

UPDATE ON ONLINE LEARNING

BACKGROUND

Online learning is a rapidly emerging educational delivery strategy in Washington's public schools. As an increasing number of districts enroll an increasing number of students in online courses, practitioners, policy makers and citizens are concerned about the impact of this trend on our public education system. Specific concerns address quality, accountability, equity, funding, and state oversight.

The 2009 Washington State Legislature passed SSB 5410 to begin to address these concerns and to establish an organized approach to public K-12 online learning in Washington State.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

SSB 5410 requires OSPI to establish a review and approval process for certain online learning providers in Washington. Specifically, section 3 (1) of the law reads:

"The superintendent of public instruction, **in collaboration with the state board of education**, shall develop and implement approval criteria and a process for approving multidistrict online providers; a process for monitoring, and if necessary, rescinding the approval of courses or programs offered by an online course provider; and an appeals process. The criteria and processes shall be adopted by rule by December 1, 2009."

A draft set of criteria has been included with this document for review and is entitled "Criteria for Approval of Multi-District Online Course Providers". The criteria are organized in tables showing the category, references for sources of examples, and whether OSPI will use a rubric in its assessment. The reference column in the document contains the following abbreviations:

- NACOL = North American Council for Online Learning
- DLC = Digital Learning Commons

EXPECTED ACTION

SBE will comment and give advice on OSPI's draft approval criteria and process for approving multidistrict online providers.