268.7 Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics collaborative initiative.

1. A science, technology, engineering, and mathematics collaborative initiative is established at the university of northern Iowa for purposes of supporting activities directly related to recruitment of prekindergarten through grade twelve mathematics and science teachers for ongoing mathematics and science programming for students enrolled in prekindergarten through grade twelve.

2. The collaborative initiative shall prioritize student interest in achievement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; reach every student and teacher in every school district in the state; identify, recruit, prepare, and support the best mathematics and science teachers; and sustain exemplary programs through the university's Iowa mathematics and science education partnership. The university shall collaborate with the community colleges to develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics professional development programs for community college instructors and for purposes of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curricula development.

3. Subject to an appropriation of funds by the general assembly, the initiative shall administer the following:

a. Regional science, technology, engineering, and mathematics networks for Iowa, the purpose of which is to equalize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education enrichment opportunities available to learners statewide. The initiative shall establish six geographically similar regional science, technology, engineering, and mathematics networks across Iowa that complement and leverage existing resources, including but not limited to extension service assets, area education agencies, state accredited postsecondary institutions, informal educational centers, school districts, economic development zones, and existing public and private science, technology, engineering, and mathematics partnerships. Each network shall be managed by a highly qualified science, technology, engineering, and mathematics advocate positioned at a network hub to be determined through a competitive application process. Oversight for each regional network shall be provided by a regional advisory board. Members of the board shall be appointed by the governor. The membership shall represent prekindergarten through grade twelve school districts and schools, and higher education, business, nonprofit organizations, youth agencies, and other appropriate stakeholders.

b. A focused array of the best science, technology, engineering, and mathematics enrichment opportunities, selected through a competitive application process, that can be expanded to meet future needs. A limited, focused list of selected exemplary programs shall be made available to each regional network.

c. Statewide science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programming designed to increase participation of students and teachers in successful learning experiences; to increase the number of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-related teaching majors offered by the state's universities; to elevate public awareness of the opportunities; and to increase collaboration and partnerships.

4. The initiative shall evaluate the effectiveness of programming to document best practices.

2012 Acts, ch 1132, §12