2020-21 Alternative Learning Experience Common Questions

The following topics are addressed in this document:

- Signatures
- Weekly contact
- Course type designations
- Substantially similar requirements
- Options for claiming apportionment in 2020-21
- Resources & Additional Information

Signatures

Q: Who needs to sign the WSLP?

A: ALE WAC 392-550-025 requires a WSLP be approved by a certificated teacher prior to claiming enrollment. This approval is documented in the form of a signature and date. A student or parent signature is a best practice but not required.

Q: Can we allow digital signatures?

A: Because a student or parent signature is not required by ALE WAC 392-550, whether or how a student/parent signs is a local decision. For signatures that are required, the electronic system should be evaluated for several things prior to being utilized:

1. the system's security features are strong enough to assign responsibility for the electronic approval to the individual who initiated the approval (i.e. user, date, time),
2. the content of what was approved is captured/retained, and
3. the document/record subject to the approval is protected from alteration after the approval is captured.

Weekly Contact

Q: Can student attendance in synchronous online classes count as evidence of weekly contact?

A: Yes, attendance in synchronous classes can be taken and records used as documentation of weekly contact, the same as it would if classes were held in-person. WAC 392-550-065 indicates the following as documentation of weekly contact:

a.   For students participating in regularly scheduled classes, including in-person instructional contact and synchronous digital instructional contact, evidence may include classroom attendance records.

b.   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.

If students are participating in asynchronous online classes, they must have documented two-way weekly contact with a certificated teacher.

Course Type Designations

Q: How should we assign course types for 2020-21?

A: We understand that the course type this fall may need to shift in response to the public health crisis and want to avoid the course type designation being an additional barrier to serving students. Below are our recommendations for assigning course types on a WSLP and in your student information system (SIS).

Key points:

1.   Please designate ALE funded courses as ALE in your SIS.
2.   You have discretion on selecting the ALE course type on your WSLP's and in your SIS. We recommend that the course type be based on the delivery model you anticipate for the majority of the course and any changes be documented in the WSLP.
3.   Please designate online courses as "online". This records the specific online course information including provider and program. This information helps OSPI capture and communicate information about online providers and programs to students, families, and educators per RCW 28A.250.

Substantially Similar Requirements

Q: Do substantially similar requirements and prohibition of allotments still apply?

A: Yes. This is the case regardless of the funding model chosen.

Allotments

Gifts of public funds are prohibited in schools/programs funded via the prototypical formula and ALE. ALE WAC 392-550-030 (4) specifically prohibits providing families any compensation, reimbursement, gift, reward, or gratuity. 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. Additional guidance on allotments can be found in the Guide to Offering ALE.

Substantially Similar

ALE WAC 392-550-030 (9)(a) prohibits purchasing or contracting for experiences and services, such as lessons, trips, and other activities, unless substantially similar experiences or services are also made available to students enrolled in the district's or charter school's regular instructional program. Substantially similar comparisons may need to be reviewed over the course of the school year as the school's regular instructional program shifts their plan for in-person activities.

Options for Claiming Apportionment in 2020-21

Q: What is the difference between ALE and Continuous Remote Learning (CRL)?

A: OSPI issued Bulletin No. 066-20 which provides guidance on the difference and options for claiming ALE funding in 2020-21.

Q: Who decides whether a program claims ALE or the prototypical school model?

A: Bulletin No. 066-20 clarifies this is a local decision. OSPI requests that programs commit to a single model for the duration of the 2020-21 school year and decisions should be made by the November count day.

Q: Do we need to update our Online School Program approval if we utilize continuous remote learning and claim the prototypical school model, instead of ALE, for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: Yes. OSPI needs to ensure that your program and school district understands and has addressed the differences between these funding options. Please contact our department to learn more.

Q: If we switch to the prototypical school model, can we receive enhanced CTE funding?

A: ALE-funded courses are not eligible for enhanced CTE funding. OSPI will continue to restrict this funding for ALE programs that convert to continuous learning funding for the 2020-2021 school year.

Resources & Additional Information

ALE:

- ALE Website.
- OSPI Guide to Offering ALE.
- ALE regulations: WAC 392-550 and RCW 28A.232.
- ALE enrollment reporting rules: WAC 392-121-182.

- For guidance updates, subscribe to the Alternative Learning newsletter [here](#).

Online Learning:
- [Online Learning Website](#).
- [Guide to Online Learning](#).

Contact Us at ALDInfo@k12.wa.us.