

INSTRUCTIONS: In order to begin the application process to become an approved online learning provider in Minnesota, the following documents must be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE): 1) Online Learning New Provider Application, and 2) Program Narrative Template for Online Learning Providers. Completed and signed documents should be sent to: Jeff Plaman, Minnesota Department of Education, 1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, MN 55113-4233.

I. Applicant Information

Organization Type: (select one) Independent District Charter School Intermediate District
 Consortium of Districts under a Joint Powers Agreement. List districts: _____

Program Name: _____ District or Charter Number: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Contact Name: _____ Position Title: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Contact email: _____

II. Program Information

Program Type: (select one) Comprehensive Supplemental Comprehensive and Supplemental

Grade Levels: _____

Enrollment Type: (select one)

fixed terms Enter start dates of terms: _____

flexible or rolling enrollment Describe and list dates: _____

Management and Operations – indicate how services are delivered in the program and provide the information for each service.

Service	Local District	Contract (non-profit)	Contract (for-profit)	Other (describe)
Program Management				
IT Infrastructure (LMS)				
Student Technical Support				
Curriculum Assembly and Course Content				
Hiring Teachers				
Teacher Evaluation/ Training/Professional				
Marketing				

III. Statutory Compliance

State-approved online learning providers are responsible to be aware, understand and implement current education statutes including, but not limited to the Online Learning Option Act. The applicant is responsible to annually review [Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.095](#) and demonstrate understanding of the obligations and requirements of an Online Learning (OLL) Program provider as specified in law. See page seven for full statute.

IV. Statement of Assurances

All boxes must be checked and the provider must sign below indicating that all of the following items have been met.

- Submit annual program information in the requested format to the Minnesota Department of Education by July 15th.
- Submit the final organizational chart or list of key personnel that includes its administrators, director of program, faculty and support staff prior to the start of the school year.
- Comply with, and ensure compliance from contractors and service providers with, local policies and state and federal laws related to data practices and student data privacy. These laws include but are not limited to Minnesota Statute Chapter 13, FERPA, PPRA, and COPPA.
- Comply with all other federal, state, and local public school program policies, including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines for website accessibility, and local school district policies relating to Internet Safety and Acceptable Use.
- Provide fair access to public education for Special Education students and follow due process requirements for all special education students participating in online learning.
- Provide Minnesota licensed teachers to assemble curriculum and deliver instruction to online learning students enrolled by the provider and to document its licensed online teaching faculty in the annual STAR report.
- Ensure a teacher teaching an online program will not instruct more than 40 students in any online learning course unless the provider has a waiver from the Commissioner of Education.
- Align all online courses to “meet or exceed state academic standards” for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.
- Use only the standard enrollment forms provided by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Obtain parental consent for students under the age of 17 who seek enrollment in online learning. This consent includes a signoff for parent and/or student as verification online course, program, and student expectations are understood.
- Record and maintain student membership and course grades completed in the online learning program. Records will be maintained and available to auditors for three years after the end of each school year.
- Notify students/parents of acceptance into the online course/program and obtain the MARSS state reporting number from the student’s enrolling district within 10 days of receiving the completed application for enrollment.

Supplemental Programs Only

- Identify enrolling district Online Learning Liaison and obtain his/her contact information.
 - Submit supplemental online learning notice of registration to the enrolling district upon student application in the online learning program. Include the courses or program credits to be awarded, Minnesota Standards met, and the start date of online enrollment.
 - Provide a course syllabus and confirm that the course(s) will meet the student's graduation plan at the enrolling district. After acceptance, enrollment status and student grades are provided to the student home district in a timely manner.
 - Submit supplemental online learning notice of course completion to the enrolling district in a timely manner.
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I certify that this online learning program meets all items in the list above in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.095 and applicable state and federal education statutes.

NOTE: Typing in your name for the Signature field below will act as a binding signature.

Signature of Superintendent

Date

V. Program Narrative

A quality Online Learning (OLL) Program follows quality program standards. Please submit a [program narrative](#) with the following bold headings that answer the prompts in italics below. These standards are adapted from [iNACOL Quality Online Program Standards](#). These program standards are echoed in the three-year review process.

Institutional Standards

1. **Mission Statement:** A mission statement of a quality online program clearly conveys its purpose and goals. It serves as the basis for the program's day-to-day operations, as well as a guide for its strategic plans for the future. Everyone within the organization understands the mission statement and works to achieve it.
 - a. *What is your program mission statement?*
 - b. *Explain how the organization will work to ensure the mission statement is understood and drives all of the work.*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your mission statement?*
2. **Governance:** Governance is provided by a Board of Directors, Advisory Board, or a School Board working with each other to develop policies for programming and staff.
 - a. *Provide an organizational chart listing all key positions and people in those positions (include any roles filled by external contractors):*
 - b. *List the responsibilities for each role in the organization.*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your governance structure?*
 - d. *Attach official documents as evidence of approval to the application: (only those that apply to your organization type, i.e. School Board approval, Joint Powers of Authority approval, Consortia approval, Charter School Authorizer approval)*
3. **Leadership and Planning:** Governance and leadership work hand-in-hand, developing operational policies for the program and its leadership and staff. Program policies and practice promote equity and support students' ability to access the program. Planning is managed by leadership and staff. Program uses strategic planning, long-range and operational planning along with annual goal setting including alignment with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11 (World's Best Workforce).
 - a. *Describe the processes in place for stakeholder feedback and continuous program improvement, including roles and responsibilities for those involved.*
 - b. *List any enrollment policies or guidelines that are in place. NOTE: Fees and policies that may be discriminatory are not allowed.*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your leadership and planning?*
4. **Integrity and Accountability:** In a quality online program, leadership is transparent in its management of the program, providing regular and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, management of material, financial and human resources, and achievement of student learning outcomes. Data is shared with all stakeholders.
 - a. *Describe accountability systems in place and how they will function to assure program integrity and accountability.*
 - b. *Provide the official attendance policy for calculating membership hours and determining truancy.*
 - c. *Provide a draft fiscal budget.*
 - d. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the level of integrity and accountability of your program?*

Teaching and Learning Standards

5. **Curriculum and Course Design:** A quality online program will have a well-thought-out approach to its curriculum and course design whether it develops its own courses and/or licenses curriculum from other educational providers. The standard and its sub-sets of education goals, student learning, rigor, accommodation of learning styles, requirements for copyright, and accessibility of content are addressed.
 - a. *Describe how your online program offers something unique and value-added to the students it serves. What sets this program apart from other online learning programs? Include information about course offerings, structure of learning program, support, etc.*
 - b. *Explain how online courses are designed to be clear, accessible, and engaging and how teachers are able to adapt and modify their courses. (If contracted, third-party vendors provide the course content, explain how statutory requirements of curriculum being assembled by Minnesota licensed teachers are met (Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.095, subdivision 4 e)).*
 - c. *Provide policies and procedures that ensure all courses meet standards, ensure student progress toward graduation and career and college readiness, address various learning styles, and meet copyright and accessibility requirements.*
 - d. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of curriculum and course design?*
6. **Minnesota K-12 Standards:** Districts are required to put state standards into place so all students have access to high-quality content and instruction. Districts must develop local standards for subjects that do not have state standards. Providers must include information on how they meet or exceed Minnesota K-12 Standards.
 - a. *Provide a table listing all courses and which standards are covered.*
7. **Instruction:** A quality online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent online teaching for its students. This process begins with promising practices but is equally committed to continuous improvement and adaptation to student learning needs through professional development. The standard and its sub-sets of instruction grounded in program mission, research, best practices, assessment, student learning styles and cultural differences, levels of interactions with stakeholders, limitations of time and place, requirements for faculty licensure and professional development, and academic integrity are addressed.
 - a. *Provide policies and procedures related to online instruction including communication expectations for teachers and participation guidelines for students and parents (i.e. students must participate in daily live-lesson webinars).*
 - b. *Describe how teachers incorporate research-based practices, including developing strong student-teacher relationships, using multiple modalities to engage students, and how the organization makes this a priority.*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of instructional practices?*
8. **Assessment:** A quality online learning program values student academic performance and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring student achievement. This includes use of multiple assessment measures and strategies that align closely to both program and learner objectives with timely, relevant feedback to all stakeholders. The standard and its sub-sets of monitoring progress, adapting instruction to meet learner needs, multiple methods of assessment of student performance, feedback loops for instructional practice and course design are addressed.
 - a. *Provide policies and procedures that are in place regarding assessment of student learning, feedback, adapting instruction to meet the needs of learners.*
 - b. *Describe how timely, relevant feedback is communicated to students, parents, and student support/intervention team members.*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of assessment practices?*

Support

9. **Faculty Support:** A quality online program supports the faculty by providing opportunities for them to develop their professional skills, through mentoring, professional development, and technical assistance.
 - a. *Explain how teachers with Minnesota licenses and experience/training in online teaching are hired, trained, reviewed, and developed as professionals. If teachers are hired through a third-party contractor, explain how quality teaching practices will be monitored and ensured by a licensed administrator in the state-approved program.*
 - b. *Explain how appropriate workloads for staff will be maintained.*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your faculty support?*
10. **Student Support:** A quality online program has student support services to address the various needs of students at different levels within the organization. The levels of support are appropriate and adequate for a student's success.
 - a. *List the roles and responsibilities for supporting all learners.*
 - b. *Describe the student support services provided by the program and the procedures in place to ensure that all students are successful including enrollment, onboarding, and during the learning process.*
 - c. *Explain how students receiving special education services will be assessed and evaluated, supported by appropriate interventions and accommodations, and monitored. Specifically address supports in place for students with autism spectrum disorders.*
 - d. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your student support?*
11. **Guidance Support:** A quality online program has guidance services to support students and parents to ensure success of the online program. Depending on the program, these services are either directly provided by the program or a service provider, or in the case of supplemental programs these services may be provided by the local school.
 - a. *List the roles and responsibilities for providing guidance support services to students and/or collaborating with guidance personnel from enrolling districts.*
 - b. *Describe the guidance support services provided by the program and the procedures in place to ensure that all students are healthy and ready for career and college pathways. Specifically address how the school is implementing the required use of evidence-based social-emotional learning to prevent and reduce discrimination and other improper conduct (Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.031 subdivision 5).*
 - c. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your guidance support?*
12. **Organizational Support:** A quality online program has organizational support to oversee the instructional learning environment as it is conveyed through technology. Some organization support services may be distributed between the program and other entities, depending on the physical location where the students are taking their online course.
 - a. *List the roles and responsibilities for providing organizational support services.*
 - b. *Explain how students are supported with access to technology hardware software, and internet access.*
 - c. *Describe the organizational support services provided by the program. For support services provided by third-party contractors, explain how quality of the services will be ensured.*
 - d. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your organizational support services?*

13. **Parent/Guardian Support:** Parents/guardians play an integral part in their student's educational life. They work as a team with faculty, administrators, guidance services, and organizational support to ensure a quality educational experience for their students.
- a. *Describe how parents are actively engaged with enrollment, onboarding, their child's learning process, support and intervention, and development of the program.*
 - b. *What outcome data will you collect to inform you about the effectiveness of your parent/guardian support?*

Evaluation

14. **Program Evaluation:** Evaluation efforts are utilized to both verify the program is meeting its intended purposes and identify where improvements can be made. Continuous improvement processes (CIP) across all aspects of the organization ensure the program is focused on accomplishing its mission and vision. CIP linked to the online program, support services connected to stakeholders, and operational planning are addressed.
- a. *Describe how outcome data will be utilized to evaluate the online program, services for various stakeholders, and operational planning.*
15. **Program Improvement:** A quality online program establishes a culture of continual program improvement. It fosters continuous improvement across all aspects of the organization and ensures the program is focused on accomplishing its mission and vision. Program improvement, and its sub-sets of strategic planning, data driven decision making, advancing the program mission and vision, along with internal and external evaluation of its practices, are addressed.
- a. *Describe the process in place for continuous program improvement connected to the online program, services for various stakeholders and operational planning.*

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.095 Online Learning Option

Subdivision 1. **Citation.** This section may be cited as the "Online Learning Option Act."

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given them.

(a) "Digital learning" is learning facilitated by technology that offers students an element of control over the time, place, path, or pace of their learning and includes blended and online learning.

(b) "Blended learning" is a form of digital learning that occurs when a student learns part time in a supervised physical setting and part time through digital delivery of instruction, or a student learns in a supervised physical setting where technology is used as a primary method to deliver instruction.

(c) "Online learning" is a form of digital learning delivered by an approved online learning provider under paragraph (d).

(d) "Online learning provider" is a school district, an intermediate school district, an organization of two or more school districts operating under a joint powers agreement, or a charter school located in Minnesota that provides online learning to students and is approved by the department to provide online learning courses.

(e) "Student" is a Minnesota resident enrolled in a school under section 120A.22, subdivision 4, in kindergarten through grade 12.

(f) "Online learning student" is a student enrolled in an online learning course or program delivered by an online learning provider under paragraph (d).

(g) "Enrolling district" means the school district or charter school in which a student is enrolled under section 120A.22, subdivision 4, for purposes of compulsory attendance.

(h) "Supplemental online learning" means an online learning course taken in place of a course period at a local district school.

(i) "Full-time online learning provider" means an enrolling school authorized by the department to deliver comprehensive public education at any or all of the elementary, middle, or high school levels.

(j) "Online learning course syllabus" is a written document that an online learning provider transmits to the enrolling district using a format prescribed by the commissioner to identify the state academic standards embedded in an online course, the course content outline, required course assessments, expectations for actual teacher contact time and other student-to-teacher communications, and the academic support available to the online learning student.

Subd. 3. **Authorization; notice; limitations on enrollment.**

(a) A student may apply for full-time enrollment in an approved online learning program under section 124D.03 or 124D.08 or chapter 124E. Notwithstanding sections 124D.03 and 124D.08 and chapter 124E, procedures for enrolling in supplemental online learning are as provided in this subdivision. A student age 17 or younger must have the written consent of a parent or guardian to apply. No school district or charter school may prohibit a student from applying to enroll in online learning. In order to enroll in online learning, the student and the student's parents must submit an application to the online learning provider and identify the student's reason for enrolling. An online learning provider that accepts a student under this section must notify the student and the enrolling district in writing within ten days if the enrolling district is not the online learning provider. The student and the student's parent must notify the online learning provider of the student's intent to enroll in online learning within ten days of being accepted, at which time the student and the student's parent must sign a statement indicating that they have reviewed the online course or program and understand the expectations of enrolling in online learning. The online learning provider must use a form provided by the department to notify the enrolling district of the student's application to enroll in online learning.

(b) The supplemental online learning notice to the enrolling district when a student applies to the online learning provider will include the courses or program, credits to be awarded, and the start date of the online course or program. An online learning provider must make available the supplemental online course syllabus to the enrolling district. Within 15 days after the online learning provider makes information in this paragraph available to the enrolling district, the enrolling district must notify the online provider whether the student, the student's parent, and the enrolling district agree or disagree that the course meets the enrolling district's graduation requirements. A student may enroll in a supplemental online learning course up to the midpoint of the enrolling district's term. The enrolling district may waive this requirement for special circumstances and with the agreement of the online provider. An online learning course or program that meets or exceeds a graduation standard or the grade progression requirement of the enrolling district as described in the provider's online course syllabus meets the corresponding graduation requirements applicable to the student in the enrolling district. If the enrolling district does not agree that the course or program meets its graduation requirements, then:

(1) the enrolling district must make available an explanation of its decision to the student, the student's parent, and the online provider; and

(2) the online provider may make available a response to the enrolling district, showing how the course or program meets the graduation requirements of the enrolling district.

(c) An online learning provider must notify the commissioner that it is delivering online learning and report the number of online learning students it accepts and the online learning courses and programs it delivers.

(d) An online learning provider may limit enrollment if the provider's school board or board of directors adopts by resolution specific standards for accepting and rejecting students' applications.

(e) An enrolling district may reduce an online learning student's regular classroom instructional membership in proportion to the student's membership in online learning courses.

(f) The online provider must report or make available information on an individual student's progress and accumulated credit to the student, the student's parent, and the enrolling district in a manner specified by the commissioner unless the enrolling district and the online provider agree to a different form of notice and notify the commissioner. The enrolling district must designate a contact person to help facilitate and monitor the student's academic progress and accumulated credits towards graduation.

Subd. 4. Online learning parameters.

(a) An online learning student must receive academic credit for completing the requirements of an online learning course or program. Secondary credits granted to an online learning student count toward the graduation and credit requirements of the enrolling district. The enrolling district must apply the same graduation requirements to all students, including online learning students, and must continue to provide nonacademic services to online learning students. If a student completes an online learning course or program that meets or exceeds a graduation standard or the grade progression requirement at the enrolling district, that standard or requirement is met. The enrolling district must use the same criteria for accepting online learning credits or courses as it does for accepting credits or courses for transfer students under section 124D.03, subdivision 9. The enrolling district may reduce the course schedule of an online learning student in proportion to the number of online learning courses the student takes from an online learning provider that is not the enrolling district.

(b) An online learning student may:

(1) enroll in supplemental online learning courses equal to a maximum of 50 percent of the student's full schedule of courses per term during a single school year and the student may exceed the supplemental online learning registration limit if the enrolling district permits supplemental online learning enrollment above the limit, or if the enrolling district and the online learning provider agree to the instructional services;

(2) complete course work at a grade level that is different from the student's current grade level; and

(3) enroll in additional courses with the online learning provider under a separate agreement that includes terms for paying any tuition or course fees.

(c) An online learning student has the same access to the computer hardware and education software available in a school as all other students in the enrolling district. An online learning provider must assist an online learning student whose family qualifies for the education tax credit under section 290.0674 to acquire computer hardware and educational software for online learning purposes.

(d) An enrolling district may offer digital learning to its enrolled students. Such digital learning does not generate online learning funds under this section. An enrolling district that offers digital learning only to its enrolled students is not subject to the reporting requirements or review criteria under subdivision 7, unless the enrolling district is a full-time online learning provider. A teacher with a Minnesota license must assemble and deliver instruction to enrolled students receiving online learning from an enrolling district. The delivery of instruction occurs when the student interacts with the computer or the teacher and receives ongoing assistance and assessment of learning. The instruction may include curriculum developed by persons other than a teacher holding a Minnesota license.

(e) Both full-time and supplemental online learning providers are subject to the reporting requirements and review criteria under subdivision 7. A teacher holding a Minnesota license must assemble and deliver instruction to online learning students. The delivery of instruction occurs when the student interacts with the computer or the teacher and receives ongoing assistance and assessment of learning. The instruction may include curriculum developed by persons other than a teacher holding a Minnesota license. Unless the commissioner grants a waiver, a teacher providing online learning instruction must not instruct more than 40 students in any one online learning course or program.

(f) To enroll in more than 50 percent of the student's full schedule of courses per term in online learning, the student must qualify to exceed the supplemental online learning registration limit under paragraph (b) or apply to enroll in an approved full-time online learning program, consistent with subdivision 3, paragraph (a). Full-time online learning students may enroll in classes at a local school under a contract for instructional services between the online learning provider and the school district.

Subd. 5. Participation in extracurricular activities. An online learning student may participate in the extracurricular activities of the enrolling district on the same basis as other enrolled students.

Subd. 6. Information. School districts and charter schools must make available information about online learning to all interested people.

Subd. 7. Department of Education.

(a) The department must review and approve or disapprove online learning providers within 90 calendar days of receiving an online learning provider's completed application. The commissioner, using research-based standards of quality for online learning programs, must review all approved online learning providers on a cyclical three-year basis. Approved online learning providers annually must submit program data to, confirm statements of assurances for, and provide program updates including a current course list to the commissioner.

(b) The online learning courses and programs must be rigorous, aligned with state academic standards, and contribute to grade progression in a single subject. The online learning provider, other than a digital learning provider offering digital learning to its enrolled students only under subdivision 4, paragraph (d), must give the commissioner written assurance that: (1) all courses meet state academic standards; and (2) the online learning curriculum, instruction, and assessment, expectations for actual teacher-contact time or other student-to-teacher communication, and academic support meet nationally recognized professional standards and are described as such in an online learning course syllabus that meets the commissioner's requirements. Once an online learning provider is approved under this paragraph, all of its online learning course offerings are eligible for payment under this section unless a course is successfully challenged by an enrolling district or the department under paragraph (c).

(c) An enrolling district may challenge the validity of a course offered by an online learning provider. The department must review such challenges based on the approval procedures under paragraph (b). The department may initiate its own review of the validity of an online learning course offered by an online learning provider.

(d) The department may collect a fee not to exceed \$250 for approving online learning providers or \$50 per course for reviewing a challenge by an enrolling district.

(e) The department must develop, publish, and maintain a list of online learning providers that it has reviewed and approved.

(f) The department may review a complaint about an online learning provider, or a complaint about a provider based on the provider's response to notice of a violation. If the department determines that an online learning provider violated a law or rule, the department may:

(1) create a compliance plan for the provider; or

(2) withhold funds from the provider under sections 124D.095, 124E.25, and 127A.42. The department must notify an online learning provider in writing about withholding funds and provide detailed calculations.

Subd. 8. Financial arrangements.

(a) For a student enrolled in an online learning course, the department must calculate average daily membership and make payments according to this subdivision.

(b) The initial online learning average daily membership equals 1/12 for each semester course or a proportionate amount for courses of different lengths. The adjusted online learning average daily membership equals the initial online learning average daily membership times .88.

(c) No online learning average daily membership shall be generated if: (1) the student does not complete the online learning course, or (2) the student is enrolled in online learning provided by the enrolling district.

(d) Online learning average daily membership under this subdivision for a student currently enrolled in a Minnesota public school shall be used only for computing average daily membership according to section 126C.05, subdivision 19, paragraph (a), clause (ii), and for computing online learning aid according to section 124D.096.

Subd. 9. [Repealed, 1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 85]

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