

## CHAPTER 1086

### CHARTER SCHOOLS — INNOVATION ZONE SCHOOL ELIMINATION — AREA EDUCATION AGENCY SERVICES, EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS, SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, TEACHER TRAINING AND LICENSURE, STATEWIDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM, AND PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

*H.F. 2754*

**AN ACT** relating to education, including by modifying provisions related to charter school approval, contracts, funding, and operations, services provided to charter schools by area education agencies, charter school student participation in extracurricular activities provided by public schools, the Iowa public employees' retirement system, education savings accounts, independent accreditation, teacher training and licensure, the statewide voluntary preschool program, the district-to-community college sharing or concurrent enrollment program, open enrollment, school tuition organizations, private instruction, and innovation zone schools; making appropriations; and including effective date and applicability provisions.

*Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:*

#### DIVISION I CHARTER SCHOOLS

Section 1. Section 29E.1, subsection 1, paragraph b, subparagraph (4), Code 2026, is amended by striking the subparagraph.

Sec. 2. Section 232E.1, subsection 6, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

6. “*Public school district*” means a public school district as described in chapter 274, and includes a charter school under chapter 256E, ~~or a charter school or an innovation zone school under chapter 256F.~~

Sec. 3. Section 256.7, subsection 15, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

15. Adopt rules under chapter 17A that require school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, ~~and innovation zone schools~~ to include information regarding the exemptions and requirements for an exemption described in section 139A.8, subsection 4, in any communication to the parent or guardian of a student that is related to the immunizations required under section 139A.8.

Sec. 4. Section 256.9, subsections 69, 71, 73, and 78, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

69. On or before May 1, 2025, develop and distribute to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, ~~and innovation zone schools~~ model policies that, if adopted, would satisfy a school district's responsibilities under section 279.88 relating to policies governing student use of personal electronic devices.

71. Develop and distribute to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, ~~and innovation zone schools~~ family-centered resources to support student development of mathematics knowledge at home.

73. On or before July 1, 2025, develop and distribute to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, ~~and innovation zone schools~~ a comprehensive state mathematics plan that is designed to increase the level of mathematics proficiency attained by students using systematic and sequential approaches to teaching subitizing, cardinality, object counting, verbal counting, spatial relationships, benchmark numbers, and part-part-whole models.

78. a. Develop and distribute to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, ~~and innovation zone schools~~ a test in multiple-choice format that consists of all of the questions contained in the most recent version of the civics test developed by the United States citizenship and immigration services.

b. On or before the January 31 immediately subsequent to each general election which

is a presidential election, update the test described in paragraph “a” and distribute the updated test to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, ~~and innovation zone schools.~~

Sec. 5. Section 256.163, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. *f.* A charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I.

Sec. 6. Section 256E.1, subsection 2, paragraphs a and b, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

*a.* A school board may create a founding group to apply to the state board or the university of northern Iowa for approval to establish and operate a charter school within and as a part of the school district by establishing a new attendance center, creating a new school within an existing attendance center, or by converting an existing attendance center to charter status.

*b.* A founding group may apply to the state board or the university of northern Iowa for approval to establish and operate a charter school within the boundaries of the state that operates as a new attendance center independently from a public school district.

Sec. 7. Section 256E.1, subsection 3, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

The purpose of a charter school established pursuant to this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall be to accomplish the following:

Sec. 8. Section 256E.1, subsection 3, paragraph d, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

*d.* Accelerating student learning to prevent learning loss during ~~the COVID-19 pandemic and other~~ significant disruptions to student learning.

Sec. 9. Section 256E.1, subsection 4, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

4. The state board of education and the university of northern Iowa shall be the only ~~authorizer~~ authorizers of charter schools under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 10. Section 256E.2, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

As used in this ~~chapter~~ subchapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

Sec. 11. Section 256E.2, subsections 2 and 5, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

2. “*Charter school*” means a school established in accordance with this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

5. “*Founding group*” means a person, group of persons, or education service provider that develops and submits an application for a charter school to the state board or the university of northern Iowa under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 12. Section 256E.3, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256E.3 Department — duty to monitor.**

The department shall monitor the effectiveness of charter schools and shall implement the applicable provisions of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 13. Section 256E.4, subsections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. A school board may create a founding group to apply to the state board or the university of northern Iowa for approval to establish and operate a charter school within and as a part of the school district by establishing a new attendance center, creating a new school within an existing attendance center, or by converting an existing attendance center. The application shall demonstrate the founding group’s academic and operational vision and plans for the proposed charter school, demonstrate the founding group’s

capacity to execute the vision and plans, and provide the state board or the university of northern Iowa a clear basis for assessing the founding group's plans and capacity.

2. The state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall adopt rules to establish appropriate application timelines and deadlines for the submission of charter school applications under this section.

3. The instructions for completing an application shall include or otherwise inform applicants of all of the following:

a. The performance framework adopted by the state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, for charter school oversight and evaluation requirements in accordance with sections 256E.9 and 256E.10.

b. The criteria the state board or the university of northern Iowa will use in evaluating applications.

c. The requirements concerning the format and content essential for applicants to demonstrate the capacities necessary to establish and operate a successful charter school.

5. If the founding group proposes to establish a charter school by converting an existing attendance center of the school district, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall not approve the application unless the founding group submits evidence that the attendance center's teachers and parents or guardians of students enrolled at the existing attendance center voted in favor of the conversion. A vote in favor of conversion under this subsection requires the support of a majority of the teachers employed at the school on the date of the vote and a majority of the parents or guardians voting whose children are enrolled at the school, provided that a majority of the parents or guardians eligible to vote participate in the ballot process. The state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall establish procedures by rule for voting under this subsection. A parent or guardian voting in accordance with this subsection must be a resident of this state.

6. In reviewing and evaluating charter school applications, the state board and the university of northern Iowa shall employ procedures, practices, and criteria consistent with nationally recognized principles and standards for reviewing charter school applications. Each application review shall include thorough evaluation of the written application, an in-person interview with the founding group, and an opportunity in a public forum for local residents to learn about and provide input on each application.

7. Following review of a charter school application and completion of the process required under subsection 6, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall do all of the following:

a. Approve a charter school application only if the founding group has demonstrated competence in each element of the approval criteria and if the founding group is likely to open and operate a successful charter school.

b. Make application decisions on documented evidence collected through the application review process.

c. Adhere to the policies and criteria that are transparent, based on merit, and avoid conflicts of interest or any appearance thereof.

8. The state board or the university of northern Iowa shall approve a charter school application if the application satisfies the requirements of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter. The state board or the university of northern Iowa shall approve or deny a charter school application no later than seventy-five calendar days after the application is received. If the state board or the university of northern Iowa denies an application, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall provide notice of denial to the founding group in writing within thirty days after the state board's or the university of northern Iowa's action. The notice shall specify the exact reasons for denial and provide documentation supporting those reasons. An approval decision may include, if appropriate, reasonable conditions that the founding group must meet before a charter school contract may be executed pursuant to section 256E.6. An approved charter application shall not serve as a charter school contract.

9. A decision of the state board or the university of northern Iowa relating to an application under this section is not appealable.

10. An unsuccessful applicant under this section may subsequently reapply to the state board or the university of northern Iowa.

Sec. 14. Section 256E.4, subsection 4, paragraph ab, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

*ab.* The specific statutes and administrative rules with which the charter school does not intend to comply. The department, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall provide technical assistance to the applicant concerning statutes and administrative rules that may be waived under the charter school contract in order to facilitate the goals of the charter school.

Sec. 15. Section 256E.5, subsections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. A founding group may apply to the state board or the university of northern Iowa for approval to establish and operate a charter school within the boundaries of the state that operates as a new attendance center independently from a public school district. The application shall demonstrate the founding group's academic and operational vision and plans for the proposed charter school, demonstrate the founding group's capacity to execute the vision and plans, and provide the state board or the university of northern Iowa a clear basis for assessing the founding group's plans and capacity.

2. The state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall adopt rules to establish appropriate application timelines and deadlines for the submission of charter school applications under this section.

3. The instructions for completing an application shall include or otherwise inform applicants of all of the following:

*a.* The performance framework adopted by the state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, for charter school oversight and evaluation requirements in accordance with sections 256E.9 and 256E.10.

*b.* The criteria the state board or the university of northern Iowa will use in evaluating applications.

*c.* The requirements concerning the format and content essential for applicants to demonstrate the capacities necessary to establish and operate a successful charter school.

5. In reviewing and evaluating charter school applications, the state board and the university of northern Iowa shall employ procedures, practices, and criteria consistent with nationally recognized principles and standards for reviewing charter school applications. Each application review shall include thorough evaluation of the written application, an in-person interview with the applicant, and an opportunity in a public forum for local residents of the public school district within which the applicant proposes to locate the charter school to learn about and provide input on each application.

6. Following review of a charter school application and completion of the process required under subsection 5, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall do all of the following:

*a.* Approve a charter school application only if the applicant has demonstrated competence in each element of the state board's or the university of northern Iowa's published approval criteria and the applicant is likely to open and operate a successful charter school.

*b.* Make application decisions on documented evidence collected through the application review process.

*c.* Adhere to the policies and criteria that are transparent, based on merit, and avoid conflicts of interest or any appearance thereof.

8. The state board or the university of northern Iowa shall approve a charter school application if the application satisfies the requirements of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter. The state board or the university of northern Iowa shall approve or deny a charter school application no later than seventy-five calendar days after the application is received. If the state board or the university of northern Iowa denies an application, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall provide notice of denial to the applicant in writing within thirty days after board action. The notice shall specify the exact reasons for denial and provide documentation supporting those reasons. An approval decision may include,

if appropriate, reasonable conditions that the applicant must meet before a charter school contract may be executed pursuant to section 256E.6. An approved charter application shall not serve as a charter school contract.

9. An unsuccessful charter school applicant may subsequently reapply to the state board or the university of northern Iowa.

10. A decision of the state board or the university of northern Iowa relating to an application under this section is not appealable.

Sec. 16. Section 256E.5, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

**NEW SUBSECTION.** 1A. The governing board of a charter school that is approved under this section shall be designated a local education agency for the purpose of receiving federal funds for all attendance centers that are under the jurisdiction of the governing board.

Sec. 17. Section 256E.5, subsection 4, paragraph ab, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

*ab.* The specific statutes and administrative rules with which the charter school does not intend to comply. The department, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall provide technical assistance to the applicant concerning statutes and administrative rules that may be waived under the charter school contract in order to facilitate the goals of the charter school.

Sec. 18. Section 256E.6, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256E.6 Charter school contract.**

1. Within the later of thirty days following approval of a charter school application or upon the satisfaction of all reasonable conditions imposed on the applicant in the charter school approval, if any, an enforceable and renewable charter school contract shall be executed between the founding group and the state board or the university of northern Iowa, as applicable, setting forth the academic and operational performance expectations and measures by which the charter school will be evaluated pursuant to sections 256E.9 and 256E.10 and the other rights and duties of the parties.

2. An initial charter school contract shall be granted for a term of five school budget years, commencing with the school budget year in which the charter school opens. The charter school contract shall include the beginning and ending dates of the charter school contract term. An approved charter school ~~may delay its opening for a period of time not to exceed one school year in order to plan and prepare for the charter school's opening~~ shall open on the first day of the school year that is two school years immediately subsequent to the school year in which the charter school contract is executed under subsection 1; provided, however, that the approved charter school may open on the first day of the school year that is immediately subsequent to the school year in which the charter school contract is executed under subsection 1 if the approved charter school demonstrates adequate preparation to the state board or the university of northern Iowa. If the charter school requires an opening delay of more than ~~one school year~~ two school years immediately subsequent to the school year in which the charter school contract is executed under subsection 1, the charter school may request an extension from the state board or the university of northern Iowa.

3. Each charter school contract shall be signed by the president of the state board or the president of the university of northern Iowa, as applicable, and the president or appropriate officer of the governing body of the founding group.

4. Within fifteen days of the execution of a charter school contract entered into by the state board or the university of northern Iowa, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall notify the department and the department of management of the name of the charter school and any applicable education service provider, the proposed location of the charter school, and the charter school's first year projected enrollment.

5. A charter school approved under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall not commence operations without a valid charter school contract executed in accordance with this section and approved in an open session of the state board or by the university of northern Iowa.

6. The contract may provide for requirements or conditions to govern and monitor the start-up progress of an approved charter school ~~prior to the opening of the charter school from the date the charter school contract is executed through the date the charter school opens~~, including but not limited to conditions to ensure that the charter school meets all building, health, safety, insurance, and other legal requirements.

7. A charter school contract may be amended to govern multiple charter schools operated by the same applicant and approved by the state board ~~or the university of northern Iowa~~. However, each charter school that is part of a charter school contract shall be separate and distinct from any other charter school governed by the contract.

Sec. 19. Section 256E.7, subsection 1, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

In order to fulfill the charter school's public purpose, a charter school established under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall be organized as a nonprofit education organization and shall have all the powers necessary for carrying out the terms of the charter school contract including but not limited to the following, as applicable:

Sec. 20. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

A charter school established under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter is exempt from all state statutes and rules and any local rule, regulation, or policy, applicable to a noncharter school, except that the charter school shall do all of the following:

Sec. 21. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, paragraphs g, i, and w, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

g. Be subject to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as a school district. The audit shall be consistent with the requirements of sections 11.6, 11.14, 11.19, and 279.29, and section 256.9, subsection 20, except to the extent deviations are necessary because of the program at the school. The department, the university of northern Iowa, the auditor of state, or the legislative services agency may conduct financial, program, or compliance audits.

i. Provide instruction for at least the number of days or hours required by section 279.10, subsection 1, unless specifically waived by the state board ~~or the university of northern Iowa~~ as part of the application process.

w. Comply with the requirements of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 22. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, paragraph h, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

Be subject to and comply with the requirements of section 256.7, subsection 21, and the educational standards of section 256.11, unless specifically waived by the state board ~~or the university of northern Iowa~~ during the application process; provided, however, that the state board ~~or the university of northern Iowa~~ shall not waive any of the following educational standards:

Sec. 23. Section 256E.7, subsection 9, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

9. Individuals compensated by an education service provider are prohibited from serving as a voting member on the governing board of any charter school unless the state board ~~or the university of northern Iowa~~ waives such prohibition.

Sec. 24. Section 256E.8, subsections 1 and 4, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. Each student enrolled in a charter school established under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall be counted, for state school foundation purposes, in the student's district of residence pursuant to section 257.6, subsection 1, paragraph "a", subparagraph (9), including any applicable amounts under section 256B.9. For purposes of this section, residence means a residence under section 282.1.

4. If necessary, and pursuant to rules adopted by the state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, funding amounts required under this section for the first

school year of a new charter school shall be based on enrollment estimates for the charter school included in the charter school contract. The department, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall adopt rules to establish a process for determining estimated enrollments for charter school funding purposes in school years after the first school year of a charter school. Amounts paid using estimated enrollments shall be reconciled during subsequent payments based on actual enrollment of the charter school during each school year.

Sec. 25. Section 256E.9, subsection 1, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

The performance provisions within the charter school contract shall be based on a performance framework adopted by the state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the evaluation of the charter school by the state board or the university of northern Iowa, without compromising individual student privacy. The performance framework shall include but is not limited to indicators, measures, and metrics for all of the following:

Sec. 26. Section 256E.9, subsections 2 and 5, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

2. Annual performance targets shall be agreed upon between each charter school and the state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, if applicable. Such performance targets shall be contained in the charter school contract and shall be designed to help each charter school meet applicable federal, state, and local standards. The performance targets contained in the charter school contract may be amended by mutual agreement after the charter school is operating and has collected initial achievement data for the charter school's students.

5. Each charter school established under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall be evaluated and graded by the department pursuant to the attendance center performance ranking system developed and adopted by the department.

Sec. 27. Section 256E.10, subsections 1, 2, 6, 8, 12, and 13, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. The state board and the university of northern Iowa shall monitor the performance and compliance of each charter school ~~the state board approves~~ approved by the state board or the university of northern Iowa, including collecting and analyzing data according to the charter school contract in order to meet the requirements of this ~~chapter subchapter~~. Such oversight may include inquiries and investigation of the charter school so long as the activities are consistent with the intent of this ~~chapter subchapter~~, adhere to the terms of the charter school contract, and do not unduly inhibit the autonomy granted to the charter school. Any performance report resulting from an inquiry or investigation under this section shall, upon conclusion of such action, be included in the annual report required under section 256E.12.

2. As part of the charter school contract, the charter school shall submit an annual report to the state board or the university of northern Iowa to assist the state board or the university of northern Iowa in evaluating the charter school's performance and compliance with the performance framework.

6. Annually, by June 30, the state board or the university of northern Iowa, as applicable, shall issue a charter school performance report and charter school contract renewal application guidance to each charter school whose charter school contract will expire during the following school budget year. The performance report shall summarize the charter school's performance record to date based on the data required by the charter school contract and by this ~~chapter subchapter~~ and shall identify concerns that may jeopardize renewal of the charter school contract if not remedied. The charter school shall have sixty days to respond to the performance report and submit any corrections or clarifications for the report.

8. No later than October 1, the governing board of a charter school seeking renewal shall submit a renewal application to the state board or the university of northern Iowa

pursuant to the renewal application guidance. A renewal or denial shall be approved by resolution of the state board, or by the university of northern Iowa, within sixty days following the filing of the renewal application.

12. A decision to revoke or to not renew a charter school contract shall be by resolution of the state board, or by the university of northern Iowa, and shall clearly state the reasons for the revocation or nonrenewal.

13. If a charter school has been evaluated and graded to be in the exceptional category, or the highest rated category under a succeeding evaluation system, under the evaluation and grading required under section 256E.9, subsection 5, for the immediately preceding two school years, and the charter school is in compliance with the current charter school contract and all provisions of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter, the charter school's application renewal under subsection 8 shall be renewed for an additional period of time equal to the length of the original charter school contract or the most recent renewal of the contract, whichever is longer, unless the state board or the university of northern Iowa provides written notice to the charter school of the state board's or the university of northern Iowa's rejection of the expedited renewal within sixty days of the filing of the application. The state board or the university of northern Iowa shall not reject an expedited renewal application unless the state board or the university of northern Iowa finds exceptional circumstances for the rejection or seeks material changes to the charter school contract.

Sec. 28. Section 256E.10, subsection 9, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

Unless eligible for expedited renewal under subsection 13, when reviewing a charter school contract renewal application, the state board or the university of northern Iowa shall do all of the following:

Sec. 29. Section 256E.10, subsection 10, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

A charter school contract may be revoked at any time or not renewed if the state board or the university of northern Iowa determines that the charter school did any of the following:

Sec. 30. Section 256E.10, subsection 10, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

a. Committed a material violation of any of the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures required under the charter school contract or this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 31. Section 256E.10, subsection 11, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

The state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall develop charter school contract revocation and nonrenewal standards and procedures that do all of the following:

Sec. 32. Section 256E.11, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. Prior to any charter school closure decision, the state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall develop a charter school closure protocol to ensure timely notice to parents and guardians, provide for the orderly transition of students and student records to new schools, and to provide proper disposition of school funds, property, and assets in accordance with the requirements of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter. The protocol shall specify required actions and timelines and identify responsible parties for each such action.

Sec. 33. Section 256E.12, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256E.12 Reports.**

1. Each charter school shall prepare and file an annual report with the department. The department, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall prescribe by rule the required contents of the report, but each such report shall include information regarding student achievement, including annual academic growth and proficiency,

graduation rates, and financial performance and sustainability. The reports are public records and the examination, publication, and dissemination of the reports are governed by the provisions of chapter 22.

2. The state board, in consultation with the university of northern Iowa, shall prepare and file with the general assembly by December 1, annually, a comprehensive report with findings and recommendations relating to the charter school program in the state and whether the charter school program under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter is meeting the goals and purposes of the program. The report also shall contain, for each charter school, a copy of the charter school's mission statement, attendance statistics and dropout rate, aggregate assessment test scores, projections of financial stability, and the number and qualifications of teachers and administrators.

Sec. 34. Section 256F.1, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. Charter schools ~~and innovation zone schools~~ shall be part of the state's program of public education.

Sec. 35. Section 256F.1, subsection 3, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

The purpose of a charter school ~~or an innovation zone school~~ established pursuant to this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall be to accomplish the following:

Sec. 36. Section 256F.1, subsection 4, Code 2026, is amended by striking the subsection.

Sec. 37. Section 256F.2, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

As used in this ~~chapter~~ subchapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

Sec. 38. Section 256F.2, subsections 1 and 3, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. "Advisory council" means a council appointed by the school board of directors of a charter school ~~or an innovation zone consortium~~ pursuant to section 256F.5, subsection 4.

3. "Charter school" means a charter school established in accordance with this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 39. Section 256F.2, subsections 5 and 6, Code 2026, are amended by striking the subsections.

Sec. 40. Section 256F.3, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256F.3 Application Monitoring — no new approvals — adoption of rules.**

1. The department shall monitor the effectiveness of charter schools ~~and innovation zone schools~~ and shall implement the applicable provisions of this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

~~2. a. To receive approval to establish a charter school in accordance with this chapter, the principal, teachers, or parents or guardians of students at an existing public school shall submit an application to the school board to convert an existing attendance center to a charter school. An attendance center shall not enter into a charter school contract with a school district under this chapter unless the attendance center is located within the school district. The application shall demonstrate the support of at least fifty percent of the teachers employed at the school on the date of the submission of the application and fifty percent of the parents or guardians voting whose children are enrolled at the school, provided that a majority of the parents or guardians eligible to vote participate in the ballot process, according to procedures established by rules of the state board.~~

~~b. To receive approval to establish an innovation zone school in accordance with this chapter, an innovation zone consortium shall submit an application to the state board which demonstrates the support of at least fifty percent of the teachers employed at each proposed innovation zone school on the date of the submission of the application and fifty percent of the parents or guardians voting whose children are enrolled at each proposed innovation zone school, provided that a majority of the parents or guardians eligible to vote participate in the ballot process, according to procedures established by rules of the state board.~~

~~e. A parent or guardian voting in accordance with this subsection must be a resident of this state.~~

~~3. A school board shall receive and review all applications for converting an existing building or creating a new building for a charter school. Applications received on or before October 1 of a calendar year shall be considered for charter schools to be established at the beginning of the school district's next school year or at a time agreed to by the applicant and the school board. However, a school board may receive and consider applications after October 1 at its discretion.~~

~~4. A school board shall by a majority vote approve or deny an application relating to a charter school no later than sixty calendar days after the application is received. An application approved by a school board and subsequently approved by the state board pursuant to subsection 6 shall constitute, at a minimum, an agreement between the school board and the charter school for the operation of the charter school. A school board that denies an application for a conversion to a charter school shall provide notice of denial to the applicant in writing within thirty days after board action. The notice shall specify the exact reasons for denial and provide documentation supporting those reasons.~~

~~5. An applicant may appeal school board denial of the applicant's charter school application to the state board in accordance with the procedures set forth in chapter 290. The state board shall affirm, modify, or reverse the school board's decision on the basis of the information provided in the application indicating the ability and willingness of the proposed charter school to meet the requirements of section 256F.1, subsection 3, and section 256F.4.~~

~~6. Upon approval of an application for the proposed establishment of a charter school, the school board shall submit an application for approval to establish the charter school to the state board in accordance with section 256F.5.~~

~~7. An application submitted to the state board pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph "b", or subsection 6 shall set forth the manner in which the charter school or innovation zone school will provide special instruction, in accordance with section 280.4, to students who are English learners. The application shall set forth the manner in which the charter school or innovation zone school will comply with federal and state laws and regulations relating to the federal National School Lunch Act and the federal Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. §1751-1785, and chapter 283A. The state board shall approve only those applications that meet the requirements specified in section 256F.1, subsection 3, and sections 256F.4 and 256F.5. The state board may deny an application if the state board deems that approval of the application is not in the best interest of the affected students.~~

~~8. The state board shall approve not more than ten innovation zone consortium applications.~~

~~9. 2. The state board shall not approve a new charter school under this chapter subchapter on or after July 1, 2021.~~

~~10. 3. The state board shall adopt rules in accordance with chapter 17A for the implementation of this chapter subchapter. If federal rules or regulations relating to the distribution or utilization of federal funds allocated to the department pursuant to this section are adopted that are inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter subchapter, the state board shall adopt rules to comply with the requirements of the federal rules or regulations. The state board shall identify inconsistencies between federal and state rules and regulations as provided in this subsection and shall submit recommendations for legislative action to the chairpersons and ranking members of the senate and house standing committees on education at the next meeting of the general assembly.~~

Sec. 41. Section 256F.4, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended by striking the subsection.

Sec. 42. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

Although a charter school or innovation zone school may elect to comply with one or more provisions of statute or administrative rule, a charter school or innovation zone school is exempt from all statutes and rules applicable to a school, a school board, or a school district, except that the charter school or innovation zone school shall do all of the following:

Sec. 43. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, paragraphs a and h, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

a. Meet all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements and laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ancestry, or disability. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ located within the boundaries of a school district subject to court-ordered desegregation at the time the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ application is approved shall be subject to the desegregation order unless otherwise specifically provided for in the desegregation order.

h. Be subject to and comply with chapter 284 relating to the student achievement and teacher quality program. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ that complies with chapter 284 shall receive state moneys or be eligible to receive state moneys calculated as provided in section 257.10, subsections 9 and 10, and section 257.37A as if it did not operate under a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ contract.

Sec. 44. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. v. Be subject to and comply with the requirements of section 256E.9 related to the incorporation into the charter school contract of a performance framework that is used by the state board to evaluate the charter school in the same manner as a charter school established under subchapter I.

Sec. 45. Section 256F.4, subsections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

3. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall not discriminate in its student admissions policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a person with a disability. However, a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ may limit admission to students who are within a particular range of ages or grade levels or on any other basis that would be legal if initiated by a school district. Enrollment priority shall be given to the siblings of students enrolled in a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~.

4. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall enroll an eligible resident student who submits a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, students must be accepted by lot. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ may enroll an eligible nonresident student who submits a timely application in accordance with the student admission policy established pursuant to section 256F.5, subsection 1. If the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ enrolls an eligible nonresident student, the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall notify the school district of residence and the sending district not later than March 1 of the preceding school year. Transportation for the student shall be in accordance with section 282.18, subsection 10. The sending district shall make payments to the charter school ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ in the manner required under section 282.18, subsection 7. ~~If the nonresident pupil is also an eligible pupil under section 261E.6, the innovation zone consortium shall pay the tuition reimbursement amount to an eligible postsecondary institution as provided in section 261E.7.~~

5. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall provide instruction for at least the number of days or hours required by section 279.10, subsection 1.

6. Notwithstanding subsection 2, a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall meet the requirements of section 256.7, subsection 21.

7. ~~a.~~ A charter school shall be considered a part of the school district in which it is located for purposes of state school foundation aid pursuant to chapter 257.

~~b.~~ ~~Students enrolled in an innovation zone school shall be counted, for state school foundation aid purposes, in the student's district of residence.~~

8. A charter school ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ may enter into contracts in accordance with chapter 26.

Sec. 46. Section 256F.5, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

An application to the state board for the approval of a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall include but shall not be limited to a description of the following:

Sec. 47. Section 256F.5, subsections 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. The method for admission to the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~.
2. The mission, purpose, innovation, and specialized focus of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~.
4. The method for appointing or forming an advisory council for the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~. The membership of an advisory council appointed or formed in accordance with this ~~chapter~~ subchapter shall not include more than one member of a participating school board.
6. The charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ governance and bylaws.
7. The financial plan for the operation of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ including, at a minimum, a listing of the support services the school district ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ will provide, and the charter school ~~or innovation zone school's~~ revenues, budgets, and expenditures.
10. The organization of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ in terms of ages of students or grades to be taught along with an estimate of the total enrollment of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~.
12. A statement indicating how the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ will meet the requirements of section 256F.1, as applicable; section 256F.4, subsection 2, paragraph "a"; and section 256F.4, subsection 3.
13. Assurance of the assumption of liability by the charter school ~~or the innovation zone consortium for the innovation zone school~~.
14. The types and amounts of insurance coverage to be obtained by the charter school ~~or innovation zone consortium for the innovation zone school~~.
15. A plan of operation to be implemented if the charter school ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ revokes or fails to renew its contract.
16. The means, costs, and plan for providing transportation for students enrolled in the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~.
17. The specific statutes, administrative rules, and school board policies with which the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ does not intend to comply.

Sec. 48. Section 256F.6, subsections 1 and 3, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. *a.* An approved charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ application shall constitute an agreement, the terms of which shall, at a minimum, be the terms of a ~~four-year~~ five-year enforceable, renewable contract between a school board, ~~or the boards participating in an innovation zone consortium,~~ and the state board. ~~The contract shall include an operating agreement for the operation of the charter school or innovation zone school.~~ The terms of the contract may be revised at any time with the approval of both the state board and the school board ~~or the boards participating in the innovation zone consortium~~, whether or not the stated provisions of the contract are being fulfilled. The contract must include all of the following:

- (1) An operating agreement for the operation of the charter school.
- (2) A performance framework as required under section 256F.4, subsection 2, paragraph "v".

*b.* A contract may be renewed by agreement of the school board ~~or the boards participating in an innovation zone consortium,~~ as applicable, and the state board.

*c.* The charter school ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ shall provide parents and guardians of students enrolled in the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ with a copy of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ application approved pursuant to section 256F.5.

3. The state board of education shall provide by rule for the ongoing review of each party's compliance with a contract entered into in accordance with this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Sec. 49. Section 256F.7, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256F.7 Employment and related matters.**

1. A charter school ~~or the boards participating in an innovation zone consortium~~ shall employ or contract with necessary teachers and administrators, as defined in section 256.145, who hold a valid license with an endorsement for the type of service for which the teacher or administrator is employed.

2. The school board ~~or innovation zone consortium, as specified in the application,~~ in consultation with the advisory council, shall decide matters related to the operation of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school,~~ including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures.

3. ~~a.~~ Employees of a charter school shall be considered employees of the school district.

~~b.~~ Employees of an innovation zone school shall be considered employees of a board participating in the innovation zone consortium.

Sec. 50. Section 256F.8, subsections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

1. A contract for the establishment of a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ may be revoked by the state board, ~~or the school board that established the charter school, or the innovation zone consortium that established the innovation zone school~~ if the appropriate board ~~or consortium~~ determines that one or more of the following occurred:

a. Failure of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ to abide by and meet the provisions set forth in the contract, including educational goals.

b. Failure of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ to comply with all applicable law.

c. Failure of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ to meet generally accepted public sector accounting principles.

d. The existence of one or more other grounds for revocation as specified in the contract.

e. Assessment of student progress, which is administered in accordance with state and locally determined indicators established pursuant to rules adopted by the state board, does not show improvement in student progress over that which existed in the same student population prior to the establishment of the charter school ~~or the innovation zone school~~.

2. The decision by a school board ~~or an innovation zone consortium~~ to revoke or to fail to take action to renew a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ contract is subject to appeal under procedures set forth in chapter 290.

3. A school board ~~or a board participating in an innovation zone consortium~~ that is considering revocation or nonrenewal of a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ contract shall notify the advisory council, the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~, and the teachers and administrators employed by the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~, sixty days prior to revoking or the date by which the contract must be renewed, but not later than the last day of classes in the school year.

4. If the state board determines that a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ is in substantial violation of the terms of the contract, the state board shall notify the school board ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ and the advisory council of its intention to revoke the contract at least sixty days prior to revoking a contract and the school board ~~or the school boards participating in the innovation zone consortium~~ shall assume oversight authority, operational authority, or both oversight and operational authority. The notice shall state the grounds for the proposed action in writing and in reasonable detail. The school board ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ may request in writing an informal hearing before the state board within fourteen days of receiving notice of revocation of the contract. Upon receiving a timely written request for a hearing, the state board shall give reasonable notice to the school board ~~or innovation zone consortium~~ of the hearing date. The state board shall conduct an informal hearing before taking final action. Final action to revoke a contract shall be taken in a manner least disruptive to students enrolled in the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~. The state board shall take final action to revoke

or approve continuation of a contract by the last day of classes in the school year. If the final action to revoke a contract under this section occurs prior to the last day of classes in the school year, a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ student may enroll in the resident district.

6. A school board revoking a contract or a school board, ~~innovation zone consortium~~, or advisory council that fails to renew a contract under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ is not liable for that action to the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~, a student enrolled in the charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ or the student's parent or guardian, or any other person.

Sec. 51. Section 256F.9, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256F.9 Procedures after revocation — student enrollment.**

If a charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ contract is revoked in accordance with this ~~chapter subchapter~~, a nonresident student who attended the school, and any siblings of the student may submit an application to another school district according to section 282.18. Applications and notices required by section 282.18 shall be processed and provided in a prompt manner.

Sec. 52. Section 256F.10, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256F.10 Reports.**

1. A charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~ shall report at least annually to the school board ~~or innovation zone consortium~~, advisory council, and the state board the information required by the school board ~~or innovation zone consortium~~, advisory council, or the state board. The reports are public records subject to chapter 22.

2. Not later than December 1 annually, the state board shall submit a comprehensive report with findings and recommendations to the general assembly. The report shall evaluate the state's charter school ~~and innovation zone school~~ programs generally, including but not limited to an evaluation of whether the charter schools ~~and innovation zone schools~~ are fulfilling the purposes set forth in section 256F.4, subsection 2. The report also shall contain, for each charter school ~~or innovation zone school~~, a copy of the charter school ~~or innovation zone school's~~ mission statement, attendance statistics and dropout rate, aggregate assessment test scores, projections of financial stability, the number and qualifications of teachers and administrators, and number of and comments on supervisory visits by the department of education.

Sec. 53. Section 256F.12, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**256F.12 Operation of existing charter schools.**

Charter schools established under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ prior to July 1, 2021, shall continue to operate under and be subject to the requirements of this ~~chapter subchapter~~ and shall not be subject to ~~chapter 256E subchapter I~~.

Sec. 54. Section 257.6, subsection 1, paragraph a, subparagraph (9), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

(9) Resident pupils enrolled in a charter school under chapter 256E ~~or 256F~~.

Sec. 55. Section 280.36, subsection 3, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

3. The board of directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school may enter into an agreement with another school district, accredited nonpublic school, ~~or charter school, or innovation zone school~~ to create a multidisciplinary school safety assessment team that shall coordinate resources among the schools and assess and intervene when a student enrolled in either school exhibits behavior that may pose a threat to the safety of either school, employees of either school, or students enrolled in either school.

Sec. 56. Section 282.9, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. Notwithstanding sections 256E.7, ~~256F.4~~ 256E.23, 275.55A, and 282.18, or any other provision to the contrary, prior to knowingly enrolling an individual who is required to register as a sex offender under chapter 692A, but who is otherwise eligible to enroll in

a public school, the board of directors of a school district shall determine the educational placement of the individual. Upon receipt of notice that a student who is enrolled in the district is required to register as a sex offender under chapter 692A, the board shall determine the educational placement of the student. The tentative agenda for the meeting of the board of directors at which the board will consider such enrollment or educational placement shall specifically state that the board is considering the enrollment or educational placement of an individual who is required to register as a sex offender under chapter 692A. If the individual is denied enrollment in a school district under this section, the school district of residence shall provide the individual with educational services in an alternative setting.

Sec. 57. Section 282.18, subsection 11, paragraph a, subparagraph (8), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

(8) If the pupil participates in open enrollment because of circumstances that meet the definition of good cause. For purposes of this section, “good cause” means a change in a child’s residence due to a change in family residence, a change in a child’s residence from the residence of one parent or guardian to the residence of a different parent or guardian, a change in the state in which the family residence is located, a change in a child’s parents’ marital status, a guardianship or custody proceeding, placement in foster care, adoption, participation in a foreign exchange program, initial placement of a prekindergarten student in a special education program requiring specially designed instruction, or participation in a substance use disorder or mental health treatment program, a change in the status of a child’s resident district such as removal of accreditation by the state board, surrender of accreditation, or permanent closure of a nonpublic school, revocation of a charter school contract as provided in section 256E.10 or ~~256F.8~~ 256E.27, the failure of negotiations for a whole grade sharing, reorganization, dissolution agreement, or the rejection of a current whole grade sharing agreement, or reorganization plan.

Sec. 58. Section 297.24, subsection 3, paragraph d, Code 2026, is amended by striking the paragraph.

Sec. 59. CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVE — TRANSFERS — NEW SUBCHAPTERS.

1. The Code editor is directed to make the following transfers:
  - a. Section 256F.1 to section 256E.20.
  - b. Section 256F.2 to section 256E.21.
  - c. Section 256F.3 to section 256E.22.
  - d. Section 256F.4 to section 256E.23.
  - e. Section 256F.5 to section 256E.24.
  - f. Section 256F.6 to section 256E.25.
  - g. Section 256F.7 to section 256E.26.
  - h. Section 256F.8 to section 256E.27.
  - i. Section 256F.9 to section 256E.28.
  - j. Section 256F.10 to section 256E.29.
  - k. Section 256F.12 to section 256E.30.
2. The Code editor is directed to create two new subchapters in chapter 256E as follows:
  - a. Subchapter I shall be entitled “Charter Schools” and include sections 256E.1 through 256E.13.
  - b. Subchapter II shall be entitled “Legacy Charter Schools” and include sections 256E.20 through 256E.30.
3. The Code editor is directed to make changes in any Code sections or other noncodified enactments amended or enacted by any other Act to correspond with the changes made in this Act if there appears to be no doubt as to the proper method of making the changes and the changes would not be contrary to or inconsistent with the purposes of this Act or any other Act.

Sec. 60. APPLICABILITY. The following applies to charter school contracts that are executed or renewed pursuant to chapter 256E on or after the effective date of this

division of this Act:

The section of this division of this Act amending section 256E.6.

Sec. 61. APPLICABILITY. The following apply to charter school contracts entered into under section 256F.6 between a school board and the state board of education that are renewed on or after the effective date of this division of this Act:

1. The section of this division of this Act amending section 256F.4, subsection 2, by requiring charter schools to incorporate a performance framework into the charter school contract.

2. The section of this division of this Act amending section 256F.6, subsection 1, paragraph “a”.

## DIVISION II FUNDING AND AREA EDUCATION AGENCY SERVICES

Sec. 62. Section 256E.8, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

a. The charter school in which the student is enrolled shall receive under paragraph “c” an amount equal to the sum of the regular program state cost per pupil for the budget year plus the teacher leadership supplement state cost per pupil, the teacher salary supplement state cost per pupil, the professional development supplement state cost per pupil, and the early intervention supplement state cost per pupil for the budget year as provided in section 257.9 plus any moneys that would be due to the school district of residence for the student as a result of the non-English speaking weighting under section 280.4, subsection 3, for the budget year multiplied by the state cost per pupil for the budget year. If a student is an eligible pupil under section 261E.6, the charter school shall pay the tuition reimbursement amount to an eligible postsecondary institution as provided in section 261E.7.

Sec. 63. Section 257.35, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 21A. The director of the department of management may deduct the following from the state aid due to each school district pursuant to this chapter and shall pay the amounts to the respective area education agencies on a monthly basis from September 15 through June 15 during each school year for purposes of providing services to students enrolled in charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, within the boundaries of the area education agency:

a. The amount calculated for media services for the school district that is attributable to the number of students enrolled in charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, within the school district who are provided with media services by an area education agency.

b. The amount calculated for educational services for the school district that is attributable to the number of students enrolled in charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, within the school district who are provided with educational services by an area education agency.

Sec. 64. Section 273.2, subsection 3, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

a. The area education agency shall furnish educational services and programs as provided in section 273.1, this section, sections 273.3 through 273.8, and chapter 256B to pupils enrolled in public or nonpublic schools which are on the list of accredited schools pursuant to section 256.11, and to pupils enrolled in charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, which request to receive such services. The programs and services provided shall be at least commensurate with programs and services existing on July 1, 1974. The programs and services provided to pupils enrolled in nonpublic schools shall be comparable to programs and services provided to pupils enrolled in public schools within constitutional guidelines.

Sec. 65. Section 273.2, subsection 4, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

4. The area education agency shall provide for special education services and media services for school districts and shall encourage and assist school districts to establish programs for gifted and talented children. The area education agency shall provide for media services for charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I. The area education agency shall assist in facilitating interlibrary loans of materials between school districts and other libraries.

Sec. 66. APPLICABILITY. The following apply to school budget years beginning on or after July 1, 2026:

1. The section of this division of this Act amending section 256E.8, subsection 2, paragraph “a”.
2. The section of this division of this Act amending section 257.35.

### DIVISION III EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Sec. 67. Section 280.13D, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**280.13D Participation in extracurricular interscholastic athletic contests or competitions and extracurricular activities provided by public schools.**

1. *a.* The board of directors of a school district shall allow a student who resides within the school district, and who is enrolled in a nonpublic school or a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, to participate in any extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition, and any extracurricular activity, including theater, show choir, and band, that is provided by the school district pursuant to the terms of an agreement between the board of directors of the school district and the authorities in charge of the nonpublic school or the governing board of the charter school, as applicable, that provides for the eligibility of the student, if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

(1) The extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition or extracurricular activity has not been provided by the nonpublic school or the charter school during the two immediately preceding school years.

(2) The nonpublic school or charter school has not entered into an agreement under section 280.13A with another school district, nonpublic school, or charter school that provides for the eligibility of students enrolled in the nonpublic school or charter school to participate in the extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition or any extracurricular activity that is being provided by that school district, nonpublic school, or charter school.

*b.* The board of directors of a school district shall allow a student who resides within a contiguous school district, and who is enrolled in a nonpublic school or a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, to participate in any extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition and any extracurricular activity that is provided by the school district pursuant to the terms of an agreement between the board of directors of the school district and the authorities in charge of the nonpublic school or the governing board of the charter school, as applicable, that provides for the eligibility of the student, if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

(1) The extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition or extracurricular activity has not been provided by the nonpublic school or charter school, or by the student’s school district of residence, during the two immediately preceding school years.

(2) The nonpublic school or charter school has not entered into an agreement under section 280.13A with another school district, nonpublic school, or charter school that provides for the eligibility of students enrolled in the nonpublic school or charter school to participate in the extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition or extracurricular activity that is being provided by that school district, nonpublic school, or charter school.

*c.* If the board of directors of a school district has established a fee for the cost of a student’s participation in an extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition or extracurricular activity, a student who is enrolled in a nonpublic school or a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, and is participating in a ~~contest~~

~~or competition~~ an extracurricular interscholastic contest or competition or extracurricular activity at a public school pursuant to paragraph “a” or “b”, or the student’s parent or guardian, shall be responsible for the payment of such fee. The amount of such fee shall not exceed the amount of the fee the board of directors of the school district has established for students who are enrolled in the school district.

2. A student who is enrolled in a nonpublic school or a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, and is participating in ~~a contest or competition~~ an extracurricular interscholastic contest or competition or extracurricular activity at a public school pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph “a” or “b”, shall participate under the same conditions as a student who is enrolled in the school district, including meeting the school district’s student code of conduct requirements.

3. A student who participates in an extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition or extracurricular activity pursuant to this section shall be deemed to satisfy the residence requirements for purposes of section 256.46.

#### DIVISION IV DRIVER EDUCATION

Sec. 68. Section 321.178, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

c. (1) (a) Every public school district in Iowa shall offer or make available to all students residing in the school district, or Iowa students attending a nonpublic school or receiving competent private instruction or independent private instruction as defined in section 299A.1, in the district, an approved course in driver education.

(b) (i) Every public school district in Iowa shall offer or make available to all Iowa students residing in the school district who attend a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, an approved course in driver education pursuant to policies established by the public school district. The charter school shall be responsible for the payment of all of the school district’s costs associated with providing the approved course in driver education to such students.

(ii) Every charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, shall offer or make available to all students attending the charter school an approved course in driver education.

(c) The receiving district shall be the school district responsible for making driver education available to a student participating in open enrollment under section 282.18.

(2) The courses may be offered at sites other than at the public school or charter school, including nonpublic school facilities within the public school districts. An approved course offered during the summer months, on Saturdays, after regular school hours during the regular terms or partly in one term or summer vacation period and partly in the succeeding term or summer vacation period, as the case may be, shall satisfy the requirements of this section to the same extent as an approved course offered during the regular school hours of the school term. A student who successfully completes and obtains certification in an approved course in driver education or an approved course in motorcycle education may, upon proof of such fact, be excused from any field test which the student would otherwise be required to take in demonstrating the student’s ability to operate a motor vehicle. A student shall not be excused from any field test if a parent, guardian, or instructor requests that a test be administered. A final field test prior to a student’s completion of an approved course shall be administered by a person qualified to provide street or highway driving instruction under paragraph “b”, subparagraph (2).

#### DIVISION V IOWA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES’ RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Sec. 69. Section 97B.1A, subsection 8, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subparagraph:

NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (13) Persons employed by a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, that satisfies all applicable requirements under federal law for participation in the retirement system.

Sec. 70. Section 97B.1A, subsection 9, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

a. “Employer” means the state of Iowa, the counties, municipalities, agencies, public school districts, charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, that satisfy all applicable requirements under federal law for participation in the retirement system, all political subdivisions, and all of their departments and instrumentalities, including area agencies on aging, other than those employing persons as specified in subsection 8, paragraph “b”, subparagraph (7), and joint planning commissions created under chapter 28E or 28I.

Sec. 71. Section 256E.11, subsection 2, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

2. In the event of a charter school closure, the assets of the charter school shall be used first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for employees of the school and any liabilities due and owing to the Iowa public employees’ retirement system, then to creditors of the school, then to the public school district in which the charter school operated, if applicable, and then to the state general fund. If the assets of the charter school are insufficient to pay all obligations of the charter school, the prioritization of the distribution of assets shall be consistent with this subsection and otherwise determined by the district court.

#### DIVISION VI CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

Sec. 72. **NEW SECTION. 16.163 Charter school facilities revolving loan program fund — credit enhancement agreements.**

1. a. A charter school facilities revolving loan program fund is created within the authority to assist charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, in acquiring suitable school facilities. The moneys in the charter school facilities revolving loan program fund are appropriated to the authority for use in the development and operation of a charter school facilities revolving loan program to assist charter schools in purchasing, acquiring, developing, reconstructing, remodeling, or replacing school buildings.

b. Moneys transferred by the authority for deposit in the charter school facilities revolving loan program fund, moneys appropriated to the charter school facilities revolving loan program, and any other moneys available to and obtained or accepted by the authority for placement in the charter school facilities revolving loan program fund shall be deposited in the fund. Additionally, payment of interest, recaptures of awards, and other repayments to the charter school facilities revolving loan program fund shall be deposited in the fund. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or earnings on moneys in the charter school facilities revolving loan program fund shall be credited to the fund. Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the end of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain available for the same purpose in the succeeding fiscal year.

c. The authority shall annually allocate moneys available in the charter school facilities revolving loan program fund to assist charter schools in purchasing, acquiring, developing, reconstructing, remodeling, or replacing school buildings.

2. In addition to the charter school facilities revolving loan program authorized pursuant to subsection 1, the authority is authorized to make or enter into a liquidity or credit enhancement agreement with a charter school established pursuant to chapter 256E, subchapter I, to assist the charter school in purchasing, acquiring, developing, reconstructing, remodeling, or replacing school buildings.

Sec. 73. **CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVE.** The Code editor shall designate section 16.163, as enacted in this division of this Act, as a new section within chapter 16, subchapter X, part 6, and may redesignate the preexisting part and correct internal references as necessary, including references to part headnotes.

DIVISION VII  
EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Sec. 74. Section 257.11B, subsections 3 and 4, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

3. a. (1) On or after January 1, but on or before June 30, preceding the school year for which the education savings account payment is requested, the parent or guardian of an eligible pupil may request an education savings account payment by submitting an application to the department of education.

(2) On or after October 15, but on or before November 15, preceding the semester for which the education savings account payment is requested, the parent or guardian of an eligible pupil may request an education savings account payment by submitting an application to the department of education.

b. ~~Within thirty days following~~ Following submission of an application, the department of education or third-party entity shall notify the parent or guardian of each pupil approved for the following school year or semester and specify the amount of the education savings account payment for the pupil, if known at the time of the notice. As soon as practical following the processing of all applications, the department of education or third-party entity shall determine the number of pupils in each school district approved for the school budget year and provide such information to the department of management.

c. Education savings account payments shall only be approved for one school year or one semester, as applicable, and applications must be submitted annually for payments in subsequent school years.

4. Each education savings account payment shall be equal to the regular program state cost per pupil for the same school budget year; provided, however, that an education savings account payment shall be equal to fifty percent of the regular program state cost per pupil for the same school budget year if the pupil's parent or guardian submitted an application under subsection 3, paragraph "a", subparagraph (2).

DIVISION VIII  
INDEPENDENT ACCREDITATION

Sec. 75. Section 256.11, subsection 16, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new paragraphs:

NEW PARAGRAPH. d. (1) If an approved independent accrediting agency deaccredits a nonpublic school, the nonpublic school shall not seek accreditation from an independent accrediting agency that is on the approved list pursuant to paragraph "a" for a period of three years beginning on the date the approved independent accrediting agency deaccredited the nonpublic school.

(2) If an approved independent accrediting agency deaccredits a nonpublic school, the nonpublic school may immediately seek accreditation under subsection 10.

NEW PARAGRAPH. e. (1) This subsection shall not be construed to authorize the state or any political subdivision of the state to exercise authority over any nonpublic school or construed to require a nonpublic school to modify its academic standards for admission or educational program.

(2) This section shall not be construed to expand the authority of the state or any political subdivision of the state to impose regulations upon any nonpublic school that are not necessary to implement this section.

(3) Rules adopted by the state board of education to implement this section that impose an undue burden on a nonpublic school are invalid.

(4) A nonpublic school shall be given the maximum freedom possible to provide for the educational needs of the school's students, consistent with state and federal law.

DIVISION IX  
SCHEDULE OF TEACHER TRAININGS AND LICENSURE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 76. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED TEACHER TRAINING AND LICENSURE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS.

1. The department of education shall convene and provide administrative support to a task force that shall study the training programs in which teachers in this state are required to participate pursuant to state law and the requirements associated with renewing a teaching license.

2. Any expense incurred by a member of the task force shall be the responsibility of the individual member or the respective entity represented by the member.

3. The task force shall submit its findings and recommendations to the general assembly on or before December 31, 2026. The recommendations must include specific recommendations related to how to change current law to create a more manageable training program schedule and licensure renewal requirement schedule for teachers.

DIVISION X  
STATEWIDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Sec. 77. Section 256.163, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

c. Preschool programs at school districts approved to participate in the preschool program, or at community-based providers approved to directly participate in the preschool program, under chapter 256C.

Sec. 78. Section 256C.1, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. “Approved local program” means a school district’s program or community-based provider’s program for four-year-old children approved by the department of education to provide high-quality high-quality preschool instruction.

Sec. 79. Section 256C.1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. “Community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program” means a community-based provider that meets the community-based provider requirements under section 256C.3 and has been approved by the department to directly participate in the preschool program. “Community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program” does not mean a community-based provider that partners with a school district’s approved local program.

Sec. 80. Section 256C.3, subsection 1, paragraph b, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

b. If space and funding are available, including funding from another school district account or fund from which preschool program expenditures are authorized by law, a school district approved to participate in the preschool program or community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program may enroll and pay the cost of attendance for a younger or older child in the preschool program; however, the child shall not be counted for state funding purposes.

Sec. 81. Section 256C.3, subsection 2, paragraph a, subparagraph (1), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

(1) The individual is either employed by or under contract with the school district, or with the community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program, that is implementing the program.

Sec. 82. Section 256C.3, subsection 3, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

The state board shall adopt rules to further define the following preschool program requirements which shall be used to determine whether or not a local program implemented by a school district approved to implement the preschool program or

a community-based provider directly approved to implement the preschool program qualifies as an approved local program:

Sec. 83. Section 256C.3, subsection 3, paragraph h, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

*h.* Provision for ensuring that children receiving care from other child care arrangements can participate in the preschool program with minimal disruption due to transportation and movement from one site to another. The children participating in the preschool program may be transported by the school district or community-based provider to activities associated with the program along with other children.

Sec. 84. Section 256C.3, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 4A. Community-based provider requirements. The state board shall adopt rules to further define the following requirements of community-based providers approved to directly participate in the preschool program in implementing the preschool program:

*a.* Methods of demonstrating readiness to implement high-quality instruction in the local program shall be identified.

*b.* A community-based provider shall participate in data collection and performance measurement processes and reporting as defined by rule.

*c.* Professional development for community-based provider preschool teachers shall be addressed in the community-based provider's professional development plan.

Sec. 85. Section 256C.3, subsection 5, paragraphs a, b, and d, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

*a.* The department shall implement an application and selection process for school district participation and community-based provider participation in the preschool program that includes but is not limited to the enrollment requirements provided under section 256C.4.

*b.* The department shall track the progress of students served by a school district preschool program or community-based provider preschool program and the students' performance in elementary and secondary education.

*d.* The state board, in collaboration with the department, shall ensure that the administrative rules adopted to support the preschool program emphasize that children's access to the program is voluntary, that the preschool foundation aid provided to a school district or a community-based provider is provided based upon the enrollment of eligible students in the school district's or community-based provider's local program regardless of whether an eligible student is a resident of the school district, and that agreements entered into by a school district for the provision of programming in settings other than the school district's facilities are between the school district and the private provider.

Sec. 86. Section 256C.4, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. General State funding for school district approved to participate in the preschool program.

*a.* State funding provided under the preschool program to school districts shall be based upon the enrollment of eligible students in the preschool programming provided by a school district approved to participate in the preschool program.

*b.* A school district approved to participate in the preschool program may authorize expenditures for the district's preschool programming from any of the revenue sources available to the district from the sources listed in chapter 298A, provided the expenditures are within the uses permitted for the revenue source. In addition, the use of the revenue source for preschool or prekindergarten programming must have been approved prior to any expenditure from the revenue source for the district's approved local program.

*c.* Funding provided under the preschool program is intended to supplement, not supplant, existing public funding for preschool programming.

*d.* Preschool foundation aid funding shall not be commingled with the other state aid payments made under section 257.16 to a school district and shall be accounted for by the

local school district separately from the other state aid payments. Preschool foundation aid payments made to school districts are miscellaneous income for purposes of chapter 257. A school district shall maintain a separate listing within its budget for preschool foundation aid payments received and expenditures made. A school district shall certify to the department of education that preschool foundation aid funding received by the school district was used to supplement, not supplant, moneys otherwise received and used by the school district for preschool programming.

e. Preschool foundation aid funding shall not be used for the costs of constructing a facility in connection with an approved local program. Preschool foundation aid funding may be used by approved local programs and ~~community providers~~ community-based providers that partner with a school district's local program for any purpose determined by the board of directors of the school district to meet standards for high-quality preschool instruction and for purposes that directly or indirectly benefit students enrolled in the approved local program, including but not limited to professional development for preschool teachers, instructional equipment and supplies, material and equipment designed to develop pupils' large and small motor skills, translation services, playground equipment and repair costs, food and beverages used by children in the approved local program, safety equipment, facility rental fees, and for other direct costs that enhance the approved local program, including by contracting with community partners for any such services. Preschool foundation aid funding may be used by approved local programs for the costs of transportation involving children participating in the preschool program. The costs of transporting other children associated with the preschool program or transported as provided in section 256C.3, subsection 3, paragraph "h", may be prorated by the school district. Preschool foundation aid funding received by an approved local program that remains unexpended and unobligated at the end of a fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2017, shall be used to build the approved local program's preschool program capacity in the next succeeding fiscal year excluding that portion of such unexpended and unobligated funding that the school district authorizes for transfer for deposit in the school district's flexibility account established under section 298A.2, subsection 2, if the statutory requirements for the use of such funding are met. For purposes of determining whether a school district has authority to transfer preschool foundation aid funding for deposit in the school district's flexibility account established under section 298A.2, subsection 2, the school district must have provided preschool programming during the fiscal year for which funding remains unexpended and unobligated to all eligible students for whom a timely application for enrollment was submitted.

f. The receipt of funding by a school district for the purposes of this chapter, the need for additional funding for the purposes of this chapter, or the enrollment count of eligible students under this chapter shall not be considered to be unusual circumstances, create an unusual need for additional funds, or qualify under any other circumstances that may be used by the school budget review committee to grant supplemental aid to or establish a modified supplemental amount for a school district under section 257.31.

g. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and each succeeding fiscal year, of the amount of preschool foundation aid received by a school district for a fiscal year in accordance with section 257.16, not more than five percent may be used by the school district for administering the district's approved local program. Outreach activities and rent for facilities not owned by the school district are permissive uses of the administrative funds.

h. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and each succeeding fiscal year, of the amount of preschool foundation aid received by a school district for a fiscal year in accordance with section 257.16, not less than ninety-five percent of the per pupil amount shall be passed through to a community-based provider for each pupil enrolled in the district's approved local program. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and each succeeding fiscal year, not more than ten percent of the amount of preschool foundation aid passed through to a community-based provider may be used by the community-based provider for administrative costs. The costs of outreach activities and rent for facilities not owned by the school district are permissive administrative costs. The

costs of transportation involving children participating in the preschool program and other children may be prorated.

Sec. 87. Section 256C.4, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. State preschool funding for community-based providers approved to directly participate in the preschool program.

a. State preschool funding shall not be used for the costs of constructing a facility in connection with an approved local program. Preschool foundation aid funding may be used by community-based providers for any purpose determined by the community-based provider to meet standards for high-quality preschool instruction and for purposes that directly or indirectly benefit students enrolled in the approved local program, including but not limited to professional development for preschool teachers, instructional equipment and supplies, material and equipment designed to develop pupils' large and small motor skills, translation services, playground equipment and repair costs, food and beverages used by children in the approved local program, safety equipment, facility rental fees, and for other direct costs that enhance the approved local program, including by contracting with other community partners for any such services. State preschool funding may be used by approved local programs for the costs of transportation involving children participating in the preschool program. Preschool foundation aid funding received by a community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program that remains unexpended and unobligated at the end of a fiscal year shall be used to build the community-based provider's capacity in the next succeeding fiscal year.

b. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and each succeeding fiscal year, of the amount of state preschool funding received by a community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program for a fiscal year, not more than five percent may be used by the community-based provider for administering the approved local program. Outreach activities and rent for facilities not owned by the community-based provider are permissive uses of the administrative funds.

Sec. 88. Section 256C.4, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

a. To be included as an eligible student in the enrollment count of the preschool programming provided by a school district approved to participate in the preschool program or a community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program, a child must be four years of age by September 15 in the base year and attending the school district's or community-based provider's approved local program.

Sec. 89. Section 256C.5, subsection 1, paragraphs c and d, Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

c. "Preschool budget enrollment" means the figure that is equal to fifty percent of the actual enrollment of eligible students in the preschool programming provided by a school district approved to participate in the preschool program or a community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program on October 1 of the base year, or the first Monday in October if October 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

d. "Preschool foundation aid" means the product of the regular program state cost per pupil for the budget year multiplied by the school district's preschool budget enrollment or the community-based provider's preschool budget enrollment.

Sec. 90. Section 256C.5, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 2A. Preschool foundation aid community-based provider amount. For the initial school year for which a community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program receives that approval and implements the preschool program, the preschool foundation aid payable to the community-based provider is the product of the regular program state cost per pupil for the school year multiplied by fifty percent of the community-based provider's eligible student enrollment

on the date in the school year determined by rule. For budget years subsequent to the initial year for which a community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program receives that initial approval and implements the preschool program, the preschool foundation aid is the same as calculated pursuant to subsection 1. The funding for the preschool foundation aid payable to the community-based provider shall be paid from the appropriation made in section 257.16. Continuation of a community-based provider's participation in the preschool program for a second or subsequent budget year is subject to the approval of the department based upon the community-based provider's compliance with accountability provisions and the department's on-site review of the community-based provider's implementation of the preschool program.

Sec. 91. Section 256C.5, subsection 3, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

3. *Aid payments.*

a. Preschool foundation aid shall be paid as part of the state aid payments made to school districts in accordance with section 257.16.

b. Preschool foundation aid paid directly to community-based providers shall be paid to the community-based provider in monthly installments beginning on September 15 of a budget year and ending on or about June 15 of the budget year as determined by the department of management, taking into consideration the relative budget and cash position of the state resources.

Sec. 92. EMERGENCY RULES. The state board of education may adopt emergency rules under section 17A.4, subsection 3, and section 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b", to implement the provisions of this division of this Act and the rules shall be effective immediately upon filing unless a later date is specified in the rules. Any rules adopted in accordance with this section shall also be published as a notice of intended action as provided in section 17A.4.

#### DIVISION XI

##### SCHOOL TUITION ORGANIZATIONS — PRESCHOOL STARTUP COSTS

Sec. 93. SCHOOL TUITION ORGANIZATIONS — PRESCHOOL STARTUP COSTS.

1. As used in this section:

a. "Preschool" means a nonpublic provider of preschool services that commenced operations in 2025; is located in a city with a population of greater than thirty-nine thousand but less than forty thousand according to the 2020 federal decennial census; and is located in a county with a population of greater than one hundred fifty-five thousand but less than one hundred eighty thousand, according to the 2020 federal decennial census.

b. "School tuition organization" means the same as defined in section 422.11S, subsection 6.

2. a. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a school tuition organization that represents schools located in a county with a population of greater than one hundred fifty-five thousand but less than one hundred eighty thousand, according to the 2020 federal decennial census, may provide funding to a preschool in an amount up to the costs the preschool incurred in its first year of operation related to the provision of preschool services.

b. Payments made pursuant to paragraph "a" shall not count toward the allocation of annual revenue standards established in section 422.11S, subsection 6, paragraph "c", subparagraph (1).

#### DIVISION XII

##### MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 94. Section 261E.8, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

a. (1) Students from accredited nonpublic schools, ~~and~~ students receiving competent private instruction or independent private instruction under chapter 299A, and students

from charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E may access the program through the school district in which the accredited nonpublic school, ~~or private institution,~~ or charter school is located.

(2) Students from charter schools established pursuant to chapter 256E that provide educational instruction and course content that is delivered entirely over the internet may access the program through the students' school district of residence.

Sec. 95. Section 282.18, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

b. (1) The board of the receiving district shall enroll the pupil in a school in the receiving district for the following school year unless the receiving district has insufficient classroom space for the pupil or unless the receiving district has prohibited the pupil from enrolling pursuant to subsection 14. The board of directors of a receiving district may adopt a policy granting the superintendent of the school district authority to approve open enrollment applications. If the request is granted, the board shall transmit a copy of the form to the parent or guardian and the school district of residence within five days after board action, but not later than June 1 of the preceding school year. The parent or guardian may withdraw the request at any time prior to the start of the school year.

(2) A denial of a request by the board of a receiving district is not subject to appeal. The board of a receiving district, or the superintendent of the receiving district if the board of the receiving district has adopted a policy granting the superintendent the authority to approve open enrollment applications, shall document the reason for the denial of a request and submit information related to the denial to the department of education in a manner prescribed by the department.

#### DIVISION XIII PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

Sec. 96. Section 299.4, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child who is of compulsory attendance age, who places the child under competent private instruction under section 299A.2, not in an accredited school or a home school assistance program operated by a school district or accredited nonpublic school, shall furnish a report in duplicate on forms provided by the public school district, to the district by September 1 of the school year in which the child will be under competent private instruction. The secretary shall retain and file one copy and forward the other copy to the district's area education agency. The report shall state the name and age of the child, the period of time during which the child ~~has been or~~ will be under competent private instruction for the year, an outline of the course of study, ~~or~~ texts that will be used, and the name and address of the instructor. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child, who is placing the child under competent private instruction for the first time, shall also provide the district with evidence that the child has had the immunizations required under section 139A.8, and, if the child is elementary school age, a blood lead test in accordance with section 135.105D. The term "*outline of course of study*" shall include subjects covered, lesson plans, and time spent on the areas of study.

Sec. 97. Section 299A.1, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

b. "*Independent private instruction*" means private instruction that meets the following criteria:

- (1) Is not accredited.
- ~~(2) Enrolls not more than four unrelated students.~~
- ~~(3) Does not charge tuition, fees, or other remuneration for instruction.~~
- (4) (2) Provides private or religious-based instruction as its primary purpose.
- ~~(5) (3) Provides enrolled students in all grade levels with instruction in mathematics, reading and language arts, science, and social studies.~~
- (6) (4) Provides, upon written request from the superintendent of the school district in which the independent private instruction is provided, or from the director of the department of education, a report identifying the primary instructor, location, name of

the authority responsible for the independent private instruction, and the names of the students enrolled receiving the instruction, who need not be related to the primary instructor.

~~(7)~~ (5) Is not a nonpublic school and does not provide competent private instruction as defined in this subsection.

~~(8)~~ (6) Is exempt from all state statutes and administrative rules applicable to a school, a school board, or a school district, except as otherwise provided in chapter 299 and this chapter.

**Sec. 98. NEW SECTION. 299A.13 Recognition of private instruction diplomas, final transcripts, and other written documentation.**

1. A student who completes a program of secondary education under competent private instruction or independent private instruction in accordance with this chapter shall be deemed to have completed a high school education.

2. The parent, guardian, legal custodian, or instructor responsible for providing the program of secondary education under competent private instruction or independent private instruction in accordance with this chapter may issue a diploma, final transcript, or other written documentation evidencing academic achievements and the completion of the program of secondary education.

3. A diploma, final transcript, or other written documentation issued pursuant to subsection 2 shall be accepted under the laws of this state in the same manner as a high school diploma, final transcript, or other written documentation issued by a school district or an accredited nonpublic school for all purposes, including but not limited to all of the following:

- a. Admission to postsecondary education or training programs.
- b. Eligibility for employment.
- c. Qualification for occupational licensure, certification, or registrations.
- d. Access to state and local programs, benefits, and opportunities.
- e. Any other purpose under the laws of this state in which a high school diploma is a condition or a qualification.

4. The state, a political subdivision of the state, or any other person shall not deny or restrict any right, privilege, or benefit available to an individual solely because the individual's diploma, final transcript, or other written documentation was issued pursuant to subsection 2.

5. A student who completes a program of secondary education under competent private instruction or independent private instruction in accordance with this chapter shall not be required to obtain a high school equivalency diploma or other alternative credential.

**Sec. 99. NEW SECTION. 299A.14 Verification of enrollment.**

The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child of compulsory attendance age shall have the authority to execute any document required by law to verify any of the following:

1. The placement of a child under competent private instruction or independent private instruction.
2. The child's full-time or part-time status in competent private instruction or independent private instruction.
3. The grades the child has obtained in competent private instruction or independent private instruction.
4. Any other required educational information.

**Sec. 100. APPLICABILITY.** The following applies to any diplomas, final transcripts, or other written documentation issued before, on, or after the effective date of the section of this division of this Act enacting section 299A.13:

The section of this division of this Act enacting section 299A.13.

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DIVISION XIV  
IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE

Sec. 101. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

Approved May 12, 2026