

**261E.9 Regional academies.**

1. *a.* A regional academy is a program established by a school district to which multiple school districts send students in grades seven through twelve. A school district establishing a regional academy may collaborate and partner with, enter into an agreement pursuant to chapter 28E with, or enter into a contract with, one or more school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, accredited public and private postsecondary institutions, accredited nonpublic schools, businesses, and private agencies located within or outside of the state.

*b.* The purpose of a regional academy established pursuant to this section shall be to build a culture of innovation for students and community, to diversify educational and economic opportunities by engaging in learning experiences that involve students in complex, real-world projects, and to develop regional or global innovation networks.

*c.* If a school district establishing a regional academy in accordance with this section submits a plan to the department for approval that demonstrates how the regional academy will increase and assess student achievement or increase and assess competency-based learning opportunities for students, the department may waive or modify any statutory or regulatory provision applicable to school districts except the department shall not waive or modify any statutory or regulatory provision relating to requirements applicable to school districts under chapters 11, 21, 22, 216, 216A, 256B, 279, 284, and 285; or relating to contracts with and discharge of teachers and administrators under chapters 20 and 279; or relating to audit requirements under section 256.9, subsection 20, and section 279.29.

2. *a.* A regional academy shall include in its curriculum advanced level courses.

*b.* A regional academy may include in its curriculum virtual or internet-based coursework and courses delivered via the Iowa communications network, career and technical courses, core curriculum coursework, courses required pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 26, or section 256.11, subsections 4 and 5, and asynchronous learning networks.

3. School districts participating in regional academies are eligible for supplementary weighting as provided in section 257.11, subsection 2. The school districts participating in the regional academy shall enter into an agreement on how the funding generated by the supplementary weighting received shall be used and shall submit the agreement to the department for approval.

4. Information regarding regional academies shall be provided to a student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the development of the student's core curriculum plan under section 279.61.

2008 Acts, ch 1181, §59; 2011 Acts, ch 132, §15, 29