

256.42 Iowa learning online initiative.

1. An Iowa learning online initiative is established within the department to partner with school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to provide distance education to high school students statewide. The department shall utilize a variety of content repositories, including those maintained by the area education agencies and the public broadcasting division, in administering the initiative.

2. The initiative shall include an online learning program model designed to prepare teachers to meet the needs of students in an online learning environment, including but not limited to building community interaction and support, developing strategies for working with virtual students, and assessing virtual students.

3. Coursework offered under the initiative shall be taught by a teacher licensed under chapter 272 who has completed an online-learning-for-Iowa-educators-professional-development project offered by area education agencies, a teacher preservice program, or comparable coursework.

4. Each participating school district and accredited nonpublic school shall submit its online curricula to the department for review. Each participating school district and accredited nonpublic school shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan submitted pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 21, a list and description of the online coursework offered by the district.

5. Under the initiative, students must be enrolled in a participating school district or accredited nonpublic school, which is responsible for recording grades received for initiative coursework in a student's permanent record, awarding high school credit for initiative coursework, and issuing high school diplomas to students enrolled in the district or school who participate and complete coursework under the initiative. Each participating school shall identify a site coordinator to serve as a student advocate and as a liaison between the initiative staff and teachers and the school district or accredited nonpublic school.

6. Coursework offered under the initiative shall be rigorous and high quality, and the department shall annually evaluate the quality of the courses and ensure that coursework is aligned with the state's core curriculum and core content requirements and standards, as well as national standards of quality for online courses issued by an internationally recognized association for kindergarten through grade twelve online learning.

7. The department may waive for one year the provisions of section 256.11, subsection 5, which require that specified subjects be offered and taught by professional staff of a school district or school, if the school district or school makes every reasonable and good faith effort to employ a teacher licensed under chapter 272 for such a subject, and the school district or school proves to the satisfaction of the department that the school district or school is unable to employ such a teacher. The specified subject shall be provided by the initiative.

8. The department shall establish fees payable by school districts and accredited nonpublic schools participating in the initiative. Fees collected pursuant to this subsection are appropriated to the department to be used only for the purpose of administering this section and shall be established so as not to exceed the budgeted cost of administering this section to the extent not covered by the moneys appropriated in subsection 9. Providing professional development necessary to prepare teachers to participate in the initiative shall be considered a cost of administering this section. Notwithstanding section 8.33, fees collected by the department that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain available for expenditure for the purpose of expanding coursework offered under the initiative in subsequent fiscal years.

9. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state to the department, for the following fiscal years, the following amounts, to be used for administering this section and for not more than three full-time equivalent positions:

a. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2015, the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars.

b. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2016, the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars.

2012 Acts, ch 1119, §17; 2013 Acts, ch 30, §58; 2013 Acts, ch 121, §43

Referred to in §256.7

[T] Subsection 6 amended

[T] NEW subsections 8 and 9