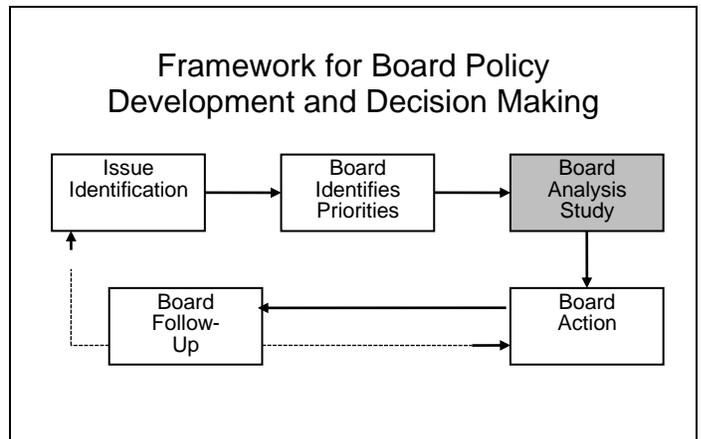


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

May 14, 2015



Agenda Item:

Work Session: Approval Process For Out-of-State Online Educator Preparation Programs

Iowa Goal:

All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

State Board Role/Authority:

Iowa Code section 256.7(3) and 281 Iowa Administrative Code rule 79.5 grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and approve practitioner preparation programs based on those standards.

Presenter:

Lawrence R. Bice, Administrative Consultant
Bureau of Educator Quality

Attachments:

None

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the State Board hear and discuss this information.

Background:

New federal Department of Education regulations (34 CFR § 600.9) require an institution that offers online courses and programs, including educator preparation programs, to be registered with each state in which students of the programs reside, if the state requires that the institution be registered in that state. Iowa Code chapter 261B, as modified effective July 1, 2009, requires an institution that maintains or conducts a course of instruction in Iowa, including through distance education, to register with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

Out-of-State Online Educator Preparation Programs

Prepared by Larry Bice

The process of approval of out-of-state online educator preparation programs is based on federal and Iowa Code.

- A. The requirement to approve out-of-state online programs operating in Iowa comes from federal statute ¹ that requires out-of-state online programs to meet state requirements.
- B. The state requirements are in Iowa Code 261B ², under the jurisdiction of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC). The ICSAC is responsible to approve and register all out-of-state online programs/higher education institutions to enroll students in Iowa, regardless of content being taught.
- C. Iowa Code 261B3A ³ requires that any out-of-state online program/institution that offers educator preparation leading to licensure must be approved by the State Board of Education (Board) before it can be approved by the ICSAC. The Board is responsible only for out-of-state educator preparation programs leading to licensure.

The process we use ⁴ was designed to meet the requirements of A, B and C above. It is described in the letter ⁵ we send to all out-of-state online programs seeking approval. Documentation that all requirements in the letter are met must be examined before a recommendation for approval is forwarded to the Board.

The process does not put out-of-state online programs through the same accreditation review as in-state programs. The process assures that out-of-state online programs have undergone an accreditation process in their home state similar to the Iowa in-state requirements. The process of accreditation is costly, and Iowa Code precludes the Iowa Department of Education (Department) from recovering costs from out-of-state online programs.

NOTE: The Department has no authority to cause out-of-state online programs to make changes as it does with in-state programs.

Footnotes:

1. United States 34 Code of Federal Regulations, 600.9(c):

If an institution is offering postsecondary education through distance or correspondence education to students in a State in which it is not physically located or in which it is otherwise subject to State jurisdiction as determined by the State, the institution must meet any State requirements for it to be legally offering postsecondary distance or correspondence education in that State. An institution must be able to document to the Secretary the State's approval upon request.

2. Iowa Code 261B.3 Registration:

Except as provided in [section 261B.11](#), a school shall register with the commission if a person compensated by the school conducts any portion of a course of instruction in this state or if the school otherwise has a presence in this state.

3. Iowa Code 261B.3A Requirements — Provisional Registration:

In order to register, a school shall be accredited by an agency or organization approved or recognized by the United States Department of Education or a successor agency, be approved by any other state agency authorized to approve the school in this state, and, subsequently, be approved for operation by the commission.

A practitioner preparation program, as defined in [section 272.1](#), operated by a school that applies to register the program in accordance with [this chapter](#) shall, in order to register, be accredited by an agency or organization approved or recognized by the United States Department of Education or a successor agency, be approved by the state board of education pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 3](#), and, subsequently, be approved for operation by the commission.

4. Process for approval:

- Department staff developed a checklist to be used in determining if a program meets requirements for approval. It is posted on the Department's website.
- A program seeking approval may contact the Department directly, or may contact the ICSAC, who puts them in contact with us.
- We provide the program a link to the letter and checklist.
- The program then sends us documentation that they meet the requirements. Documentation will include catalog descriptions, student handbook pages, scanned or copied letters from accrediting agencies, etc. We verify accreditation status with the accrediting agency, verify standing with their state education agency and verify other documentation as necessary.
- If the program does not meet requirements because of missing documentation, we request the documentation. If the program does not meet requirements, even with documentation, they are denied.
- If the program meets requirements, with all required documentation, we forward a request for approval to the Board.

5. Letter detailing process (excerpt):

An institution seeking approval by the Board of an educator preparation program offered in Iowa via distance education must demonstrate all of the following criteria:

1. That the institution seeks to offer programs in Iowa via distance education only; the institution has no bricks-and-mortar presence in Iowa.^A

2. That a candidate graduating from the institution obtains initial educator licensure/certification from the state in which the candidate completed his/her preparation.^B
3. That the candidates graduating from the institution receive prominent written disclosure from the institution in all published and web-based materials that describe the educator preparation program(s) as follows (slight paraphrasing is permitted):

A student seeking an Iowa educator license is advised that successful completion of this institution's program(s) of educator preparation does not qualify you for initial educator licensure by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners.

A candidate seeking licensure in the State of Iowa must first be licensed/certified as an educator in the state in which preparation was completed. This institution shall assist a candidate in contracting the appropriate licensing board in the state in which the candidate's preparation was completed. This institution shall assist the candidate in understanding the requirements of the appropriate licensing board prior to the candidate's completion of this institution's program(s) of educator preparation.

^A An institution with a physical ("bricks-and-mortar") presence in Iowa must have full chapter 79 review process.

^B An institution whose candidates seek initial licensure from the Iowa BoEE must have full chapter 79 review process. The "state in which the candidate completed his/her preparation" means the state in which a majority of the candidate's instruction originates.

A candidates seeking subsequent licensure from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners must contact that Board (515-281-5849; <http://www.boee.iowa.gov/>) for licensure requirements in Iowa.

4. That the institution's educator preparation programs are regionally accredited.
5. That the institution is approved/accredited to offer the same educator preparation program(s) it wishes to offer in Iowa by an entity with authority over educator preparation programs in the state in which the institution maintains its primary physical presence. [If the institution is approved/accredited to offer the same educator preparation program(s) it wishes to offer in Iowa by an entity with authority over educator preparation programs in other states in which the institution maintains a physical presence, the institution is encouraged to present proof of the same to the Iowa State Board of Education.]

An institution is not required to seek the Board's approval for educator preparation programs it offers via distance education unless the commission requires the institution to register in Iowa in order to offer its distance education programs in Iowa. Nevertheless, all institutions that offer

educator preparation program via distance education in Iowa are expected to comply with the disclosure requirements described in item #3 above.

Process:

1. Programs must submit evidence that the above-mentioned criteria have been met.
2. Submitted materials will be reviewed by the Practitioner Preparation Consultant at the Department.
3. Review status and feedback will occur within 30 days upon receipt.
4. Reviewed program(s) will be presented to the Board for approval. Timeline of presentation is dependent upon the Board calendar and agenda availability.
5. Approved program(s) may register with the ICSAC (877-272-4456).