

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) Self-Assessment

Purpose

This self-assessment is intended to assist schools offering ALE in reviewing their program practices for (1) general program requirements, (2) individual student fiscal accountability with [Chapter 392-550 WAC](#) (a.k.a. ALE compliance requirements) and (3) promising practices. This tool is intended to be a resource, and outcomes should inform local discussion and improvements to program practices or processes. Use of this tool does not indicate formal OSPI approval of practices or compliance status.

- For the purpose of general program development or improvement, this tool can be used in its entirety. The Local Education Agency (LEA) should self-select areas of focus.
- For the purpose of conducting an internal compliance review or preparing for a formal audit, refer to [Section B](#).

Regulation References

- Funding Eligibility: [WAC 392-121-182](#)
- ALE Rules: [Chapter 392-550 WAC](#)
- ALE Law: [Chapter 28A.232 RCW](#)

Additional Resources

For further information on ALE, please refer to:

- [Alternative Learning Experience website](#)
- [Guide to Offering Alternative Learning Experiences](#)

Section A: Program Requirements

This section is intended to identify the core requirements for a school/program offering ALE courses. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it identifies common areas of questions during historical reviews of ALE.

Allotments or Student Funds: The public school directs all use of funds. Students and parents do not receive allotments, dedicated funds, or any similar practice for the purchase of educational materials, supplies, experiences, services, or technology ([WAC 392-550-030\(4\)](#)).

CEDARS Reporting: A system is in place for capturing all required student information including ALE course types in the Student Information System (SIS) for submission to CEDARS. Specifically, ALE course types are reflected in student schedules and grade history as applicable ([WAC 392-550-060\(4\)](#)).



Certificated Teachers: Certificated teachers have the responsibility and accountability for each course specified in the Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP), including supervision, instruction, monitoring, evaluation, and documenting progress. These are the individuals assigned to supervise instruction. Each educator has appropriate endorsements in the subjects they supervise or have been formally approved by the school board to teach an out-of-endorsement area ([WAC 392-550-025\(1\)\(b\)](#)).

Difference Between Home-based Instruction and ALE: A description of the difference between home-based instruction and ALE exists in the school/program informational materials, is publicly available, and is shared with families at enrollment ([WAC 392-550-030\(10\)](#)).

Full-day Kindergarten (FDK): Practices and procedures are in place for meeting the requirements of full-day kindergarten for any kindergarten student enrolled at more than 0.5 FTE ([WAC 392-550-035](#)).

Instructional Materials (Curriculum): Course content, learning activities, and learning resources are consistent with those offered by the rest of the school district, and adopted per district policy ([WAC 392-550-030\(6\) & \(7\)](#)).

Online Learning and Approvals: When using content delivered electronically, using the internet or other computer-based methods, the school/program understands the definition of online courses, when they apply, and when online school program approval is required. Required approvals are in place ([RCW 28A.250](#)).

School Board Policies: School board policies and procedures authorizing ALE are in place, up to date, and reviewed annually ([WAC 392-550-045](#)).

School Board Report: The program's designated representative has presented to the school board at least annually ([WAC 392-550-060\(5\)](#)).

Special Education/504/Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP)/Multilingual (ML): ALE courses are accessible to all students. Appropriate screening processes are in place and the LEA is providing a continuum of services for identified students ([WAC 392-550-030\(1\)](#)).

Substantially Similar: Any purchases for experiences or services have been locally reviewed to verify alignment with substantially similar requirements and are reported to OSPI ([WAC 392-550-030\(9\)](#) and ([WAC 392-550-060\(2\)](#)).

Truancy: Practices and procedures are in place for meeting the requirements of truancy in ALE ([WAC 392-550-040](#)).

Section B: Requirements to Claim Student Enrollment (WAC 392-550-025)

This section is intended to guide schools/programs in conducting a self-check of their documentation.

Initial Steps and Planning for Conducting a Self-Check

1. **Identify local goals for the review:** Is the purpose to train new staff? General program improvement intended to identify gaps or areas of focus? Report to the school board? Prepare for an upcoming audit? Part of a routine review that the school/program/LEA conducts annually?
2. **Identify a local team of reviewers:** The size of this team could vary depending on local needs. It could be one person, or it could be a team of five individuals. Their purpose is to review student files, check for requirements to claim enrollment, and identify any missing elements or questions about record keeping practices. While it may not be essential that every individual identified be familiar with ALE practices, as their role is to review files for the presence of information contained in this self-check, the team should be led or have access to someone familiar with how ALE is implemented locally.
3. **Identify the scope of what will be reviewed:** Is the team reviewing files for a single school/program, or are they reviewing files from several schools/programs in the district? Will there be a scheduled process, for example reviewing files from grades 9 one year, 10 the next year, and so on? How many files should be included? This will vary depending on local needs and ALE options.
4. **Determine a method for selecting files:** Should the selection process be random? If so, it may help to organize students by number and then use a random number generator to identify a selection. Is there a local benefit to selecting certain students? Selecting a range of students where files are well organized and complete to others that staff suspect might be missing some required elements may be helpful. Reviewing only the most complete and accurate files may not accomplish the goal of a review.
5. **Determine a system for reviewing files:**
 - a. **Access to files:** Do reviewers need digital access? Will files be printed? Where and how will individuals review the documents?
 - b. **Review tools:** Do reviewers need any tools, spreadsheets, guidance on local process/practices, or other resources to locate items in files? Examples of tools reviewers may need access to may include but are not limited to:
 - i. School board policies
 - ii. Monthly enrollment reports indicating amount of FTE claimed per student
 - iii. Student files
 - iv. Full-day Kindergarten expectations
 - v. Choice transfer records
 - c. **Timing:** When will the review happen and how long do reviewers need?
 - d. **Process:** How many individuals will review each file? Will there be an order for who reviews when? Who will be the facilitator or designee for answering

questions or providing any background information on how files are organized, where to find information, etc. How will reviewers document their findings? Should reviewers document the location of items, general notes or questions, or a simple indicator of whether items present are adequate? Who will the results be provided to?

e. **Discussion:** How will the team finalize their review? What are next steps if items need discussion? If items are marked as missing, is there another documentation system that might have additional records or ways of capturing the requirement? How will the results of the review be shared with other staff to create an opportunity for systems improvement?

Items to Review

The table below includes each of the items reviewed during an audit. Indicate all items that are present. If the required element appears to be missing, add relevant notes or leave the box blank to flag the item for additional review and discussion.

Document	Required Element	Examples of Data	Present
WSLP	Beginning date.	First day of the term, or first date the student is expected to be working on the learning goals/objectives identified in the WSLP.	
WSLP	Ending date.	Last day of the term, or end/exit date.	
WSLP	Estimate of the average number of hours per week needed to meet the goals of the WSLP.	Minimum 27.75 hours for a full-time student.	
WSLP/ Enrollment Reports	Estimated hours on WSLP correspond to the amount of FTE claimed during the month reviewed.	Minimum 27.75 hours per week indicated on the WSLP and monthly enrollment report indicates 1.0 FTE (or a percentage of FTE that aligns with the hours per week indicated on the WSLP).	
WSLP	Course name/description and timeline (if different from overall WSLP).	Course title, (beginning and ending dates if different from overall WSLP).	
WSLP or Syllabus	Course codes.	CEDARS codes (state course codes) present for each course.	
WSLP or Syllabus	ALE Course type.	Site-based – T (weekly) Site-based – U (less than weekly) Remote – R Online – O	

Document	Required Element	Examples of Data	Present
WSLP or Syllabus	Course syllabus – content may be embedded in the WSLP or may refer to weblink or separate syllabus. Includes description of learning goals, performance objectives, learning activities, course requirements, instructional materials, applicable high school credit/requirement (for high school rigor courses); assessment/evaluation method(s).	WSLP includes or references (e.g., links to) an external document (e.g., PDF, Google Sheet, Learning Management System (LMS), course provider resource) that includes a syllabus for the course with a description of learning goals, performance objectives, learning activities, course requirements, instructional materials, applicable high school credit/requirement (for high school rigor courses); assessment/evaluation method(s).	
WSLP or Syllabus	Identification of certificated teacher supervising instruction.	Certificated and endorsed teacher listed for each course that aligns with a list of endorsement areas for individual educators assigned to the program (or documentation of school board approval for out of endorsement area assignment for a particular educator).	
WSLP	Methods for weekly contact (must be two-way).	Check boxes or other text indicating allowable methods of communication such as face-to-face, email, phone, synchronous/asynchronous digital, video conferencing, etc.	
WSLP	Evaluation timeline and methods.	<p>Description of how monthly progress is reviewed and when; what satisfactory progress means and/or looks like.</p> <p>Description aligns with board policy for definition of satisfactory progress.</p>	

Document	Required Element	Examples of Data	Present
WSLP	Dated approval by certificated teacher. If WSLP has only online courses, approval may be by a school-based support staff (SBSS).	<p>Certificated teacher or SBSS signature, if appropriate.</p> <p>Digital approvals allowed per local policies. If used, the document with the digital signature is protected from alteration and the system can assign responsibility for the electronic approval to the individual who initiated the approval and when (e.g., user, date, time)?</p>	
WSLP	If monthly enrollment claim for a kindergarten student is above 0.5 FTE, the WSLP includes all content and experiences required in a FDK program.	<p>WSLP includes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Description of learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity. 	
First Participation	Evidence of participation in learning before first claim.	Log of in-person or digital instructional interaction at WSLP conference or evidence of coursework started prior to initial monthly enrollment claim.	

Document	Required Element	Examples of Data	Present
Choice Transfer	Approved choice transfer prior to initial count.	Screenshot from choice transfer system that indicates the student information and date transfer was approved. Approval date is prior to the first enrollment claim for the student.	
Weekly Contact	<p>Evidence of two-way contact between certificated teacher and student each school week.</p> <p>Methods of contact used must align with methods identified in the WSLP.</p>	<p>Contact log that includes a weekly entry of the following elements: date, method/type of contact (in person, phone, email, synchronous), notes indicating the overview/purpose of communication (e.g., instruction, assessment, progress review, etc.).</p> <p>Attendance records from an SIS for students participating in regularly scheduled classes.</p> <p>The WSLP reflects contact via the methods used.</p>	

Document	Required Element	Examples of Data	Present
Monthly Progress	<p>Monthly evaluation by certificated teacher (or SBSS for WSLP's with only online courses) to determine satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress completed during the month being reviewed or by the 5th school day of the following month.</p> <p>Determination should be based on definition of satisfactory progress in WSLP and board policy.</p> <p>Evidence of direct personal contact with the student/parent/guardian (unless after an initial month of satisfactory progress, in subsequent months where progress continues to be satisfactory or during the final month of the year if the evaluation is the delivery of final grades).</p>	<p>Copy of the review document with a check box indicating satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress and evidence or statement indicating how the determination aligns with policies for determining satisfactory progress.</p> <p>Document also includes the name of the certificated teacher (or SBSS for WSLP's with all online courses) completing the review; date the review was shared with the student/parent; and method of direct personal (two-way) contact.</p>	

Document	Required Element	Examples of Data	Present
Intervention Plan	<p>Intervention plan within five days of a determination of unsatisfactory progress that includes at least one of the following options: 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.</p> <p>Developed by certificated teacher (or SBSS for WSLPs with only online courses) in conjunction with the student and parent. When developed by SBSS, must be in conjunction with certificated teacher, student, and parent and approved by the student's online certificated teacher.</p>	<p>Document that indicates the assigned intervention and includes name of the certificated teacher and dated approval within five days of unsatisfactory mark. Document also includes evidence of student and/or parent/guardian (K-8) involvement in developing the plan.</p> <p>If developed by SBSS, document indicates approval by the certificated teacher.</p>	
WSLP	Substantial change to the WSLP after three consecutive months of unsatisfactory progress.	New WSLP, with substantial revisions, approved by a certificated teacher (or SBSS for WSLPs with only online courses) with an approval date after the third consecutive unsatisfactory and before the next subsequent monthly count day.	

Section C: Promising Practices for Quality Programs

- Review and self-assess using the [National Standards for Quality Online Programs](#).
- Review and self-assess using the [Guide to Offering ALE Appendix F - Commonly Misinterpreted Regulations in ALE](#).
- Review and self-assess using the following tools for Serving Students with Disabilities:
 - [ALE Program Profile](#)
 - [Programmatic Considerations for Special Education in ALE/Online Programs](#)
- Review and self-assess using the [screening for biased content](#) in instructional materials.
- Review and self-assess on how all elements of a basic education are accessible to students in the ALE school/program.

Basic Education Programs

ALE means a course, or for grades K–8 coursework, that is a delivery method for the program of basic education ([RCW 28A.232.010\(1\)\(a\)](#)).

A program of basic education is described in [RCW 28A.150.210](#) and includes opportunities for students to develop knowledge and skills essential to:

- Read with comprehension, write effectively, and communicate successfully in a variety of ways and settings and with a variety of audiences;
- Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
- Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
- Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

This translates into a comprehensive course of study for grades K–8, and one that meets Washington State [Graduation Requirements](#) set by the State Board of Education for high school. Local school districts may have additional requirements and can determine details such as term lengths, scheduling options, interdisciplinary options, curriculum, and instructional frameworks, etc. for implementing a basic education program.

Additional Basic Education resources:

- Washington State Board of Education – [Basic Education Information & Matrix](#)
- OSPI – [Learning Standards & Year of Adoption](#)