



# Washington State Auditor's Office

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**Special Report**  
**Alternative Learning Experience**  
**Yakima School District No. 7**  
**Yakima County**

**For the period September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014**

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## Washington State Auditor's Office

June 11, 2015

Board of Directors  
Yakima School District No. 7  
Yakima, Washington

### Report on Alternative Learning Experience

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for District operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our report on the District's compliance with alternative learning experience enrollment reporting rules. Our independent audit report describes the overall results and conclusions for areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

JAN M. JUTTE, CPA, CGFM  
ACTING STATE AUDITOR  
OLYMPIA, WA

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## AUDIT SUMMARY

### Results in brief

District operations complied with applicable state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures regarding alternative learning experience (ALE) enrollment. For the year ending, August 31, 2014 the District received approximately \$87.6 million in combined enrollment and staff mix funding; \$773,270 of this was related to its ALE programs.

- Yakima Online – The program reported 101.49 average annual full-time equivalents (AAFTE). Our audit tested a sample of ten students and found 5.0 monthly FTE over reported. The following errors were identified:
  - Two students were included in September reported enrollment without documentation to support two-way contact occurred prior to the fourth school day in September.
  - One student was counted for two months in error. Unsatisfactory progress was noted for both months, but no intervention plan was documented.
  - One student lacked a monthly progress review in May, but was not removed from the June count.

We estimate the errors resulted in approximately \$2,648 in over funding.

- CLC Contract Program – The program reported 32.1 AAFTE. Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the District’s compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters, with regard to its ALE program. We found controls were adequate to assure compliance.
- ALE Contracts at YV-Tech – The program reported 12.3 AAFTE. Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the District’s compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters, with regard to its ALE program. We found controls were adequate to assure compliance.

### About alternative learning experience programs

ALE programs are a form of basic K-12 public school education in Washington State. While students in traditional basic education attend classes on campus and have face-to-face contact

with teachers and other staff, ALE students may spend most, or even all, of their time outside of a regular classroom setting.

Districts may build Internet-based educational programs that enroll students from anywhere in the state. Besides Internet programs, ALE can be accomplished through a contract between a student and district instructors, or through a parent-partner program in which parents participate in the design and teaching of the student's courses. These programs are different from homeschooling in that students remain part of the public school system and districts claiming funding are responsible for supervision, monitoring, assessing and evaluating the student's education.

Districts may count ALE students for funding when they report enrollment to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In order to claim ALE students for funding, ALE programs must satisfy OSPI's requirement for courses of study leading to a high school diploma. Districts must: prepare detailed plans for each student, maintain regular contact with students, and evaluate student progress on a monthly basis. Districts must also keep detailed records to show they have met all of these requirements.

During the period under review, the District operated three ALE programs, which accounted for less than one percent of its total basic student enrollment:

- Yakima Online is an independent learning program for students in grades 6-12. The District contracts with Advanced Academics of Oklahoma for its online curriculum and instruction. Required monthly progress reviews and weekly two-way contacts are conducted by a Yakima Online certificated teacher. This program has operated for eight years and nonresident students represent 3.4 percent of the program's total enrollment.
- The CLC Contract Program is an independent learning program for students in grades 9-12. Students work at their own pace and complete roughly one course per month. This program has operated for 31 years and typically serves only resident students.
- ALE Contracts at YV-Tech is an independent learning program offering both online and remote courses for students in grades 11-12. This program has operated for 21 years and nonresident students represent 31.9 percent of the program's total enrollment.

## About the audit

Per RCW 28A.232.010, school districts must receive biennial audits of their ALE program. This report contains the results of our independent audit of ALE enrollment at Yakima School District No. 7 from September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable ALE requirements. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the District's compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters, with regard to its ALE program.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of noncompliance.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Yakima School District No. 7 operates 24 schools to provide educational services to approximately 15,400 students in Yakima County. Services include basic elementary, middle school, high school, vocational education, vocational skills center, alternative schools, bilingual education, pupil transportation, food services, magnet schools, special education and remedial and enriched education programs. In addition, the District provides transportation vehicle repair services.

An elected, five-member Board of Directors governs the District. The Board appoints management to oversee the District's daily operations as well as its 1,750 full- and part-time employees. The District operates on an annual budget of approximately \$200 million.

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### Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for the District at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

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