

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 initiative may also provide distance education to a student receiving independent private instruction as defined in [section 299A.1, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, competent private instruction under [section 299A.2](#), or private instruction by a nonlicensed person under [section 299A.3](#). 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 or school.

5. Under the initiative, a student must be enrolled in a participating school district or accredited nonpublic school or be receiving private instruction under [chapter 299A](#) as described in [subsection 1](#). For a student enrolled in a participating school district or accredited nonpublic school, the school district or school is responsible for recording grades received for initiative coursework in a student’s permanent record, awarding high school credit for initiative coursework, and issuing a high school diploma to a student enrolled in the district or school who participates and completes 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. The individual providing instruction to a student under [chapter 299A](#) as described in [subsection 1](#) shall receive the student’s score for completed initiative coursework.

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. a. The provisions of [section 256.11, subsection 5](#), which require that specified subjects be offered and taught by a school district or accredited nonpublic school, shall not apply for up to two specified subjects at a school district or school under [this section](#) if any of the following apply:

(1) The school district or school makes every reasonable and good faith effort to employ a teacher licensed under [chapter 272](#) for the specified subject, and is unable to employ such a teacher.

(2) Fewer than ten students typically register for instruction in the specified subject at the school district or school.

b. The department may waive for one school year the applicability of [section 256.11, subsection 5](#), at its discretion, to additional specified subjects for a school district or accredited nonpublic school that proves to the satisfaction of the department that the school district or school has made every reasonable effort, but is unable to meet the requirements of [section 256.11, subsection 5](#). A school district or accredited nonpublic school may apply for an annual waiver each year.

c. If the provisions of [section 256.11, subsection 5](#), are made inapplicable under paragraph “a”, or are waived under paragraph “b”, the specified subject shall be provided by the initiative

or by the school district or accredited nonpublic school if an online alternative satisfying the requirements of subparagraph (1) or (2) can be made available by the school district or accredited nonpublic school. Any course not required under [section 256.11, subsection 5](#), may also be provided by the initiative or by the school district or accredited nonpublic school. However, in either case, if offered by the school district or accredited nonpublic school, the specified subject or course shall be offered through either of the following means:

(1) An online learning platform if the course is developed by the school district or accredited nonpublic school itself or is developed by a partnership or consortium of schools that have developed the course individually or cooperatively, provided the course is taught by an Iowa licensed teacher with online learning experience and the course content is aligned with the Iowa content standards and satisfies the requirements of [subsection 6](#). A partnership or consortium of schools may include two or more school districts or accredited nonpublic schools, or any combination thereof.

(2) A private provider utilized to provide the course that meets the standards of [this section](#) and is approved in accordance with [section 256.9, subsection 55](#).

d. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “*good faith effort*” means the same as defined in [section 279.19A, subsection 9](#).

8. The department shall establish fees payable by school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and individuals providing instruction to students under [chapter 299A](#) as described in [subsection 1](#), for coursework offered under 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 cost of administering [this section](#). 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.

2012 Acts, ch 1119, §17; 2013 Acts, ch 30, §58; 2013 Acts, ch 121, §43; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §57; 2016 Acts, ch 1012, §1; 2017 Acts, ch 29, §60; 2018 Acts, ch 1029, §1, 2; 2018 Acts, ch 1119, §6 – 8; 2018 Acts, ch 1163, §11; 2018 Acts, ch 1172, §23; 2019 Acts, ch 96, §1

Referred to in §256.7, 256.9, 256.43

Subsection 7, paragraph c amended