

Online Learning in Iowa Annual Report



January 15, 2021

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
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Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

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OVERVIEW

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

During the 2018 legislative session, lawmakers amended Iowa Code 256.7 to remove open enrollment caps, remove restrictions allowing open enrollment only to CAM and Clayton Ridge Community School District academies whose educational instruction and course content are delivered primarily over the internet, and removed the requirement that the Iowa Department of Education (Department) conduct annual surveys of not less than ten percent of the total number of students enrolled. Additionally, legislation no longer requires the Department to collaborate with the International Association for K-12 Online Learning regarding the collection of data.

Iowa Code 256.7(32) (e) was amended and now contains the following requirements. *The State Board shall:*

- (1) *Adopt rules which require that educational instruction and course content delivered primarily over the internet be aligned with the Iowa core standards as applicable. Under such rules, a school district may develop and offer to students enrolled in the district educational instruction and course content for delivery primarily over the internet. A school district providing educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet shall annually submit to the department, in the manner prescribed by the department, data that includes but is not limited to the following:*
 - (a) *Student achievement and demographic characteristics.*
 - (b) *Retention rates.*
 - (c) *The percentage of enrolled students' active participation in extracurricular activities.*
 - (d) *Academic proficiency levels, consistent with requirements applicable to all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools in this state.*
 - (e) *Academic growth measures, which shall include either of the following:*
 - (i) *Entry and exit assessments in, at a minimum, math and English for elementary and middle school students, and additional subjects, including science, for high school students.*
 - (ii) *State-required assessments that track year-over-year improvements in academic proficiency.*
 - (f) *Academic mobility. To facilitate the tracking of academic mobility, school districts shall request the following information from the parent or guardian of a student enrolled in educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet.*
 - (i) *For a student newly enrolling, the reasons for choosing such enrollment.*
 - (ii) *For a student terminating enrollment, the reasons for terminating such enrollment.*

(g) *Student progress toward graduation. Measurement of such progress shall account for specific characteristics of each enrolled student, including but not limited to age and course credit accrued prior to enrollment in educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet, and shall be consistent with evidence-based best practices.*

(2) *The department shall compile and review the data collected pursuant to this paragraph “c” and shall submit its findings and recommendations for the continued delivery of educational instruction and course content by school districts delivered primarily over the internet, in a report to the general assembly by January 15 annually.*

The Department received the demographic data, student achievement, retention rates, participation, academic proficiency, academic growth, academic mobility, and progress toward graduation from Iowa Connections Academy at CAM Community School District (hereinafter “IACA”), Iowa Virtual Academy at Clayton Ridge Community School District (hereinafter “IAVA”) and Des Moines Virtual at Des Moines Community School District (hereinafter “DMPS Virtual”) for the 2019-2020 school year. The data are presented in this report.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, number of students, for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below.

Characteristic	IACA	IAVA	DMPS Virtual
Enrollment	545	541	134
Male	199	215	67
Female	266	326	67
Asian	*	*	*
African-American	11	39	19
Hispanic	46	49	34
Multiracial	16	*	10
Native American	*	*	*
Pacific Islander	*	*	*
White	465	441	68
English Language Learner	*	*	11
504 Plan	35	47	*
Students with individualized education program (IEP)	51	30	*
Free-Reduced Lunch Eligible	108	221	108

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that there are fewer than ten students in that particular cell. No data will be publicly reported for those cells, to protect student privacy pursuant to state and federal law.

ACADEMIC DATA - SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

ACHIEVEMENT DATA, percent proficient based on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress, including alternate assessment scores, in reading, math, and science for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below. Due to COVID-19, the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress was not administered per Governor Proclamation.

	Reading	Math	Science
IACA	NA - COVID	NA - COVID	NA - COVID
IAVA	NA - COVID	NA - COVID	NA - COVID
DMPS Virtual	NA - COVID	NA - COVID	NA - COVID

ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY LEVELS BY SUBGROUP, percent proficient based on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress is not available for 2019-2020 because the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress was not administered due to COVID-19 per Governor Proclamation.

RETENTION RATES - SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

RETENTION RATES, defined as the percent of students who return to the school this year from the previous year, for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below.

	Percent of Students
IACA	63.1%
IAVA	57.7%
DMPS Virtual	31.3%

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY DATA, percent of students participating in extracurricular activities, for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below.

	Percent of Students
IACA	8%
IAVA	22%
DMPS Virtual	No Data

ACADEMIC GROWTH – FIVE YEAR TREND

ACADEMIC GROWTH DATA, percent proficient based on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress, including alternate assessment scores, in reading, math, and science for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress was not administered per Governor Proclamation.

Reading – Percent Proficient

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
IACA	76.1	85.4	80.6	75.2	NA - COVID
IAVA	68.9	71.8	68.2	60.6	NA - COVID
DMPS Virtual	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA - COVID

Math – Percent Proficient

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
IACA	66.5	71.7	66.8	60.5	NA - COVID
IAVA	52.3	63.8	59.6	53.4	NA - COVID
DMPS Virtual	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA - COVID

Science – Percent Proficient

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
IACA	71.6	79.3	74.1	56.0	NA - COVID
IAVA	33.3	72.0	57.6	42.0	NA - COVID
DMPS Virtual	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA - COVID

ACADEMIC MOBILITY - SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

ENROLLMENT DATA, percent of newly enrolled students choosing such enrollment for specified reason, for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA	DMPS Virtual
Anyplace/Anytime Learning	34%	26%	59%
Illness/Injury	16%	16%	9%
Bullying/Harassment	16%	24%	9%
More/Less Course Selection	2%	5%	0%
Under Credit/Overage	5%	4%	5%
More/Less Personalized Learning	9%	14%	9%
Miscellaneous	16%	11%	9%

ENROLLMENT TERMINATION DATA, percent of students choosing to terminate their enrollment for specified reason, for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA	DMPS Virtual
Anyplace/Anytime Learning	20.2%	6%	10%
Illness/Injury	0%	0%	0%
Bullying/Harassment	0%	0%	0%
More/Less Course Selection	2.4%	2%	8%
Under Credit/Overage	6%	8%	0%
More/Less Personalized Learning	33.3%	15%	0%
Miscellaneous	38.1%	69%	82%

PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION – SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION DATA, percent of students on track for graduation, for IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA	DMPS Virtual
First Year High School Students	93.2%	78%	18%
Second Year High School Students	67.6%	69%	26%
Third Year High School Students	63.9%	76%	22%
Fourth Year High School Students	78.8%	74%	9%
Fifth Year Plus High School Students	82.6%	60%	17%

CONCLUSION

As required by legislation, IACA, IAVA and DMPS Virtual have submitted the required and available data to the Department for school year 2019-2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no public school districts in the state administered the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress thus it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the course content delivered primarily over the internet for the 2019-2020 school year.

Retention rates have increased for IACA and IAVA for the 2019-2020 school year. IACA 2018-2019 was 49.7% and 2019-2020 was 63.1%; IAVA 2018-2019 was 55.9% and 2019-2020 was 57.7%. DMPS Virtual has one year of data showing a 31.3% retention rate, this should be a data point DMPS Virtual should focus on improving.

Of high school students, the percent on track for graduation ranges for all three schools indicate a wide range from a high of 82.6% for IACA Fifth Year Plus High School Students to 9% for DMPS Virtual Fourth Year High School Students. It is difficult to tell from enrollment termination information why students are choosing to leave either academy, with a large percentage of the responses falling in the miscellaneous category.

Iowa Code 256.7 was amended to remove restrictions allowing open enrollment only to CAM and Clayton Ridge Community School District academies whose educational instruction and course content are delivered primarily over the internet, thus opens up the possibility for other districts to operate schools where educational instruction and course content are delivered primarily over the internet. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school, Des Moines Public School District received approval and are included in this report. Multiple school districts have been approved to allow open enrolled students to participate in an approved online school which offers course content delivered primarily over the internet during the 2020-2021 school year. The most current list is located on the Iowa Department of Education website on the [Online Learning](#) web page.

All of these pieces of information, taken together with results from prior year's review and considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggests that it may be beneficial to determine (a) to what extent each district is working through its virtual academy to provide an evidence-based multi-tiered system of supports that will support student achievement and, given the impact of the pandemic on statewide assessments, what alternative/additional data source each school might collect to support these additional supports, (b) what work each district is doing within its virtual academy to support on-time graduation, and (c) if a revised survey/method of collection on termination of enrollment would glean better information.