Alternative Learning Experiences (ALE) and Online Learning

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Agenda

- ALE background
- Why reform ALE?
- Legislative proposals
- Accountability

ALE BACKGROUND

"Alternative learning experience" means:

(B) The student pursues the requirements of the written student learning plan in whole or in part **independently from a regular classroom setting or schedule**, but the learning plan may include some components of direct instruction…

WAC 392-121-182 (3)

What is ALE?

- ALE is a method for claiming state basic education funding, **using the existing funding system and definitions**, e.g.:
  - "Enrolled student" including exclusions
  - FTE hour definition
  - Nine enrollment count dates
- ALE contrasts with other methods, e.g.:
  - "Seat-time"
  - Running Start
  - Work-based Learning

ALE as a "course of study"

"A school district must meet the requirements of this section to count an alternative learning experience as a course of study pursuant to WAC 392-121-107." WAC 392-121-182 (2)

"'course of study' means those activities for which students enrolled pursuant to chapters180-16, 180-51, 392-169, 392-134, and 392-410 WAC may be counted as enrolled students for the purpose of full-time equivalent student enrollment counts." WAC 392-121-107

WAC 392-410-115: Mandatory areas of study in the common school

(1) "…all school districts shall provide instruction in reading, penmanship, spelling, mathematics, geography, English grammar, physiology, hygiene, and history of the United States."

(3) "…each school district offering a high school program shall provide a course of study which includes the preparation for uniform college and university entrance requirements."

(4) "…each such school district shall offer all required courses for a high school diploma as provided in chapter 180-51 WAC…"

Core ALE requirements

- Written student learning plan (WSLP)
  - Description of each ALE course, including goals, objectives, and learning activities
  - Description of timelines and methods of evaluation
  - Identification of materials
  - Estimated hours per week = student FTE
- Weekly contact between certificated teacher and student
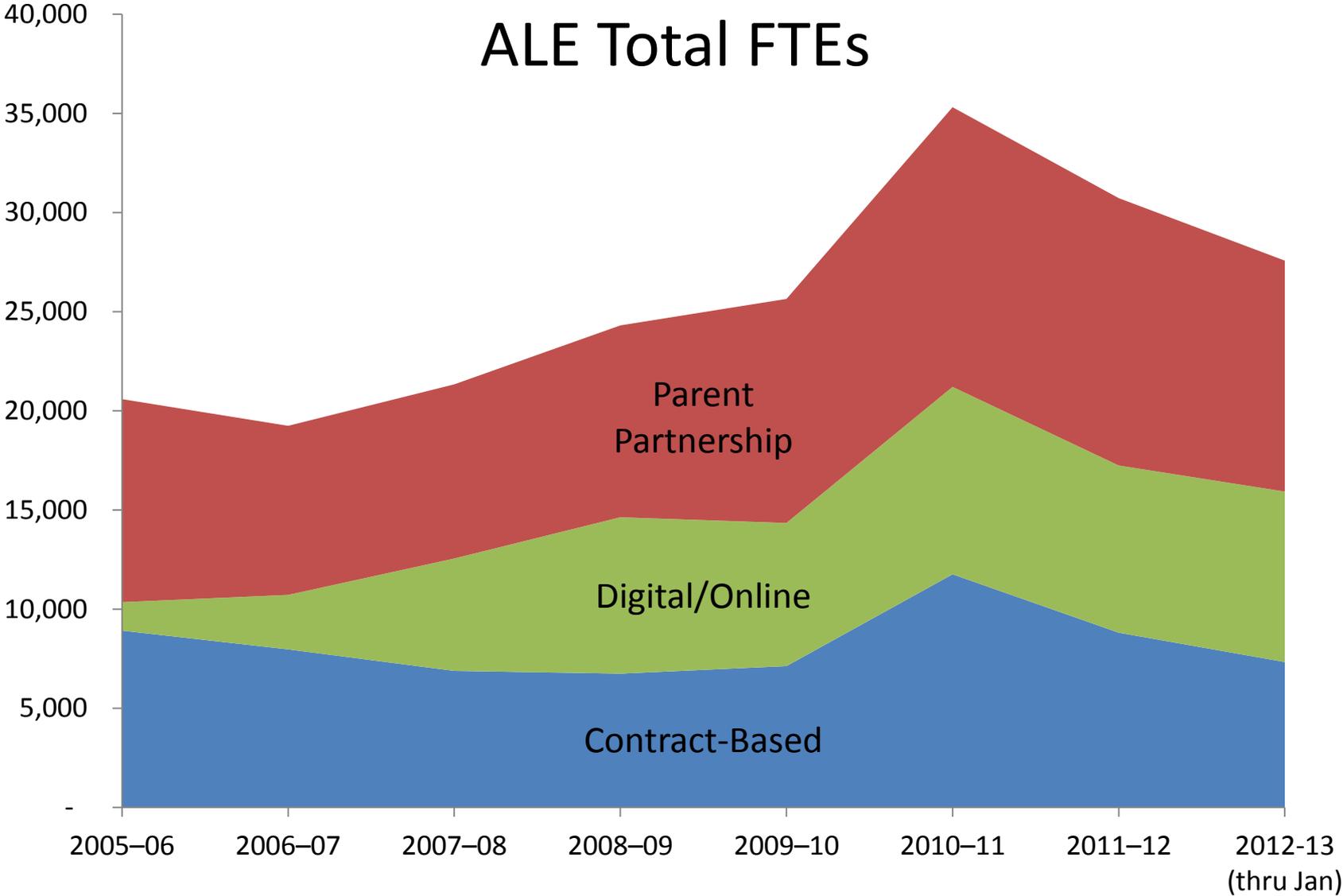- Monthly evaluation of student progress

ALE Categories

- Online programs as defined in RCW 28A.150.262;

- Parent partnership programs that include significant participation and partnership by parents and families in the design and implementation of a student's learning experience; and
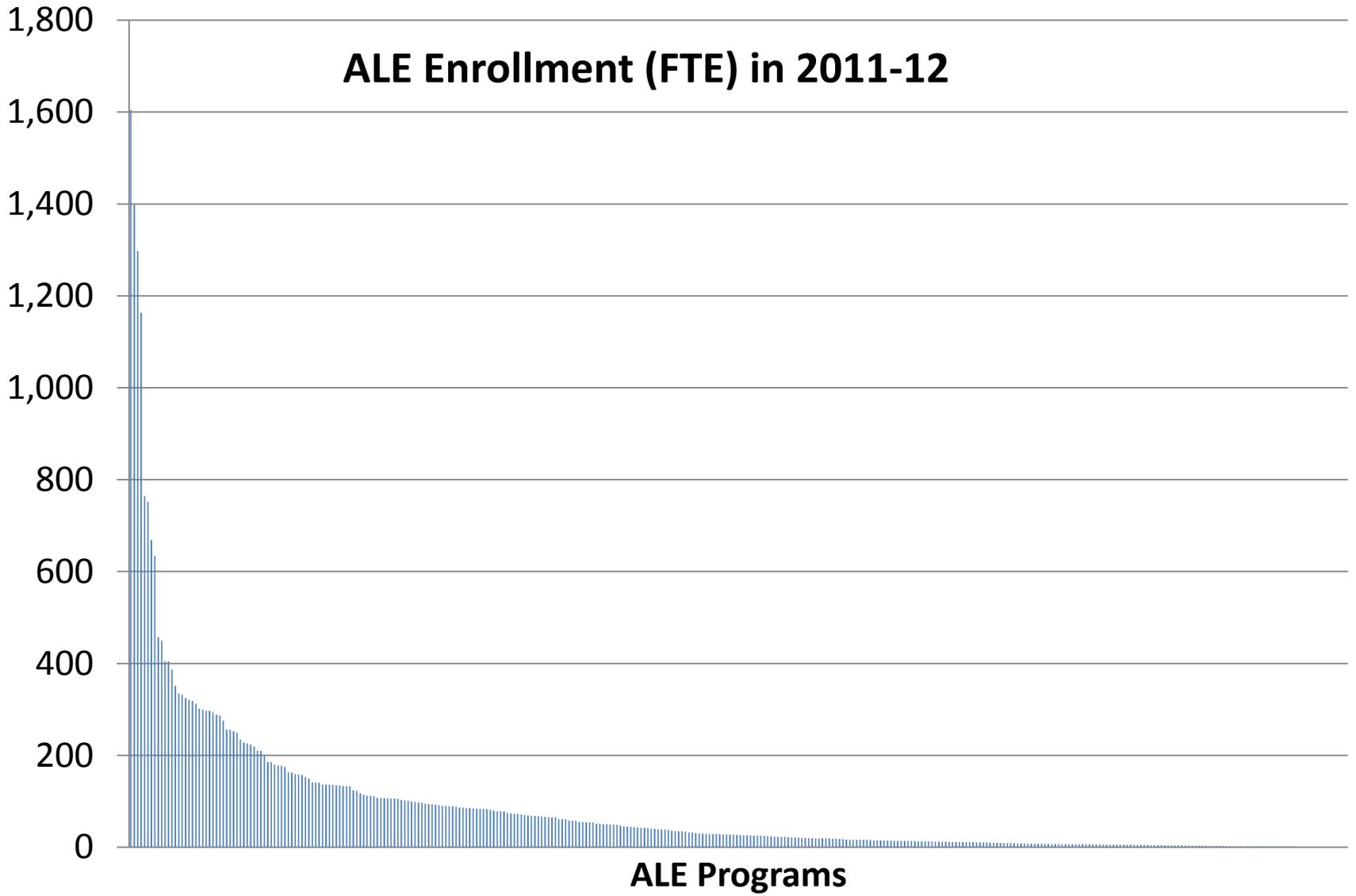
- Contract-based learning programs.

ALE Enrollment

- 30,726 FTE in 2011-12
- 3.1% of all FTEs
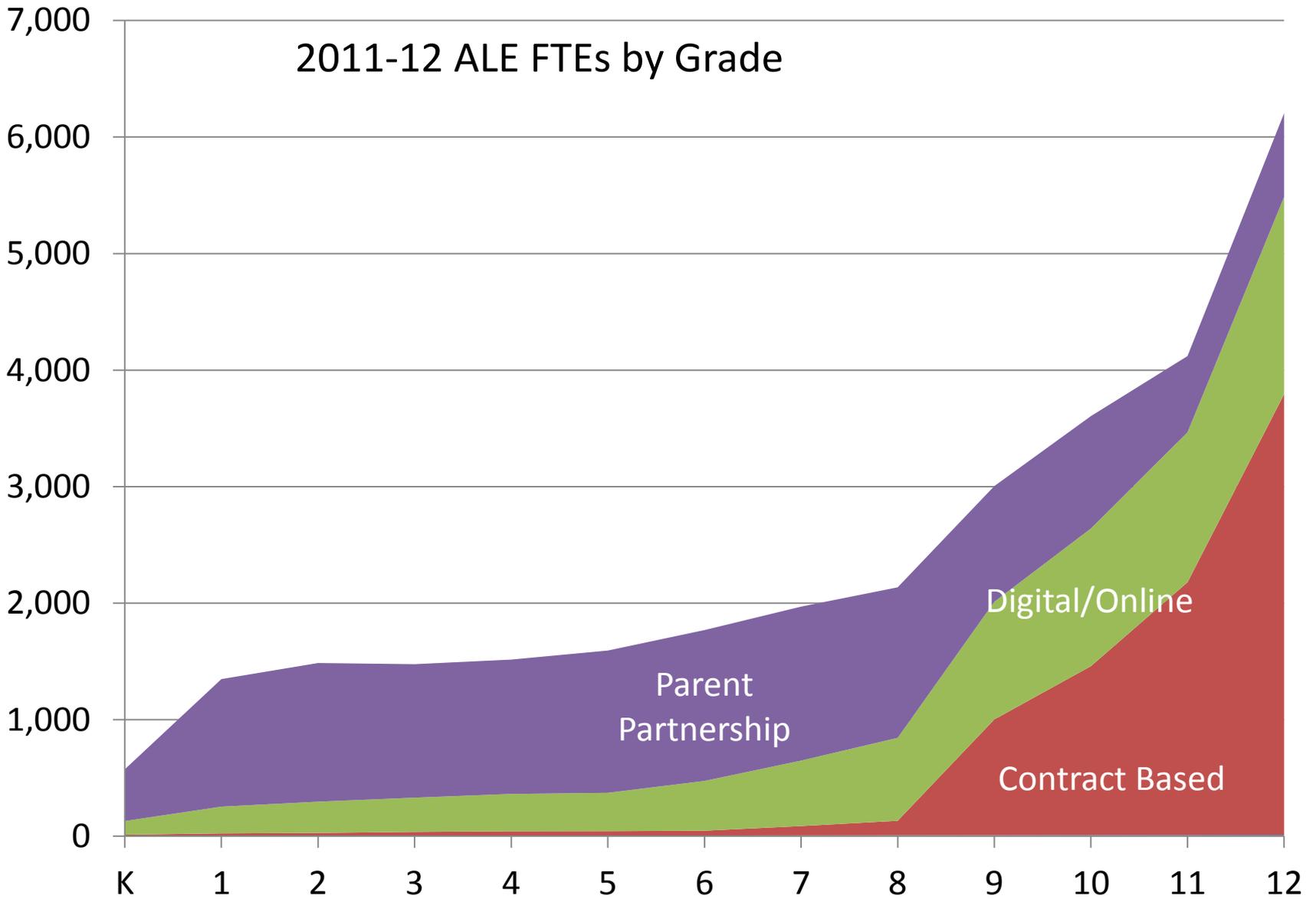- Approx $158M in apportionment in 2011-12
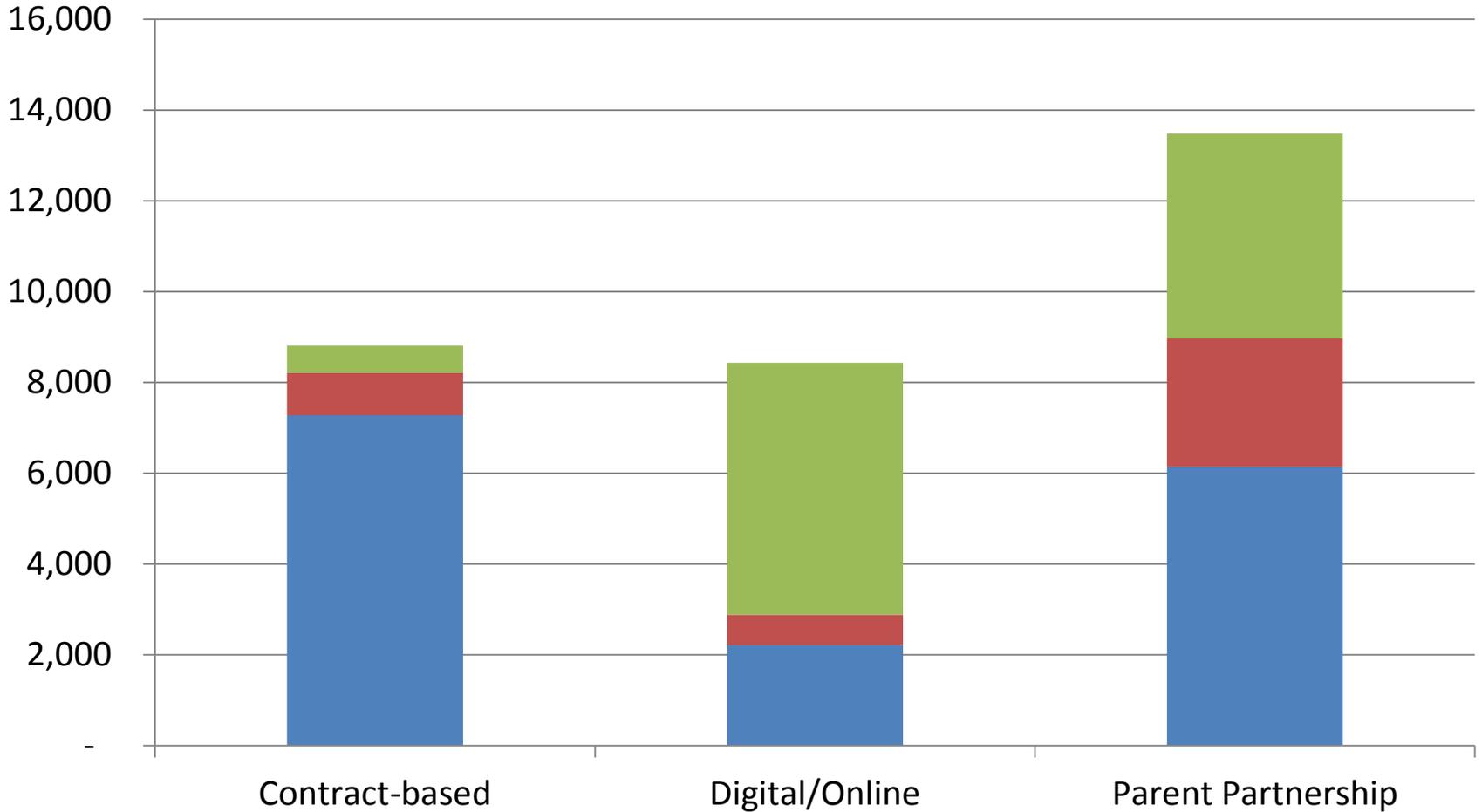- About 350 ALE programs

ALE Total FTEs

(Stacked area chart showing FTEs from 2005–06 through 2012-13 (thru Jan) with three categories: Contract-Based, Digital/Online, and Parent Partnership. Y-axis ranges from 0 to 40,000.)

ALE Enrollment (FTE) in 2011-12

2011-12 ALE FTEs by Grade

Digital/Online

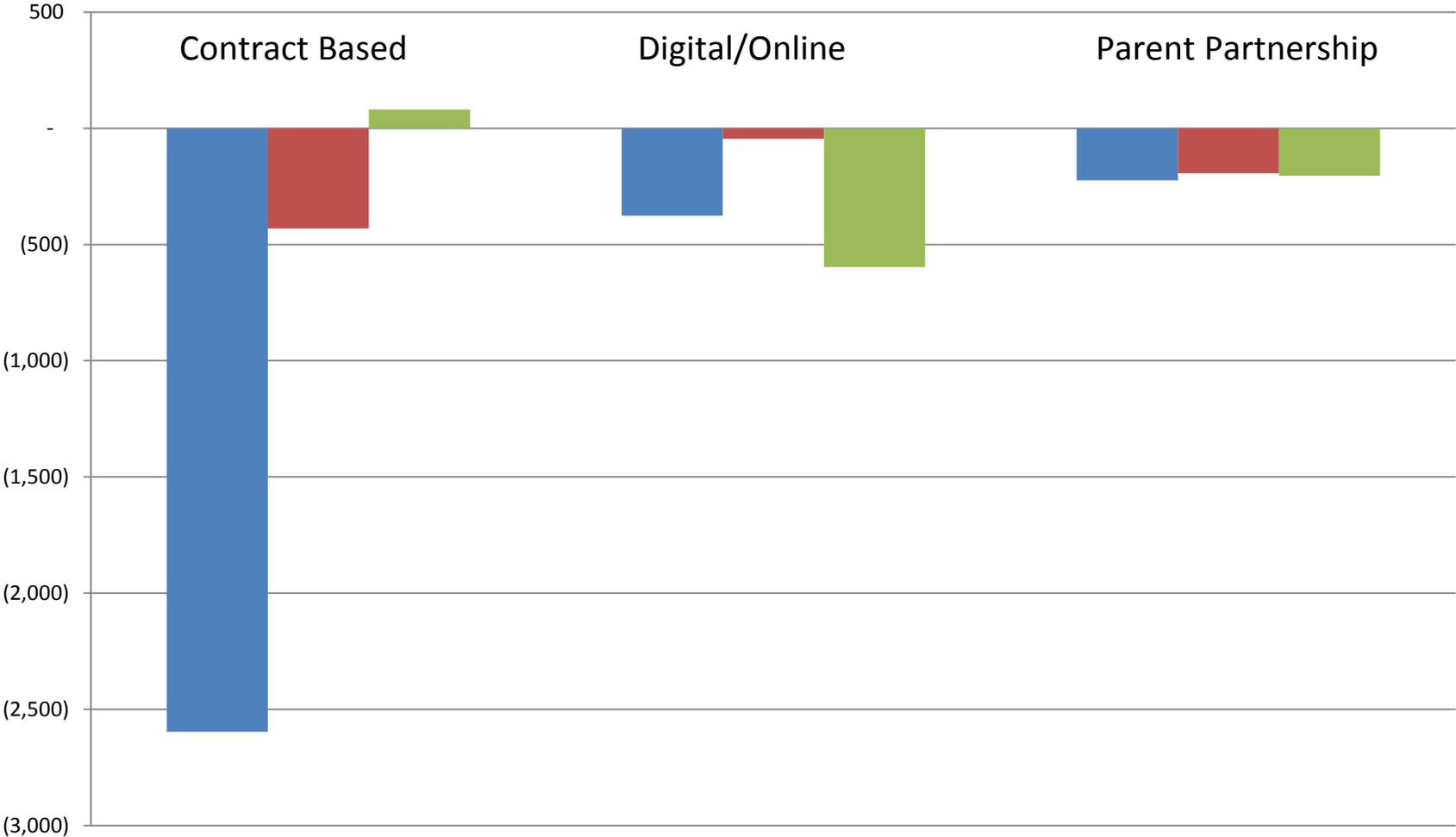Parent Partnership

Contract Based

2011-12 FTEs by Location

ALE REFORM

Why reform? Why now?

- ALE funding cuts
- Perceptions around ALE costs
- Declining enrollment for at-risk students
- Audit issues
- Assessment participation and performance
- Contracting concerns

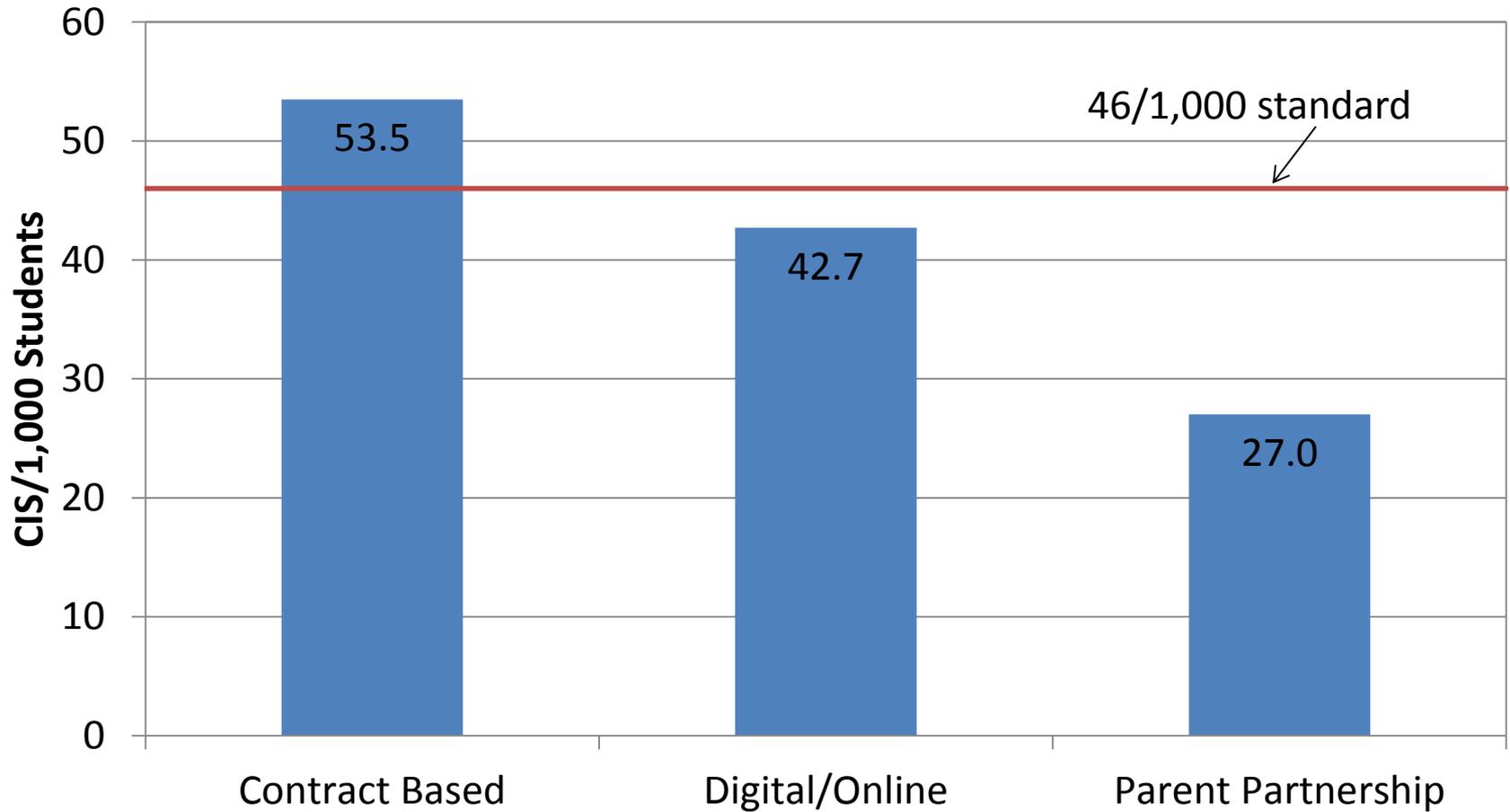Growth/Decline in ALE FTEs from 10-11 to 11-12

Operating Costs

- ESHB 2065: "...there is a rational basis on which to conclude that there are **different costs** associated with providing a program not primarily based on full-time, daily contact between teachers and students and not primarily occurring on-site in a classroom."

ALE Staffing Ratios

"Program 02" Financials

- OSPI collects ALE financial expenditure data at the *district* level.

- Data appears incomplete for some districts
  - Expenditures without ALE enrollment
  - ALE enrollment without expenditures
  - Outliers

- Removing incomplete data, we have records for 133 districts

"Program 02" Financials (2011-12)

- 88 districts spend less than they received
  - Total "underspend": $15.8M
- 54 districts spend more than they received
  - Total "overspend": $12.2M
- $4,342: Average ALE apportionment (per FTE)
- $4,791: Average ALE expenditure (per FTE)
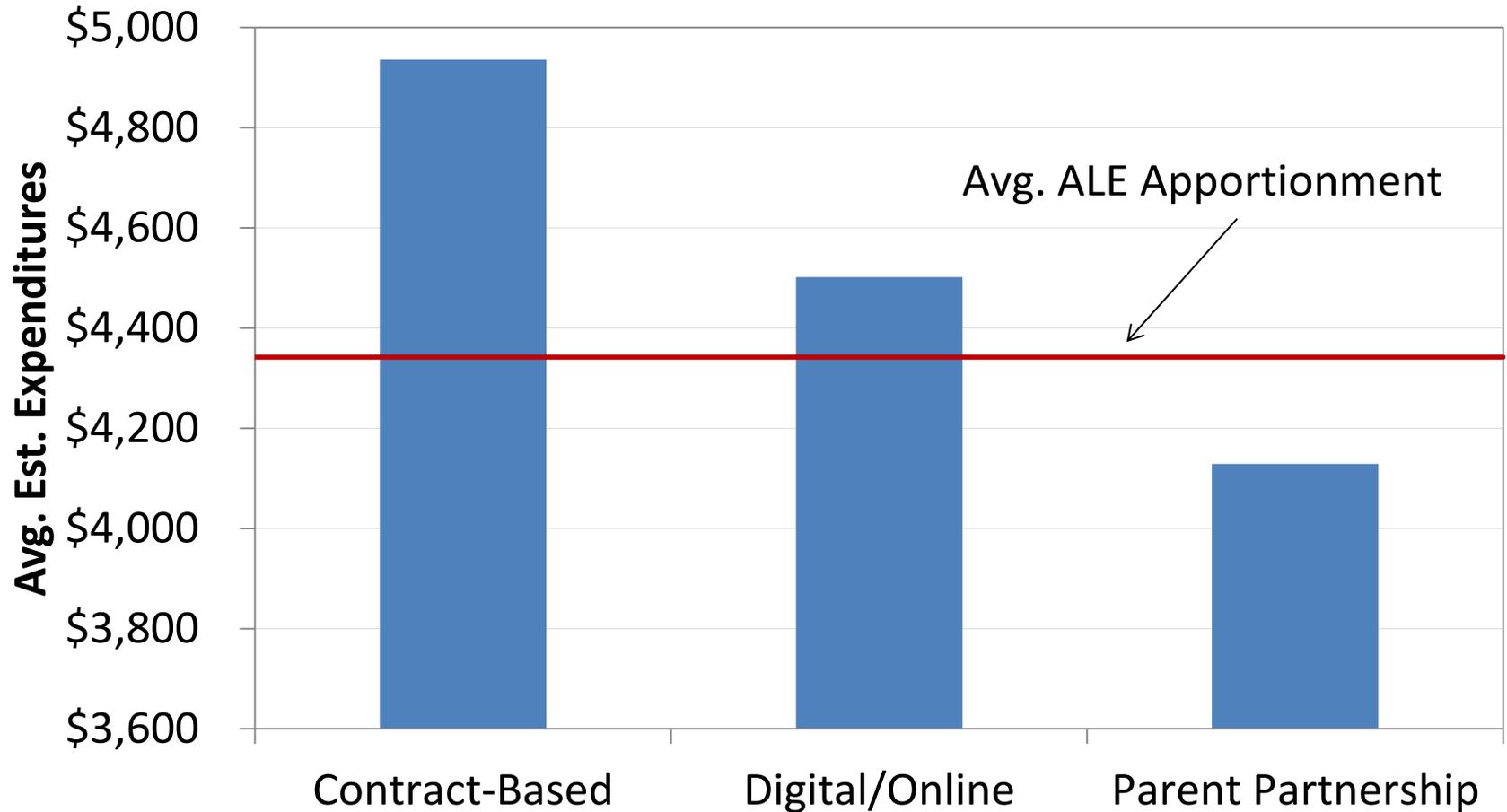
ALE Audits

67 districts audited

52 districts had reported issues

	Approximate Questioned Cost
FY 09	$963,296
FY 10	$ 9,346,682
FY 11	$16,543,147
Total	$26,853,125

As of 2/12/13

State Assessments

Percent Tested, Math, 2012

Assessment Results

Met Standard, without Previous Pass, 2012

Assessment Results

Met Standard, Excluding No Score, 2012

Subject Tested

■ ALE Schools   ■ State Average
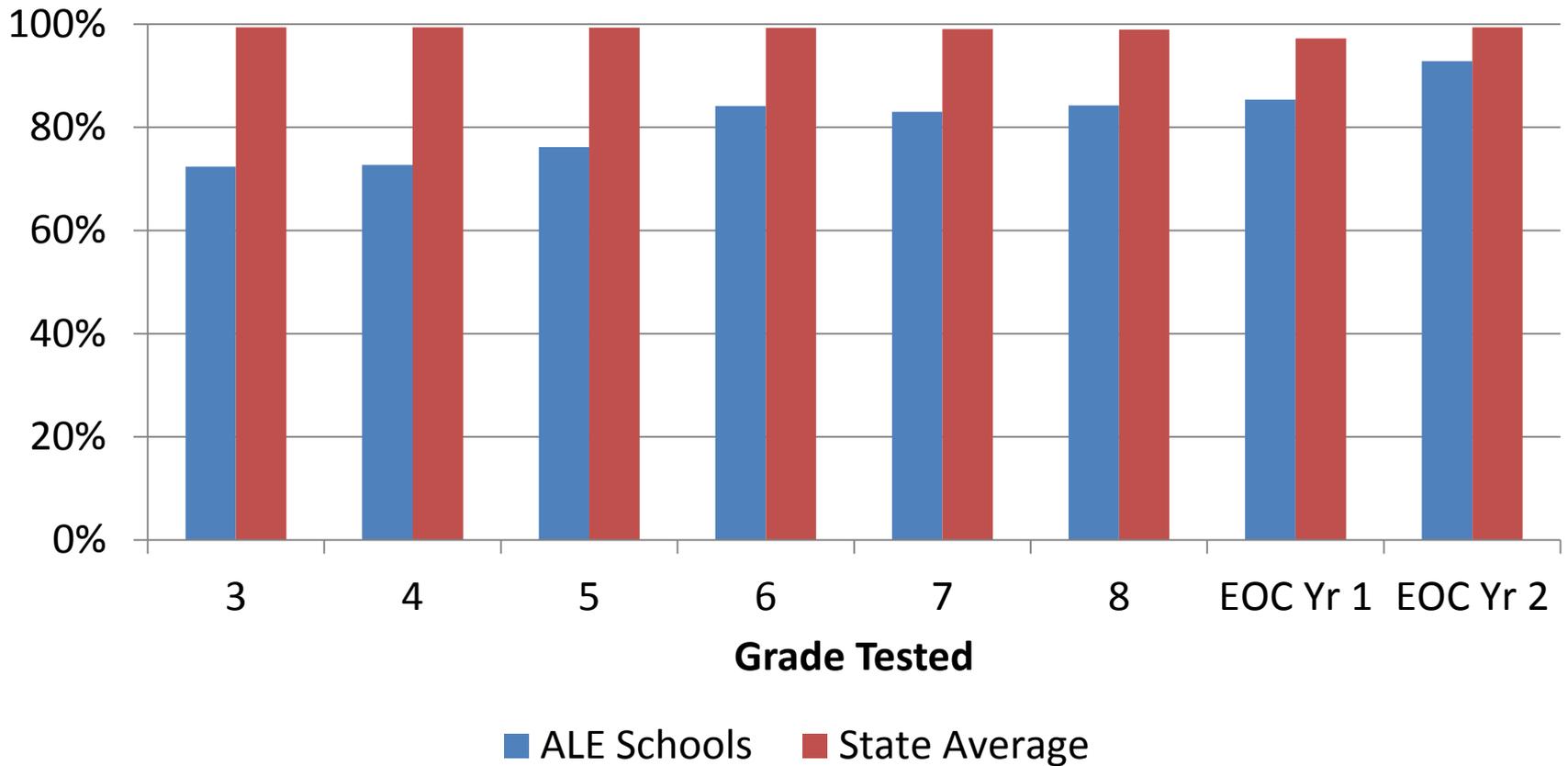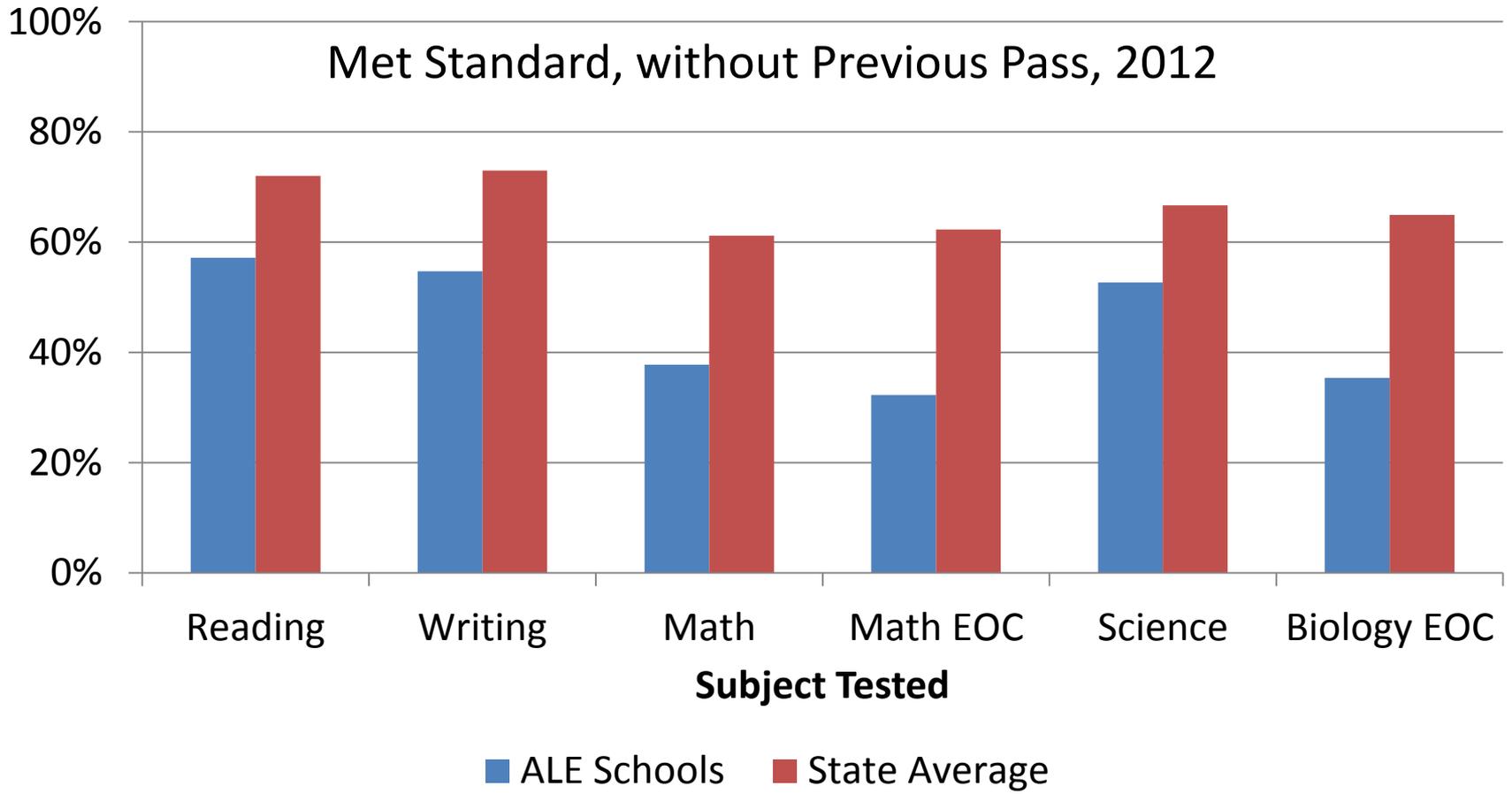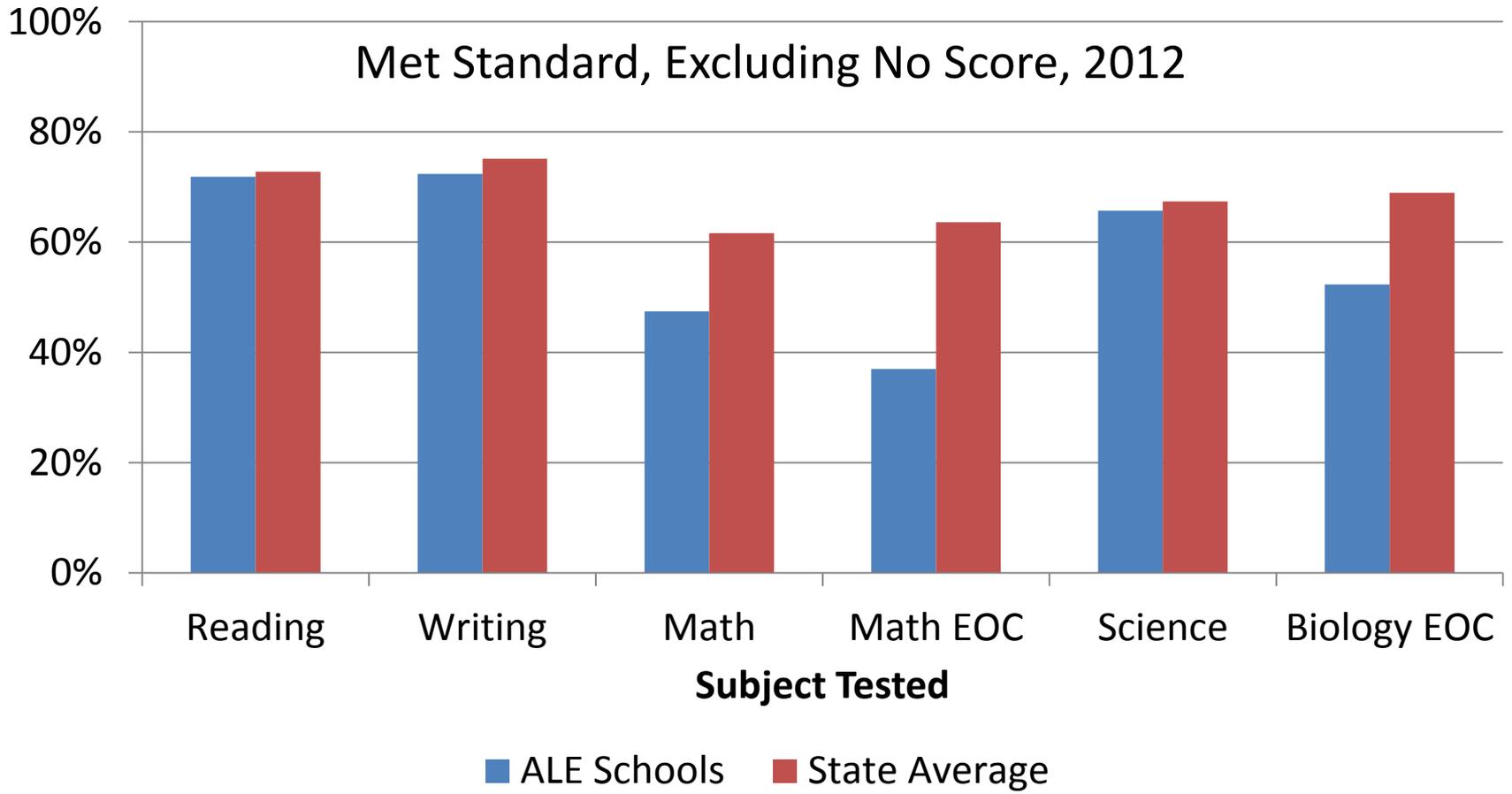
"Substantially Similar" Contracting

- Reports from 48 districts
- 4,534 expenditures
- $4,593,103 spent
- Mostly parent partnerships, K-8
- Subjects:
  - 30% Music
  - 23% PE

Instructional Models

- "State-funded homeschooling"
- Models with minimal student-teacher contact

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

ALE Bills

- HB 1431 – Superintendent Dorn's proposal
- SHB 1423 – Removes online from ALE
- 2SSB 5794 – Restructures ALE and calls for funding study

HB 1431 - Funding

- Funding cut enacted by ESHB 2065 ends as is scheduled after the 2011-13 biennium
- ALE enrollments are fully funded moving forward

HB 1431 - Model Changes

- Focus on *course-level delivery models*, not program-level categories
  - Program-level: parent partnership, contract-based, online
  - Course-level: remote, hybrid, online

HB 1431 - "Hybrid" courses

- Student has in-person instructional contact for at least 20% of the course per week
- Instructional contact:
  - Face-to-face instructional time w/ cert. teacher
  - Physical classroom environment
  - For the purposes of instruction, review of assignments, evaluation, other learning activities
  - Tied to WSLP
  - Group setting

HB 1431 - "Remote" courses

- Student has in-person instructional contact time for less than 20% of the course per week
  - In practice, in most remote courses, students spend little to no time in the classroom

HB 1431 - "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; and

- The student's primary instructional interaction is with a certificated teacher. Instructional interaction between the teacher and the student includes, but is not limited to, direct instruction, review of assignments, assessment, testing, progress monitoring, and educational facilitation.

HB 1431 - Models by Grade Level

	K-5 (non-credit)	6-8 (non-credit)	9-12 (credit)
Remote	No*	No*	Yes
Hybrid	Yes	Yes	Yes
Online	No*	Yes	Yes

*Exemptions for K-8 remote and K-5 online:

- Student has a documented health issue such that attendance at a physical school is not possible
- Temporary travel. See WAC 392-121-108 1(a).
- Discipline/suspension for middle school students

HB 1431 - "Substantially Similar"

- Districts cannot purchase or contract for services or activities for ALE programs
  - Unless the exact same services/activity is provided to *all* students in the district
  - Except contracting with approved online providers
- Many services that had been contracted will be available at the local district, taught by district employees, not contractors

OSPI options if nothing passes

1. Remove "differential funding" but make no other changes

2. Make minor rule changes to address small issues

3. Attempt ALE reform via rule

Private online schools

- HB 1304 would authorize approval of online school programs in private schools
- Overlap in the population of students interested in an private online school and ALE/online learning

Charter schools

- Will existing online schools become charters?
- Why?
  - No ALE, no OSPI online provider approval, enrollment could be easier
- 20+ states have "virtual charters"
- Large online learning companies use multiple governance methods

ACCOUNTABILITY

Questions about accountability and ALE

- What standards are in place to ensure quality?
- Are students in ALE getting a "basic education"?
- How does online provider approval work?
- How do competency-based systems fit in?

Layers of accountability

- Student: written learning plan, weekly contact, monthly evaluation
- District: school board policy
- State:
  - State assessment/accountability system
  - SBE rules on basic education
  - ALE funding rules (and apportionment audits)
  - For online providers, OSPI online provider approval

Online Provider Approval

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.

OSPI Approval

- External review team

- Reviews conducted annually

- Approval lasts 4 years

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

Approval Criteria

- [54 criteria](#) covering:
  - 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

Competency-based models

How do you measure competency?

- External evaluation
- Built-in assessments

Key question: how do you ensure quality/alignment of measurements?

Q&A