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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

August 21, 2020

() Action Required
(X) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 066-20 Student Engagement & Support

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Clarifying Options to Claim Alternative Learning Experience Enrollment Funding
in 2020–21

CONTACT: Anissa Sharratt, ALE Program Manager
360-485-3758, anissa.sharratt@k12.wa.us

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify:

1. the distinction between Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) and continuous remote learning models created in response to the COVID-19 health crisis, and
2. options for previously operating ALE schools/programs to claim student FTE in school year 2020–21 when most schools/programs will be operating via a continuous remote learning model that includes providing courses and grade-level coursework away from the regular classroom setting and schedule.

Definitions

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)

ALE, authorized by [RCW 28A.232](#), is a delivery method and funding model for the program of basic education where courses or grade-level coursework are provided in whole or in part away from the regular classroom setting or schedule. ALE funding is calculated using the non-vocational Running Start rate.

Prototypical School Model

Defined in [RCW 28A.150.260](#), the prototypical school model is the allocation of state funding that the legislature deems necessary to support school districts in offering the minimum instructional program of basic education under [RCW 28A.150.220](#).

Continuous Remote Learning (CRL)

CRL is instruction or other educational activities which are conducted in part or in whole in a non-seat-based time environment specifically in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CRL requires that rigorous educational services be provided to students through remote, online, or hybrid models to meet the instructional hour and day requirements set by the State Board of Education. Full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for students in CRL is based on the State Board of Education’s definition of instructional hours. Funding for students being served in this model will be provided through the prototypical school funding formula as approved in statute and the current state budget. Daily attendance must be taken for students in this model as a measure of student participation and engagement.

CLAIMING ENROLLMENT FOR STATE FUNDING IN 2020–21

School districts can locally determine whether to use a CRL or an ALE model for claiming student FTE for the 2020–21 school year. This choice extends to schools and programs operating as ALE prior to COVID-19. The table below describes the simplified differences and requirements to claim enrolment for the two models.

Continuous Remote Learning	Alternative Learning Experience
Daily attendance	Documented two-way weekly contact
Bell schedule available to public	Written student learning plan & monthly progress evaluation
Maximizing K–3 funding is dependent on K–3 class size compliance	No link between staff ratios and funding
Funded via prototypical school model	Funded via nonvocational Running Start rate and subject to all ALE FTE documentation requirements per chapter 392-550 WAC
20 consecutive school days exclusions apply	

OSPI does not intend to pursue emergency rulemaking to modify ALE rules.

Recommendations

OSPI recommends districts consider the following in their decision-making process:

- Schools and programs previously claiming FTE under the ALE funding model may choose to adopt the prototypical school funding formula and CRL requirements during this public health crisis. **Schools making this change must meet all requirements of CRL.**
 - Conduct a thorough review of the school or program prior to making this decision. Take into consideration the history and purpose of the school or

program, the needs and interests of students and families being served, the degree to which the school or program can be efficiently converted to the other funding model, and implications for the future.

- We strongly urge maintaining some or all requirements to claim ALE enrollment while operating under a CRL model to ensure a seamless transition back to ALE when necessary.
- Districts without schools previously operating under the ALE funding model **should not create new ALE programs as an immediate response to this public health crisis**. ALE includes a range of detailed requirements to claim enrollment and many additional record keeping demands. ALE programs are also subject to additional regulatory monitoring by OSPI, and financial auditing by the State Auditor's Office. If you are interested in developing an ALE program for future school years, connect with OSPI's Alternative Learning Department for more information on these requirements.
- Choose a funding model with full understanding of all the requirements to claim enrollment under the chosen model.
- Commit to a funding model for the full 2020–21 school year. If your district returns to regular in-person classroom schedules during the school year, you could:
 - continue to serve some students in a CRL model without creating a full ALE program, and
 - continue to operate your previously existing ALE school or program under the prototypical school funding formula without converting back to ALE mid-year.

Next Steps—Creating a Long-term ALE Option

ALE is a useful tool for serving students who may desire more flexibility in their schedule. If you think you may want to continue an ALE model in the 2021–22 school year, the Alternative Learning Department is developing resources and supports to assist schools planning a long-term ALE option.

Online Learning

Regardless of whether a model is funded via the prototypical model or ALE, additional state laws apply when a district is offering online courses. Any district offering online courses as part of their CRL plan should be aware of these laws and rules.

One of the requirements is an approval through OSPI. If your district does not have an approval in place, contact the Alternative Learning Department as soon as possible to expedite this process for single district or affiliate approvals. For districts interested in starting a multi-district online school program begin preparing for the multi-district program approval process which opens in January 2021.

RESOURCES

Prototypical CRL

- [Guidance on daily attendance](#) is located on OSPI's website.
- For more information on calculating FTE based on bell schedules, refer to the annual Enrollment Reporting Handbook posted to the [Enrollment Reporting Instruction website](#). The updated handbook for 2020–21 school year should be available late August 2020.
- For more information on K–3 Class Size Compliance, refer to the [K–3 Class Size Compliance Q&A](#).

ALE

- [ALE Website](#)
- Information on requirements to claim ALE enrollment can be found in the [Guide to Offering ALE](#).
- ALE rules can be found in chapter [392-550 WAC](#) and [RCW 28A.232](#).
- ALE enrollment reporting rules can be found in [WAC 392-121-182](#).
- For guidance updates, [subscribe to the Alternative Learning newsletter](#).

Online Learning

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

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact:

- Becky McLean, Supervisor, Enrollment Reporting and Categorical Funding, at 360-725-6306 or becky.mclean@k12.wa.us.
- Anissa Sharratt, ALE Program Manager, at 360-485-3758 or anissa.sharratt@k12.wa.us.
- The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

For questions about online learning approval and resources, please contact Nicole Gonzalez, Online Learning Program Manager at 360-725-6058 or nicole.gonzalez@k12.wa.us.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

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