

Methow Valley School District No. 350

Alternative Learning Experience
and
Independent Learning Center

WAC Compliance Description

Revised
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Methow Valley School District

Alternative Learning Experience and Independent Learning Center: WAC Compliance Description

To help insure that the Methow Valley School District remains compliant to the applicable Administrative Code of Washington (WAC), the WACs are listed below, following by a short italicized description of how the District maintains compliance to the statute.

(1) WAC 392-121-182 Alternative learning experience requirements. An alternative learning experience may be counted as a course of study. A school district alternative learning experience may make use of digital and/or on-line curricula, and may be delivered over the Internet or using other electronic means. A school district alternative learning experience may also include significant participation by students, parents, and families in the design and implementation of a student's learning experience. This section provides an alternative method of determining full-time equivalent enrollment and claiming state funding for public school learning experiences that are:

(a) Individual courses of study for students who meet the definition for enrollment specified by WAC . Students may enroll part-time in alternative learning experiences. Such enrollment shall be subject to the provisions of RCW and chapter WAC;

Enrollment in the Alternative Learning Experience includes both the Independent Learning Center (ILC) and the Alternative Learning Experience Home School (ALE). The District insures that each student and/or parent meets weekly with a certified staff member. This may be accomplished through attending the ILC, a home visit, a phone call, or an Internet contact.

(b) Supervised, monitored, assessed, and evaluated by school staff. As used in this section, "school staff" means certificated instructional staff of the school district according to the provisions of chapter WAC, or a contractor pursuant to WAC ;

WAC 392-121-188 refers to contracting "for the services of individuals to provide instruction, subject to applicable state and federal laws and local collective bargaining agreements." While it would be possible to contract out of district for instructional services, the District hires certified

teachers for its programs who are under the local collective bargaining agreement.

(c) Provided in accordance with a written alternative learning experience plan that is implemented pursuant to the school district board's policy for alternative learning experiences; and

Individual student learning plans are written for both ALE and ILC students and/or parent. These learning plans are adjusted and developed throughout the year. Each plan is based on the grade level learning goals and performance objectives developed by the State of Washington K-12. Each individual student's instructional material and specific curricula may vary but the basic academic learning requirements are reviewed and met. (See Board Policy 2255, Sections I and VII.)

(d) Provided in whole or part, outside the regular classroom setting, including those learning experiences provided digitally via the Internet or other electronic means.

Normally, a certificated staff member primarily conducts instruction for the ALE through a weekly contact. However, at times, the Internet, telephone, or other electronic media is used as the situation warrants. Instruction, on the other hand, is primarily conducted on the campus of the ILC program.

This section sets forth the standards, procedures, and requirements for state-funded alternative learning experiences. This section is not intended to prevent or limit alternative education programs provided by a school district with federal or local resources.

An alternative learning experience may be counted as a course of study pursuant to WAC if the following requirements are met:

(2) School district board policies for alternative learning experiences: The board of directors of a school district claiming state funding for alternative learning experiences shall adopt and annually review written policies for each alternative learning experience program and program provider that:

Board policy 2255, "Alternative Learning Experience Programs," addresses each of the following.

(a) Require a written plan for each student participating in an alternative learning experience that meets the minimum criteria pursuant to subsection (4) of this section;

As noted below, a written educational plan is provided to each student and their parent or guardian. Copies of the SLP templates for both the ALE and ILC are available from the teachers upon request.

(b) Require that the overall ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students enrolled in alternative learning experience programs and courses, including those that rely primarily on digital curriculum, be identified and approved by the school district board of directors in a public meeting;

In approving the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Board agreed to a maximum teacher-to-pupil ratio for class sizes for the ALE of 1:27 and 1:25 for the ILC. The respective optimum size for each of these programs is 25 and 23. Within the parameters of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the board may annually modify these ratios except as otherwise agreed upon in contract.

(c) Describe how student performance will be supervised, monitored, assessed, evaluated, and recorded by school staff. Such description shall include methods for periodic grade reporting, if different from existing school district policy;

Formal evaluations for students are recorded monthly on progress forms for both ILC and ALE students. Moreover, the performance of ILC students includes assessment on individual learning packets, which on an average are completed weekly. The ILC also requires a formal (confidential) student/parent (guardian) conference each quarter. (See Board Policy 2255.)

(d) Require each student enrolled in an alternative learning experience to have direct personal contact with school staff at least weekly, until the student completes the course objectives or the requirements of the learning plan. Direct personal contact shall be for the purposes of instruction, review of assignments, testing, reporting of student progress, or other learning activities. Direct personal contact means a face-to-face meeting with the student and, where appropriate the student's parent or guardian. In establishing policies for alternative learning experience programs and program providers, the school district board of directors may determine that direct personal contact can be accomplished through the use of telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, interactive video communication, or other means of digital communication, instead of a face-to-face meeting, if in the judgment of the board such contact methods do not compromise educational quality, student health and safety, or the fiscal integrity of the district;

Students in the ALE program make weekly contact with a certified teacher. The teacher assesses the student's progress and offers suggestions. ILC students, on the other hand, attend school on-site with a certificated teacher.

(e) Require that each student's educational progress be reviewed at least monthly and that the results of each review be communicated to the student and if the student is in grades K–8, the student's parent or guardian;

Formal evaluations for students are recorded monthly on the progress forms for both ALE and ILC students. The performance of ILC students includes assessment on individual learning packets, which are usually due weekly. Results of these evaluations are shared with the parents or guardians. The ILC teacher meets quarterly in a formal conference with students and their parents or guardians.

(f) At the discretion of the school district board, the policy may describe responsibilities of the student's parent(s) or guardian including, but not limited to:

(i) Approval of the written alternative learning experience plan;

The ALE Statement of Understanding form is the contract in which parents/guardians take responsibility for the child's education with the assistance of the teacher, as stated.

(ii) Responsibility for the parent(s) or guardian to provide or implement a portion of the student's alternative learning experience under the supervision of school staff, if the parent(s) or guardian agrees; and

The ALE teacher reviews the individual learning plan for each student and makes suggestions and adjustments as needed.

(iii) Requirements to meet with school staff for purposes of evaluating the student's performance and/or receiving instructions on assisting with the student's alternative learning experience. The school district board may also prescribe requirements for appointing a person to provide or supervise a portion of the student's alternative learning experience in the event the student's parent(s) or guardian will not or cannot be a participant in the student's alternative learning experience;

ALE students are involved in a partnership program with the District, as indicated on the Statement of Understanding. The certificated teacher is expected to monitor the progress of students, but the parent or guardian is responsible for direct instruction. ILC students, with input from teacher and/or parent/guardian, are responsible for completing a certain amount of high school graduation credit work each week. That progress is monitored by student, teacher and parent/guardian and is based primarily on passing tests/completing projects. Students have several options available. Examples include one-on-one tutoring, traditional small group instruction, and larger group activities. (See Board Policy 2255.)

(g) Designate one or more school district official(s) responsible for approving specific alternative learning experience programs or courses, monitoring compliance with this section, and reporting at least annually to the school district board of directors on the program. This annual report shall include at least the following:

(i) Documentation of alternative learning experience student headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment claimed for basic education funding;

An annual report to the school board includes student headcount and the full-time student enrollment in both the ALE and ILC programs (See Board Policy 2255, Section II.)

(ii) A description of how certificated and classified staff are assigned program management and instructional responsibilities that maximize student learning, including the ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students;

No classified staff members are hired for the ALE or ILC programs. The ratio of certified teachers to students and instructional responsibilities, on the other hand, are assigned as outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, which includes looking for the best instructional match to the ALE and ILC programs.

(iii) A description of how a written student learning plan pursuant to subsection (4) of this section, is developed, and student performance supervised and evaluated, by certificated staff;

Individual learning plans for both ILC and ALE students are developed by District certificated staff and parents. Specific textbooks and approaches are discussed. Each plan is designed to meet the learning goals of the student with the essential academic learning requirements developed by the State of Washington included in the plan. Parents are made aware of Grade Level Expectations and are given support to meet these requirements. In addition, student work is reviewed and assessed monthly. In addition, ILC students work directly with a teacher to develop individual student learning plans, to identify their graduation credit goals, and to design a plan to meet those goals.

(iv) A description of how the program supports the district's overall goals and objectives for student academic achievement; and

The goals of the ALE and ILC are tucked under the District's mission and visions. The Student Improvement Plan (SIP) is annually updated for both educational programs. In addition, the ILC staff sits on the SIP committee

for Liberty Bell Jr.-Sr. High School and adopts the goals that stem from this committee for their educational center. The ILC staff was also directly involved in the district's accreditation process this school year.

(v) Results of any self-evaluations conducted pursuant to subsection (7) of this section;

Many of the students, staff, and parents of the ALE and ILC programs participated in the self-evaluation Climate Survey in the 2005-2006 school year, as well as the self-study from the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

(h) Satisfy the state board of education's requirements for courses of study and equivalencies (chapter WAC);

(i) For alternative learning experience courses offering credit, or for alternative learning experience programs issuing a high school diploma, satisfy the state board of education's high school graduation requirements (chapter WAC); and

Elementary and junior high students are not enrolled in credit-driven programs. Most high school student, on the other hand, take credit courses through Liberty Bell Jr.-Sr. High School, Running Start, or the ILC. The ILC offers a 21-credit program, which is recognized by the State of Washington and the District.

(j) Identify what, if any, expenditures which are directly related to the written student learning plan and are paid by participants of an alternative learning experience may be subject to reimbursement by the district.

The district will reimburse ALE participants up to \$300 per student for educational material that are nonsectarian and are of a "standard curriculum" nature. In addition, \$100 per student is retained for materials related to classes offered to students and additional expenses for materials needed for ALE groups and administered by district staff. All purchases must be tied to the student learning plan. Purchases must follow the OSPI guidelines, which expressly excludes the following:

- *Sectarian materials of any kind.*
- *Registration in any religiously affiliated organization*
- *An expensive version of a simpler item.*
- *Memberships, such as MAC or YWCA/YMCA.*
- *Uniform, such as sports uniforms, graduation cap and gowns.*
- *Sports equipment.*
- *Backpacks.*
- *Driver's Education fees.*
- *Textbooks for Running Start.*
- *Tickets for fun centers or amusement parks.*

- *Fees for class group parties or outings unless strictly educational.*
- *Animals, even if they are part of a science experiment.*
- *Musical instruments and supplies.*
- *Dues to organizations such as Scouts or Camp Fire.*
- *Computer supplies such as ink cartridges or system upgrades.*
- *Non-consumable school supplies like binders, pencil boxes.*

Kindergarten students are reimbursed up to \$150 per student. Recently, the reimbursement request was divided into consumable and non-consumable items. The non-consumable items are carried and tracked on an inventory.

(3) Alternative learning experience implementation standards:

(a) Alternative learning experiences shall be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Alternative learning experiences for special education students shall be provided in accordance with chapter WAC.

(b) It is the responsibility of the school district or school district contractor to ensure that students have all curricula, course content, instructional materials, and other learning resources essential to successfully complete the requirements of the written student learning plan. Curricula, course content, instructional materials, and other learning resources for alternative learning experiences shall at minimum be consistent in quality with those available to the district's overall student population. Instructional materials shall be provided in accordance with RCW .

The certified staff reviews the individual learning plans for each student, including the curricula, course content, and instructional materials to assure, in part, that these meet a standard that is equivalent to other District curriculum adoptions.

(c) Work-based learning as a component of an alternative learning experience course of study shall be subject to the provisions of WAC and .

To earn work-based credit, students must work within the guidelines and credit requirements outlined by the teachers at the ILC.

(d) Contracting for alternative learning experiences shall be subject to the provisions of WAC and RCW .

Contract services for individuals who provide instruction are subject to WAC 392-121-188. The district may enter into an agreement for such individual services in some cases.

(e) A school district that provides one or more alternative learning experiences to a student shall provide the parent(s) or guardian of the student, prior to the

student's enrollment, with a description of the difference between home-based instruction pursuant to chapter RCW and the enrollment option selected by the student. The parent or guardian shall sign documentation attesting to his or her understanding of the difference and the documentation shall be retained by the district and made available for audit.

Parents sign a statement of understanding that outlines the differences between home-based instruction and other options. A copy of this document is retained in the student files on District property.

(f) The school district shall institute reliable methods to verify a student is doing his or her own work. The methods may include proctored examinations or projects, including the use of web cams or other technologies. "Proctored" means directly monitored by an adult authorized by the school district.

Certificated instructors, who also proctor the ILC tests and assessments, review ALE and ILC student work. When possible, standardized indicators are used, i.e. standardized reading tests, Washington State Assessment of Learning tests, and computer-based assessment programs. A certificated staff member makes weekly contacts to examine student work and to check for understanding by asking questions.

(g) State funded public schools or public school programs whose primary purpose is to provide alternative learning experiences using digital or on-line means shall be accredited through the state accreditation program or through the regional accreditation program.

The Methow Valley School district does not provide this service.

(4) Written student learning plan: Each student enrolled in an alternative learning experience course of study shall have a written student learning plan designed to meet the student's individual educational needs. The written student learning plan may be developed in partnership with the student, the student's parents, and other interested parties, with recognition that school staff has the primary responsibility and accountability for the plan, including supervision and monitoring, and evaluation and assessment of the student's progress. The written student learning plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

(a) A beginning and ending date for the learning experience;

Beginning and ending dates are included in the student learning plan.

(b) An estimate of the average number of hours per week that the student will engage in learning activities to meet the requirements of the student learning plan. This estimate may be used in reporting enrollment in compliance with subsection

(5) of this section and must be based upon the criteria in subsection (6) of this section;

In the ALE program, the weekly lesson plan form is used to keep track of hours spent in education each week. ILC students are to be engaged in learning for five hours per full school day. This is monitored by attendance and academic progress and reported on the monthly forms.

(c) A description of how weekly contact requirements will be fulfilled;

Weekly ALE contract requirements are fulfilled by meetings, e-mail, telephone, and in-class sessions. The records of the contact are logged and filed.

(d) A description of the specific learning goals and performance objectives of the alternative learning experience. This requirement may be met through the use of course syllabi or other similarly detailed descriptions of learning requirements. The description shall clearly identify the requirements a student must meet to successfully complete the course or program;

The student learning plan identifies and lists academic areas and specific learning goals with performance objectives. Parent/guardian and student provide a course syllabus to demonstrate how each subject is addressed. Staff member reviews this information and assists the parent-student team to meet these requirements.

(e) Identification of instructional materials essential to successful completion of the learning plan; and

Instructional materials are listed in the student learning plan and, for ILC students, in the monthly reports and quarterly conferences.

(f) A description of the timelines and methods for evaluating student progress toward the learning goals and performance objectives specified in the learning plan.

The ALE and ILC teachers checks on progress weekly. Typical methods of evaluating are listed by the following.

- *Frequent, focused observations*
- *The use of specific characteristics (e.g. Grade Level Expectations (GLEs))*
- *Classroom-based/performance-based instructor assessment.*
- *Samples of student work (e.g., portfolios).*
- *Checklists from which items that can be checked-off as students meet goals and expectations.*

(5) Enrollment reporting: Effective the 2005–06 school year, the full-time equivalency of students enrolled in alternative learning experience programs shall be determined as follows:

Enrollment is reported monthly by both ILC and ALE certificated staff to school secretaries. Any changes are reported at this time.

(a) Using the definition of full-time equivalent student in WAC and the number of hours the student is expected to engage in learning activities as follows:

(i) On the first enrollment count date on or after the start date specified in the written student learning plan, the estimated average weekly hours of learning activity described in the written student learning plan;

ALE student hours are reported on each weekly lesson plan and also on the monthly summary sheet for each student. ILC student instructional hours are based on attendance on-site, participation in classroom activities and by regular academic progress.

(ii) On subsequent monthly count dates, if the student's progress review pursuant to subsection (6) of this section indicates satisfactory progress, the student's full-time equivalent shall be based on the estimated average weekly hours of learning activity identified in the student learning plan;

Enrollment is reported monthly by both ILC and ALE certificated staff to school secretaries. Any changes are reported at this time.

(iii) If the student's progress review indicates a lack of satisfactory progress, the student's full-time equivalent shall be based on the estimated average weekly hours of learning activity described in the student learning plan, and the actual number of hours the student engages in learning activity pursuant to the written student learning plan shall be documented during the ensuing month. Documented hours shall encompass only time spent on those learning activities intended to accomplish the learning goals and performance objectives identified in the written student learning plan, shall meet the following criteria and shall be verified by district staff:

Staff members monitor student progress. If a student is not making satisfactory progress, a plan will be instated to assist that student. If the student does not make satisfactory progress after intervention, a reduction in full-time equivalency may be necessary.

(A) Those hours of classroom instruction provided by school staff;

ALE students meet with the certified teacher for weekly instruction. An

ILC certificated staff person is on-site daily and offers up to five hours of instruction.

(B) Those hours of work based learning calculated in accordance with WAC (1)(f);

(C) Those hours of learning activity other than those specified in (a)(iii)(A), (B) and (D) of this subsection that are conducted and supervised by the student's parent(s) or guardian, or other person as designated by the written plan; and

(D) Those hours that the student participates in learning activities other than those specified in (a)(iii)(A), (B) and (C) of this subsection. If the student is in grades K–8, such learning activity shall be supervised by the student's parent(s) or guardian or other person designated by the written student learning plan;

(iv) On subsequent monthly count dates, if the student's progress review indicates a lack of satisfactory progress, the student's full-time equivalent shall be based on the actual average weekly hours of learning activity documented during the prior month;

Both ILC and ALE student progress is reviewed and supported, but when a student does not make satisfactory progress within a specific period of time, full-time equivalent enrollment may be reduced.

(v) Enrollment of part-time students shall be subject to the provisions of RCW , and shall generate the pro rata share of full-time funding.

(b) The enrollment count shall exclude students meeting the definition of enrollment exclusions in WAC or students who have not had direct personal contact with school staff for twenty consecutive school days. Any such student shall not be counted as an enrolled student until the student has met with appropriate school staff and resumed participation in their alternative learning experience or participated in another course of study as defined in WAC ;

(c) School districts providing alternative learning experiences to nonresident students shall document the district of the student's physical residence, and shall establish procedures that address, at a minimum, the coordination of student counting for state funding so that no student is counted for more than one full-time equivalent in the aggregate.

(6) Accountability for student performance:

(a) At minimum, students enrolled in alternative learning experiences shall have their educational performance evaluated according to the following process and schedule:

(i) Each student's educational progress shall be reviewed at least once per month. The progress review shall be based on the learning goals and performance objectives defined in the written student learning plan.

Student progress is monitored and reported on the Monthly Evaluation Form. The teacher and the parent sign the monthly evaluation form.

(ii) The progress review shall be conducted by school staff and shall include direct personal contact with the student. If allowed by district policy, direct personal contact may include the use of telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, interactive video communication, or other means of digital communication. The results of the review shall be communicated to the student and, where possible, the student's parent(s) or guardian.

The ALE teacher makes a weekly contact with the parent and student. The teacher and parent exchange educational ideas and insights, and adjustments to the student plan are made as needed. On alternate weeks the teacher and parent/student communicate through email, in class participation or by telephone. The teacher on site monitors weekly progress of each ILC student. (See Board Policy 2255.)

(iii) Based on the progress review, school staff shall determine and document whether the student is making satisfactory progress in completing the learning activities and reaching the learning goals and performance objectives defined in the written plan.

Satisfactory progress is noted on the monthly evaluation forms signed by parents. If students are not making satisfactory progress, the parent is informed on the monthly evaluation form and adjustments are made to assist the student in meeting educational goals and objectives.

(iv) If the student fails to make satisfactory progress for no more than two consecutive evaluation periods or if the student fails to follow the written student learning plan, an intervention plan designed to improve student progress shall be developed and implemented. School staff in conjunction shall develop this intervention plan with the student and, for students in grades K–8, the student's parent(s) or guardian.

If a student does not make satisfactory progress as noted on two consecutive monthly evaluations forms, a plan is developed to assist the student. This may require additional work, some public school enrollment, ILC enrollment or other means of assisting the student to make adequate progress.

(v) If, after no more than three subsequent evaluation periods, the student still is not making satisfactory progress, a plan designed to more appropriately meet the

student's educational need shall be developed and implemented by school staff in conjunction with the student and, for students in grades K-8, the student's parent(s) or guardian.

If an ALE student fails to make satisfactory progress within any three-week period, the teacher develops an improvement plan. This plan might include meeting more often with the student, performing additional educational tasks, enrolling in Liberty Bell Jr.-Sr. High School, or attending the ILC. If a student continues to fail to meet the requirements of the ALE program, truancy papers are filed.

(b) The educational progress of students enrolled in alternative learning experiences shall be assessed 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 shall also be assessed at least annually. However, part-time students who are either receiving home-based instruction under chapter RCW or who are enrolled in an approved private school under chapter RCW are not required to participate in the assessments required under chapter RCW.

Students are required to take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning tests appropriate to their levels in school. The test results are reviewed and used to make changes and adjustments for the betterment of the program. At the ILC those test results are also used to monitor student achievement, including a review of progress toward graduation requirements.

(c) Students enrolled full-time in nonresident alternative learning experience schools, programs, or courses shall have the opportunity to participate in any required annual state assessments at the district of residence, subject to that district's planned testing schedule. It is the responsibility of the enrolling district to facilitate all necessary coordination with the district of residence and with the student and, where appropriate the student's parent(s) or guardian to fulfill this requirement. Such coordination may include arranging for appropriate assessment booklets, student notification of assessment administration schedules, arrangements for forwarding of completed assessment booklets to the enrolling district for submission for scoring and reporting, and other steps as may be necessary. Assessment results for students assessed according to these provisions shall be included in the enrolling district's accountability measurements, and not in the district of residence's accountability measurements.

(7) Program evaluation: School districts offering alternative learning experiences shall engage in periodic self-evaluation of these learning experiences in a manner designed to objectively measure their effectiveness, including the impact of the experiences on student learning and achievement. Self-evaluation

shall follow a continuous improvement model, and may be implemented as part of the school district's school improvement planning efforts.

ALE and ILC teachers and school administrators meet on a regular basis to review the program. Efforts are made to continually review the effectiveness of the program and continue to improve.

(8) Annual reporting: Each school district offering alternative learning experiences shall report annually to the superintendent of public instruction on the types of programs and course offerings subject to this section, including student headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment claimed for basic education funding. The report shall identify the ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students enrolled in alternative learning experience courses or programs. The report shall separately identify alternative learning experience enrollment of students provided under contract pursuant to RCW and WAC .

The ALE electronic report is submitted annually to OSPI and a copy of this report is kept on file in the District office. Among other data, the annual report includes the course offerings, the core academic subjects, staffing information, student headcount, the ratio of full-time teachers to students, and the number of enrolled non-resident students. It identifies the ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent enrollment in alternative learning programs. (See Board Policy 2255, Section II.)

(9) Documentation: In accordance with required records retention schedules, a school district claiming state funding for alternative learning experiences shall maintain the following written documentation available for audit:

- (a) School board policy for alternative learning experiences pursuant to this section;
- (b) Annual reports to the school district board of directors as required by subsection (2)(g) of this section;
- (c) Annual reports to the superintendent of public instruction as required by subsection (8) of this section;
- (d) The written student learning plans required by subsection (4) of this section, including documentation of required weekly direct personal contact;
- (e) Student progress reviews, evaluations, and assessments required by subsection (6) of this section;
- (f) Student enrollment detail substantiating full-time equivalent enrollment reported to the state, including estimated total hours of participation in

educational activities, and any actual documentation of hours of learning for those students failing to make satisfactory progress; and

(g) Signed parent enrollment disclosure documents required by subsection (3)(e) of this section.

*All of the above are in ALE files with the teacher or in the district office.
The ILC documents are kept on file on location.*