

Iowa State Profile

Updated November 2023

Much of the online learning activity in Iowa is at the district level. There are a number of multi-district fully online schools and one community college offering high school credit recovery.

For students to enroll in a fully online school outside the student's resident district, the family must apply to the Iowa Department of Education's (IDOE) [Open Enrollment](#) program. In 2020 the legislature passed [SF 2310](#) (Section 8) that expanded the Open Enrollment program. The number of [approved online schools](#) grew to 23 for the 2022-23 SY.

State virtual school?	NO
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Multi-district fully online schools?	YES
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State approval process for online providers?	YES
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State approval process for online courses?	NO
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Four multi-district fully online schools enrolled 1,911 students in SY 2022-23. The following illustrates the impact of the pandemic on the virtual charter school student enrollment.

- 1,086 students in SY 2019-20 (in two online schools)
- 2,555 students in SY 2020-21 (in five online schools)
- 1,917 students in SY 2021-22 (in five online schools)
- 1,911 students in SY 2022-23 (in four online schools)

A district may offer a fully online program for students within the district without receiving state approval, however, they must meet Iowa guidance for licensed teachers and course content guidelines.

In 2021, the Department of Education launched the [Iowa e-Learning Central](#) online course catalog after the Iowa legislature eliminated funding for Iowa Learning Online (ILO), the state virtual school, in 2020. e-Learning Central provides PK-12 open educational resources, a district course exchange option, and a resource center.

eLearning Central facilitates sharing of seats between schools, both those with extra seats in online courses and for schools searching for seats for students who need an online course not offered by the resident school. Schools negotiate sharing agreements to register students for open seats. e-Learning Central does not provide online teachers.

The IDOE has also approved [14 online course providers](#) that districts contract with directly for individual online courses or a full online curriculum.

District activity includes:

- Des Moines Independent Community School District [Virtual Learning](#) offers a full-time option for 6K-12 students. Students are provided with a district owned laptop and courses include both asynchronous and synchronous components.
- Cedar Rapids Community School District [Virtual Academy](#) serves both part- and full-time students in grades 6-12.
- Sioux City Community School District's [VIBE Academy](#) serves grades K-12 with the district supplying a laptop or other learning device.
- Johnston Community School District provides [online options](#) for grades K-12. Grade 6-12 students use a national provider for curriculum and instruction while K-5 students are supported by district teachers and lessons in another online learning platform.
- Council Bluffs Community School District [Virtual Academy](#) provides online options for K-12 students using the Council Bluffs Community School District's curriculum.

The [Iowa Online AP Academy](#) offers online AP courses for middle and high school students. [Kirkwood High School Distance Learning](#) is a program of Kirkwood Community College that works with school districts across Iowa to offer online transfer credit courses to students looking for credit recovery opportunities.

State Policies

No major legislation impacting online and/or blended learning was passed through November 2023.

The Iowa Department of Education published an [annual report](#) on online learning for the Iowa legislature, last published in 2021. Iowa Code [256.9](#) subsection 55 defines the process for approving online course providers.

[HF 813](#) (2021) allows for the creation of charter schools in Iowa, including virtual charter schools.

[SF 2310](#) (Section 8) in 2020 expanded the Open Enrollment program.

[DLC State Profile Key Terms](#)