

## Guidance for New Online Learning Provider Applicants

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.095 requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to create a process, aligned with national standards, to review applications for schools who want to offer online education. The application process is intentionally designed to create robust planning conversations in the districts and schools who are applying. MDE will continue to work with applicants as they navigate the process until their application is approved.

When writing the application narrative, you'll want to pay particular attention to:

**1) What does the students experience look and feel like?**

Be as descriptive as possible to give the reviewers the good sense of the instructional model and methods you'll be using in your proposed online program. Readers should get a good sense of what the user experience is like on a typical day/week.

**2) What are the expectations of the adults in the program to create the education experience?**

Describe the systems and structures being created to help ensure that the adults are providing instruction and support as intended. Include policies, procedures, and support mechanisms.

See questions specific to [Special Education planning](#).

**3) Demonstrate how courses are aligned with Minnesota Academic standards.**

Applicants must review and ensure alignment of all courses offered. For comprehensive programs, this means all Minnesota standards and benchmarks for the grade levels served must be included in the application. Make sure to use the current standards. Reviewers suggest using the spreadsheets for each content area available on the [Academic Standards page](#) for each content area. You may add columns to the spreadsheet and input relevant alignment details such as Grade Level, Course/Unit/Topic. Curriculum alignment documents provided by vendors are typically not sufficient.

In the application narrative, describe how the online instruction will meet benchmarks that require demonstrated skills such as science investigations, arts performances, and physical education skills. If an interdisciplinary approach is being used, explain how students receive instruction that includes each of the standard areas. Describe how school-created lessons or units are used to augment vendor courseware in areas that do not support Minnesota benchmarks.