teacher overseeing the WSLP. This estimate should reflect the actual time a student is engaged in learning activities to complete the learning goals and performance objectives. The WSLP is a working document that can be edited and modified by the certificated teacher over the course of the year to be flexible to student needs and academic progression. Hours can be adjusted to align with the pace at which a student progresses and additional courses or coursework can be added as needed for full-time students to reach full FTE, or for students in grades 9–12 to meet graduation requirements.

For more information on WSLP requirements, see the Requirements to Claim Enrollment section of this document. For more information on the rules and definition of instructional hours, see the Instructional Hours section of this document.

Shared FTE



Students can take as many non-ALE courses or ALE courses as determined appropriate by the student, family, and school. However, the total monthly enrollment claim cannot exceed 1.0 FTE. A student taking both ALE courses and non-ALE courses would have their FTE split as non-ALE FTE and ALE FTE. If the total FTE for non-ALE instruction and ALE instruction is more than 1.0, the district determines which FTE to claim first. For more information on determining which type of instruction to claim first, and how to report enrollment, see the sections below on Enrollment Reporting and Funding Rates.

If FTE is shared between school districts, the interdistrict agreement should outline the FTE claimed by each school district.

Enrollment Reporting

ALE enrollment is reported to OSPI monthly through two Educational Data System (EDS) applications – NEW Enrollment (P-223) and SAFS ALE. The NEW Enrollment (P-223) application collects enrollment at the school level and is used for funding. The SAFS ALE application collects ALE enrollment by ALE program and student's Home District.

For the NEW Enrollment reporting and when a student has course(s) at more than one school, the student's FTE is reported at each school.

Examples:

- A student takes 3 non-ALE courses at School A and 3 ALE courses at School B. The district reports School A's FTE for School A and School B's FTE for School B to OSPI.
- A student takes 3 non-ALE courses at School A and also takes 3 ALE courses at School A. The district reports both the non-ALE and ALE enrollment for School A to OSPI.

Note: The NEW Enrollment and SAFS ALE reporting are different from CEDARS reporting. For more information on navigating these applications and reporting requirements, review the Reporting Guide in Appendix C of this document.

Funding Rates

ALE is funded based on the Running Start (RS) nonvocational rate. The RS nonvocational rate is the statewide average rate for students in grades 9–12. This funding rate is the same regardless of the ALE course type. For more information on course type definitions, review the Course Type section of this document.

Student enrollment can be claimed up to 1.0 FTE, which equates to 27 hours and 45 minutes (27.75 hours) or 1,665 minutes per week. If a student enrolls in courses equaling more than 1.0 FTE and that FTE includes any combination of ALE, non-ALE, and/or CTE enrollment, the district may wish to evaluate rate difference when deciding which enrollment to claim first.

1. The RS nonvocational rate may be more (or less) than the district's prototypical funding for their non-ALE enrollment. Because of these rate differences, a district may find that claiming ALE enrollment first is more beneficial. In other cases, it may be less beneficial.
2. ALE courses are not eligible for enhanced CTE funds. Therefore, when reporting student FTE that is a combination of CTE, ALE, and non-ALE enrollment it would be most beneficial for a district to claim non-ALE CTE classes first, since these classes may generate the CTE enhanced funding. Then, based on the prototypical school funding rate, claim either the non-ALE enrollment or ALE enrollment second.

Example:

- A student attends non-ALE courses for 3 classes that meet 1 hour every day of the week for a total of 15 weekly hours. Their classroom instruction would be a 0.54 FTE ((15 hours x 60 minutes) ÷ 1,665 minutes).
- The same student also enrolls in ALE courses with the WSLP stating 15 weekly hours of estimated learning. The ALE FTE would be 0.54 FTE ((15 hours x 60 minutes) ÷ 1,665 minutes).
- The student's total FTE would be 1.08 (0.54 non-ALE + 0.54 ALE).
- The district can only claim up to 1.0 of the 1.08 FTE for this student. If the district determined that they would claim the ALE FTE first, they would report 0.54 ALE FTE and a 0.46 non-ALE FTE for the student. If instead, the district decided to claim the non-ALE enrollment first, they would report 0.46 ALE FTE and a 0.54 non-ALE FTE for the student.
- A district would make the decision regarding what enrollment to claim first based on the prototypical funding rate as compared to the RS nonvocational rate.

ALE Allocations

Allocation of the generated state funding is a local decision. There is no state requirement that the ALE funds go to the ALE program. Each district is responsible for deciding how to disburse ALE funds.

Small Schools Funding Impact

Enrollment of nonresident students may impact a district's non-ALE funding rate especially if the district qualifies for small high or small school funding.

School districts should have adopted policies that provide clear guidelines for the acceptance and denial of nonresident student transfer requests. Districts with new or expanding ALE programs should give added consideration to including policy language that provides clear definitions of how enrollment capacity is determined at the school and district level.

For more information on small schools funding impacts, contact your district Business Services office or the [School Apportionment and Financial Services \(SAFS\) Department](#) at OSPI.

Instructional Hours

Relevant Rules:

- [RCW 28A.150.220](#) Basic education – Minimum instructional requirements.
- [RCW 28A.230.090](#) High school graduation requirements or equivalencies.
- [RCW 28A.150.315](#) All-day kindergarten programs.

Full-day Kindergarten

Schools and programs offering full-day kindergarten under [RCW 28A.150.315](#) must provide at least one thousand (1,000) instructional hours.

Grades 1–12

ALE instructional hours are included in the district-wide annual average instructional offering requirements in [RCW 28A.150.220](#). Districts have two options to meet the requirements:

- Districts must provide at least:
 - o 1,080 instructional hours to students in grades 9–12 and
 - o 1,000 instructional hours to students in grades 1–8.
- The instructional hours may be calculated by a school district using a district-wide annual average of instructional hours over grades 1–12 to reach 1,027 hours.

Course Types

ALE is a course-level designation with three course type options defined in [RCW 28A.232](#).

Online courses

ALE courses (for grades 9–12) or grade-level course work (for grades K–8) that fit the definition of online course per [WAC 392-502](#) where:

- More than half of the course content is delivered electronically using the internet or other computer-based methods; and
- More than half of the teaching is conducted from a remote location through an online course learning management system or other online or electronic tools.

A certificated teacher has the primary responsibility for the student’s instructional interaction. Instructional interaction between the teacher and the student includes, but is not limited to direct instruction, review of assignments, assessment, testing, progress monitoring, and educational facilitation; and student access to the teacher synchronously, asynchronously, or both.

Remote Courses

ALE courses (for grades 9–12) or grade-level course work (for grades K–8) where the course:

- Is not an online course; and
- The written student learning plan for the course does not include a requirement for in-person instructional contact time.
- No minimum in-person instructional contact time is required.

Site-based Courses

ALE courses (for grades 9–12) or grade-level course work (for grades K–8) where:

- The written student learning plan for the course includes a requirement for in-person instructional contact time.

How to Decide?

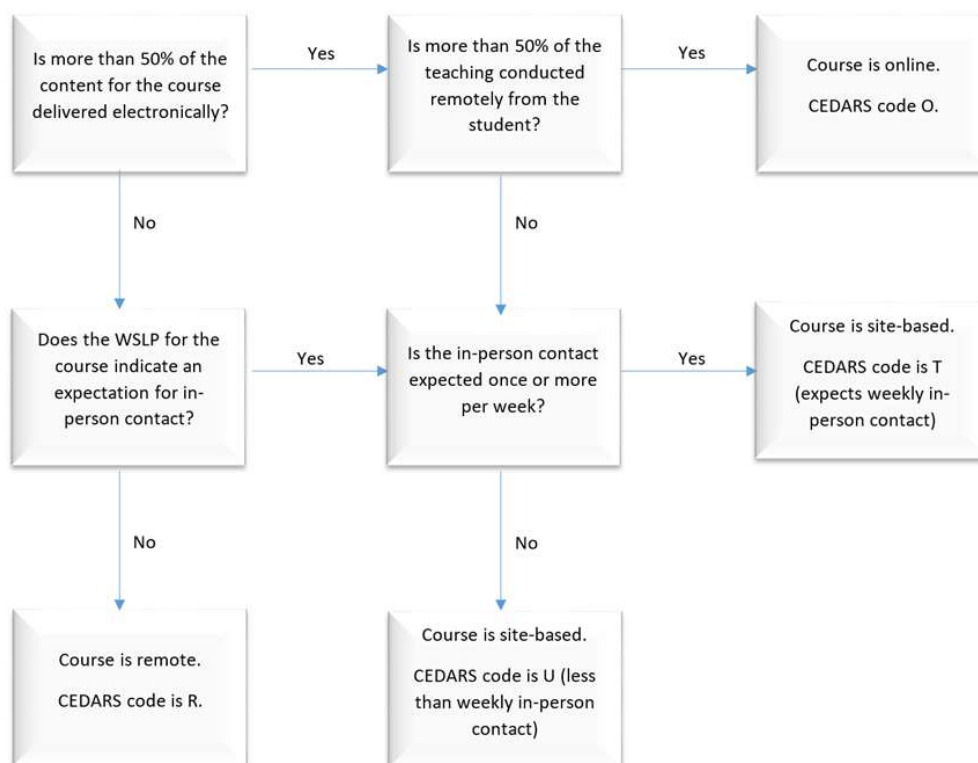
Step 1: Determine whether the course meets the definition of an online course. If so, the course should be designated as online. The definition of online supersedes remote and site-based.

Step 2: If a course does not meet the definition of online, determine whether it is remote or site-based. If the WSLP has an expectation for in-person instructional contact time that takes place on-site, regardless of how frequent, then the course qualifies as site-based. If there is no expectation indicated in the WSLP for in-person instructional contact time on-site, the course designation would be remote.

In-person instructional contact is defined by [WAC 392-550-020](#) (6) as, face-to-face contact between a certificated teacher and the student in a classroom environment. In-person instructional contact may be accomplished in a group setting between the teacher and multiple students and must be:

- For the purpose of actual instruction, review of assignments, testing, evaluation of student progress, or other learning activities or requirements identified in the WSLP; and
- Related to an ALE course identified in the WSLP.

Course Type Decision Tree



This decision tree may assist in assigning an ALE course type. A full-page version of this visual is

included in Appendix A of this document.

Additional considerations related to course types:

1. For CEDARS reporting purposes, site-based is broken down into two reporting categories. For additional information on how to report site-based courses, please review the Reporting Guide in Appendix C of this document.
2. Students can take any combination of course types and a school or program can offer any combination of course types, however if a school or program is offering Online courses, they should be familiar with the [Online Learning](#) rules and approval process.
3. Online courses are not always ALE courses. If all the instructional time for the course takes place within a classroom or school setting, the course is not an ALE course.

PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

A variety of considerations should be made in the operation of an ALE model. This section outlines a number of them. Additional information and guidance on developing a new ALE option or reviewing practices in an existing ALE option can be found in the ALE Development Tool in Appendix E of this document.

Allotments

Allotments are the term used by Learning Options to describe the practice of specifying an amount of money available for services, experiences, and educational materials to parents and students in ALE programs. This practice violates [RCW 28A.232.010](#) (3) and [WAC 392-550-030](#) (4).

To ensure compliance with [RCW 28A.232.010](#) (3) and [WAC 392-550-030](#) (4), take the following actions:

1. Do not allow students or parents to direct public funds for the purchase of materials, supplies, experiences, services, or technological equipment.
2. Do not inform students or parents how much funding is available for materials, supplies, experiences, services, or technological equipment specifically for them or their child.
3. Remove from the program website, parent and student handbook, or other materials and communication any information that suggests that students and parents can direct public funds while enrolled in the program.

Rule Language

[RCW 28A.232.010](#) (3) and [WAC 392-550-030](#) outline state law and rules around the purchasing of educational materials for students enrolled in an Alternative Learning Experience course.

WAC 392-550-030 (4)

School districts and charter schools must ensure that no student or parent is provided any compensation, reimbursement, gift, reward, or gratuity related to the student's enrollment or participation in, or related to another student's recruitment or enrollment in, an alternative learning experience course or course work unless otherwise required by law. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, funds provided to parents or students for the purchase of educational materials, supplies, experiences, services, or technological equipment.

WAC 392-550-030 (8)

A district may purchase educational materials, equipment, or other non-consumable supplies for students' use in alternative learning experience courses if the purchase is consistent with the district's approved curriculum, conforms to applicable laws and rules, and is made in the same manner as such purchases are made for students in the district's regular instructional program. Items so purchased remain the property of the school district upon program completion.

Guidance

Public schools in Washington state have the local control to purchase services, experiences, and educational materials for enrolled students as outlined in their district instructional and supplemental materials policies and purchasing procedures. In ALE this applies to items identified for courses outlined in a WSLP.

The process for budgeting and purchasing services, experiences, and educational materials for ALE courses should be similar to the process for non-ALE courses. This means that the certificated teacher, or curriculum review team, as designated by school board policy, determines which items are necessary to implement the WSLP. The school or program then purchases items in accordance with their district purchasing policies. Services, experiences, and materials are then provided to students; non-consumable materials are returned to the school or program upon completion of the course. Programs may offer options of approved curriculum or educational materials for various courses, however, annual allotments to families are prohibited per RCW 28A.232.010 and WAC 392-550-030.

Based on the language of the prohibition in RCW 28A.232.010, allotments appear to provide compensation, reimbursement, gifts, rewards, or gratuities for participation, which violates state law. Allotments also raise concerns about the manner in which purchases are made as compared to purchases in non-ALE settings.

Acceptable Implementation Examples

While not an exhaustive list, the examples below identify ways in which an ALE program or school could manage their expenditures for services, experience, and educational materials in accordance with this guidance.

- Build a curriculum library where materials can be assigned to students and checked-out based on the WSLP, limiting the number of curriculum purchases on an annual basis.
- ALE is intended to be an individualized model and different students may need different levels of expenditures. Maintain an internal budget of dollars spent on services, experiences, and materials. This information is not communicated to families. Instead, the certificated teacher determines what is necessary and assigns items as needed. A local communication system is determined through which the teacher and designated school staff monitor the budget.
- Families interested in services, experiences, or materials other than what the district can financially provide, or what the certificated teacher determines as appropriate to meet the goals of the WSLP, are encouraged to purchase desired items independently or utilize local libraries.
- Relationships are built with community partners who through volunteering or donations provide services and experiences that replace the need for purchased items.
- Adopt a policy, procedure, and subsequent review process through which any parent, student, or community member can request new services, experiences, or educational materials. While any individual may suggest items for the program's curriculum review

process, they should not play any more of a role in purchasing than they do in the non-ALE instructional program.

Assessment & Accountability

Part-time Students

Part-time students enrolled at more than 0.8 FTE in any one month from September – January must be included by the school district in required state or federal accountability reporting for that school year. This includes participation in state assessments.

Nonresident Students

Students who are enrolled in a nonresident district may be unable to participate in required annual state assessments at the nonresident district. The nonresident school district must provide these students the opportunity to participate in required assessments. This may be by providing regional proctored assessments or arranging options through the district of residence through a contract or interdistrict agreement.

WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment

Kindergarten students enrolled at greater than 0.5 FTE are required to participate in the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment. In order to maintain fidelity to the state WaKIDS assessment protocol, programs must have multiple weekly observations of students each week during the eight-week WaKIDS assessment window. Observations must take place either in person or through synchronous digital instructional contact and be conducted by certificated teachers who have successfully completed the WaKIDS 101 training.

Attendance

In order to claim ALE enrollment, programs are required to maintain a series of documentation requirements. These requirements take the place of daily attendance requirements regardless of whether the ALE course is online, site-based, or remote. A daily attendance record is not expected for ALE courses and is not a required component of CEDARS submissions.

Auditing

ALE funding claimed by a district is subject to audit by the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO). Any district claiming ALE funds is responsible for establishing internal controls around ensuring compliance with [WAC 392-550](#), in addition to ensuring appropriate recordkeeping and retention. This includes all funding claimed by a district and passed on to a contractor for students served through Instruction Provided under Contract, [WAC 392-121-188](#).

For questions regarding compliance, enrollment reporting requirements, or to request a pre-audit compliance review, contact us at learningoptions@k12.wa.us.

Certification

ALE [WAC 392-550-020](#) (3), defines a certificated teacher as an employee of a school district or charter school, of a school district contractor pursuant to [WAC 392-121-188](#), or a charter school contractor pursuant to [WAC 392-121-1885](#), who is assigned and endorsed according to the provisions of chapter [181-82 WAC](#). This means that teachers assigned to ALE schools or programs must meet the same certification and endorsement requirements as all teachers in the state of Washington. Teachers assigned to ALE programs are not exempt from state certification and endorsement requirements no matter the size of the program.

For additional information on teacher certification, please review the [Certification and Endorsement](#) guidance developed in collaboration with the Professional Educator Standards Board, Office of Professional Practices, Title II Part A, and the OSPI Certification Office.

Curriculum

A district or charter school may purchase curriculum, materials, equipment, or other supplies for student use in ALE courses as long as the purchase is consistent with the district's or charter school's instructional materials policy. All curriculum purchases must conform to applicable laws and rules, including being free from religious doctrine, and be made in the same manner as such purchases in the district's or charter school's non-ALE instructional programs. Purchased items remain the property of the school district or charter school upon program completion.

Schools and programs offering ALE courses should be familiar with and follow the district policy on purchasing curriculum in order to maintain compliance with [WAC 392-550](#). Schools and programs offering ALE courses are prohibited from incentivizing enrollment by providing funds to families for educational materials. Families are encouraged to have conversations with certificated teachers about their student's instructional needs, but the staff member(s) designated in the district Instructional Materials policy and procedures is responsible for adopting curriculum and the certificated teacher is responsible for assigning curriculum and materials on the WSLP.

Additional Resources

Review the [OSPI Learning Standards and Instructional Materials website](#) and contact content area specialists directly.

Review instructional materials for bias. More information and a tool on screening for bias content is available on the [OSPI Equity & Civil Rights website](#).

Digital Approvals & Signatures

ALE Rules

ALE rules require an approval on two documents:

1. The WSLP must be approved by a certificated teacher, or for students with 100% online

courses the school-based support staff ([WAC 392-550-025\(1\)\(a\)](#); [WAC 392-550-025\(1\)\(c\)](#)).

2. An intervention plan for students with only online courses developed by a school-based support staff must be approved by the online certificated teacher ([WAC 392-550-025\(4\)\(b\)](#)).

A signature is one form of approval and considered a best practice. Approvals may be inked or digital. When using a digital approval, ensure all local school district policies and procedures are followed and review the following:

1. Are the system's security features strong enough to assign responsibility for the electronic approval to the individual who initiated the approval (e.g., user, date, time)?
2. Is the content of what was approved fully captured and retained?
3. Is the document being approved protected from alteration after the approval is captured?
4. How easily can the original version of the document can be accessed and provided upon request?

Documentation Tools

Many formal applications such as DocuSign, Adobe PDF signature function, or student information systems will capture these items. Other common electronic document sharing services such as Google or Microsoft 365 may require additional review. If you are unsure whether your system meets the items outlined above or have a working document you plan to update regularly and would prefer an easily accessible original, a common practice is to save a PDF or image of the original approved document for retention purposes.

Note: Several requirements to claim ALE enrollment require documentation elements beyond an approval. Review the [requirements to claim enrollment](#) and [record retention](#) sections of this document for more information.

Local Policy

Local districts, schools, and programs may request a student or parent signature on any number of documents per local decision making and policy. When signatures or approvals are locally requested, they may take any form as determined by the school district and school staff should refer to their local policy and district administration for guidance on obtaining these signatures.

General School Operations

The guidance included in this document covers considerations relevant to offering ALE courses and guidance on specific ALE requirements. However, many additional considerations should be taken into account related to general public school operations. As a public school option, schools offering ALE courses should keep these components in mind when planning a new program or site. Considerations include but are not limited to the following:

1. School mission and vision
2. Transportation
3. School-supplied meals

4. Discipline response
5. Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP)
6. Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP)
7. Federal programs
8. Accreditation
9. Special education services
10. Facilitates, including student access to technology, libraries, etc.
11. Continuous improvement
 - a. Goal setting
 - b. Relevant performance indicators
12. Staff roles
 - a. Counseling services
 - b. Social-emotional learning
 - c. Teacher role and teacher-to-student ratios
 - d. Leadership responsibilities
 - e. Support staff responsibilities
13. If the program is a school of choice, ensuring students have equitable access to the school or program
 - a. Referral systems
 - b. Applications
 - c. Intake procedures
14. Instructional practices and master schedule
15. Data collection practices and use to inform decisions
16. Multi-tiered systems of student support
17. Awarding of credits
 - a. Time-based
 - b. Competency-based

Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements for students taking ALE courses are the same as for students taking non-ALE courses and should align with district policies. Although ALE allows for instructional time away from the regular classroom setting or schedule, accountability protocols should be put in place to ensure students are making educational progress towards high school graduation. A high school student enrolled full-time in ALE courses over an academic year should have the opportunity to earn a full year's worth of high school credits towards graduation. See your district policies for more information on graduation requirements and expectations for students enrolled in your district.

Interdistrict Agreements

Interdistrict agreements provide a method for districts to share a student's enrollment. In contrast to a Choice Transfer, when an Interdistrict Agreement is in place, the resident district

retains the responsibilities for the student's education. However, the provision of the student's basic education, special education, or transitional bilingual instruction program (TBIP) services are shared with another district within the state of Washington. The nonresident district sharing the student becomes a contractor of the resident district and has only those obligations so noted in the Interdistrict Agreement. The resident district maintains ultimate responsibility for the education being provided by the nonresident district.

For additional information, please refer to the [Student Transfers: Choice Transfers, Interdistrict Agreements, and Standard Choice Transfer System \(SCTS\) guidance](#) found on the OSPI [Enrollment Reporting website](#) and the information found on the [student transfers website](#).

Marketing

ALE programs cannot market directly to students and parents who have filed a declaration of intent to homeschool, per [WAC 392-550-030](#) (11).

(k) The school district or school district contractor, or charter school or charter school contractor, is prohibited from advertising, marketing, and otherwise providing unsolicited information about learning programs offered by the school district or charter school including, but not limited to, digital learning programs, part-time enrollment opportunities, and other alternative learning programs, to students and their parents who have filed a declaration of intent to cause a child to receive home-based instruction under RCW 28A.200.010. School districts and charter schools may respond to requests for information that are initiated by a parent. This prohibition does not apply to general mailings, newsletters, or other general communication distributed by the school district, school district contractor, charter school, or charter school contractor to all households in the district.

Contracted instruction providers are required to state in their materials that the services are offered by the school district under contract, per section 19 of the Instruction Provided Under Contract [WAC 392-121-188](#).

(19) The school district requires the contractor to clearly state in all of the contractor's advertising, publicity, or public statements regarding the contracted service that the service is being offered by the school district under contract.

Subsection 3 of [RCW 28A.232.010](#), regarding ALE, identifies concerns and places limits on practices in ALE that appear to incentivize non-resident enrollment. This may impact decisions around how a program is marketed to students, families, and the community.

(3) School districts that offer alternative learning experience courses may not provide any compensation, reimbursement, gift, reward, or gratuity to any parents, guardians, or students for participation in the courses. School district employees are prohibited from receiving any compensation or payment as an incentive to increase student enrollment of out-of-district students in alternative learning experience courses. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, providing funds to parents, guardians, or students for the purchase of educational materials, supplies, experiences, services, or technological

equipment. A district may purchase educational materials, equipment, or other non-consumable supplies for students' use in alternative learning experience courses if the purchase is consistent with the district's approved curriculum, conforms to applicable laws and rules, and is made in the same manner as such purchases are made for students in the district's regular instructional program. Items so purchased remain the property of the school district upon program completion. School districts may not purchase or contract for instructional or cocurricular experiences and services that are included in an alternative learning experience written student learning plan, including but not limited to lessons, trips, and other activities, unless substantially similar experiences and services are available to students enrolled in the district's regular instructional program. School districts that purchase or contract for such experiences and services for students enrolled in an alternative learning experience course must submit an annual report to the office of the superintendent of public instruction detailing the costs and purposes of the expenditures. These requirements extend to contracted providers of alternative learning experience courses, and each district shall be responsible for monitoring the compliance of its providers with these requirements. However, nothing in this subsection shall prohibit school districts from contracting with school district employees to provide services or experiences to students, or from contracting with online providers approved by the office of the superintendent of public instruction pursuant to chapter [28A.250 RCW](#).

Non-Certificated Instructional Support

Each student participating in an alternative learning experience must have a written student learning plan developed and approved by a certificated teacher. The certificated teacher must have responsibility and accountability for each course specified in the plan, including supervision and monitoring, and evaluation and documentation of the student's progress.

To supplement this essential role of the teacher, the practice of using individuals other than certificated teachers in instructional settings is common both in ALE and non-ALE settings. Schools or programs offering ALE courses may utilize non-certificated instructional support for a variety of reasons. However, due to the unique nature of ALE courses, the teacher is not always located in the same physical space as the student during instructional times. Because of this, districts should evaluate hiring practices, instructional practices, and ways to ensure student safety when utilizing non-certificated instructional support.

Hiring Practices

For each individual paid for and organized by the school district while operating away from a school facility, one of the following should be in place:

- Certificate options such as a conditional teacher, emergency substitute, or paraeducator.
- Formal contract approved by the local school board indicating the instructional support is in the best interest of students. This should happen through a formal contract approved by the local school board per [WAC 392-121-188](#) Instruction provided under contract.

For individuals operating in the school facility, districts should follow local hiring policies and procedures for school staff members.

These hiring practices should be in place to maintain integrity around the role of the certificated teacher and ensure appropriate use of public funds. These practices should never replace the role of the teacher or any school staff member role for which certification is required, as the intentional employment of a person to serve as an employee in a position where certification is required is considered an unauthorized professional practice in the state of Washington, per [WAC 181-87-070](#).

Instructional Practices

When an individual other than a certificated teacher is providing instructional support either within or away from the school facility, supervision protocols are essential to ensure meaningful instruction and appropriate use of public funds.

Supervision and support between certificated teachers and non-instructional support staff can take a variety of methods, for example:

- Phone or synchronous digital communication to discuss instructional strategies, how activities align with learning standards, and student progress.
- In-person monitoring of instructional activities.
- Email check-in and follow-up.

Regardless of the method, these practices and communication strategies should take place on a regular basis with protocols in place for individuals who might need additional support or professional development.

Ensuring Student Safety

At a minimum, any individual providing instructional support that is organized and paid for by the school district and is provided away from the direct in-person supervision of a certificated teacher, should have a fingerprint and background check.

In addition, when non-certificated instructional support takes place away from the school facility, site-visits are a best practice to monitor student safety, mitigate risk, and ensure appropriate use of public funds. This practice can also be a way to provide additional supervision, professional development, and support for individuals.

Other educational models where state funding is appropriated for time where students are supervised away from the school setting by someone other than district employees include [Work-Based Learning](#) and [Nonpublic Agencies](#). These models require site-visit components and districts may use these site-visit protocols these as a model for implementing site visits in the ALE setting.

Resources

- Contact the OSPI Certification Office at <http://ospi.certification.sgizmo.com/s3/> for information regarding certification.
- Contact the Professional Educator Standards Board at paraboard@k12.wa.us for information regarding Paraeducator Certificate Programs.
- For information on what is required to offer Instruction provided under contract, review [WAC 392-121-188](#).
- For information about professional conduct, review the [Code of Professional Conduct website](#), and [WAC 181-87](#) Professional certification-Acts of unprofessional conduct.

Online Learning

An approval process through OSPI is required prior to offering Online Learning. If a school or program is interested in offering online courses or contracting with a company to provide online courses or courseware, review the information provided in the [Guide to Online Learning](#) and ensure compliance with the Online Learning [WAC 392-502](#) and [RCW 28A.250](#).

Out-of-District Students (Nonresident Enrollment)

For students who live outside of your school district and wish to enroll in your program, a choice transfer must be approved before the first date that the student is claimed for apportionment. All nonresident student transfer requests into ALE programs must be processed through the Choice Transfer System, per [RCW 28A.225.020 \(3\)](#).

For additional information, please refer to the [Student Transfers: Choice Transfers, Interdistrict Agreements, and Standard Choice Transfer System \(SCTS\) guidance](#) found on the OSPI [Enrollment Reporting website](#) and the information found on the [student transfers website](#).

Additional considerations regarding nonresident enrollment may include:

- Different online school and program approvals are required depending on the number of out of district students served. For more information and an overview of approval categories, please visit the [Guide to Online Learning](#).
- Nonresident enrollment may impact small school funding. This funding is based on district headcount, which includes nonresident online and ALE students. Refer to the section on small schools funding of this document for more information.
- Subsection 3 of [RCW 28A.232.010](#) specifically refers to incentivizing the enrollment of out-of-district students. Refer to Marketing section of this guide for more information about this rule.

Program vs. School

Due to a number of factors, some settings offering ALE courses choose to remain as a program within a preexisting school. Other settings, however, choose to be recognized as a standalone school and apply for a separate school code. Below you will find some considerations in making the decision between operating as a program or a school, in addition to information on the

process to apply for a school code if desired.

Considerations for operating as a program or a school may include:

- State and federal accountability
- Required school-level reporting (enrollment, staff, expenditures, etc.)
- Student population served (K–12 or subset of grade levels)
- NCAA status
- Graduation or diploma granting capabilities
- Accreditation
- Staff access to student information systems
- Leadership support
- Shared enrollment for students who need to access other types of instruction such as special education services, non-ALE courses, or career and technical education

OSPI issues a bulletin each spring detailing the process and deadline for changes to the school directory. Districts interested in opening, closing, or changing school configurations for the following year should review this bulletin for additional information.

Records Retention

It is important to retain records per established state and district record retention schedules at an official school building or storage site for the purposes of auditing and state monitoring. State retention schedules should be followed and can be found [here](#). Consult with your district to determine whether a more stringent retention schedule is in place at the local level. [WAC 392-550-065](#) outlines these requirements and includes retaining the following documents:

- a) School board policy for alternative learning experiences
- b) Annual reports to the school district board of directors or charter school board
- c) Monthly and annual reports to OSPI
- d) Written student learning plans
- e) Evidence of weekly contact
 - (i) For students participating in regularly scheduled classes, including in-person instructional contact and synchronous digital instructional contact, evidence may include classroom attendance records
 - (ii) For students who are not participating in regularly scheduled classes, evidence of contact must include the date of the contact, the method of communication by which the contact was accomplished, and documentation to support the subject of the communication
- f) Student progress evaluations and intervention plans
- g) The results of any assessments, and
- h) Student enrollment detail substantiating full-time equivalent enrollment reported to the state

ALE enrollment is subject to audit by the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO). The SAO may

request file reviews conducted from a remote location with information shared through secure electronic file transfers, or they may conduct on-site audits. Regardless of the method, the SAO will need access to the documentation required for claiming ALE enrollment, per [WAC 392-550](#) and as outlined in the [Requirements to Claim ALE Enrollment](#) section of this document, from previous school years. If a school or program does not have adequate documentation to support a monthly enrollment claim, it is recommended that monthly enrollment claims be revised to reflect the documentation that is available.

Common Questions Regarding Records & Documentation

1. **How long should records be retained?** Records should be retained according to the [state retention schedule](#) at a minimum. Consult with the local district to determine whether a more stringent retention schedule exists.
2. **What are common ways of documenting weekly contact?** [WAC 392-550-065\(3\)\(e\)](#) requires weekly contact be documented. For students participating in regularly scheduled classes, including in-person instructional contact and synchronous digital instructional contact, evidence may include classroom attendance records. For students who are not participating in regularly scheduled classes, evidence of contact must include the date of the contact, the method of communication by which the contact was accomplished, and documentation to support the WSLP-related subject of the communication.

The format and process for documenting contact is determined by each local school or program. Examples include:

Type of Contact	Sample Documentation Method(s)
Regularly scheduled in-person class	Physical or electronic attendance book, sign-in sheet, individual student contact log*
Regularly scheduled synchronous online class	Physical or electronic attendance book, participation log generated by the platform (e.g., Zoom participation log), screenshot of individual names in attendance, individual student contact log*
Synchronous online meeting	Participation log generated by the platform (e.g., Zoom participation log), screenshot of individual names in attendance, individual student contact log*
In-person meeting	Individual student contact log*
Phone call	Phone log, individual student contact log*
Email	Save email electronically, print email for student file, individual student contact log*
Messaging	Use an electronic platform such as a learning management system or other messaging service. Save messaging logs, screenshots, individual student contact log*

*Note: Individual student contact logs may require backup evidence (e.g., emails,

conference logs, messaging logs, etc.). Sample compliance forms are available on the [ALE website](#).

3. **What documentation is required for a monthly progress review?**

ALE rule language does not specifically require an approval or signature on the monthly progress review, however, there must be documented evidence of the individual completing the review, either the certificated teacher or School-Based Support Staff for students with only online courses, and the date of the review. The clearest evidence of the individual completing a review is a signature which may be captured in a physical or digital format on a paper-based document, in a learning management system, or other electronic system. If your systems do not allow in any format for an actual signature, the individual may document their completion of a monthly progress review in a paper-based or digital documentation system along with their name, date, and any other relevant details. There also must be evidence of direct personal contact with the student (and parent if K–8) if the previous month did not result in satisfactory progress.

4. **How should we document that an intervention plan was completed by, or when developed by a School-Based Support Staff approved by, a certificated teacher?**

The clearest evidence that the plan was developed by a certificated teacher or approved by the certificated teacher when developed by a School-Based Support Staff for students with only online courses, is a signature. A signature may be captured in a physical or digital format on a paper-based document, in a learning management system, or other electronic system. The signature can be located on the actual intervention plan or in a documentation platform. If your systems do not allow in any format for an actual signature, a teacher may document their completion of an intervention plan in a paper-based or digital documentation system along with their name, date, and any other relevant details.

5. **How should we document participation of the student, and parent for students in grades K–8, in the development of an intervention plan required per WAC 392-550-025 (4)(b), “An intervention plan must be developed, documented, and implemented by a certificated teacher in conjunction with the student and, for students in grades K–8, the student’s parent(s).”**

The intent of this rule is to get student and/or family input on appropriate interventions and the policy is the same regardless of course type or communication method. The clearest way to document participation is a signature, however, there are a variety of ways to accomplish this goal and both the actual practice and the documentation system vary by program model and age level of the student. Examples are included below based on common practices and student age. These are examples and this list is not exhaustive.

	K–8 Students	9–12 Students
<i>In-Person</i>	Physical or digital signature of parent, and student if developmentally appropriate	Physical or digital signature of student

	K–8 Students	9–12 Students
Phone	Make a note in a paper-based or electronic tracking system of the phone call with the parent and student	Make a note in a paper-based or electronic tracking system of the phone call with the student
Email	Retain an email record with the parent, and student if developmentally appropriate	Retain an email record with the student
Learning Management System (LMS)	Retain the actual conversation from an LMS communication system, or document via some other method the details of the exchange with the parent, and student if developmentally appropriate	Retain the actual conversation from an LMS communication system, or document via some other method the details of the exchange with the student
Synchronous Meeting	Retain the participation record from the synchronous meeting in the electronic system or note in some other way the participation by the parent, and student if developmentally appropriate, at the virtual meeting.	Retain the participation record from the synchronous meeting in the electronic system or note in some other way the participation by the student.

Reporting

Reporting data to the state is an essential component of all ALE schools and programs. Reporting is what draws student funding, tracks enrollment demographics, and documents outcomes. The state level reporting requirements for ALE programs can be broken down into three main categories: enrollment reporting for state funding, CEDARS reporting, and year-end reporting.

For additional information on reporting, please review the Reporting Guide found in Appendix C of this document, which was developed in collaboration with the OSPI Student Information Department and OSPI School Apportionment & Financial Services Office.

School-based Support Staff

ALE rules include provisions for school-based support staff (SBSS) to assist with certain [requirements to claim enrollment](#) when a student has **all online courses on their WSLP**. SBSS are defined as an employee of a school district or a charter school, of a school district contractor pursuant to [WAC 392-121-188](#), or a charter school contractor pursuant to [WAC 392-121-188](#), who is supporting a student in an online course. The school-based support staff may or may not hold a teaching certificate ([WAC 392-550-020\(11\)](#)).

SBSS may support students with only online courses because the student should already have an appropriately certificated and endorsed teacher supervising the instruction for each of their online courses. When utilizing school-based support staff, it is important to clearly outline the roles, responsibilities, documentation expectations, and communication channels between various educators supporting student learning.

The references below outline the role a SBSS can play in managing requirements to claim ALE enrollment.

- WSLP ([WAC 392-550-025\(1\)\(c\)](#)). For students whose written student learning plan includes only online courses, the written student learning plan may be developed and approved by a certificated teacher or a SBSS.
- Weekly Contact. The SBSS **cannot** complete this requirement.
- Monthly Review ([WAC 392-550-025\(3\)\(a\)](#), [\(3\)\(b\)](#), [\(3\)\(c\)\(vi\)\(A\)](#), & [\(3\)\(c\)\(vi\)\(B\)](#)).
 - o (3)(a) The educational progress of each student enrolled in an alternative learning experience must be evaluated at least once each calendar month of enrollment by a certificated teacher or, for students whose written student learning plans include only online classes, SBSS in accordance with this section.
 - o (3)(b) The results of each evaluation must be communicated to the student or, if the student is in grades K–8, both the student and the student's parent. For students whose written student learning plan includes only online courses, a SBSS may communicate the progress evaluation to the student.
 - o (3)(c)(vi)(A) For students whose written student learning plan includes only online courses, SBSS, **according to school policy and procedures**, may use the student's progress grades in the online course or courses to determine whether a student's progress is satisfactory.
 - o (3)(c)(vi)(B) SBSS, **following school policy and procedures**, may take into account nonacademic factors or local school expectations to finalize the determination of satisfactory progress.
- Intervention Plans ([WAC 392-550-025\(4\)\(b\)](#)). An intervention plan must be developed, documented, and implemented by a certificated teacher in conjunction with the student and, for students in grades K–8, the student's parent(s). For students whose written student learning plan includes only online courses, the intervention plan may be developed by the SBSS in conjunction with the student and certificated teacher and **must be approved by the student's online certificated teacher**.

School Board Policies & Reporting

Prior to claiming state funding for ALE courses, the board of directors of a school district or charter school must adopt a policy authorizing ALEs claimed for state funding. This includes authorization for each ALE program, school, or program provider. The approved policy must designate, by title, one or more school district official(s) responsible for overseeing the program and reporting annually to the school board.

Beginning in January 2021, ALE rules include a definition of truancy and related protocols. Each ALE school board policy must also include a list of valid justifications why a student may miss

the weekly contact requirements of ALE for the purpose of truancy. Examples of valid justifications for missing weekly contact may align with the Excused absences [WAC 392-401-020](#).

Once the board of directors approves an ALE program, school, or program provider, the indicated designee(s) is responsible for reporting to the board on an annual basis. The annual report should include the following components, per [WAC 392-550-060](#):

- ALE student headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment claimed for basic education funding,
- Ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students in each school or program offering ALE courses,
- A description of how the program supports the district's overall goals and objectives for student academic achievement.

For sample school board policies and procedures, your school board and superintendent may receive regular updates from the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), which should include guidance regarding school board policies.

Statement of Understanding

In August 2020, OSPI adopted rules delinking what was commonly referred to as the Statement of Understanding as a requirement to claim enrollment. **School districts offering ALE courses no longer need a parent signature on this document in order to enroll and claim monthly student apportionment.** However, districts are still required to provide parents with a description of the difference between home-based instruction, per [RCW 28A.200](#), and ALE courses. This information must be provided (1) directly to the parent prior to the student's enrollment, and (2) in the school or program's informational materials, e.g., website and/or handbook.

Examples of providing this information directly to the parent prior to enrollment might include:

- Reference to an electronic description for parent review
- Providing a paper handout along with other district required enrollment documents or informational materials

Examples of including a description of the difference in informational materials might include:

- Section included on the school/program website
- Section included in a school/program handbook

Sample Description

Home-based Instruction and enrollment in an ALE are different educational models. Home-based instruction includes the following:

- Instruction is developed and supervised by the parent or guardian as authorized under [RCW 28A.200](#) and [28A.225.010](#).
- The parent has filed an annual Declaration of Intent with the district.
- Students are neither enrolled nor eligible for graduation through a public high school unless they meet all district and state graduation requirements.
- Students are not subject to the rules and regulations governing public school, including course, graduation, and assessment requirements.
- The public school is under no obligation to provide instruction or instructional materials, or to supervise the student's education.

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) includes the following:

- Is a public education enrollment option authorized under [WAC 392-550](#).
- Subject to all state and federal rules and regulations governing public education.
- Curriculum and instructional materials meet district standards and are free from sectarian control or influence.
- Learning experiences are:
 - o Supervised, monitored, assessed, and evaluated by a certificated teacher.
 - o May be planned in collaboration with the student, parent, and teacher.
 - o Provided via a Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP).
 - o Provided in whole, or part, outside the regular classroom.

For a sample description in Spanish, please contact Learning Options at learningoptions@k12.wa.us.

Substantially Similar

The term substantially similar refers to rules regarding activities, trips, lessons, or other services purchased or contracted for through the school or program offering an ALE course. [WAC 329-550-030](#) (9) specifically addresses that school districts may not purchase or contract for instructional or co-curricular experiences and services that are included in an ALE WSLP, unless substantially similar experiences and services are available to students enrolled in the district's non-ALE instructional program. In addition, the substantially similar experiences in the non-ALE instructional program must be at the same grade level, frequency, intensity, duration, and at a similar cost to the student. This includes but is not limited to lessons, trips, and other activities.

An experience may be substantially similar if students in a similar grade level have a comparable experience at the same frequency, intensity, and duration. Do they have a similar group setting? Does the experience include similar content or activities? Does it occur at a similar rate each week? Is it supervised, monitored, assessed, evaluated, and documented by a certificated teacher?

Examples of experiences/expenditures that might not be considered substantially similar:

1. Contracting with non-certificated instructors with limited or no direct supervision by the school and certificated teacher.
2. Accessing specialized instruction when the cited similar instruction is a general instruction area – frequently PE, art, music, or theater courses, but also some science and foreign language courses. An elite swimming class does not look substantially similar to a general elementary PE class.
3. Expensive courses or activities that benefit few students such as professional sporting events or plays.
4. Items that appear to incentivize enrollment such as allowing parents to direct funds towards specific curriculum or activities or purchases and contracts that directly benefit a family or family business.

Examples of experiences/expenditures that may be considered substantially similar:

1. Facility fee for a facility similar to the regular program for a PE class taught by a district employed certificated PE teacher.
2. Field trip costs for trips supervised by the certificated teacher and substantially similar to the field trips available in the non-ALE instructional program.
3. Tutoring if it is part of the WSLP and students in the non-ALE program receive substantially similar tutoring services.
4. Swimming instruction provided by non-certificated instructors where:
 - a. The course is under the supervision/direction of the certificated teacher,
 - b. A district staff person is on-site, and
 - c. The students in the non-ALE program have access to a similar type of activity at the same grade level, duration, frequency, and intensity.

ALE is intended to be a flexible learning model. However, it is public education and therefore must meet the expectations around the use of public funds. It is recommended that schools or program purchasing services or activities establish a process to evaluate expenditures. This process might include the use of the substantially similar checklist and staff from the non-ALE school setting to evaluate whether potential expenditures are substantially similar across environments. For assistance on evaluating whether an experience is substantially similar, please review the [Substantially Similar Checklist](#) available on the Alternative Learning Experience [website](#).

While evaluating whether experiences are substantially similar, it is also recommended to determine whether the lesson, trip, or activity results in an unauthorized professional practice. Per section (1) of [WAC 181-87-070](#), “the intentional employment of a person to serve as an employee in a position for which certification is required by rules of the professional educator standards board when such a person does not possess, at the time of commencement of such responsibility, a valid certificate to hold the position for which such person is employed,” may be considered an act of unprofessional practice. Evaluate the roles and responsibilities of various staff members within the ALE and non-ALE settings. Are there situations in the ALE setting where an individual without the appropriate credential is in a role where one is typically required? If so,

this may be an unprofessional practice.

Substantially Similar Reporting

When a program or school does purchase or contract for services or activities, those expenditures must be reported annually to OSPI. The purpose of the annual reporting is to demonstrate that expenditures are limited to things that are substantially similar to those available to students in non-ALE settings. This means that the substantially similar activity is regular part of the non-ALE instructional program, not that the students in the non-ALE instructional program can access these through the ALE program.

- A "service or activity" is a specific service or experience provided by a single vendor as a part of one or more students' written student learning plan.
- This requirement refers to expenditures using ALE basic education funds.
- All expenditures must be on or related to activities on a written student learning plan.

What expenditures need to be reported?

- Purchased or contracted curriculum from an online provider that has not been approved by OSPI. Districts are not required to use approved providers when purchasing curriculum, however, purchases from unapproved providers should be reported.
 - o See OSPI website for a list of approved providers
- Substantially similar experiences, services, or activities purchased from a vendor.
Examples:
 - o YMCA classes
- Substantially similar experiences, services, or activities provided by someone other than a school district employee.
 - o Swimming classes provided by a local business or community member that are paid for by the school district
 - o Field trips or other activities supervised by someone other than a certificated school district employee (e.g., community member, parent, or other business)

What expenditures do not need to be reported?

- Experiences, services, or activities provided by someone other than a school district employee that are not paid for by the school (e.g., volunteered or paid by families).
- Purchased or contracted online courses from approved online providers.
- Educational materials purchased through district's instructional materials policy and process.
- Services or activities authorized by the school district and directly supervised by a certificated school district employee (teacher, administrator, ESA, para).

What expenditures are prohibited?

- Purchasing or contracting for services or activities from vendors or non-school district employees unless a substantially similar experience is available to students in the non-ALE.

- Services, activities, or field trips not included in one or more student's written student learning plan.

Supervision

Classroom Supervision

The physical supervision of a classroom may include activities such as taking attendance, assisting students in remaining on-task, ensuring student safety and accountability, and following school or program protocols when students need to access instructional support. The staff member assigned to this type of supervision is a district level decision and should be made in accordance with district policy and practices.

Supervision of Instruction

The supervision of instruction includes but is not limited to the following: development of a syllabus, development, and implementation of instructional activities, monitoring student progress, and grading. The supervision of instruction may take place remotely from the student but must be the responsibility of an appropriately endorsed and certificated Washington state teacher.

Off-site Supervision

Off-site supervision refers to in-person instruction organized and paid for by the school district that takes place away from the school setting.

When learning or instructional activities take place off-site, there must be a supervision component by a school district staff member or contractor established that includes sight and sound proximity to the student. If supervision of these activities is not provided by a certificated teacher, the district needs to ensure the individual with sight and sound proximity to the student has had a formal fingerprint background check on file and is an approved contractor of the district, per Instruction Provided by Contract rules in WAC 392-121-188. It is also highly recommended that the district have policies and procedures in place to mitigate any risk associated with this type of supervision and ensure that off-site locations are safe and appropriate for public education.

Truancy

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, a definition of truancy and response protocol is effective for ALE settings ([WAC 392-550-040](#)).

Background

How should my school or program begin planning for a truancy response?

- Develop local program truancy response protocols.
 - o See [these Padlet examples](#) from other districts.

- Collaborate with your district's truancy liaison and local juvenile court.
 - o Find your district truancy liaison [here](#).
- Develop procedures for valid justification of missed weekly contacts.
 - o See [Chapter 392-401 WAC](#) and your district policy for reference.
- Update ALE board policy to include valid justifications of missed contacts.
- Communicate with students and families regarding regular contact and truancy expectations.

Guiding Principles

In addition to a specific truancy response protocol, all schools should have systems of response and support in place for when a student begins missing contact for any reason or showing signs of disengagement. The purpose of monitoring regular contact, whether the missed contact has a valid justification or not, is to provide educators with meaningful data that may signal when a student is not exposed to instruction, is struggling with the instruction provided, needs additional supports, or may be in an unsafe situation. For more information and resources, review the Best Practices section of this document. Missed contacts are not solely reflective of a student or family but can powerfully reflect back to educators and administrators where students are experiencing challenges with our systems, processes, and instruction.

Truancy Section Contents

Additional information and resources in this section include:

- Valid justification for missed weekly contact and related school board policy
- Leveraging existing ALE requirements
- Needs assessments and screeners
- District truancy liaisons
- Filing petitions, including information specific to nonresident students
- Community engagement boards
- Student transfers
- Shared FTE
- Best practices
- Reporting impacts
- Home-based Instruction (HBI)
- One-page overview of truancy action requirements in ALE settings

For more information on truancy and tiered supports, visit:

- [OSPI Attendance, Chronic Absenteeism, & Truancy Website](#)
- [OSPI Multi-Tiered Systems of Support \(MTSS\) Website](#)

Valid Justification for Missed Weekly Contact

Valid justifications are appropriate reasons why a student might miss weekly contact. In the non-ALE setting this would equate to an excused absence and would not be included in the total

consecutive or cumulative missed contacts that count towards the definition of truant. [WAC 392-550-045](#) allows for districts offering ALE to define valid reasons for missed weekly contact in their ALE board policy.

Note: Valid justifications for missed weekly contacts **do not** apply when determining if a student is eligible for claiming enrollment. Valid justifications impact a district responsibility to implement a truancy protocol. They **do not** apply to claiming student enrollment for state funding.

School Board Policy

The board of directors of a school district must authorize ALE through board policy, indicating each program and provider, per [WAC 392-550-045](#). The ALE board policy should also define all valid justifications for missed contact allowable by the school district. If a board policy authorizes multiple ALEs, the individual identified in the board policy to oversee ALE might collaborate with all authorized schools and programs to create a single list of valid justifications for inclusion in board policy.

The WSSDA model policy for ALE was updated during the summer of 2020 to align with this rule change. The model policy references Excused absences [WAC 392-401-020](#) as the valid justifications for missed weekly contact. If a district would like to include valid justifications in addition to what is included in the excused absences WAC, those valid justifications would need to be added to the board policy.

Leverage Existing ALE Requirements

Schools and programs offering ALE already have extensive systems in place to meet requirements to claim enrollment. Incorporating efforts to mitigate truancy into these pre-existing systems may improve efficiency. For example, required weekly contact with a certificated teacher might include general engagement or wellness checks as a Tier 1 support. When students are missing regular contact requirements or struggling to make adequate academic progress, a monthly progress review may trigger additional supports from a case manager, counselor, or student support specialist. Alternatively, if a student is meeting minimum weekly contact requirements, but not fully engaging, the monthly progress review requirement to claim ALE enrollment may be an appropriate place to develop and intervention plan. Although this may not require a truancy response, it should initiate interventions to support engagement.

The notification and intervention components required per truancy rules in response to missed contacts without valid justification may be consolidated with requirements to claim ALE enrollment when the timelines align. For example, if a student has reached the point in a truancy response where a conference is required, and the timing also coincides with the required monthly progress review then combining the two meetings is encouraged as long as the components of each requirement are met.

Needs Assessments and Screeners

One of the responses to missed contact without valid justification is the implementation of a

screeners. This screener should evaluate the reasons behind the missed contact. Resources on screeners include:

- [Washington Assessment of Risks & Needs of Students \(WARNS\)](#)
- [Hope Scale \(Kitsap Strong – Hope Toolkit\)](#)
- [District Attendance Materials & Resources Padlet \(see Assessment Examples\)](#)
- [OSPI Attendance, Chronic Absenteeism, & Truancy Website](#)

Considerations may need to be made when implementing screeners in ALE settings. Schools and programs must ensure that staff are sufficiently trained in the administration of the screener and that a process is established where the results of the screeners are appropriately responded to in a timely fashion. Schools or programs offering ALE courses with on-site requirements are encouraged to administer screeners in-person. Schools or programs offering ALE courses without on-site requirements are encouraged to administer screeners via synchronous digital communication or by phone. If screeners are given asynchronously or by mail, additional processes may need to be put in place to provide supports to make it easier for the student to complete the screener and ensure confidentiality.

District Truancy Liaisons

Per [RCW 28A.25.026](#), each school district must identify a point of contact for all matters related to excessive absenteeism and truancy. Schools and programs offering ALE should connect with the truancy liaison for their district and collaborate with them to determine a local process for truancy related actions in the ALE setting. Some districts may prefer to have one centralized individual identified as their Truancy Liaison and other districts may wish to have a separate Truancy Liaison for their ALE. If your school or program has a truancy liaison different from or in addition to the one designated at the district level, that individual should register on the [OSPI District Truancy Liaison website](#). If your district does not have anyone identified or if that person has left the district or the role, please contact your district leadership or Krissy Johnson, OSPI Attendance Program Supervisor at krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us.

Filing Petitions

ALE schools and programs, including those providing instruction under contract with a school district, per [WAC 392-121-188](#), operate within the larger school district system and it is the responsibility of the school district to petition the juvenile court when students meet the definition of truant ([RCW 28A.225.030](#)).

ALE school and programs should coordinate with their district truancy liaison, if appropriate, to understand existing local procedures including those established in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the district and the court or, in some smaller districts, procedures established in an MOU with an Educational Service District (ESD) as part of a collaborative partnership with courts.

School districts should always be in contact with any schools or programs providing instruction under contract, per [WAC 392-121-188](#), regarding how they are pursuing truancy petitions on behalf of the school district.

Nonresident Students

When a student has an approved choice transfer request to attend a nonresident school district, the nonresident school district becomes responsible for all provisions of basic education unless an interdistrict agreement is in place that outlines responsibilities otherwise. This includes the requirements of school districts to file truancy petitions. By accepting a nonresident student, a school district and any of their contractors providing instruction per [WAC 392-121-188](#) accept this responsibility.

Per WAC [392-550-040\(3\)\(c\)](#), petitions should be filed according to the procedures and expectations established by the juvenile court in the county most accessible for the student and parent. When determining the appropriate county court in which to file a truancy petition, consider the following:

- Proximity to the student or parents' primary place of residence.
- The guidance from the juvenile court closest to the student or parents' primary place of residence.
- Preference stated by the student or parent if communication with the parent(s) has been established.

When serving nonresident students, any school district or their contractors providing instruction under the responsibility and oversight of the school district, [per WAC 392-121-188](#), may need to collaborate with a variety of counties. It may be beneficial to allocate staff responsible for managing relationships with various county courts.

Length of Acceptance

[WAC 392-137-230](#) - Length of acceptance - requires school districts enrolling a nonresident student to inform the resident school district if the student drops out of the school or is otherwise no longer enrolled. This communication often takes place via the choice transfer system. *Notification through this method is a minimum requirement and would not be sufficient as a best practice.* In addition to a notification in the choice transfer system, additional practices to support students might include:

- A phone call or email to the student's last school of record.
- A phone call or email to the [district truancy liaison](#) identified on the OSPI website in the students last known resident district.
- Outreach, when a student has an active petition, to the truancy officer with the court jurisdiction where the petition is active.
- Sending information directly to the family through multiple modes of communication such as mail, email, or other digital means regarding pursuing other learning options.
- Preparing accurate student information on engagement, truancy response interventions, updated high school and beyond plans, and other relevant information to provide the next district as soon as a records request arrives.

Community Engagement Boards

Note: During the 2021 legislative session, [several changes](#) to the compulsory attendance laws

were made, one primary change was renaming community truancy boards to community engagement boards.

In 2016, [the Washington State legislature required](#) juvenile courts and school districts to enter in an MOU to provide students access to [community engagement boards](#) (CEB); an intensive intervention for students with unexcused absences that engages community partners to assist with reducing and addressing the barriers to attendance. For districts with fewer than 300 students, the requirement is to provide coordinated means of intervention¹ in partnership with court and optionally in collaboration with the ESD.

The legislature required that the initial truancy petition be stayed, and the student referred to a CEB. Most school districts currently operate a CEB in partnership with the local court. ALE programs should consult with their district truancy liaison, ESD and/or local court to understand the existing process and procedures.

Nonresident Students

Schools and programs serving nonresident students will need to take additional steps to:

- Conduct a community engagement board that connects student with resources in their local community, and
- Facilitate MOUs with multiple courts, as the supports available may be linked to where the student lives.

CEB Resources

- CEB Manual & Training Materials (email Krissy Johnson at krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us)
- Spokane Valley CEB Replication Toolkit (email Krissy Johnson at krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us)
- [District Attendance Materials & Resources Padlet](#)

Student Transfers

Students may transfer to or from an ALE setting with a range of scenarios related to truancy, including but not limited to:

- A history of unexcused absences or missed contacts without valid justification but no active truancy petition.
- A petition but not under court jurisdiction.
- An active petition under court jurisdiction.

In any of these scenarios, the school or program offering ALE should connect with the student's previous school for records and collaborate with their district truancy liaison and the court, if

¹ Other coordinated means of intervention is defined as identifying barriers to school attendance, and connecting students and their families with community services, culturally appropriate promising practices, and evidence-based services such as functional family therapy.

applicable, to review local procedures and determine next steps.

Shared FTE

Monitoring engagement when student enrollment is shared across multiple school entities can be complex. Successfully navigating any complexity may require communication and information sharing between settings. Designate a point person at each setting to monitor the student's engagement. If concerns arise, confirm whether the missed contact or absence is also happening in the other settings. If so, a truancy response may be a collaborative effort between settings. If not, and the student is engaged at a particular setting, interventions, or a reevaluation of enrollment at a particular setting may be necessary.

Best Practices

Students may disengage for any number of individual or systemic reasons, and without additional supports, enrollment in an ALE setting may exacerbate disengagement due to fewer requirements for regular classroom attendance. Interventions and supports commonly implemented in non-ALE settings can be modified to support students in ALE settings. For example, interventions such as students tracking their own engagement or protocols such as Check and Connect can be implemented through a remote or online model using direct personal contact or synchronous digital means.

General best practices to support student attendance, contact and engagement:

- Designate someone at the school or program to track students and engage in outreach in addition to required weekly contact.
- Establish a multi-disciplinary team to address academic and non-academic barriers to participation. A multi-disciplinary team in a small ALE setting might include a teacher, registrar, and administrator assigned to the program.
- Establish tiered interventions, using specific thresholds of attendance, contact and engagement measures.
- Partner with community organizations to expand the network of adults to support youth and build relationships.
- Set concrete contact and/or attendance expectations at the beginning of the school year along with information on what the truancy response process will look like in the ALE setting. Share with students and families why regular contact is important to learning and what students will miss if they don't participate or engage.
- Provide all information and communication in a manner that students and families can understand (e.g., using a family's native language).
- Engage students and families by asking for their feedback. Involve them in decision-making on issues like equity, curriculum, school climate and culture, instructional modes, or other aspects of school life. This can happen through informal conversations or formal perception surveys. Connect with your local school district to determine whether specific perception surveys are available for use.

- Review enrollment and reenrollment practices for any barriers that may disproportionately impact student engagement (e.g., required conferences or assessments that delay enrollment).

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. The following resources are valuable places to start when building or refining your system of supports.

- [Attendance Works](#)
- [FutureEd Attendance Playbook](#)
- [OSPI Attendance, Chronic Absenteeism, & Truancy Website](#)

Reporting Impacts

Enrollment Reporting

Pursuant to [WAC 392-121-108 \(1\)](#), students who have not attended school within twenty consecutive school days prior to the monthly count day cannot be claimed on Form P-223 for state basic education funding. However, the fiscal reporting requirement **does not** define or govern when/if the student should be withdrawn from enrollment.

The [OSPI Enrollment Reporting Handbook](#) and [OSPI Enrollment Reporting Program Supervisor](#) should always be the primary source for all questions and guidance related to apportionment. The guidance here does not capture the full extent of apportionment guidance.

Reporting Truancy in CEDARS

All schools, including those offering ALE, are required to report certain truancy actions to CEDARS such as when a student is referred to a community engagement board or when a petition is filed. Detailed guidance on this can be found in [Appendix F – Student Attributes and Programs](#).

Home-based Instruction (HBI)

Compulsory attendance laws ([RCW 28A.225.010](#)) outline mandatory school attendance requirements for students in Washington state. After a family files a declaration of intent to provide HBI, the student is no longer subject to compulsory attendance laws and would not be subject to truancy protocols and petitions. This applies when students enroll part-time in a public school to attend an ALE school or program. Although part-time enrolled students would not be subject to compulsory attendance and truancy laws, the local school or program may have minimum attendance or engagement requirements for enrollment. These local expectations can be enforced for the purposes of enrollment as long as they apply to all students.

More information on HBI can be found in the [Washington State's Laws Regulating Home-based Instruction](#).

One-page Overview of Truancy Action Requirements in ALE Settings

When	Action / Response
Always	Be familiar with the definition of truancy and response protocol in WAC 392-550-040 . This definition and response outlines how Washington state compulsory attendance and truancy laws required for any district claiming state dollars for student apportionment, per Chapter 28A.225 RCW , apply in ALE.
Initially and updated as needed	Formalize, and update as needed , valid justifications for missing weekly contact for the purpose of truancy in the district ALE board policy. (WAC 392-550-045)
After 1 missed weekly contact without valid justification	Inform the student's parent/guardian by a notice via direct personal contact as defined by WAC 392-550-020 in the language the parent is fluent in, whenever the student has missed weekly contact without valid justification. The notice should inform the parent/guardian of the potential consequences of additional missed weekly contacts. (WAC 392-550-040)
After 2 consecutive or 3 cumulative missed weekly contacts without valid justification	Schedule a conference with parent/guardian and student for the purpose of identifying barriers to the student's regular attendance and the supports and resources that may be made available to the family, and the steps to be taken so that the student is able to eliminate or reduce his/her absenteeism. The conference may take place in person, by phone, or through interactive video communication. (WAC 392-550-040) • Develop a data-based intervention plan to eliminate or reduce student's absences, consistent with the WARNS or other assessment results. • For middle and high school students. Must apply WARNS (Washington Assessment of Risks and Needs of Students) or other assessment. Convene the IEP or 504 team, if the student has an IEP or a 504 Plan to consider the reasons for the absences and adjust the IEP or 504 plan as necessary.(RCW 28A.225.020)
At 5 consecutive or 6 cumulative missed weekly contacts without valid justification	File truancy petition with Office of Juvenile Court. Court must stay the petition. Refer parent and child to a community engagement board (CEB) or other coordinated means of intervention. (WAC 392-550-040)

This summary is not intended to capture the full detail of the rule and law; please refer to the RCWs and [WAC 392-550-040](#) for the full extent of the requirements.

Washington State Residency

ALE courses are available to students who are residents of Washington state. [WAC 392-137-115](#) establishes student residency as where the student sleeps at night and where they are expected to reside for twenty consecutive days or more. Once a student is expected to be sleeping outside of the state of Washington for twenty or more consecutive days, they are no longer considered a Washington state resident and therefore are ineligible for state basic education funding. This applies to any student whose family may be planning to leave the state for an extended trip. Students who are out of the state on extended trips are not eligible to receive basic education funding, including ALE funding for remote or online courses, until they return to the state of Washington.

STUDENT POPULATIONS

Full-day Kindergarten (FDK)

Any program or school enrolling and claiming kindergarten students at greater than 0.5 ALE FTE in any month is subject to the full-day kindergarten sections of [WAC 392-550](#). These additional requirements include:

- The WSLP and/or syllabi must address the following elements:
 - o Developing initial skills in academic areas of reading, math, and writing
 - o Developing a variety of communication skills
 - o Experiences in science, social studies, arts, health, physical education, and world language
 - o Acquiring small and large motor skills
 - o Acquiring social and emotional skills
 - o Learning through hands-on experiences
 - o A description of learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity
- 1,000 annual hour instructional program.
- Administration of the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment. In order to maintain fidelity to the state WaKIDS Assessment protocol, programs must have multiple weekly observations of students each week during the eight-week WaKIDS assessment window. Observations must take place either in person or through synchronous digital instructional contact and be conducted by certificated teacher(s) who have successfully completed the [WaKIDS 101 training](#).
- Two additional annual reporting elements including the annual headcount of students claimed as full-day kindergarten during the year and the headcount of those students who participated in the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment.

Additional resources and information on WaKIDS, including guidance on the other two components of WaKIDS, Family Connection and Early Learning Collaboration, intended to assist in the implementation of FDK in an ALE setting can be found on the [WaKIDS website](#). Common questions regarding FDK in ALE are located in Appendix D.

Part-Time Home-based Instruction (HBI) and Private School

Part-time HBI and private school students are welcome in ALE programs. Families are encouraged to be a part of the learning process, as students benefit from having a collaborative learning environment that includes all the important adults in their lives.

Private school students may enroll in a public school offering ALE courses part-time for the purpose of taking a course or receiving an ancillary service that is not available in the private school.

For more information on apportionment rules for part-time attendance, review [WAC 392-134](#).

Difference Between HBI and Public Education

Families should be aware that ALE is publicly funded basic education and therefore is subject to all the requirements of basic education. [WAC 392-121-107](#) defines the courses of study eligible for student enrollment and apportionment in Washington state. ALE is an approved course of study when it is provided in compliance of state education regulations and supervised by a certificated teacher.

Home-based instruction (HBI) is excluded from being a course of study eligible for apportionment, per RCW [28A.200.010](#). When families have filed a declaration of intent to provide HBI, they disenroll from public school. In HBI, the family is entirely responsible for providing curriculum and instruction. The family may access information, resources, and any instructional support provided by their local school district, if available, or other organizations available statewide or nationally. Ultimately, the parent is responsible for designing instruction and monitoring progress, and the district has no obligation to provide support.

When families enroll in an ALE, they are enrolling in public education. The certificated teacher and school district are the primary decision-makers of an instructional program. The teacher and/or program may develop systems and practices that encourage high levels of family involvement in the decision-making process, may consider recommendations from families, and may have significant portions of instructional time taking place away from the school setting supported by a parent. In an ALE, the district and certificated teacher are ultimately responsible for designing and supervising instruction and assessing student progress toward state learning standards.

More information on this topic can be found in the [Statement of Understanding](#) section of this document.

Roles and Responsibilities

Programs may find more success when all stakeholders have a clear vision of their roles and responsibilities.

Responsibility for...	Public Education	Home-based Instruction
Education decisions and activities	The certificated teacher, school, and school district in-line with state regulations and district policy and procedure. The family may be involved in discussion toward these decisions.	The parent makes decisions on education and activities.
Curriculum selection	The certificated teacher in-line with state regulations and district policy and	The parent makes decisions related to curriculum.

Responsibility for...	Public Education	Home-based Instruction
	procedure. The family may provide input to the certificated teacher.	
Decisions on allocations and expenditures	The school and school district make decisions on how district money is allocated and spent in-line with state regulations and district policy and procedure.	Not state funded. The parent is responsible for paying for all educational materials and experiences.
Student evaluation	The teacher and school in-line with state regulations and district policy and procedure. The family may provide observations and evidence to support the teacher's evaluation.	The parent evaluates their child's progress and ensures participation in a qualifying annual assessment.
Regulations	The district remains in compliance with all federal, state, and district education expectations.	The parent remains in compliance with home-based instruction laws only.

What can school districts provide home-based instruction families?

- Funded services: Students in home-based instruction are entitled to part-time enrollment and ancillary services. This is publicly funded and must comply with state education requirements and be provided in the same manner and combination as a full-time student can access.
 - [RCW 28A.150.350](#), Part-time Students
 - [WAC 392-134](#), Financial Apportionment for Part-time Public School Attendance
- Unfunded resources: Some school districts choose to provide supports or resources for students and families in home-based instruction. Examples include:
 - Access to a curriculum library or at-cost purchasing of district instructional materials
 - Collaboration space
 - Instructional support

What are school districts not able to provide home-based instruction families?

- Districts cannot market or advertise their education options directly to home-based instruction families per [RCW 28A.320.092](#).
- Districts should not purchase, or provide services and materials, to students in home-based instruction or the ALE setting that aren't available to full-time students and students enrolled in the regular setting.

- Districts should avoid anything that appears to be an incentive to enroll in ALE programs such as allotments, services, or courses that are not similar to what is provided to students enrolled full-time or in the regular setting.
- Districts should not require families to file the declaration of intent form to participate in public education options. The declaration of intent form is for families choosing to enroll their school-age child in full-time or part-time home-based instruction.

Serving Students with Disabilities

State and federal laws prohibit discrimination in Washington public schools on the basis of disability, including in ALE courses ([WAC 392-550-030 \(1\)](#), chapter [28A.642 RCW](#), chapter [392-190 WAC](#), Section 504, 34 CFR Part 104). School districts that offer ALE courses must ensure that they are accessible to all students, including students with disabilities.

For additional information on special education, please review the [Serving Students with Disabilities](#) guidance developed in collaboration with the OSPI Special Education Department.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Communications & Newsletters

Rules and information are subject to change. [Subscribe to the Learning Options newsletter](#) for regular updates and ongoing information.

Website

Visit the [Alternative Learning Experience website](#) for the most up-to-date rule guidance information, links to communications, and other resources for ALE and online learning.

Contact Us

Contact us with questions about ALE implementation or compliance.

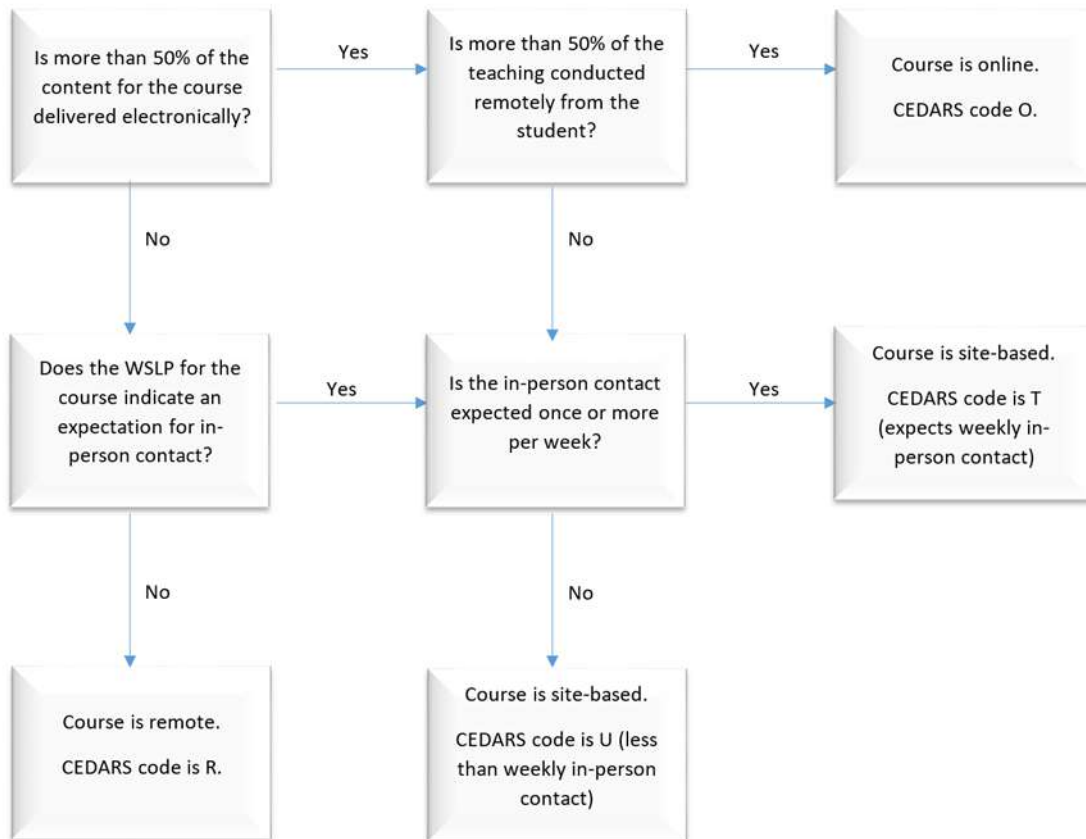
Learning Options

Learningoptions@k12.wa.us

360-725-6229

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Course Type Decision Tree



Note: This is a decision tree for determining course types in ALE funded courses. Online courses are not necessarily ALE courses. If all the weekly instructional minutes for a course take place in a school classroom or setting, the course is not ALE.

Appendix B – Contracting for Instruction in ALE Courses

School districts have general authority to contract for the services of individuals to provide instruction, subject to applicable state and federal laws and local collective bargaining agreements. However, when a school district contracts with an entity other than a school district and that entity employs staff to provide basic education instruction claimed by the school district for state basic education funding, additional requirements and considerations apply. This document may assist in the thoughtful evaluation of these elements.

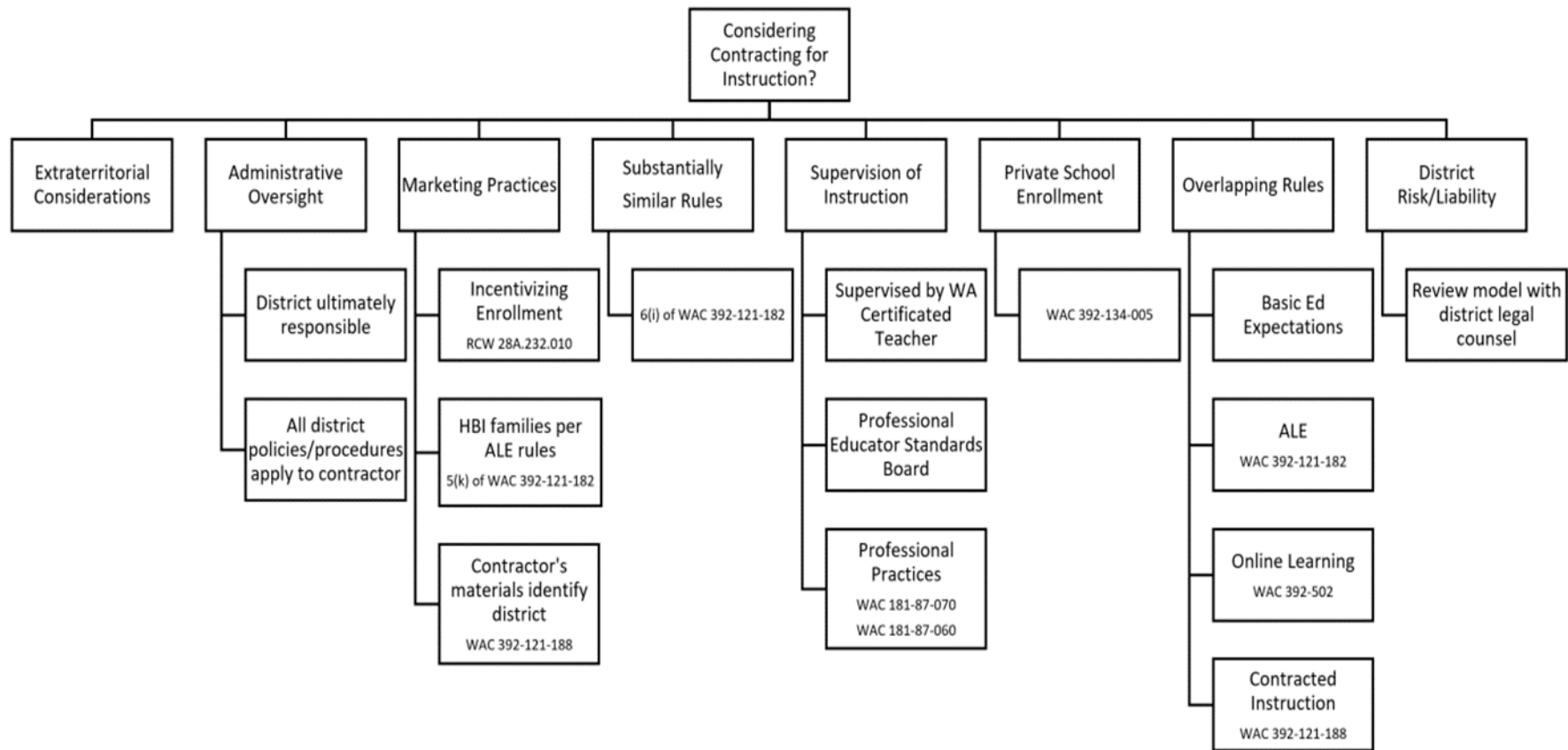
Step 1

A first step in deciding to contract for instruction is to evaluate the reason and intended purpose of the contract. The following guiding questions may assist in this first step.

- Intent.
 - o What is the intent of contracting with an outside entity to provide instruction for your district?
- Problem Identification and Exploration.
 - o Has a problem or need been identified?
 - o Review available data to identify needs or areas of concern.
 - o What existing systems might be contributing to the identified problem?
 - o Are there culture shifts that need to happen?
 - o Will student and community voice be incorporated into the development of the ALE option?
- Scope of the program option.
 - o What grade span(s) will be served and via which course types?
 - o Will the ALE be a full-time option, a part-time option for certain courses, or both?
 - o Will students have the option to take ALE courses long-term, or is this a short-term, take as needed, program option intended to support traditional courses?
 - o Will the ALE require a separate facility or will be integrated into an existing school?
- District Systems.
 - o How will the ALE option fit into the district network of schools and learning options?
 - o Is there district wide support for this program option?
- Continuous Improvement.
 - o How will you know whether you have met the goal or intent of the program to determine success or areas for improvement?

Step 2

Once a purpose for the instruction provided under contract has been evaluated, ensure each of these considerations and related RCWs and WACs have been reviewed and discussed with appropriate district leadership.



Step 3

Develop a contract that puts students first and is in the best interest of the district. Regardless of the instructional services offered through the contract, each enrolled student ultimately remains the responsibility of the local district. The district is accountable for student safety and educational progress, in addition to maintaining compliance with any overlapping rules such as [WAC 392-121-188](#), Instruction provided under contract.

WAC 392-121-188 Instruction provided under contract	
	A school board policy is in place that indicates rationale/need for contracted instruction.
	Practices that ensure school district retains full responsibility for, and contractor complies with, all state and federal laws.
	Contracted instruction is free of sectarian or religious influence or control.
	Enrollment is voluntary, free from discrimination, and no tuition is charged.
	Students are enrolled in the district reporting the enrollment and the contractor provides enrollment reports to the school district.
	All high school courses satisfy graduation requirements.
	No other entity is claiming student enrollment or receiving state support for the contracted instruction.
	The curriculum is approved by the district.
	The contractor maintains required documentation for audit or review by the school district, state, or federal authorities. (See section 12 of WAC 392-121-188 for list of required documentation)
	Personnel is reported appropriately to OSPI, when applicable. (See section 13 of WAC 392-121-188 for additional information)
	A written contract is in place between the school district and contractor that includes enough detail to ensure accountability.
	A process is in place to allow for the school district to monitor the contractor's compliance with applicable rules and expectations.
	Contracts for services for students with disabilities comply with WAC 392-172A-04085 and 392-172A-04090.
	Reported FTE for students served under contract with a higher education institution is based on the number of hours of instruction per WAC 392-121-107.
	Contractor's advertising, publicity, or public statements regarding the contracted service, clearly identifies that the service is being offered under contract by the school district.

Appendix C – Reporting Guide

Introduction

Reporting data to the state is an essential component of all Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) schools and programs. Reporting is what draws student funding, tracks enrollment demographics, and documents outcomes. The state level reporting requirements for ALE programs can be broken down into three main categories: enrollment reporting for state funding, CEDARS reporting, and year-end reporting. In this guide, you will find an overview of these three categories in addition to information on the specific reporting requirements.

*Online programs may have additional reporting requirements not included here. Information for online programs can be found in the [online learning guide](#) under the data reporting section.

Reporting Quick Guide

Enrollment Reporting for State Funding – Monthly

CEDARS Reporting – Monthly

- All CEDARS data files
- CEDARS data elements unique to ALE
 - o Residency Information
 - o Teacher Information
 - o ALE course type
- CEDARS data elements unique to Online
 - o Online Course Designation

Year End Reporting – Annually by August 31

Enrollment Reporting for State Funding

The Basics

- ❖ Who: This data is typically entered by a registrar and/or district business office.
- ❖ Where: EDS New Enrollment P223 and EDS SAFS ALE applications.
- ❖ When: Monthly.
- ❖ Why: P223 is the method through which all schools are funded, including those offering ALE. SAFS ALE restates the P223 enrollment by ALE program and student's home district.
- ❖ What: Per [WAC 392-550-060](#) (1), school districts with courses that qualify as Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) are required to report their ALE enrollment headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment to OSPI.

Details, instructions, and resources on enrollment reporting for state funding can be found in the annual enrollment reporting handbook. The handbook is a reference manual for reporting enrollment to School Apportionment and Financial Services (SAFS) at the Office of

Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The current enrollment reporting handbook and user guide can be found on the SAFS website at <https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/school-apportionment>.

More Information

Contact

School Apportionment & Financial Services (SAFS)

Becky McLean, Enrollment Reporting Supervisor

Phone: 360-725-6306

Email: Becky.Mclean@k12.wa.us

Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) Reporting

The Basics

- **Who:** This information is entered into a district student information system (SIS) by a registrar, office manager, or program specialist assigned to this task. This information, entered into a district SIS is included in the district CEDARS submission. Each district has a data security manager who has knowledge of this transfer of information.
- **Where:** District SIS and CEDARS system.
- **When:** At a minimum, as required under WAC 392-117-038 and as described in the CEDARS data manual, districts are required to submit data for all their students to CEDARS at least once a month between October and June of each school year.
- **Why:** This reporting allows schools and programs to be in compliance with state law and allows Washington state to be in compliance with federal reporting requirements. Moreover, this data provides both the district and OSPI the opportunity to track students participating in ALE, identify successes and challenges in the ALE model, and make data-informed decisions on how to better support programs and students.
- **What:** All CEDARS data files are required for ALE students and teachers. In addition, there are required CEDARS elements unique to ALE students and teachers as described in [WAC 392-550-060](#) (4). These additional elements are outlined below.

Required CEDARS Elements Unique to ALE

The information below explains data that is unique to students served in ALE. This data is captured in a district SIS system and is then included in the district submission to CEDARS. Each section includes the CEDARS data file and specific elements for which data is submitted.

ALE Student Residency Information – Monthly

Per [WAC 392-550-060](#) (4), schools and programs offering Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) courses or course work must gather and record information about the resident and serving

districts of all students in their SIS system. This data is submitted to CEDARS District Student File (B), Elements B02 – Serving County District Code and B03 – Home County District Code.

ALE Teacher Information Reporting – Monthly

Per [WAC 392-550-060](#) (4), schools and programs offering Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) courses or coursework must gather and record teacher information in their SIS or human resource system. This data is submitted to CEDARS Staff File (F).

Contracted teacher information must also be entered according to the SAFS personnel reporting instructions for S-275. Information on personnel reporting via the S-275 can be found on the School Apportionment and Final Services (SAFS) [website](#).

ALE Course Type – Monthly/As Needed

Per [WAC 392-550-060](#) (4) and [RCW 28A.300.500](#), every school or program offering Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) courses or coursework must record this information in their student information system (SIS).

Student Schedule. All courses that qualify as ALE courses are required to be assigned and recorded in the district SIS. Courses that meet the definitions and compliance outlined in [RCW 28A.232](#) and chapter [392-550 WAC](#) qualify as ALE.

- ALE Course Type O – Online
- ALE Course Type U – Site based course where the written student learning plan for the course expects less than weekly in-person instructional contact time
- ALE Course Type T – Site based course where the written student learning plan expects regular weekly in-person instructional contact time
- ALE Course Type R – Remote

This data is submitted to CEDARS Student Schedule File (E), Element E09 – ALE Course Type.

Student Grade History. All courses that qualify as Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) courses are required to be assigned and recorded in the district SIS. Courses that meet the definitions and compliance outlined in [RCW 28A.232](#) and chapter [392-550 WAC](#) qualify as ALE.

- ALE Course Type O – Online
- ALE Course Type U – Site based course where the written student learning plan requires less than weekly in-person instructional contact time
- ALE Course Type T – Site based course where the written student learning plan requires regular weekly in-person instructional contact time
- ALE Course Type R – Remote

This data is submitted to CEDARS Student Grade History File (H), Element H27 – ALE Course Type.

Required CEDARS Elements Unique to Online Courses

Online Course Designation – Monthly/As Needed

Additional reporting may be required in CEDARS when ALE courses are designated as Online. Review the [Online Learning Guide](#) for additional information on reporting requirements for Online Courses.

Common Questions

Transfer Credits

All district-funded courses should be recorded into the district SIS for each course and submitted to CEDARS student schedule and student grade history. District-funded courses should not be recorded as transfer credits. The only exception is a district-funded course taken through Running Start. In this case, the course must be reported as a transfer credit with the Course Designation code of R – Running Start.

If a student enrolls in and pays for a course independent of their district, this could be listed as a transfer credit in accordance with the district policy and procedure for accepting private transfer credits.

Contracted Instruction

The district remains responsible for all contracted courses including those through approved online course providers. All course catalog and accompanying staff information should be recorded into the district SIS and submitted to CEDARS.

Data for Online Courses

Online courses funded by the school district should be recorded in the district SIS and submitted to CEDARS in the same manner as other district courses.

Online Course Types

Online courses are not necessarily also ALE courses. If all the weekly instructional minutes for a course take place in a school classroom or setting, the course is not ALE.

More Information

More information about the CEDARS Data Manual can be found on the [OSPI CEDARS website](#).

For assistance in determining accurate course types, review the flowchart in Appendix A.

Contact

Learning Options, OSPI

Phone: 360-725-6229

Email: Learningoptions@k12.wa.us

Contact

CEDARS Customer Support, OSPI
Phone: 1-800-725-4311 or 360-725-6371
E-mail: customersupport@k12.wa.us

Year End Reporting

The Basics

- Who: Representative from the program, as locally determined.
- Where: Electronic Survey Link. A link to the survey form will be available each spring and communicated via the ALE website and newsletter.
- When: Annually, due August 31.
- Why: In addition to information on substantially similar expenditures or services, this annual report provides information related to compliance as well as program demographics over the course of the academic year.
- What: Per [WAC 392-550-060](#) (2)(3), each school district offering ALE courses or coursework must report a variety of information annually to OSPI.

Getting Started

1. Identify who will submit the report for each program in your district.
2. Review the questions and prepare responses. You will need to submit responses to all questions at the same time.
3. Locate the link to the survey form. The link is communicated annually when the report opens.
4. Enter the prepared responses into the survey form for the program and submit.

Accessing & Submitting the Report

Beginning in 2021–22, the ALE Year End Report was transitioned out of the School Apportionment and Financial Services (SAFS) ALE application in EDS to a more accessible survey form. Anyone with the survey link can complete and submit the report. ALE programs should connect with their local school team and district to determine who should complete and submit the information.

Q: How do I access the survey form?

A: The survey can be accessed with a link provided by OSPI Learning Options. The link will be updated annually and shared on the ALE website and communicated through the Learning Options newsletter when the report opens each spring. Login information is not required.

Q: Where will I find the list of ALE programs I need to submit data for?

A: In the survey form there is a dropdown list of ALE programs by district that claimed ALE FTE during the school year. A report is required for each ALE program listed.

Q: If data has already been submitted for a program, how will I know?

A: Beginning in June, a list of programs that have submitted a report will be available on the [ALE website](#).

Q: My program doesn't show up on the dropdown list of ALE programs in the survey form.

A: The dropdown list includes all programs that reported ALE FTE during the school year. The ALE program names are assigned locally by each school district in the School Apportionment and Financial Services (SAFS) ALE application in EDS, the application where districts submit their monthly ALE enrollment reports by home district. The program names on this list are taken directly from the SAFS ALE application. For further questions on this topic, contact learningoptions@k12.wa.us.

Q: Can I save partial data and return to complete the report at a later date?

A: Yes, the survey form does have this capability. However, we recommend collecting data locally until all responses are prepared. This will allow you to enter and submit at one time. The feature allowing a user to save and return to the form can be cumbersome and requires the user to keep track of a unique link. The link to save and continue the survey is available after the first page of the survey.

Q: How will I know if data is missing for an ALE program?

A: We will begin reaching out to ALE programs with missing data in late July. ALE programs are welcome to reach out to us at learningoptions@k12.wa.us at any time to check on their report status.

Q: Where can I view the submitted data for future reference?

A: A copy of the data will be sent to the email address indicated in the form upon submission. Please ensure the email address is entered accurately for this function to work and check spam folders if needed. The individual completing the form should share the report data with any necessary individuals as determined locally.

Q: Who can enter and submit data?

A: Anyone with the link to the survey form will be able to submit data for an ALE program. ALE programs should connect with their local school and district team to determine who should complete and submit the information.

Q: How can I make changes once my report has been submitted?

A: First, submit another report with the updated data. Then reach out to learningoptions@k12.wa.us to confirm which version of the report should be saved.

Q: Why did OSPI move the report out of the SAFS ALE application in EDS?

A: The survey form format is a more flexible, accessible, and user-friendly data collection tool. It allows for more control over the questions in the report, managing updates as needed, and direct access to the data submitted.

Report Questions & Guidance

The report includes the questions below.

1. Contracted Instruction. What percentage of the program's annual enrollment was taught by contracted instruction pursuant to [RCW 28A.150.305](#) and/or [WAC 392-121-188](#)?
(Enter whole numbers without a percentage mark, decimal point, or decimal number.)

- The intent of this question is to get information on the amount of instruction that is contracted to an entity other than the school district. Contracted instruction is outlined in [WAC 392-121-188](#). Examples of contracted learning include (1) a district contracting with an approved online provider where the online provider hires the teacher for the course(s), or (2) a district contracting with a community-based organization (CBO) for instruction where the certificated teacher is hired by the CBO.
 - For this question, report the percentage of your student enrollment that took courses taught by the contracted certificated teacher. These are not school district employees, but teachers such as those employed by a contractor of the district. For example, if 75% of your students enrolled during the school year took courses taught by certificated teachers employed by an online course provider, not school district employees, you would report 75 for this question.
 - Enter whole numbers without a percentage mark, decimal point, or decimal number.
2. Course Types. What percentage of the ALE courses taken by your students was classified as "online," "remote," or "site based" on the first day of class for the school year, February 1, and the last day of class for the school year?
- The intent of this question is to get information on the course types offered by a program during the school year.
 - Courses included in this calculation should be those taken by students over the course of the year, not all courses available in your course catalog or offerings.
 - For assistance in determining course types, review the Course Type section of this document.
 - Totals for each date must equal 100% or 0%.
 - Enter whole numbers without percentage mark, decimal point, or decimal number.
3. District Certificated Instruction. What is the total FTE of certificated teachers employed by the school district assigned to the ALE program? (Enter a number with two decimal places.)
- The intent of this question is to get information on the amount of instruction provided by staff employed through the district.
 - For this question, report the FTE of certificated teaching staff employed by the local school district who provided ALE instruction. Refer to the S-275 Personnel Reporting Instructions found on the [SAFS website](#) for more information.
 - This information may be used to calculate a student-to-teacher ratio for your program.
4. Assessment Participation. What percentage of eligible students did not participate in required ELA and Math statewide testing? (Enter a whole number without percentage mark, decimal point, or decimal number.)
- The intent of this question is to track assessment participation in ALE programs.

- For this question, report the percentage of enrolled students who were eligible to participate in either the SBAC Math and/or ELA assessment, but did not participate for any reason.
 - Eligible students are those students enrolled in grades 3-8, or 10 during the assessment window.
 - Statewide testing for the purposes of this question include the SBAC Math and/or ELA assessments only.
 - Participation means:
 - o A student eligible to take the ELA SBAC attempted the assessment.
 - o A student eligible to take the Math SBAC attempted the assessment.
 - o A student eligible to take both the ELA and Math SBAC attempted each of the assessments.
5. Full-day Kindergarten Enrollment. What is the annual headcount of students claimed as Full-day Kindergarten?
- The intent of this question is to determine the number of FDK students enrolled during the school year.
 - FDK means any kindergarten student claimed above 0.5 FTE for any month during the school year.
 - For this question, count each student claimed for FDK apportionment at any time during the school year.
 - Please enter a whole number.
 - Example: Two kindergarten students enrolled above 0.5 FTE in September, three new kindergarten students enrolled above 0.5 FTE in October, one of those kindergarten students enrolled above 0.5 FTE withdrew in April. Your annual headcount would be 5 ($2+3=5$).
6. Full-day Kindergarten Assessment Participation. What was the headcount of students claimed as Full-day Kindergarten who participated in the WaKIDS assessment during the assessment window?
- The intent of this question is to determine how many of the full-day kindergarten students enrolled in the program participated in the required assessment.
 - WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment is a required state assessment with an open window each fall until October 31.
 - Of your kindergarten students enrolled above 0.5 FTE during the WaKIDS assessment window, how many of them participated in the assessment?
 - Please enter a whole number.
 - Example: 5 kindergarten students were enrolled above 0.5 FTE during the WaKIDS assessment window. One student formally opted-out of the assessment, the remaining 4 students participated in the assessment by October 31st. The headcount of FDK students who participated in the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment during the assessment window would be 4 ($5-1=4$).

7. Purchased Services. Yes or no, did the program purchase or contract for instructional or co-curricular services or activities included in ALE written student learning plans? If yes, a 'Substantially Similar' report is required.
- Per [WAC 392-550-060](#) (2), ALE programs are required to report, on an annual basis, any costs and purpose of purchased services or activities provided to their ALE students. Additionally, ALE programs must show how these purchases are substantially similar to those provided for students in the non-ALE classroom.
 - The intent of this question is to identify the type and amount of services purchased by an ALE program, in addition to ensuring any services are substantially similar to those offered in the regular or non-ALE environment.
 - Instructional or co-curricular services or activities can include but are not limited to lessons, trips, or other activities. Online courses or courseware are not considered a service or activity and do not need to be reported.
 - For additional guidance on what needs to be reported, review the Substantially Similar section of this document.
 - To meet these reporting requirements, ALE programs that answer "Yes" to this question must complete the "Substantially Similar Spreadsheet."

More Information

To assist programs in self-assessing compliance with substantially similar requirements, a self-check compliance tool can be found on the [Alternative Learning Experience website](#).

To assist programs in preparing a substantially similar report, a copy of the template can be found on the [Alternative Learning Experience website](#).

Contact

Learning Options, OSPI

Phone: 360-725-6229

Email: learningoptions@k12.wa.us

Questions

Please direct questions regarding reporting to one of the departments listed below.

Learning Options

Phone: 360-725-6229

Email: learningoptions@k12.wa.us

School Apportionment & Financial Services, OSPI

Becky McLean, Enrollment Reporting Supervisor

Phone: 360-725-6306

Email: becky.mclean@k12.wa.us

CEDARS Customer Support, OSPI

Phone: 1-800-725-4311 or 360-725-6371
Email: customersupport@k12.wa.us

Appendix D – Full-day Kindergarten (FDK) Frequent Questions

Is full-day kindergarten mandatory in Alternative Learning Experience classrooms?

"Full-day kindergarten" (FDK) means a program that is eligible for state-funded FDK, as provided for in [RCW 28A.150.315](#), in which any student's alternative learning experience (ALE) enrollment is claimed at greater than 0.50 full-time equivalent (FTE).

ALE schools/programs do not have to offer FDK. Schools/programs choosing to operate as part-time can claim enrollment up to 0.50 FTE.

How many hours of instruction are required for full-day kindergarten?

ALE schools/programs providing FDK must provide at least a 1,000 annual hour instructional program. In order to reach the 1,000 annual hour requirement, a school/program offering FDK must provide at least 27 hours and 45 minutes (27.75 hours) or 1,665 minutes of instruction per week through the written student learning plan over the course of a 180-day school year. A program cannot begin mid-year.

What are the curriculum requirements of full-day kindergarten?

The Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP) and/or syllabi for each student claimed at greater than 0.50 ALE FTE must include all of the following:

- Curriculum activities that assist students in developing initial skills in the academic areas of reading, mathematics, and writing;
- Experiences in science, social studies, arts, health, physical education, and a world language other than English;
- Instruction that assists students in acquiring communication skills, large and small motor skills, and social and emotional skills including successful participation in learning activities as an individual and as part of a group; and
- Learning through hands-on experiences in environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity.

What are the other requirements of full-day kindergarten?

In addition to curricular and assessment requirements, schools/programs offering FDK must demonstrate strong connections and communication with early learning community providers and participate in kindergarten program readiness activities with early learning providers and parents.

Early learning providers may be defined as those involved in the growth and development of the young children and families in their community. This includes childcare and preschool providers, as well as local early learning coalitions, libraries, play group facilitators, parent educators and others who share a role in helping children and families prepare for success in kindergarten.

Guidance around Family Connection and Early Learning Collaboration in ALE settings can be found on the [WaKIDS website](#).

What about WaKIDS?

Schools/programs offering ALE courses or coursework to students enrolled in FDK must administer all 3 components of WaKIDS, the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), with fidelity. WaKIDS is intended to provide a smooth transition into kindergarten for families through meaningful connections between home, early learning settings and kindergarten teachers. It also provides an opportunity to identify the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year in order to inform instruction and support social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development of individual children.

Guidance around Family Connection and Early Learning Collaboration in ALE settings can be found on the [WaKIDS website](#).

What does it mean to implement WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment with fidelity?

To maintain fidelity to the state assessment protocol, WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment requires multiple weekly observations of students by certificated(s) who have successfully completed the WaKIDS 101 training each week during the eight-week assessment window until October 31. Observations must take place either in person or through synchronous digital instructional contact. While families may help contribute collecting and providing documentations for assessment, the levels of development and learning must be established by a certificated, WaKIDS-trained teacher.

The school/program and the WaKIDS-trained teacher(s) should decide how much in person or synchronous digital instructional contact time is needed to have multiple weekly observations. If you are attempting to determine whether your school/program is implementing with fidelity, ask yourself these questions:

- Are you providing multiple weekly opportunities for observation by a certificated, WaKIDS-trained teacher either in person or synchronously?
- Does the student have the opportunity for prolonged engagement in an activity that the certificated, WaKIDS-trained teacher can observe?
- If a student does not demonstrate an indicator of development during the allotted time, will he/she have another opportunity? When?

If the answer to any of these questions is *no*, it is unlikely that your school/program is implementing with fidelity. If this is the case, you may need to increase the opportunity for in

person or synchronous observation.

What if families opt out of WaKIDS?

Families may choose to opt out of any of the 3 components of WaKIDS, including the Whole-child Assessment, just as they may with other state-mandated assessments per local district policies and procedures. However, they should be made aware of the assessment benefits including the developmental information provided by WaKIDS and how results can inform plans for growth and achievement based on their child's present level of development in the six areas assessed. Most families, especially those who plan to take such a direct role in their child's education, find the information provided by the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment to be worthwhile.

ALE schools/programs should keep a written record if a family opts out of WaKIDS in accordance with the local district opt out or test refusal policy.

Students who opt out of WaKIDS must still attend the multiple weekly observations of students by certificated, WaKIDS-trained teachers each week during the eight-week assessment window either in person or synchronously.

What are the reporting requirements for full-day kindergarten funding?

ALE schools/programs must report the number of students enrolled in FDK at any time during the school year and the number of students enrolled in FDK who participated in the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment prior to the assessment deadline. This information should be included in the ALE year-end report.

What about late enrollments or if a kindergarten student starts mid-year?

Students who enroll in ALE schools/programs after October 17th are not required to participate in the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment but must participate in all other elements of FDK.

Because the developmental information provided by the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment provides such valuable developmental information, kindergarten teachers are encouraged to utilize the WaKIDS data and the *MyTeachingStrategies*® tool beyond just the mandated fall assessment window. The *MyTeachingStrategies*® tool may be voluntarily used over the course of the year to guide instruction, track growth and report progress. However, access to this tool for teachers can only be provided through the WaKIDS 101 training and administrators are not allowed to create new teacher accounts.

Who can administer WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment?

There are two requirements to administer WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment. The individual administering the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment must:

- Be a Washington state certificated teacher, and
- Have successfully completed a WaKIDS 101 training.

WaKIDS 101 trainings occur between July and September each year. For a list of training dates visit the [WaKIDS Training website](#).

Is my school/program set up to conduct WaKIDS?

If your school/program has never participated in WaKIDS, your district's Assessment Coordinator will need to contact the OSPI WaKIDS Assessment Specialist. The OSPI WaKIDS Assessment Specialist will work with your District Assessment Coordinator to create an account in the online assessment platform. For more details and contact information, reach out to wakids@k12.wa.us.

How are other programs using the enhanced full-day kindergarten funding?

The flexibility of ALE allows for unique implementation of FDK. ALE schools/programs receiving FDK funding have the opportunity to be creative in how they utilize those enhanced funds providing it meets substantially similar and acceptable expenditures per [WAC 392-550-030](#). OSPI will be collaborating with schools/programs over the coming year to learn more about promising practices.

Questions

If you have additional questions, please contact the Early Learning Department at 360-725-6161 or wakids@k12.wa.us or Learning Options at learningoptions@k12.wa.us.

Appendix E – New Program Development Tool

This document is a tool for schools and districts thinking about offering Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) courses per chapter [392-550 WAC](#). The information included is specific to implementing ALE and does not take into account additional rules, requirements, or expectations of offering a basic education program through public school, or rules specifically related to online learning, chapter [WAC 392-502](#).

If you have further questions or would like support in implementation planning, please contact us by email at learningoptions@k12.wa.us or visit the OSPI [Alternative Learning Experience website](#).

The Big Picture

ALE allows schools and districts the flexibility to claim apportionment for instruction that takes place in whole or in part outside the traditional classroom or school environment. This flexibility allows schools to personalize learning to student needs and develop focused intents or missions. What is the intent of building an ALE option in your school or district?

- Needs Assessment.
 - o Review available data to identify needs.
 - o What existing systems might be contributing to the identified problem?
 - o Are there culture shifts that need to happen?
 - o Will student and community voice be incorporated into the development of the ALE option?
 - o What are the goals of the ALE option?
- Scope of the program option.
 - o Have program policies, procedures, and systems been created with an equity lens?
 - o What grade span(s) will be served and via which course types?
 - o Will the ALE be a full-time option, a part-time option for certain courses, or both?
 - o Will students have the option to take ALE courses long-term, or is this a short-term, take as needed program option intended to support traditional courses?
 - o Will the ALE require a separate facility or will it be integrated into an existing school?
- District Systems.
 - o How will the ALE option fit into the district network of schools and learning options?
 - o Which district level offices are supporting this program and who is the district leadership collaborating in the development?
- Continuous Improvement.
 - o How will you know whether you have met the goals or intent of the program to determine success or areas for improvement?

Section 1: Program Design

This section may assist a school or program in designing their program model, including a plan for instruction, understanding of funding mechanisms, student populations, program specific policies and systems, and leadership.

Instructional Model

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Students will have equal access to ALE courses and/or programs. No discrimination in the guidance of students towards these courses and/or programs exist.	OSPI Equity & Civil Rights website Schools in Transition
☐	How will learning opportunities be designed to meet the individual needs of students?	Section 1(a) WAC 392-550-005
☐	ALE is a delivery model for providing basic education, not an exception to basic education. How will the requirements of basic education be met through this flexible model?	Section 1(a) WAC 392-550-020
☐	What curriculum will be used? Has it been appropriately adopted per district policy?	
☐	Have instructional materials been reviewed for bias content?	Screening for Bias Content Tool
☐	Is there a calendar designating the program's instructional hours?	WAC 180-16-200
☐	ALE courses are those provided in whole or in part independent of the regular classroom setting or schedule. What will the time on/off site look like?	Section 1(a)(i) WAC 392-550-020
☐	Will students be taking ALE as a full-time instructional model or will students access a mix of ALE and traditional courses?	
☐	All instruction must be provided in accordance with a written student learning plan (WSLP) that includes a syllabus. Is staff familiar with how to write a syllabus and an instructional plan?	Section 1(a)(iii) WAC 392-550-020
☐	Programs offering full-day kindergarten must have at least a 1,000 annual hour instructional program, meet additional WSLP requirements, and implement WaKIDS with multiple weekly in person or synchronous observations of students by certificated teachers each week during the eight-week WaKIDS assessment window in order to ensure fidelity to the assessment. What schedule will be followed to ensure WaKIDS is implemented with fidelity?	Section 1, 2, 4 WAC 392-550-035
☐	Will the program/district contract for any instruction? If so, the district is responsible for compliance with WAC 392-121-188 , Instruction provided under contract, and/or WAC 392-502 ,	Section 2 WAC 392-550-030

Reviewed	Items	References
	Online Learning.	WAC 392-121-188 WAC 392-502 Online Learning Guide
☐	If in-person instruction, organized and paid for by the school district, is not provided by a certificated teacher, the district needs to ensure the instruction is appropriately supervised with sight and sound proximity to a certificated teacher or assigned school district employee. If instructional activities, organized and paid for by the school district, are provided off-site, the district needs to ensure the location is safe, is appropriate for public education, and is supervised by a district contractor per WAC 392-121-188 who has completed required background checks.	WAC 181-87-070 WAC 181-87-060 WAC 392-121-188
☐	Will school-based support staff be used, in addition to the district or contracted teacher, for supporting online courses?	Section 11 WAC 392-550-020
☐	What course types will the program use?	Section 1(b) WAC 392-550-020
☐	Do all learning experience satisfy the requirements for courses of study and equivalences outlined in 392-410 WAC ?	Section 16 WAC 392-550-030 WAC 392-410
☐	All high school ALE courses will be offered for credit.	Section 17 WAC 392-550-030
☐	Work-based learning, if used as a component of an ALE course, is subject to additional rules outlined in WAC 392-410-315 and WAC 392-121-124 .	Section 12 WAC 392-550-030 WAC 392-410-315 WAC 392-121-124

Funding

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	ALE is funded based on the nonvocational running start rate. Has a cost analysis been conducted that takes into account projected enrollment trends?	
☐	If the nonvocational running start rate is not enough to cover staffing, facilities, and other related costs, how will the program budget be supplemented?	
☐	How will funds be allocated once they are received by the district?	
☐	If the district receives small schools, small high, or other federal or state funding enhancements, be aware that nonresident enrollment may be included in those calculations and could impact funding.	

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	ALE funding is reported and allocated with the expectation that full compliance with chapter 392-550 WAC is met. These funds are subject to audit and may be questioned if adequate documentation is not in place.	See compliance section of this document.
☐	Work-based learning and other occupational or CTE courses cannot receive vocationally-enhanced funding. How will those courses be supported in the ALE?	

Policies

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Do you have school board policy authorizing the ALE? Does it include the components required by WAC 392-550-045 ?	WAC 392-550-045
☐	Is staff familiar with the district curriculum adoption policy and procedures?	
☐	Is this an option school in the district? Where will students come from and when?	
☐	What communication will go out regarding ALE as an educational option?	
☐	How will you market the program in an equitable way while ensuring the program is not advertised, marketed, or providing unsolicited information about options such as online learning, part-time enrollment, or other alternative learning options to students and their parents who have filed a declaration of intent to home school.	Section 11 WAC 392-550-030
☐	Does the program have a handbook?	
☐	Does the program have an attendance policy?	
☐	Does the program have a behavior policy?	
☐	Are their policies and procedures around enrollment and withdraw from the program?	
☐	How will policies be communicated to families?	
☐	Are there district policies/procedures that may impact enrollment and operation of your program.	
☐	Will students be using online learning? If so, is an Online Learning board policy in place?	WAC 392-502

Systems and Processes

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Does the district Business Services office know about the program to ensure proper enrollment reporting and distribution of funds?	WAC 392-550-055 WAC 392-121-182
☐	What will the enrollment process look like?	
☐	Does the district Education Data System (EDS) Administrator	

Reviewed	Items	References
	know about the program to ensure proper student data reporting?	
☐	What systems will ensure students are on-track towards district grade level standards and graduation requirements, including the development of a high school and beyond plan?	
☐	Are teachers appropriately endorsed, certificated, and assigned?	
☐	What does the system of alternative options in the district look like and how does this program fit into that larger system?	
☐	Will the ALE be at a separate location or a program within a school?	
☐	Does the school/program require a change to the school directory such as requesting a new school or grade level change? If so, has that happened before the annual deadline?	Contact district data security manager
☐	What systems are in place to support truancy requirements for all students, particularly those attending on a choice transfer?	WAC 392-550-040
☐	How will students participate in state assessments, particularly those attending on a choice transfer?	WAC 392-550-050
☐	Part-time students receiving home-based instruction or attending a private school have additional assessment rules and exemptions.	Section 1, 2 WAC 392-550-050 WAC 392-134
☐	Have standardized paperwork and forms been developed for program use?	
☐	Will instructional materials or equipment to be taken off-site and if so, what is the process for ensuring they are returned?	Section 8 WAC 392-550-030
☐	What safeguards are in place to ensure students are doing their own work when off-site?	Section 13 WAC 392-550-030
☐	How will the program ensure students have access to all material identified in written student learning plan?	Section 3 WAC 392-550-030
☐	Does the program or school have a multi-tiered system of student support and/or interventions for students impacted by academic, behavioral, or social barriers?	
☐	Will information systems and/or learning management systems be used within the program? If so, do they meet district standards and do staff have the necessary access?	
☐	If individuals other than the certificated teacher will provide instructional support or learning activities included in the written student learning plan, what are the established information sharing systems, documentation processes, and coordination of supervision?	Also see substantially similar section of this document.

Leadership

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Who, within the district, has been involved in the program development? Does that team involve representation from district leadership?	
☐	Is district leadership familiar with the program and ALE rules?	
☐	Who will you go to with questions, or to advocate for additional support?	
☐	Does the program have community partners and/or a plan for family or community engagement?	
☐	What is the program mission and vision? Was a team of stakeholders involved in the development and are systems/policies/procedures set up in alignment with that mission?	
☐	Who will provide the daily oversight and leadership of the program?	
☐	Who is the district administrator overseeing the program? What does their involvement look like and do they have an understanding of ALE rules?	
☐	Who will oversee TPEP?	OSPI TPEP Website

Student Populations

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	How will the program support students with disabilities?	Section 1 WAC 392-550-030
☐	Have special education staff been assigned to the program (e.g., case manager, school psychologist, etc.)?	
☐	How will the IEP team be involved in the decision making of students taking ALE courses?	
☐	Who is responsible for managing 504 plans?	
☐	Will the program serve out of district students? How will the district ensure that the program is providing equitable public education and is not incentivizing non-resident enrollment.	WAC 392-550-030
☐	Are there specific student groups or demographics the program plans to serve and are adequate resources in place to do so?	
☐	Will the program be implementing full-day kindergarten? If so, is staff familiar with those requirements, including the WaKIDS assessment?	WAC 392-550-035
☐	What will options look like for students receiving part-time home-based instruction?	

Section 2: Data and Reporting

This section will cover reporting requirements specific to ALE in addition to other promising

practices related to data use.

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Are staff familiar with ALE reporting requirements? - Enrollment Reporting - CEDARS Reporting - Annual End of Year Report	WAC 392-550-060
☐	Are designated staff familiar with the count day process? Are systems for reporting enrollment via P223 and SAFS ALE set up?	WAC 392-550-055
☐	Is the program submitting each required element to CEDARS?	Section 4 WAC 392-550-060
☐	Do the information systems used by the local program submit data to the district student information system?	
☐	Are staff familiar with documentation and record retention requirements? What systems are in place to meet these requirements?	WAC 392-550-065
☐	What systems will be used for daily, monthly, or annual recordkeeping/data tracking? Sample documents are located on the Alternative Learning Experience website .	Alternative Learning Experience website
☐	How will both staff and leadership use data to inform practice?	
☐	Is the program prepared to annually report to OSPI on: - Cost and purpose of expenditures and substantially similar services - Number of certificated instructional staff FTE - Instruction provided under contract - Headcount of students enrolled as full-day kindergarten - Headcount of students enrolled as full-day kindergarten who participate in WaKIDS	Section 2, 3 WAC 392-550-060
☐	Is the program prepared to provide an annual report to the school board covering: - ALE student headcount and full-time equivalency claimed - Ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students in each program - Description of how the program supports the district's goals and objectives for student achievement	Section 5 WAC 392-550-060

Section 3: Compliance

This section will provide an overview of the compliance components include in chapter [392-550 WAC](#).

Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP)

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Will all instruction be supervised, developed, monitored,	Section 1(a)(ii) WAC 392-550-020

Reviewed	Items	References
	assessed, documented by a certificated teacher?	
☐	All written student learning plans include the following components: - Beginning & ending dates - Estimate of average hours per week student will engage in learning activities to meet requirements of written student learning plan - Syllabus/description of each course (learning goals, performance objectives, learning activities, course code) - Course type - Identification of certificated teacher responsible for each course - Identification of instructional materials - Description of timelines and method for evaluating progress - How contact will be made For kindergarten students claimed at greater than 0.5 monthly full-time equivalency (FTE), the following must also be addressed in the written student learning plan ▪ Developing initial skills in academic areas of reading, math, and writing ▪ Developing a variety of communication skills ▪ Experiences in science, social studies, arts, health, physical education, and world language ▪ Acquiring small and large motor skills ▪ Acquiring social and emotional skills ▪ Learning through hands-on experiences ▪ A description of learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity	Section 1 WAC 392-550-025
☐	All curriculum and materials included in the written student learning plan are approved by the district.	Section 6, 7, 8 WAC 392-550-030
☐	How will the program ensure curriculum and content standards are consistent with non-ALE settings?	Section 7, 8 WAC 392-550-030
☐	If a program includes significant collaboration with students, parents, and/or community members, how will input from stakeholders be incorporated while ensuring that all instructional and curriculum decisions are made by the certificated teacher?	
☐	If using an approved online provider or online courseware, has	WAC 392-502

Reviewed	Items	References
	the program been approved by OSPI as required by WAC 392-502?	

Student Contact

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	How will the program meet two-way weekly contact requirements of either direct personal contact, in-person instructional contact, or synchronous digital instructional contact, and document appropriately?	Section 2 WAC 392-550-025

Monthly Progress Review

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	How will monthly progress be evaluated and when?	Section 3 WAC 392-550-025
☐	A policy for evaluating satisfactory/unsatisfactory progress is clearly identified and communicated and is aligned with the district policy.	Section 3(c) WAC 392-550-025
☐	Are program staff aware of the enrollment reporting implications if a monthly progress review has not taken place within 5 days of the end of the month?	Section 3(c)(iii) WAC 392-550-025
☐	How will monthly progress reviews be communicated to students and parents (grades K–8)? Note: The initial monthly progress review and reviews during months where progress was determined to be unsatisfactory must be communicated through direct personal contact.	Section 3(b)(c) WAC 392-550-025
☐	Intervention plans will be designed and implemented when a student is determined to have made unsatisfactory progress. Intervention plans will be developed in conjunction with the student (and parent K–8) and monitored by a certificated teacher and include one of the following: - Increase frequency or duration of contact - Modify manner in which contact is accomplished - Modify learning goals - Modify number/scope of courses or content in WSLP	Section 4 WAC 392-550-025
☐	A course of study better designed to meet the student needs will be developed after three months of unsatisfactory progress.	Section 5 WAC 392-550-025

Substantially Similar

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Will the program be purchasing or contracting for instruction, experiences, services, or activities? If so, all purchased or contracted expenditures including lessons, trips, services, or other activities are substantially similar. This means they have an	Section 9 WAC 392-550-030

Reviewed	Items	References
	identical or similar experience for students in the district's non-ALE school(s): - At same grade - At same frequency, intensity, duration - Similar cost to student - In accordance with district policy - Supervised, monitored, assessed by a certificated teacher	
☐	Does the program have a process for reviewing any expenditures to ensure they meet substantially similar requirements?	Section 9 WAC 392-550-030
☐	The program does not issue stipends to families to purchase educational materials. This includes providing parents with a budget that they can direct toward different activities or curriculum.	Section 4 WAC 392-550-030

Statement of Understanding

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	A description of the difference between home-based instruction and ALE is: - Provided to parents prior to enrollment, <u>and</u> - Included in the school/program informational materials.	Section 10 WAC 392-550-030

Other

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	Is the program aligned with the purpose of ALE, outlined in WAC 392-550-005?	WAC 392-550-005
☐	Are the individuals assigned to the program familiar with the terminology and definitions associated with ALE?	WAC 392-550-020
☐	Choice transfers are approved for any student residing outside of district boundaries prior to the 1st count day.	Section 14 WAC 392-550-030
☐	The resident district will be informed when a student on a choice transfer drops out or is otherwise no longer enrolled.	Section 15 WAC 392-550-030
☐	A board policy is in place allowing for your ALE program. The policy designates by title one or more district staff responsible for oversight of ALE program, including compliance monitoring and reporting annually to school board on the program. Do you have a copy of this policy?	WAC 392-550-045
☐	Is all curriculum approved according to school board policy?	Section 7, 8 WAC 392-550-030
☐	Staff are familiar with the WAC exclusions for claiming enrollment.	WAC 392-121-182
☐	The program has an assessment plan to ensure state testing	WAC 392-550-050

Reviewed	Items	References
	opportunities are provided. The program has a procedure for test refusal and a process for ensuring the benefits of testing are shared with families.	
☐	Staff are familiar with how to determine full-time and part-time equivalent status for students.	WAC 392-121-182

Section 4: Professional Development & Continuous Improvement

This section focuses on the long-term success and development of the program.

Reviewed	Items	References
☐	What will initial training and/or onboarding for new staff look like?	
☐	What ongoing staff training will be available related to ALE compliance?	
☐	How will program staff be incorporated into larger district initiatives and efforts?	
☐	What staff professional development options will be available?	
☐	Is program staff connected to professional organizations?	
☐	Do program staff subscribe to OSPI Bulletins and the Learning Options newsletter?	LO Newsletter OSPI Bulletins
☐	How will a plan of continuous improvement be implemented? How will staff know what they are doing is successful?	
☐	What data or metrics will be routinely reviewed to identify areas of success or improvement?	
☐	Does staff know where to find the Alternative Learning Experience website?	Alternative Learning Experience Website

Related WACs/RCWs

This section provides a list of rules and legislation that may overlap with ALE.

Basic Education

[RCW 28A.150.220](#)

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)

[WAC 392-550](#)

[RCW 28A.232](#)

Online Learning

[WAC 392-502](#)

[RCW 28A.250](#)

Instruction Provided Under Contract

[WAC 392-121-188](#)

[Student Residency](#)

[WAC 392-137-115](#)

[Enrollment Exclusions](#)

[WAC 392-121-108](#)

[Instructional Hours](#)

[WAC 180-16-200](#)

[Part-time Public School Attendance](#)

[WAC 392-134](#)

[Special Education](#)

[RCW 28A.155](#)

[WAC 392-172A](#)

[504](#)

[RCW 28A.642](#)

[WAC 392-190](#)

[Section 504 Regulations](#)

[Transitional Bilingual](#)

[WAC 392-160](#)

[McKinney Vento Act](#)

[OSPI website](#)

[Attendance/Tuancy](#)

[RCW 28A.255](#)

[Behavior/Discipline](#)

[RCW 28A.600](#)

[WAC 392-400](#)

[Definition – Full-time Equivalent Student](#)

[WAC 392-121-122](#)

[Home-Based Instruction](#)

[RCW 28A.200](#)

[Washington Laws](#)

[Full-day Kindergarten](#)

[RCW 28A.150.315](#)

[WAC 392-122-420](#) through 392-122-426

[Work-based Learning](#)

[WAC 392-121-124](#)

[Course of Study](#)

[WAC 392-121-107](#)

Appendix F – Commonly Misinterpreted Regulations in ALE

Purpose

This guidance supports school districts with Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) design, reflection on practices, and clarifies how certain practices may conflict with Washington regulations for basic education that put the local education agency (LEA) or the flexibility of ALE at risk.

How to Use this Document

This document is designed to be an informational and reflection tool for schools and programs offering ALE. It can be used in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- Initiate conversations within the LEA about the role and limitations of the ALE
- Support conversations with school teams, families, and/or communities about the role and limitations of the ALE
- Encourage program evaluation and improvement
- Reflect on whether any practices, or combination of practices, used by the ALE put the LEA or the flexibility of ALE at risk
- Guide the design of a new school or program (Note: additional guidance can be found in the New Program Development Tool, located in Appendix E of the [Guide to Offering ALE](#))

The impact of practices included in this tool may vary depending on their intended purpose, the way in which they are implemented, and if and how they are coupled together. For these reasons, this document should be used as a reflection and improvement tool rather than a checklist. Reflective questions that may assist in evaluating practices might include:

- How do staff within the program talk about a particular practice?
- How do students and families perceive a particular practice?
- What is the role or purpose of the practice for the program, school, or district?
- Are there ways to modify a practice that would reduce the level of risk?
- How do different practices or services impact groups of students within the district?
- How would a practice be perceived in the non-ALE setting in the district or by other stakeholders outside of ALE?

List of Practices

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
Use of public funds	Providing families with an educational allotment or any similar method of allowing families to direct public funds.	This practice is in direct violation of state law and rules governing ALE. This has been determined by the Washington State Legislature as an inappropriate use of public funds. This practice puts ALE at a significant risk of additional and more limiting legislative action.	Any implementation of this practice should cease. Refer to the section titled Allotments in the Guide to Offering ALE for more information.	RCW 28A.232.010(3)
Use of public funds	Paying for services or activities for students in an ALE that do not have a substantially similar comparison to services or activities accessible to students in the non-ALE setting in the district.	This practice is in direct violation of state law and rules governing ALE. This has been determined by the Washington State Legislature as an inappropriate use of public funds. This practice puts ALE at a significant risk of additional and more limiting legislative action.	Any implementation of this practice should cease. Refer to the section titled Substantially Similar in the Guide to Offering ALE for more information.	RCW 28A.232.010(3) WAC 392-550-030(9)
District oversight	Contracting with a private organization for more than instruction and/or a few limited services. Examples include contracting for school	Concerns arise when a district has a very limited role in the administration, operations and decision making of a program. Decisions may be made in conflict with district policy and procedure. May appear to outside groups, media, or policy makers as a privately run school lacking district oversight, responsibility, and accountability.	The district may want to have a district employee in a key administrative and decision-making role with the program/school. Additionally, ensure a clear and consistent process for district and program communication and	WAC 181-87-060 WAC 392-121-188

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
	administration or enrollment processing.		decision making. See also sections on contracted instruction and contractors subcontracting for services.	
District Oversight	Multiple layers of instruction provided under contract (e.g., programs that contract for instruction and those contractors subcontract with others).	Reduces the ability to monitor accountability and creates gray area for various responsibilities and lack of quality control.	Clear school district policy and board oversight of contracts. Contracts with clear terms and transparent roles and responsibilities.	WAC 392-121-188
Professional Practices	Paying individuals to provide direct instruction who are not employees of a district or are not operating under formal board approval under WAC 392-121-188 .	Concerns for supervision and oversight, student safety, and liability of the district. Concerns around alignment of instructional expectations for basic education programs, alignment with state standards, and professional practices expectations. Concerns about who is making the decisions related to the selection of the individual. This practice puts ALE at a significant risk of additional and more limiting legislative action.	Any implementation of this practice should cease. Refer to the section titled Non-Certificated Instructional Support in the Guide to Offering ALE for more information.	WAC 181-87-070 WAC 392-121-188 RCW 28A.232.010(3)
Curriculum	Use of curriculum that is religious in nature or that has not been formally adopted by the	Religious doctrine influence. Concerns around alignment of instructional expectations for basic education programs and alignment with state standards.	Refer to and follow the curriculum adoption process in the local district. Ensure families understand other learning by choice	WAC 392-550-030(6) WAC 392-550-030(7) WAC 392-550-030(8) WA St Constitution, Article IX, Sec4

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
	district per the curriculum adoption process.		options that are not publicly funded but would allow more flexibility.	
Basic Education Expectations	Lack of student access to related programs, supports, and services. These services include but are not limited to counseling, nutrition services, Bilingual Education Program, Migrant Education Program, Special Education Services, assessments, tiered systems of supports, and graduation pathway options.	ALE is a public education program. Every public education student should have access to these services as needed.	Local brainstorming and improvement planning for what this access looks like. Include relevant district level staff. Evaluate district systems and student need using data from an equity lens.	RCW 28A.150.220 WAC 392-550-020(1)
Basic Education Expectations	Minimal or limited contact with appropriately certificated and endorsed content area teachers supervising instruction.	Any course or grade-level coursework where time is claimed for state funding must be supervised by a certificated teacher. When contact with a teacher is limited by program design, the quality of instruction and potential for relationship building may suffer.	Ensure that students have access to quality communication with content area teachers in addition to meeting the minimum contact requirements in ALE.	WAC 181-87-060 WAC 392-550-025(1) WAC 392-550-025(2) WAC 392-550-025(3)

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
Basic Education Expectations	Providing only enrichment classes or claiming a high amount of FTE without providing students with a robust grade level experience in alignment with state basic education standards.	Washington law outlines learning requirements as part of a basic education program. As a delivery model for basic education, this applies to ALE. The practice appears to provide part-time students, and students in home-based instruction, public education opportunities not available to full-time students. State regulations limit part-time enrollment to any course, any ancillary service, and any combination of courses and ancillary services which is made available by a public school to full-time students.	Offer courses or grade-level coursework in alignment with state standards to all students. For part-time enrolled students, limit enrollment to a combination of courses and services that a full-time enrolled student would be able to access. Have a process and/or policy to assess this limit.	RCW 28A.150.220(3)(a) WAC 392-134-010 WAC 392-550-030(17) WAC 392-550-035
Basic Education Expectations	Offering full-day kindergarten (FDK) without implementing all the requirements of FDK.	Washington law outlines the expectations of what a basic education program should look like for a full-time student at the kindergarten level. As a delivery method for basic education, this applies to ALE.	ALE schools and programs are not required to offer full-day kindergarten. If families are not interested in participating in a full-time program, they can remain part-time. Ensure any family who is interested in a full-day program knows where and how to access that option in the district. Refer to the FDK resources in the Guide to Offering ALE or the OSPI State-Funded Full-day Kindergarten website for more information.	RCW 28A.150.315 WAC 392-550-035

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
Basic Education Expectations	Lack of incorporating high school and beyond planning at the secondary level.	Washington requires all students engage in high school and beyond planning (HSBP). State law outlines the elements that must be included in a HSBP. As a delivery method for basic education, this applies to ALE.	Local brainstorming and improvement planning for what this access looks like. Refer to the OSPI HSBP website for more information.	RCW 28A.230.090
Basic Education Expectations	Discouraging participation in state assessments or designing policies or practices that intentionally avoid state and federal accountability.	Basic education programs are required to administer state assessments. As a delivery model for basic education, this applies to ALE. Although families have the option to refuse participation, high percentages of refusals skew test results for the program and leads to challenges in tracking outcomes in ALE. A school or program may not be able to meet participation percentage requirements per ESSA which may require additional actions such as an improvement plan.	Evaluate messaging around the purpose of state assessments. Reframe the purpose of assessments and how they are used by the program. Develop strategies to encourage family participation.	RCW 28A.232.010 WAC 392-550
Basic Education, Difference between ALE and HBI	Use of the following terms to describe an ALE: - Homeschooling - Home-based Instruction	ALE is publicly funded education where a certificated teacher supervises all instruction. These terms are in direct conflict with that definition of ALE and create confusion around the difference between home-based instruction and public education. These terms create lack of clarity for schools, families, communities, state agencies, and the legislature on the type and role of the school. This puts ALE at risk of more limiting legislative changes and creates confusion for families.	ALE is a public-school option where students can learn from a variety of locations, including their home, with or without a parent as a partner in their education.	RCW 28A.232.010(3) WAC 392-550-030(10) WAC 392-550-025(1)

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
Basic Education, Difference between ALE & HBI, Part-time enrollment	Requiring families to sign a Declaration of Intent (DOI) to provide home-based instruction prior to enrolling in ALE.	Requiring parents to comply with the legal responsibilities of home-based instruction to access public education poses concerns in multiple areas: a) Appears that participation is contingent on giving up their right to a full-time public education. b) Appears that the program is not prepared to meet all basic education expectations. c) Increased risk that enrolled students are receiving courses, services, or combinations of courses and/or services that aren't available to full-time students. This may result in conflicts with part-time enrollment regulations and ALE substantial experience regulations. d) Increased risk of confusion about the difference between ALE and home-based instruction.	Filing a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction should be a family decision with family initiation. ALE's can serve part-time students (and if so, there should be a DOI on file), but this should not be a requirement to access public education. Allow full-time enrolled students to participate in the program. Students enrolled full-time should be able to access these options and have a similar experience to part-time enrolled students. See also rows with the topic "Basic Education"	RCW 28A.150.350(1)(d) , (2) WAC 392-134-010 WAC 392-550-030(10) RCW 28A.200 RCW 28A.225.010
Part-time Enrollment	Enrolling private school students for courses other than what is allowable under part-time enrollment laws.	Appears to subsidize private schools by publicly providing the instruction students should be receiving through their tuition paid program.	Ensure that the district is upholding their responsibility to assess whether the student is eligible for the course or service. If the school offers the course or service that year, the student is not eligible	RCW 28A.150.350 WAC 392-134

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
			for that publicly funded course or service.	
Extraterritorial Rules	Operation of a physical school location within the boundaries of another school district without formal interdistrict cooperation agreements.	Intrusion on a local school district and usurping of state funding.	Refer to LEA's legal counsel about potential legal liability.	Bulletin No. 023-12M, Authority for Districts to Act Outside their Boundaries
Accessibility	Blatant or suggestive language that leads families to believe they need to revoke special education services to enroll in an ALE.	This practice is in direct violation of both special education and civil rights laws. State law and rules governing ALE require that it be accessible to students with disabilities.	Any implementation of this practice should cease. Work with the district Special Education director to determine what a continuum of services looks like in the local district and where/how students in the ALE can access services. Include all relevant stakeholders on IEP teams. Refer to Serving Students with Disabilities in ALE for more information .	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Chapter 28A.642 RCW WAC 392-550-030(1)
Online Learning	Offering online courses without approval as an online school program.	This practice is in violation of state law and rules governing online learning, which require an approval for this instructional model.	Refer to the Guide to Online Learning for more information.	RCW 28A.250

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
Reporting Requirements	Not submitting required student information to CEDARS, including an ALE course type flags.	This practice is in violation of state law and rules governing ALE. It limits the information available to describe where and how public funds are being distributed and limits the ability to monitor long-term outcomes of ALE and advocate for ALE.	Refer to the reporting guide in the Guide to Offering ALE . Work with local district student information team to determine how to appropriately enter student information so it is submitted to CEDARS.	RCW 28A.232.010(7) WAC 392-550-060(4)
CTE	Offering CTE courses that do not meet the requirements of CTE.	CTE courses and programs have specific requirements such as CTE certificated teachers, CIP codes, and advisory boards. These must be in place to offer CTE credit.	Courses may meet the occupational education credit requirement without meeting the full expectation of CTE. Work with the district to ensure that occupational education credit meets district standards, policy, and procedure. Work with local district CTE Director to determine the requirements of and possibilities of offering CTE courses either in the school or program or creating connections for students with existing CTE programs in the district.	RCW 28A.700.010
Non-resident Enrollment	Serving large numbers of non-resident students	This practice is allowable under existing education laws and rules. However, depending on the purpose and role of the	Review the purpose of the program and whether its practices are fully in	RCW 28A.250 RCW 28A.225.225 RCW 28A.232.010(3)

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
	or growth of a program designed to serve non-resident students.	program within a district, it could incentivize non-resident enrollment in the ALE which is prohibited per RCW 28A.232.010(3) . Other education laws including Online Learning regulations prohibit this practice without additional accountability measures.	alignment with state basic education expectations. Ensure public funds are appropriately utilized. Continuously improve systems of support and processes for students who are struggling or not making progress to ensure they have access to resources and educational opportunities that meet their needs within their local community. Ensure nonresident students and families have a voice in district educational programming similar to resident students and families. Have a process in place that ensures that the program is accessible to all types of learners and enrollment/choice transfer process isn't disproportionately impacting specific student groups such as students with disabilities.	

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
Communications	Schools or programs not listed on the district website.	Lack of visibility could demonstrate lack of ownership, transparency, and accessibility.	Include any ALE options on the district website.	
Continued Enrollment	Continued enrollment of students who are not making progress over an extended period of time by making revisions to the WSLP (e.g., students not earning any credit over a school year) without intentional intervention strategies or evaluating other educational options.	Different students need varying levels of support and intervention. The continued enrollment of students without thoughtful intervention when needed is concerning and is perceived as a financial incentive for a school, program, or district. It leads to questions from stakeholders regarding whether a program is implementing or resourced appropriately to implement required systems such as tiered systems of support, truancy, and/or other intervention strategies.	Review data and outcomes by student groups and engage students and families in problem solving. Review systems and communications regarding how support from certificated teachers or other support staff is accessed when needed by a student. Reflect on whether progress reviews, intervention plans, and definitions of satisfactory progress are implemented appropriately.	WAC 392-550-025
Program Design	Designing a new ALE without (1) evaluating the role of the ALE in the context of the larger district system and/or (2) providing the ALE adequate staffing	Lack of district ownership, oversight, and financial viability. Potential for the design of a program that does not meet the needs of the students or community.	Conduct needs assessments and implement strategies to: a) capture student/family voice into program development	

Topic	Description of the practice	Challenge	Suggestion	Applicable Law/Guidance
	and resources, and (3) consulting students/families.		b) evaluate the system-wide needs within the district c) determine adequate staffing and resources based on factors included by not limited to the mission, model design, attendance requirements, student enrollment, and/or documentation systems and tools.	

Other Next Steps

1. Consult the Quality Matters [Quality Matters National Standards for Quality Online Learning](#), if applicable.
2. Consult the [National Alternative Education Association exemplary practices](#).
3. Utilize local data to reflect on accessibility, outcomes, and impact for different populations of students.
4. If you have questions about the role of a practice in your program, improvement ideas, or potential risks, reach out to Learning Options for additional support.

Example Self-Reflection Process



Appendix G – Apportionment Calculations

FTE to Weekly ALE Hours & Minutes

FTE	Hours	Mins
0.10	2	45
0.15	4	9
0.20	5	33
0.25	6	55
0.30	8	19
0.35	9	42
0.40	11	6
0.45	12	28
0.50	13	51
0.55	15	15
0.60	16	39
0.65	18	1
0.70	19	25
0.75	20	48
0.80	22	12
0.85	23	34
0.90	24	57
0.95	26	21
1.00	27	45

REVISION LOG & COPYRIGHT

Updates to the Guide to Offering ALE are noted below.

Sections Updated	Description	Date
Throughout all	Included guidance from monthly newsletters on digital signatures and clarified instructions and common questions on ALE Year End Report. Other formatting and hyperlink updates throughout.	6/2023
Various Full-day Kindergarten	Updated guidance to reflect allowable methods of administering the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment in accordance with the rule change that took effect August 2022.	8/2022
Throughout all	Added information on ALE compliance including example methods of documenting weekly contact, implications of continued enrollment on the WSLP, documentation supporting the first month of ALE enrollment, and the role of school-based support staff. Added an appendix on Commonly Misinterpreted ALE Regulations, incorporated guidance previously published by OSPI on the difference between home-based instruction and public education, clarified when missed contacts with a valid justification apply, and added additional information and resources on Equity and Civil Rights. Other formatting and hyperlink updates throughout.	5/2022
Throughout all	Added section on truancy. Replaced references to WAC 392-121-182 due to the rule change that was effective in August 2020. Updated with guidance from monthly newsletters. Other formatting and hyperlink updates throughout.	5/2021
Throughout all	Added sections regarding substantially similar reporting and non-certificated instructional support. Revised sections regarding school board policies, truancy, and statement of understanding due to rule changes. Replaced references to WAC 392-121-182 to chapter 392-550 WAC due to rule change. Updated with guidance from monthly newsletters. Other formatting and hyperlink updates throughout.	8/2020
Throughout all	Added new sections regarding allotments, attendance, & truancy. Updated with guidance from monthly newsletters. Other revisions throughout for clarity.	6/2019
	Initial Publication	10/2018

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