

Contact: Robert Donley

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA PRICE LABORATORY SCHOOL

Action Requested:

Approve the request of the University of Northern Iowa to close the Malcolm Price Laboratory School effective June 30, 2012.

Executive Summary: The University of Northern Iowa is strongly committed to being the premier pre K-12 higher education institution in the state and among the best in the nation. This is made explicit in the University's Strategic Plan approved by the Board.

During the past four years of budget reductions, the university has reexamined every aspect of its operations and programs to become more focused and strategic with its resources.

Iowa Code section 265.1 provides:

“The state board of regents is authorized to establish and operate elementary and secondary laboratory schools at the institutions of higher education under its control. For the purpose of this chapter, laboratory school shall mean a school operated by an educational institution for the purpose of instructing students, training teachers, and advancing teaching methods.”

Pursuant to Board authority under Iowa Code 265.1, UNI has for many years operated the Malcolm Price Laboratory School. The School has provided an excellent education for pre-K -12 students, as well as supported clinical experiences for the UNI teacher education program. It is one of the few remaining laboratory schools in the country supported by a university.

However, the University of Northern Iowa has come to a point, as have many institutions, where it is no longer financially feasible for the university to operate its own school and subsidize instruction for elementary/secondary education. The financial issue is exacerbated by an aging building which a consultant estimated would cost \$30 million to replace. Instead UNI's strategic priority is best served by focusing resources on its undergraduate teacher education and the supporting academic programs.

Best practices call for pre-service students to have a range of clinical experiences in diverse settings to prepare them for what they will realistically experience once on the job. The university is committed to an expanded network of partnerships with school districts to provide an outstanding array of clinical experiences.