

Virtual Charter Schools Statement

2007 Wisconsin Act 222 defines a virtual charter school as a charter school that provides an online learning program. The Act exempts for a limited time people who teach in virtual charter schools from having a teaching license or permit issued by the state department of public instruction. However, it requires that beginning July 1, 2013, no person may teach an online course in a public or charter school unless he or she has completed a professional development program, approved by state department of public instruction, that is designed to prepare a teacher for online teaching.

The Act directs the state department of public instruction to make online courses available for a reasonable fee, through a statewide web academy, to school districts, cooperative educational service agencies, charter schools, and private schools. That department must also establish instructional standards for online courses taken by pupils enrolled in public and charter schools.

The bill directs school boards (or chartering entity, if other than a school board) to do all of the following:

- determine which pupils may enroll in an online course, which online courses are available, and the number of online courses a pupil may take;
- provide a safe and secure online environment, ensure the confidentiality of pupil coursework and records, and verify the authenticity of pupil coursework;
- except for teachers in virtual charter schools in existence on the bill's effective date, assign an appropriately licensed teacher for each online course;
- ensure that pupils enrolled part-time in online courses have direct contact with a teacher, each week school is scheduled, for at least 20 minutes for each online course;
- ensure that elementary school pupils who are enrolled full-time in online courses have direct contact with a teacher for at least two hours each day that school is scheduled;
- ensure that high school pupils enrolled full-time in online courses have direct contact with a teacher for at least 30 minutes each day that school is scheduled;
- determine the average equivalency hours for online courses;
- ensure that only pupils who reside in this state enroll in online courses; and
- limit how many students can enroll in a virtual charter school through an Open Enrollment Program.

Submitted as:

Wisconsin

2007 Wisconsin Act 222

Status: Enacted into law in 2008.