SENATE FILE 310

BY BOETTGER and SCHOENJAHN

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the planning, approval, supplementary
2   weighting, and operation of regional academies and including
3   effective date and applicability provisions.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1   Section 1. Section 257.11, subsection 5, Code 2011, is
2 amended by striking the subsection.
3   Sec. 2. Section 261E.9, subsections 1 through 3, Code 2011,
4 are amended to read as follows:
5   1. *a.* A regional academy is a program established by
6 a school district to which multiple school districts send
7 students in grades ~~nine~~ seven through twelve~~, and which may~~
8 ~~include internet-based coursework and courses delivered via the~~
9 ~~Iowa communications network. A regional academy shall include~~
10 ~~in its curriculum advanced level courses and may include in its~~
11 ~~curriculum career and technical courses~~. A school district
12 establishing a regional academy may collaborate and partner
13 with, enter into an agreement pursuant to chapter 28E with,
14 or enter into a contract with, one or more school districts,
15 community colleges, accredited public and private postsecondary
16 institutions, accredited nonpublic schools, businesses, and
17 private agencies located within or outside of the state.
18   *b.* The purpose of a regional academy established pursuant
19 to this section shall be to build a culture of innovation for
20 students and community, to diversify rural educational and
21 economic opportunities by engaging in learning experiences
22 that involve students in complex, real-world projects, and to
23 develop regional or global innovation networks.
24   *c.* If a school district establishing a regional academy in
25 accordance with this section submits a plan to the department
26 for approval that demonstrates how the regional academy will
27 increase and assess student achievement or increase and assess
28 competency-based learning opportunities for students, the
29 department may waive or modify any statutory or regulatory
30 provision applicable to school districts in order to provide
31 the regional academy additional flexibility if the department
32 finds that the waiver or modification is likely to result in
33 increased student achievement or increased competency-based
34 learning opportunities for students.
35   2. *a.* A regional academy ~~course~~ shall ~~not qualify as a~~

1 ~~concurrent enrollment course~~ <u>include in its curriculum advanced</u>
2 <u>level courses.</u>
3   *b.* <u>A regional academy may include in its curriculum virtual</u>
4 <u>or internet-based coursework and courses delivered via the Iowa</u>
5 <u>communications network, career and technical courses, core</u>
6 <u>curriculum coursework, courses required pursuant to section</u>
7 <u>256.7, subsection 26, or section 256.11, subsections 4 and 5,</u>
8 <u>and asynchronous learning networks.</u>
9   3. School districts participating in regional academies are
10 eligible for supplementary weighting as provided in section
11 257.11, subsection 2. <u>The school districts participating in</u>
12 <u>the regional academy shall enter into an agreement on how the</u>
13 <u>supplementary weighting received shall be used and shall submit</u>
14 <u>the agreement to the department for approval.</u>
15   Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICABILITY. This Act
16 takes effect July 1, 2012, and is applicable to school years
17 beginning on or after July 1, 2012.
18   EXPLANATION
19   This bill makes changes relating to regional academies.
20   Currently, a regional academy is a program established
21 by a school district to which multiple school districts
22 send students in grades 9 through 12, and which may include
23 internet-based coursework and courses delivered via the Iowa
24 communications network. The bill lowers the grade level
25 limit to grades 7 through 12, and adds that a school district
26 establishing a regional academy may collaborate and partner
27 with, enter into an agreement pursuant to Code chapter 28E
28 with, or enter into a contract with, two or more school
29 districts, community colleges, accredited public and private
30 postsecondary institutions, accredited nonpublic schools,
31 businesses, and private agencies located within or outside of
32 the state.
33   The bill provides that the purpose of a regional academy
34 shall be to build a culture of innovation for students and
35 community, to diversify rural educational and economic

1 opportunities by engaging in learning experiences that involve
2 students in complex, real-world projects, and to develop
3 regional or global innovation networks.
4 If a school district submits a plan to the department for
5 approval that demonstrates how the regional academy will
6 increase and assess student achievement or increase and assess
7 competency-based learning opportunities for students, the
8 department may waive or modify any statutory or regulatory
9 provision applicable to school districts in order to provide
10 the regional academy additional flexibility.
11 The bill strikes language that prohibits a regional academy
12 course from qualifying as a concurrent enrollment course.
13 A regional academy may include in its curriculum virtual or
14 internet-based coursework and courses delivered via the Iowa
15 communications network, career and technical courses, core
16 curriculum coursework, courses required for graduation or under
17 the educational standards, and asynchronous learning networks.
18 Currently, regional academies may receive supplementary
19 weighting. The bill provides that the school districts
20 participating in the regional academy must enter into an
21 agreement on how the supplementary weighting received shall
22 be used and must submit the agreement to the department for
23 approval.
24 The bill eliminates an outdated provision relating to
25 supplementary weighting for regional academies.
26 The bill takes effect July 1, 2012, and is applicable to
27 school years beginning on or after that date.