

Legislative Report

Virtual Schools in Iowa Annual Report



January 15, 2020

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

State Board of Education

Brooke Axiotis, President, Des Moines
Michael Bearden, Vice President, Gladbrook
Bettie Bolar, Marshalltown
Joshua Byrnes, Osage
Angela English, Dyersville
Michael L. Knedler, Council Bluffs
Mike May, Spirit Lake
Mary Ellen Miller, Wayne County
Kimberly Wayne, Des Moines
Fez Zafar, Student Member, Clive

Administration

Ryan M. Wise, Director and Executive Officer
of the State Board of Education

Division of Learning and Results

W. David Tilly, Deputy Director

Bureau of School Improvement

Amy J. Williamson, Chief
Janet A. Boyd, Consultant
Meredith MacQuigg, Consultant

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number: 515-281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661-4544, telephone number: 312-730-1560, FAX number: 312-730-1576, TDD number: 877-521-2172, email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.

OVERVIEW

I. 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 removes 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 both the Iowa Connections Academy at CAM Community School District (hereinafter “IACA”) and Iowa Virtual Academy at Clayton Ridge Community School District (hereinafter “IAVA”) for the 2018-2019 school year. The data are presented in this report.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

Demographic information, number of students, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

Characteristic	IACA	IAVA
Enrollment	614	433
Male	261	191
Female	353	242
Asian	*	*
African-American	14	35
Hispanic	44	35
Multiracial	38	*
Native American	*	*
Pacific Islander	*	*
White	506	352
English Language Learner	*	*
504 Plan	66	21
Students with individualized education program (IEP)	39	34
Free-Reduced Lunch Eligible	248	173

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.

I. ACADEMIC DATA - SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 (Most recent data available)

Achievement data, percent proficient based on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress, including alternate assessment scores, in reading, math, and science for both IACA and IAVA are presented below. Results are calculated for all grade levels served combined.

	Reading	Math	Science
IACA	75.2	60.5	56.0
IAVA	60.6	53.4	42.0

IACA – Academic Proficiency Levels by Subgroup, percent proficient based on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress

	Male	Female	ELL	Low SES	504	IEP
Reading	67.7	81.0	*	65.9	86.2	21.1
Math	59.8	60.9	*	54.7	71.4	10.5
Science	53.7	57.7	*	43.5	64.3	37.5

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.

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American/ Alaskan Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Multiple Race/Ethn icity
Reading	76.4	33.3	76.9	*	*	*	61.5
Math	62.2	0.0	61.5	*	*	*	41.7
Science	57.8	0.0	60.0	*	*	*	42.9

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.

IAVA – Academic Proficiency Levels by Subgroup, percent proficient based on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress

	Male	Female	ELL	Low SES	504	IEP
Reading	52.3	67.4	*	55.6	50.0	26.3
Math	55.1	51.9	*	51.1	30.0	31.6
Science	40	43.1	*	36.8	33.3	12.5

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.

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American/ Alaskan Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Multiple Race/Ethn icity
Reading	63.2	31.8	62.5	*	*	*	*
Math	58.4	22.7	31.3	*	*	*	*
Science	44.8	30.0	14.3	*	*	*	*

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.

II. RETENTION RATES - SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

Retention rates, defined as the percent of students who return to the school this year from the previous year, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	Percent of Students
IACA	49.7
IAVA	55.9

III. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

Extracurricular activity data, percent of students participating in extracurricular activities, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	Percent of Students
IACA	9.8
IAVA	23.0

IV. ACADEMIC GROWTH – FOUR 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 both IACA and IAVA are presented below. The percent proficient in reading, math, and science in both online academies has declined between 2015-2016 and 2018-2019.

Reading – Percent Proficient

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
IACA	76.1	85.4	80.6	75.2
IAVA	68.9	71.8	68.2	60.6

Math – Percent Proficient

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
IACA	66.5	71.7	66.8	60.5
IAVA	52.3	63.8	59.6	53.4

Science – Percent Proficient

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
IACA	71.6	79.3	74.1	56.0
IAVA	33.3	72.0	57.6	42.0

V. ACADEMIC MOBILITY - SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

Enrollment data, percent of newly enrolled students choosing such enrollment for specified reason, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA
Anyplace/Anytime Learning	32.8	26.0
Illness/Injury	15.4	15.0
Bullying/Harassment	10.1	22.0
More/Less Course Selection	4.3	6.0
Under Credit/Overage	9.6	4.0
More/Less Personalized Learning	6.9	12.0
Miscellaneous	21.0	15.0

Enrollment termination data, percent of students choosing to terminate their enrollment for specified reason, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA
Anyplace/Anytime Learning	15.1	9.0
Illness/Injury	0.0	3.0
Bullying/Harassment	0.0	0.0
More/Less Course Selection	1.6	5.0
Under Credit/Overage	0.0	0.0
More/Less Personalized Learning	24.6	15.0
Miscellaneous	58.7	68.0

VI. PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION – SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

Progress toward graduation data, percent of students on track for graduation, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA
First Year High School Students	69.6	78.0
Second Year High School Students	66.1	64.0
Third Year High School Students	64.8	75.0
Fourth Year High School Students	71.8	74.0
Fifth Year Plus High School Students	63.2	73.0

CONCLUSION

As required by legislation, both IACA and IAVA have submitted the required and available data to the Department for school year 2018-2019. The evidence submitted supports that IACA and IAVA are continuing to operate schools with educational instruction and course content delivered primarily over the internet.

The percent of students proficient in reading, math, and science in both districts' online programs decreased this school year. In addition, according to the Iowa School Performance Profiles IAVA received Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) performance category of Comprehensive and will receive an ESSA site visit in the spring of 2020. The school four- year graduation rate was determined to be 42.86%.

Retention rates have dropped for both schools. IACA 2017-2018 was 54% and 2018-2019 was 49.7%. IAVA 2017-2018 was 58% and 2018-2019 was 55.9%. Of high school students, the percent on-track for graduation ranges for both schools shows a decline from the first year to the fifth year. 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 year, more school districts will be approved to operate virtual schools. To date, Des Moines Public School District has received approval and other school districts are participating in the process.

All of these pieces of information, taken together with results from prior year's review and the designation of IAVA as a Comprehensive school, 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, (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.