

Home-based Instruction vs Alternative Learning Exp. Programs

Comparison Chart – August 5, 2005

	Homeschooling	Public Funded Alternative Learning Programs & Virtual Schools
What laws regulate the programs?	RCW 28A.200, the Home-Based Instruction Law	WAC 392-121-182, Public School Alternative Learning Experience Programs
Who has control and is accountable for the education of the child?	The parents have control on what, when, where, why, and how their children will learn. The parents are accountable.	Students are to be supervised, monitored, assessed, and evaluated by certificated staff, who will develop student learning plans. Students are to have weekly contact with certificated staff, who are required to provide monthly evaluations of student progress.
What about curriculum?	Parents have complete control over curriculum content, level, presentation, etc. Parents provide their own curriculum.	ALE program requirements for curricula, course content, etc. will be provided by the district. Student Learning Plan must include connections with EALRs (Essential Academic Learning Requirements) and graduation requirements.
Is a faith-based curriculum OK?	Absolutely. All decisions relating to curriculum and philosophy or doctrine are the responsibility of the parent.	No. It is against the law for public schools to use or provide religious curriculum as part of an educational program.
What are the testing requirements?	There are two testing options: * standardized achievement test * non-test-based assessment The results remain in the home.	Progress for full time students shall be assessed at least annually using the state assessment (WASL) for the student's grade level and using any other annual assessments required by the school district.
What are the requirements for student progress?	It is the parents' responsibility to see that the child's progress is appropriate for their age or stage of development.	Each student enrolled shall have direct personal contact with certificated staff at least weekly. Direct personal contact shall be for the purposes of instruction, review of the student's assignments, testing, and evaluation of student progress.
What are the record keeping requirements?	Parents keep the health, testing and educational records of their child at home.	The district annually reports to OSPI: Student Learning Plans and documentation of weekly contact. Student evaluations and assessments. Student enrollment data.
What about Outcome-Based Education & Goals 2000?	Homeschooled students are exempt from Outcome-Based Education and Goals 2000.	The student's Alternative Learning Plan must support the Outcome-Based Education goals and objectives.
What about Part-Time Enrollment?	Homeschooled students are allowed to access the public schools on a part-time basis.	Homeschooled students are legally allowed to access ALE programs on a part-time basis and retain their homeschooling status.

For the complete text of the current ALEP statute, go to: www.k12.wa.us/AlternativeEd.

What Concerns Homeschoolers about Public School

Alternative Learning Experience Programs (ALEPs)

1. These Alternative Learning programs are being **targeted almost exclusively at homeschoolers**. In some districts public school students are not eligible to participate. Why homeschoolers are targeted populations? Because each student recruited from homeschooling to a public alternative learning program brings with them Full-Time Equivalency (FTE—money paid to the school district from the state for each student enrolled within that district.). Because homeschool parents already know how to teach their children and will not require supervision or training from the district in order to adequately participate in their ALEP. Because homeschooled students tend to be independent and motivated learners who score well on tests, a bonus for any public school program.

Some public school Alternative Learning Experience programs (ALE's) have the word "homeschool" in their title. How do I know if I'm homeschooling, or in a public school Alternative Learning Experience program? The Alternative Learning Experience Programs are modeled after one of the ways we legally qualify to homeschool, namely, by using a supervising teacher who meets with your child(ren) an average of one hour a week

2. Not all school districts have been **honest and straightforward** with experienced homeschool parents about the public school nature of their programs. They are not clear about the accompanying controls and regulations, such as records keeping and testing requirements, the illegal use of religious curriculum, and the fact that these students are no longer legally "homeschooled students", but are, in fact, public school students.

You are in a ALE program if: you registered your child for the program on school district forms; you are meeting in a public school building; school district personnel are supervising your child's work and progress; you have access to district curriculum materials; your child has a Student Learning Plan (SLP); you keep records on hours spent on academic pursuit at home; your child is assessed by the school personnel; your child is expected to take the WASL; and records are being kept at the school on your child. If the district is receiving full funding for your child, then you are in a full time enrollment ALE program. If you don't know for sure, ask your district if they are receiving Full Time Enrollment (FTE) funding for your child.

3. Some school districts are **deliberately misinforming parents**, who are seeking information about homeschooling, as to their legal homeschooling options under the Washington Home-based Instruction Law and, instead, are misdirecting these families to the ALEPs as being their only "homeschooling" choice. These actions subsequently serve to bring funding from the state into the public school district and their programs while reducing the ranks of homeschoolers in Washington State.

4. **ALEP's present to the public and governing bodies a more familiar, supervised, and regulated form of "homeschooling"**. The eventual result could be a lobbying of the legislature by public education to amend or abolish the Washington Home-based Instruction Law and to absorb the homeschooling community into public education under the auspices of alternative education. ***When homeschoolers and ALE participants are aware of the rules regarding the implementation, operation and accountability of such programs, the confusion will no longer exist about whether an enrollee is a homeschooler of a public school student.***



Washington Homeschool Organization

Statement of Unity Regarding the Washington Home-Based Instruction Law and Public School Alternative Learning Experience Programs

This statement is made by the following statewide independent homeschool organizations
As of January, 2009

Washington Homeschool Organization (WHO),
Christian Heritage Home Educators of Washington
Christian Homeschool Network (CHN)

Independent homeschooling, under the Washington State Home-Based Instruction Law RCW 28A.200, clearly places responsibility for all aspects of a child's education in the control of parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Since the RCW, signed into law in 1985, those who select home-based instruction have consistently been referred to by media, academia and themselves as homeschoolers. These homeschoolers are identified by their choice to take full responsibility for their child's education and the requirements outlined in the Home-Based Instruction Law.

In contrast, Public School Alternative Learning Experience Programs (PSALEP) defined in WAC 392.121.182, are government public school programs where the local school district retains control of student learning. Formation of these escalating programs began in 1996 with the introduction of the PSALEP's rules by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Of concern to the Washington Homeschool Organization, Christian Heritage Home Educators, and Christian Homeschool Network is the blurred distinction between Home-Based Instruction (homeschoolers) and participation in a PSALEP government-defined school. Additionally, troubling aspects involve the marketing of PSALEP's to already-declared homeschoolers and the use of the Declaration of Intent to Provide Home Based Instruction Form as a marketing tool to solicit enrollment.

Currently, a growing number of public school districts throughout Washington are creating Alternative Learning Programs that target homeschoolers for enrollment and thereby funding. Additionally, existing programs are changing part-time enrollment requirements to necessitate nearly full-time participation, even requesting oversight of education in the home. We believe PSALEPs are redefining and undermining the Home-Based Instruction Law and placing the nature of independent homeschooling in Washington State at risk. While styles may vary, all major Washington State homeschool organizations agree that maintaining the strength and understanding of our Home-Based Instruction Law is vital to the health of independent homeschooling in Washington State. The term "homeschooling" must remain identified, at its core, with families who have chosen to take upon themselves the responsibility for their child's education and not identified with a state government operated program.

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