

Chapter 28A.232 RCW
ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE COURSES

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RCW 28A.232.005 Finding—Intent. (1) Under Article IX of the Washington state Constitution, all children are entitled to an opportunity to receive a basic education. Although the state must assure that students in public schools have opportunities to participate in the instructional program of basic education, there is no obligation for either the state or school districts to provide that instruction using a particular delivery method or through a particular program.

(2) The legislature finds ample evidence of the need to examine and reconsider policies under which alternative learning that occurs outside the classroom using an individual student learning plan may be considered equivalent to full-time attendance in school, including for funding purposes. Previous legislative studies have raised questions about financial practices and accountability in alternative learning experience courses. Since 2005, there has been significant enrollment growth in alternative learning experience online courses, with evidence of unexpected financial impact when large numbers of nonresident students enroll in courses. Based on this evidence, there is a rational basis on which to conclude that there are different costs associated with providing courses not primarily based on full-time, daily contact between teachers and students and not primarily occurring on-site in a classroom.

(3) For these reasons, the legislature intends to allow for continuing review and revision of the way in which state funding allocations are used to support alternative learning experience courses. [2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 501; 2011 1st sp.s. c 34 s 1.]

Application—Enforcement of laws protecting health and safety—2013 2nd sp.s. c 18: See note following RCW 28A.600.022.

RCW 28A.232.010 Alternative learning experience courses—Generally—Definitions—Rules—Reports. (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Alternative learning experience course" means a course, or for grades kindergarten through eight grade-level coursework, that is a delivery method for the program of basic education and is:

(i) Provided in whole or in part independently from a regular classroom setting or schedule, but may include some components of direct instruction;

(ii) Supervised, monitored, assessed, evaluated, and documented by a certificated teacher employed by the school district or under contract as permitted by applicable rules; and

(iii) Provided in accordance with a written student learning plan that is implemented pursuant to the school district's policy and rules adopted by the superintendent of public instruction for alternative learning experiences.

(b) "In-person" means face-to-face instructional contact in a physical classroom environment.

(c) "Instructional contact time" means instructional time with a certificated teacher. Instructional contact time must be for the purposes of actual instruction, review of assignments, testing, evaluation of student progress, or other learning activities or requirements identified in the student's written student learning plan. Instructional contact time must be related to an alternative learning experience course identified in the student's written student learning plan. Instructional contact time may occur in a group setting between the teacher and multiple students and may be delivered either in-person or remotely using technology.

(d) "Online course" means an alternative learning experience course that has the same meaning as provided in RCW 28A.250.010.

(e) "Remote course" means an alternative learning experience course that is not an online course where 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.

(f) "Site-based course" means an alternative learning experience course where the written student learning plan for the course includes a requirement for in-person instructional contact time.

(g) "Total weekly time" means the estimated average hours per school week the student will engage in learning activities to meet the requirements of the written student learning plan.

(2) School districts may claim state funding under RCW 28A.232.020, to the extent otherwise allowed by state law including the provisions of RCW 28A.250.060, for students enrolled in remote, site-based, or online alternative learning experience courses. High school courses must meet district or state graduation requirements and be offered for high school credit.

(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 nonconsumable 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.

(4) Each school district offering or contracting to offer alternative learning experience courses must:

(a) Report annually to the superintendent of public instruction regarding the course types and offerings, and number of students participating in each;

(b) Document the district of residence for each student enrolled in an alternative learning experience course; and

(c) Beginning in the 2013-14 school year and continuing through the 2016-17 school year, pay costs associated with a biennial measure of student outcomes and financial audit of the district's alternative learning experience courses by the office of the state auditor.

(5) A school district offering or contracting to offer an alternative learning experience course to a nonresident student must inform the resident school district if the student drops out of the course or is otherwise no longer enrolled.

(6) School districts must assess the educational progress of enrolled students at least annually, using, for full-time students, the state assessment for the student's grade level and using any other annual assessments required by the school district. Part-time students must also be assessed at least annually. However, part-time students who are either receiving home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW or who are enrolled in an approved private school under chapter 28A.195 RCW are not required to participate in the assessments required under chapter 28A.655 RCW. The rules must address how students who reside outside the geographic service area of the school district are to be assessed.

(7) Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, school districts must designate alternative learning experience courses as such when reporting course information to the office of the superintendent of public instruction under RCW 28A.300.500.

(8) (a) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

(b) Rules adopted for weekly direct personal contact requirements and monthly progress evaluation must be flexible and reflect the needs of the student and the student's individual learning plan rather than specifying an amount of time. In addition, the rules must reduce documentation requirements, particularly for students making satisfactory progress, based on the unique aspects of the alternative learning experience course types defined in this section and taking into consideration the technical and system capabilities associated with the different course types.

(c) The rules must establish procedures that address how the counting of students must be coordinated by resident and nonresident districts for state funding so that no student is counted for more

than one full-time equivalent in the aggregate. [2018 c 56 s 1; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 502; 2011 1st sp.s. c 34 s 2. Formerly RCW 28A.150.325.]

Application—Enforcement of laws protecting health and safety—2013 2nd sp.s. c 18: See note following RCW 28A.600.022.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 34: See RCW 28A.232.005.

RCW 28A.232.020 Calculation and allocation of appropriations.

The superintendent of public instruction shall separately calculate and allocate moneys appropriated under RCW 28A.150.260 to school districts for each full-time equivalent student enrolled in an alternative learning experience course. The calculation shall be based on the estimated statewide annual average allocation per full-time equivalent student in grades nine through twelve in general education, excluding small high school enhancements, and including applicable rules and provisions of the omnibus appropriations act. [2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 503.]

Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 503: "Section 503 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [June 30, 2013]." [2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 602.]

Application—Enforcement of laws protecting health and safety—2013 2nd sp.s. c 18: See note following RCW 28A.600.022.

RCW 28A.232.030 Attendance and truancy definitions—Rules. The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules to bring consistency and uniformity to attendance and truancy definitions in the alternative learning experience setting, establish procedures for addressing truancy in all alternative learning experience courses, leverage existing systems to facilitate truancy actions between school districts and courts when the student has transferred out of his or her resident district to enroll in an alternative learning experience course; and clarify the responsibility of school districts in the event of rescinding a student transfer. [2017 c 291 s 9.]