

**281—15.5(256) Online learning—private providers.**

**15.5(1) *Online learning model established.*** An online learning program model is established by the director, pursuant to Iowa Code section 256.9, that provides districts and nonpublic schools with a list of approved online providers. The online learning program model requires that approved providers meet criteria for approval and further provides for the following:

- a. Use of funds available for online learning for program development, implementation, and innovation.
- b. Creation and maintenance of a statewide infrastructure that supports online learning.
- c. Online administration of online course assessments.
- d. Criteria for school districts or schools to use when choosing providers of online learning.

**15.5(2) *Use of approved private providers.*** At the discretion of the school board or authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school, after consideration of circumstances created by necessity, convenience, and cost-effectiveness, courses developed by private providers may be utilized by the school district or school in implementing a high-quality online learning program.

**15.5(3) *Approval criteria.*** The department shall maintain a list of approved online providers that provide course content through an online learning platform whose content and delivery meets the following requirements:

- a. Courses are taught by teachers licensed under Iowa Code chapter 272.
- b. Courses are taught by teachers who have specialized training or experience in online learning including but not limited to an online-learning-for-Iowa-educators-professional-development project offered by area education agencies, a teacher preservice program, comparable coursework, or relevant experience.
- c. Courses provide access to rigorous, high-quality content and instructional materials aligned with Iowa core content standards and blended learning.
- d. Courses provide content and instructional practices aligned with the national standards of quality for online courses issued by an internationally recognized association for kindergarten through grade 12 online learning.
- e. The provider supplies coursework customized to the needs of the student.
- f. The provider offers a means for a student to demonstrate competency in completed online coursework.
- g. Courses provide online content and instruction evaluated on the basis of student learning outcomes.

**15.5(4) *Approval process.*** Private providers of online course content or full-time online instruction shall apply for approval to offer such services to Iowa school districts and accredited nonpublic schools a minimum of once every three years on forms provided by the department. Applications to provide services may be received at any time; however, the department will give preference to applications received no later than May 1 during the year prior to the school year in which the provider intends to provide services. Applications received by the deadline of May 1 will be answered no later than June 1. An approved provider shall also apply in each year that any of the following apply:

- a. The provider has substantially altered the courses or content offered by either adding or subtracting grade levels or subjects.
- b. The provider has substantially altered the delivery of the courses or content offered by altering the learning management system or delivery of assessments.
- c. The provider has substantially altered the evaluation of student learning used in the system.
- d. The provider has substantially altered the online learning content or delivery in any other way that may reasonably be considered material to a school district considering the use of a private provider.

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