

**CHAPTER 273—S.F.No. 1528**

*An act relating to education; providing 21st century tools for teachers; providing for digital learning; modifying online learning; requiring a report; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, sections 122A.18, by adding a subdivision; 122A.60, subdivisions 1a, 3; 124D.095, subdivisions 2, 4, 7, 10; 126C.15, subdivision 1.*

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 122A.18, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 3a. **Technology strategies.** All colleges and universities approved by the Board of Teaching to prepare persons for classroom teacher licensure must include in their teacher preparation programs the knowledge and skills teacher candidates need to deliver digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective for candidates entering a teacher preparation program after June 30, 2014.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 122A.60, subdivision 1a, is amended to read:

Subd. 1a. **Effective staff development activities.** (a) Staff development activities must:

(1) focus on the school classroom and research-based strategies that improve student learning;

(2) provide opportunities for teachers to practice and improve their instructional skills over time;

(3) provide opportunities for teachers to use student data as part of their daily work to increase student achievement;

(4) enhance teacher content knowledge and instructional skills, including to accommodate the delivery of digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology;

(5) align with state and local academic standards;

(6) provide opportunities to build professional relationships, foster collaboration among principals and staff who provide instruction, and provide opportunities for teacher-to-teacher mentoring; and

(7) align with the plan of the district or site for an alternative teacher professional pay system.

Staff development activities may include curriculum development and curriculum training programs, and activities that provide teachers and other members of site-based teams

training to enhance team performance. The school district also may implement other staff development activities required by law and activities associated with professional teacher compensation models.

(b) Release time provided for teachers to supervise students on field trips and school activities, or independent tasks not associated with enhancing the teacher's knowledge and instructional skills, such as preparing report cards, calculating grades, or organizing classroom materials, may not be counted as staff development time that is financed with staff development reserved revenue under section 122A.61.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 122A.60, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Staff development outcomes.** The advisory staff development committee must adopt a staff development plan for improving student achievement. The plan must be consistent with education outcomes that the school board determines. The plan must include ongoing staff development activities that contribute toward continuous improvement in achievement of the following goals:

(1) improve student achievement of state and local education standards in all areas of the curriculum by using best practices methods;

(2) effectively meet the needs of a diverse student population, including at-risk children, children with disabilities, and gifted children, within the regular classroom and other settings;

(3) provide an inclusive curriculum for a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse student population that is consistent with the state education diversity rule and the district's education diversity plan;

(4) improve staff collaboration and develop mentoring and peer coaching programs for teachers new to the school or district;

(5) effectively teach and model violence prevention policy and curriculum that address early intervention alternatives, issues of harassment, and teach nonviolent alternatives for conflict resolution; ~~and~~

(6) effectively deliver digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology; and

(7) provide teachers and other members of site-based management teams with appropriate management and financial management skills.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 124D.095, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

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 an interactive course or program that delivers instruction from a teacher to a student by computer, is combined with other traditional delivery methods that include frequent student assessment and may include actual teacher contact time, and meets or exceeds state academic standards~~ a form of digital learning delivered by an approved online learning provider under paragraph (d).

~~(b) (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.

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

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

~~(e) (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.

~~(f) (h)~~ "Supplemental online learning" means an online learning course taken in place of a course period ~~during the regular school day~~ at a local district school.

~~(g) (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.

~~(h) (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.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 124D.095, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

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 online digital learning to its enrolled students. Such online digital learning does not generate online learning funds under this section. An enrolling district that offers online 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.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 124D.095, subdivision 7, is amended to read:

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 ~~(b)~~(c).

~~(b)~~(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 ~~certification~~ approval procedures under paragraph ~~(a)~~(b). The department may initiate its own review of the validity of an online learning course offered by an online learning provider.

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

~~(d)~~(e) The department must develop, publish, and maintain a list of ~~approved~~ online learning providers ~~and online learning courses and programs~~ that it has reviewed and ~~certified~~ 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, 124D.10, subdivision 8, and 127A.42. The department must notify an online learning provider in writing about withholding funds and provide detailed calculations.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 124D.095, subdivision 10, is amended to read:

Subd. 10. **Online Learning Advisory Council.** (a) An Online Learning Advisory Council is established. The term for each council member shall be three years. The advisory council is composed of 12 members from throughout the state who have demonstrated experience with or interest in online learning. The members of the council

shall be appointed by the commissioner. The advisory council shall bring to the attention of the commissioner any matters related to online learning and provide input to the department in matters related, but not restricted, to:

- (1) quality assurance;
- (2) teacher qualifications;
- (3) program approval;
- (4) special education;
- (5) attendance;
- (6) program design and requirements; and
- (7) fair and equal access to programs.

(b) By June 30, 2013, the Online Learning Advisory Council with the support of the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Learning Commons shall:

(1) oversee the development and maintenance of a catalog of publicly available digital learning content currently aligned to Minnesota academic standards to include:

- (i) indexing of Minnesota academic standards with which curriculum is aligned;
- (ii) a method for student and teacher users to provide evaluative feedback; and
- (iii) a plan for ongoing maintenance;

(2) recommend methods for including student performance data on the digital learning content within the catalog.

(c) The Online Learning Advisory Council under this subdivision expires June 30, 2013.

Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 126C.15, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Use of revenue.** The basic skills revenue under section 126C.10, subdivision 4, must be reserved and used to meet the educational needs of pupils who enroll under-prepared to learn and whose progress toward meeting state or local content or performance standards is below the level that is appropriate for learners of their age. Any of the following may be provided to meet these learners' needs:

(1) direct instructional services under the assurance of mastery program according to section 124D.66;

(2) remedial instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, other content areas, or study skills to improve the achievement level of these learners;

(3) additional teachers and teacher aides to provide more individualized instruction to these learners through individual tutoring, lower instructor-to-learner ratios, or team teaching;

(4) a longer school day or week during the regular school year or through a summer program that may be offered directly by the site or under a performance-based contract with a community-based organization;

(5) comprehensive and ongoing staff development consistent with district and site plans according to section 122A.60, for teachers, teacher aides, principals, and other

personnel to improve their ability to identify the needs of these learners and provide appropriate remediation, intervention, accommodations, or modifications;

(6) instructional materials, digital learning, and technology appropriate for meeting the individual needs of these learners;

(7) programs to reduce truancy, encourage completion of high school, enhance self-concept, provide health services, provide nutrition services, provide a safe and secure learning environment, provide coordination for pupils receiving services from other governmental agencies, provide psychological services to determine the level of social, emotional, cognitive, and intellectual development, and provide counseling services, guidance services, and social work services;

(8) bilingual programs, bicultural programs, and programs for learners of limited English proficiency;

(9) all day kindergarten;

(10) extended school day and extended school year programs; and

(11) substantial parent involvement in developing and implementing remedial education or intervention plans for a learner, including learning contracts between the school, the learner, and the parent that establish achievement goals and responsibilities of the learner and the learner's parent or guardian.

**Sec. 9. ONLINE LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT.**

(a) The Online Learning Advisory Council shall review Minnesota education laws and rules pertaining to classroom learning to determine which ones, if any, inhibit digital learning. The council shall include the results of their review in the report under paragraph (b).

(b) The council shall report to the committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education with its recommendations, including any proposed legislation, by June 30, 2013.

**Sec. 10. APPROPRIATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Department of Education.** The sum shown is added to the appropriations in Laws 2011, First Special Session chapter 11, or any appropriation that replaces those appropriations, to the Department of Education for the purposes specified. The appropriation is from the general fund, and available for the fiscal year indicated for its purpose.

Subd. 2. **Department of Education.** For the Department of Education for additional support and staffing related to digital learning and online learning:

\$            104,000        .....    2013

This is a onetime appropriation.

The base for fiscal year 2014 and later shall be increased by \$26,000 each year.

Presented to the governor April 30, 2012

Signed by the governor May 3, 2012, 3:16 p.m.