Online Learning:
a How-to Guide

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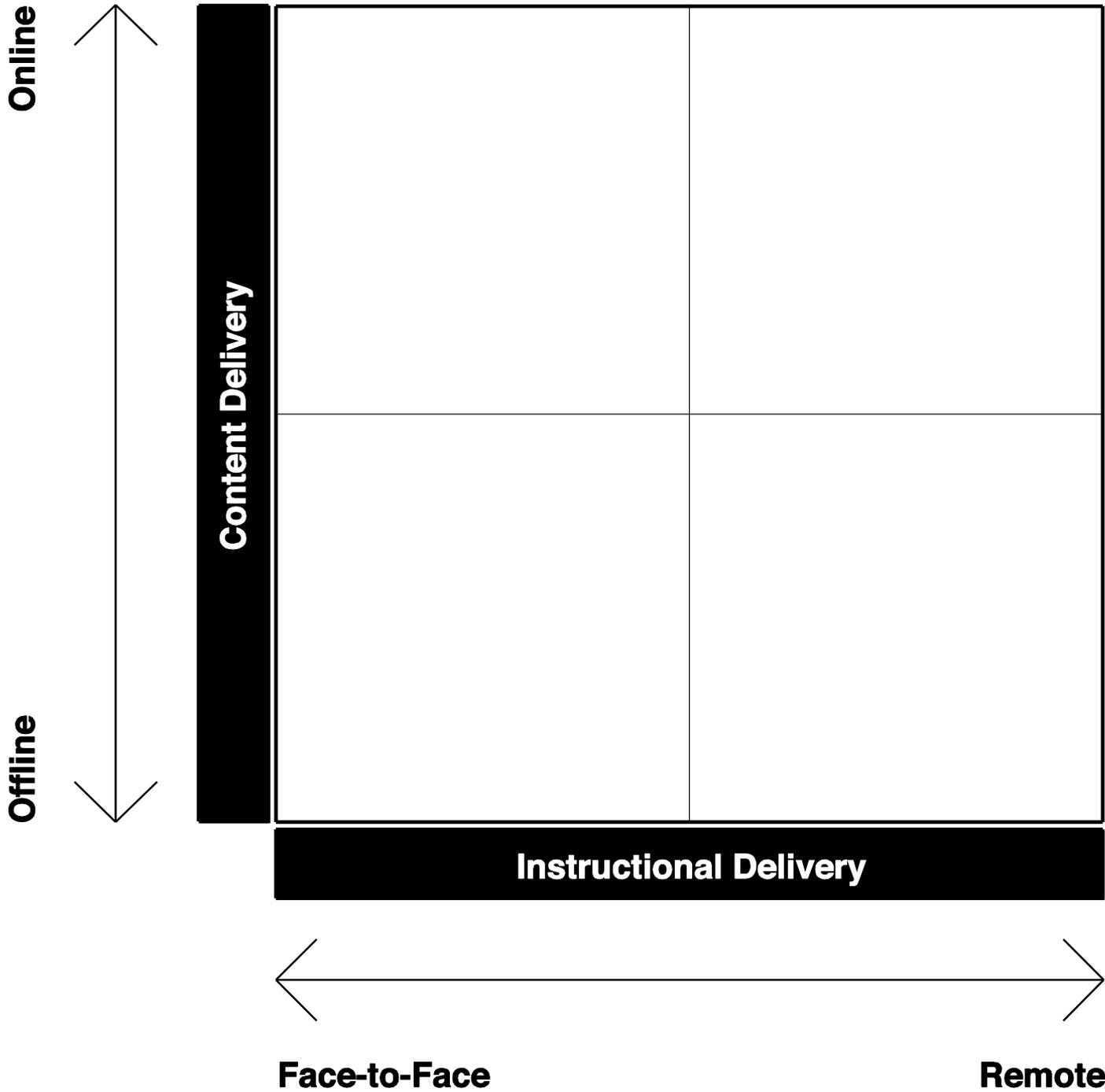Director, Digital Learning Department, OSPI

October 11, 2012

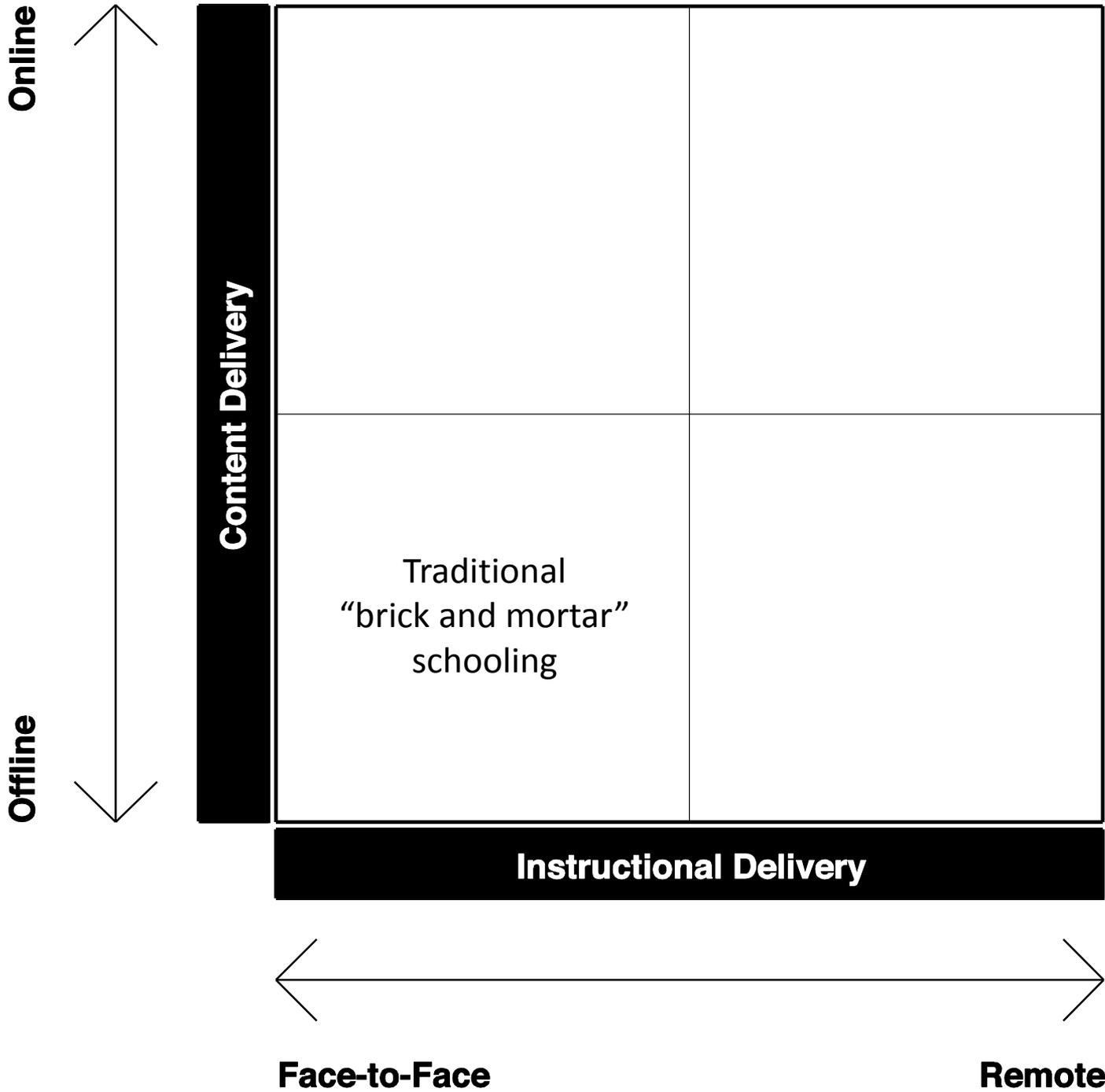# OSPI's Digital Learning Department

- **Approve** online providers

- **Improve access** to online learning

- Provide **support** to schools, students, and parents

digitallearning.k12.wa.us
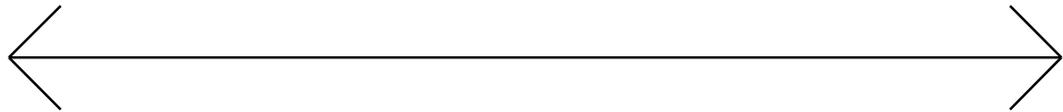
(We also oversee ALE and Open Educational Resources)

KEY TERMS

A two-by-two matrix with a vertical axis labeled "Content Delivery" ranging from "Offline" (bottom) to "Online" (top), and a horizontal axis labeled "Instructional Delivery" ranging from "Face-to-Face" (left) to "Remote" (right).

Top-left quadrant: Blended Learning

Top-right quadrant: Online courses / Online programs

Bottom-left quadrant: Traditional "brick and mortar" schooling
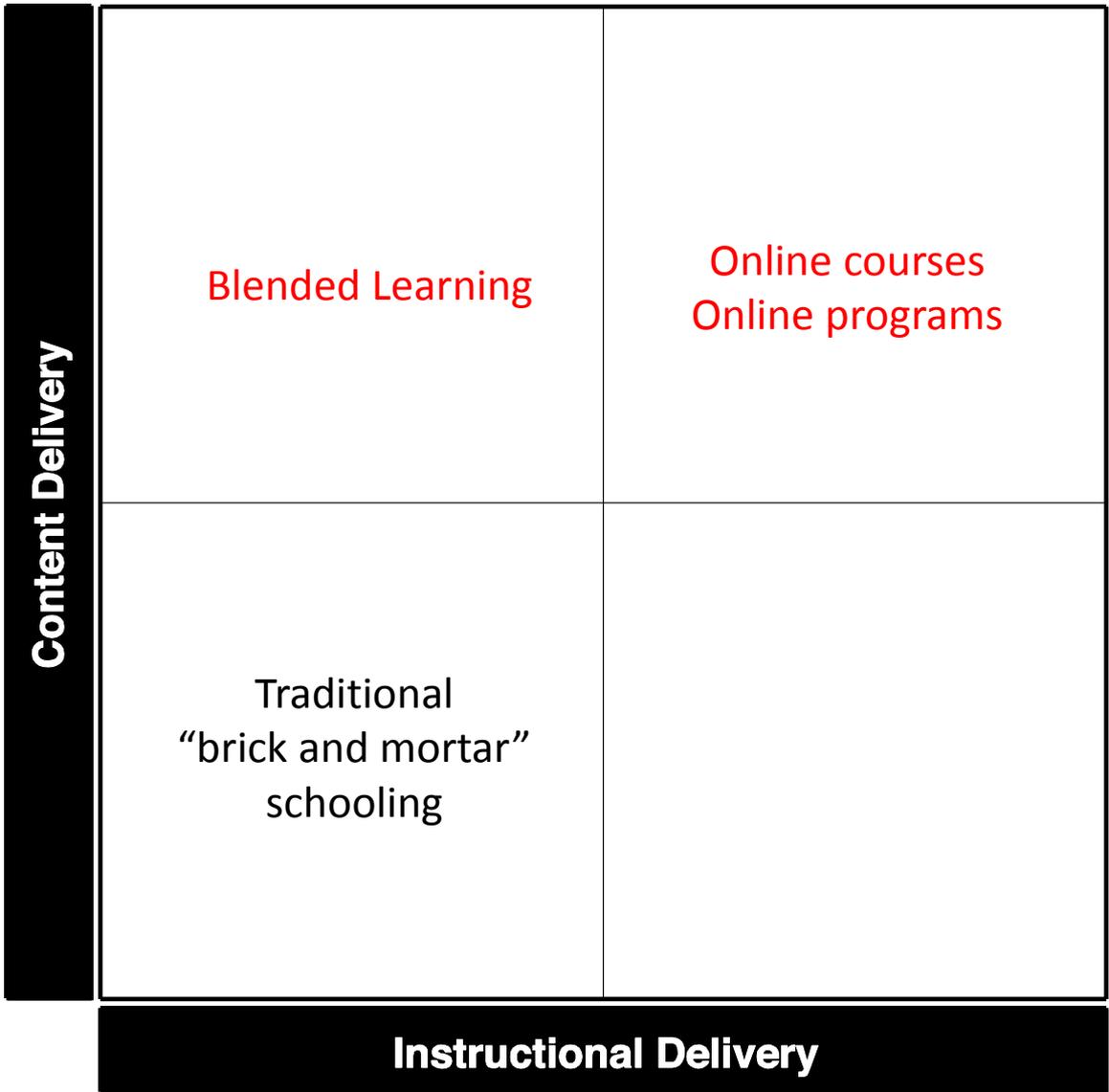
"Online Course"

- **More than half** of the **course content is delivered electronically** using the internet or other computer-based methods, *and*

- **More than half** of the **teaching is conducted from a remote location** through an online course learning management system or other online or electronic tools.

"Online School Program"

Online courses or grade-level coursework, *and*

A **sequential program** – a set of courses or coursework that may be taken in a single school term or throughout the school year in a manner that could provide a full-time basic education program if so desired by the student. Students may enroll in the program as part-time or full-time students.

digital learning paths:

- **Individual courses**

- **Online school programs**

- **Blended learning**

INDIVIDUAL ONLINE COURSES

Individual courses

- A student takes one or two courses at a time (*not* a sequential program)
- Why?
  - Course not available at school
  - Making up a failed credit
  - Flexible scheduling
  - Learning environment
- Student usually remains enrolled in local school
- 55% of HS students in online courses in 2010-11 took fewer than 5 courses for the year.

Individual course funding

- District pays for courses if part of basic education (and district claims state funding).

- Families may pay if outside of basic education context. *See district policy.*

- ALE or "seat time" depending on context.

District options for obtaining courses

- Develop in-house
- Purchase directly from a course provider:
  - Complete course, with teacher
    - (Provider must be OSPI approved)
  - Curriculum-only, district provides teacher
    - (Curriculum not subject to OSPI approval; follow district adoption procedures)
- Purchase via OSPI
  - Complete courses (with teacher) only

District responsibilities

- District policy and procedure

- Funding restrictions

- Other applicable WACs/RCWs still apply…

District Policy and Procedures

- Required by RCW 28A.250.050

- Covers:
  - Types of courses/programs offered
  - Student eligibility criteria
  - Payment
  - Providing students with information about their options

Practices for Success: Good Start

- Match the right student with the right course
  - Academic skill level
  - Learning styles and expectations
  - Student capacity (including technology capacity)
- Start strong
- Advising and support are key in the first few weeks

Practices for Success: Support

- Effective school-based support staff
  - Not the content expert
- Preparing school-based support staff
  - Provider resources for start-up and PD
  - Coordinate with counselors, service providers
- Interaction and intervention
  - Regular contact
- Extra support
  - Connect with online teacher, other resources

ONLINE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Online school programs

- Online school
- Can serve full-time or part-time students
- Can serve in-district or out-of-district students

District options for obtaining programs

- Develop in-house
- Purchase directly from a program provider:
  - Complete program, with teacher
    - (Provider must be OSPI approved)
  - Curriculum-only, district provides teacher
    - (Curriculum not subject to OSPI approval; follow district adoption procedures)
- Complicated contracts – see OSPI's [model agreements](#)

District responsibilities

- Same as with any school, plus…
- District online learning policy/procedure
- ALE
- OSPI approval
  - Now for multi-district programs
  - 2013-14 for all programs
- Other key topics:
  - Assessments
  - Special education
- Use our handy checklist:
  digitallearning.k12.wa.us/about/districts/responsibilities/programs.php

Practices for Success: Quality Teaching

- Establish relationships with students
- Timely, frequent and positive feedback
- Individualize the experience

Practices for Success: Curriculum & Technology

- Rigorous, engaging, & aligned to standards
- Easy to use and navigate
- Multiple student-teacher contact methods

ONLINE PROVIDER APPROVAL

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year…

…school districts may **claim state basic education funding**, to the extent otherwise allowed by state law, for **students enrolled in online courses or programs** only if the online courses or programs are:

- Offered by an **approved multidistrict online provider**; or
- Offered by a school district online learning program if the program serves students who reside within the geographic boundaries of the school district, including school district programs in which **fewer than ten percent of the program's students reside outside the school district's geographic boundaries**; or
- Offered by a **regional online learning program** where courses are jointly developed and offered by two or more school districts or an educational service district through an interdistrict cooperative program agreement.

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year…

…school districts may **claim state funding** under RCW 28A.150.260, to the extent otherwise allowed by state law, **for students enrolled in online courses or programs** only if the online courses or programs are **offered by an online provider approved** under RCW 28A.250.020 by the superintendent of public instruction.

Does my program need approval?

Question 1: Are you offering online courses?

An online course is one where:

– More than half of the course content is delivered electronically using the internet or other computer-based methods, *and*

– More than half of the teaching is conducted from a remote location through an online course learning management system or other online or electronic tools.

Yes: Go to question 2…

No: Approval not needed.

Does my program need approval?

Question 2: Does your program meet the definition of an "online school program"?

An "online school program" is a school or a program that offers:

– Online courses (or grade-level coursework) that meet the definition of an "online course," and

– A sequential program – a set of courses or coursework that may be taken in a single school term or throughout the school year in a manner that could provide a full-time basic education program if so desired by the student. Students may enroll in the program as part-time or full-time students.

No: Likely a course provider, and still need approval…

Yes: Program is subject to approval. Which path?

Which approval path?

Question 3: Is the program "multidistrict"?

"Multidistrict" = 10% or more of students enrolled in the program are from other districts.

No: Use the "Single District" approval process.

Yes: Move to Question 4.

Which approval path?

*Question 4: Is it your organization **offering** the online courses?*

The organization that "offers" the course is the one that provides all of the following:

– the course's teacher for the purpose of instruction,

– the course content, and

– the online learning management system.

Yes: Use the "Full" approval path.

No: Use the "Affiliate" approval path.

Approval Options

	Full	Affiliate	Single District
Accreditation Required?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Signed Assurances?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evidence Submission	Yes	No	No
Application Period	Jan. 1 – Feb. 1	Anytime	Anytime

OSPI Approval – Full Review

- External review team

  – Examines *evidence* submitted by provider

- Approval lasts 4 years

- digitallearning.k12.wa.us/approval/providers

Approval Criteria

- [Criteria](#) covers:
  - Course Content and Instructional Design
  - Classroom Management
  - Student Assessment
  - Course Evaluation and Management
  - Student Support
  - School-based Support
  - Technology
  - Staff Development and Support
  - Program Management

Approval Assurances

- [Assurances](#) are required for approval, and cover:
  - Accreditation
  - Federal or state laws, rules, and regulations
  - Washington State certificated teachers
  - High school credit
  - Standards alignment
  - Credit/content requirements
  - Advanced Placement
  - Career and Technical Education
  - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
  - Accessibility
  - Responsibility
  - Assessment
  - Alternative Learning Experiences
  - Reporting
  - Program changes

Two sides of OSPI's regulatory role

- Approval process
  - Every 4 years
  - Focused on policies, procedures, documentation
  - Based on assurances and criteria
- Monitoring and rescindment
  - Ongoing
  - Focused on provider actions
  - Based on assurances and criteria

ALE

What Characterizes ALE?

- Learning occurs in large part away from the attendance-based regular classroom setting
- A written student learning plan, developed by a teacher, defines the learning experience
- The plan may include direct instructional components
- Student learning is supervised, monitored, and evaluated by a teacher

How does ALE work?

- School board policy
- Responsibility of certificated teacher
- Written student learning plan
- Weekly contact
- Monthly progress evaluation (tied to enrollment reporting)
- Interventions for struggling students
- Annual assessments
- All other basic education requirements apply

Changes made to ALE rules, Spring 2011

- Re-emphasize role of WA certificated teacher
  - Written student learning plan
  - Weekly contact
  - Monthly progress evaluation
- Parent reimbursements are prohibited
- High-FTE part-time students must be included in accountability reporting
- New definitions; structural changes to improve clarity of requirements
- Changes in enrollment reporting process

What did ESHB 2065 do?

- Defines ALE in statute.
- Adds new restrictions to spending on ALE programs (in addition to OSPI rule change eliminating reimbursements):
  - Purchases of materials, equipment, supplies;
  - Contracts for services, experiences, activities.
- Creates differential funding scheme to accomplish 15% statewide cut to BEA.
- Requires districts to issue credit for certain online courses.

Changes made to ALE rules, Summer 2012

- Weekly Contact – three options
- Differentiated Funding – continued
- School Week – defined
- June Requirements – clarified
- Enrollment Reporting – clarified

BLENDED LEARNING (AND A BIT ON OER…)

Blended Learning Spectrum

Digital textbook replacements:
- Every student has a device
- Digital content
- Similar pedagogy

Personalized learning:
- Every student has a device
- Adaptive content (informed by assessments)
- Personalized instruction
  - Students may have some autonomy
  - Teachers mix group and individual instruction

Blended Learning Drivers

- Low-cost devices (laptops, tablets, handhelds)
- Online content and tools
- Online assessment systems
- Curriculum trends
  - Data-driven
  - Common Core standards
- Individualizing and personalizing

Considerations…

- Funding: ALE or seat-time?
- Online learning regulations probably don't apply
- Content
  - Purchased or "open educational resources" (OER)
- Assessment
- Professional development
- IT infrastructure
  - Devices: district-purchased or BYOD?
  - Network

What is OER?

- Openly licensed textbooks and other curricular materials

- Open means that districts can:
  - Use them **free of charge**, and
  - **Modify them without asking permission**

"The legislature finds the state's recent adoption of common core K-12 standards provides an opportunity to develop a library of high-quality, openly licensed K-12 courseware that is aligned with these standards."

"By developing this library of openly licensed courseware and making it available to school districts **free of charge**, the state and school districts will be able to provide students with curricula and texts while substantially **reducing the expenses** that districts would otherwise incur in purchasing these materials."

"In addition, this library of openly licensed courseware will provide districts and students with a **broader selection of materials**, and materials that are **more up-to-date**."

Requirements include…

- OSPI "shall take the lead in identifying and developing a library of openly licensed courseware aligned with the common core state standards…"

- OSPI must "advertise to school districts the availability of openly licensed courseware, with an emphasis on the fact that the courseware is available at no cost to the districts".

Also…

- "School districts may, but are not required to, use any of the openly licensed courseware."
- "'courseware' includes the course syllabus, scope and sequence, instructional materials, modules, textbooks, including the teacher's edition, student guides, supplemental materials, formative and summative assessment supports, research articles, research data, laboratory activities, simulations, videos, open-ended inquiry activities, and any other educationally useful materials."

Q&A