ONLINE INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

Action Requested: Affirm the Iowa School for the Deaf agreement for online instructional services for the 2023-24 academic year with the American School for the Deaf as more fully described in this memorandum.

Executive Summary: The Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD), like many K-12 schools across the state, is experiencing difficulty recruiting certified teachers. Recruiting challenges are intensified by a high demand for teachers of the deaf and comparatively limited number of specialized teacher training programs. ISD has been actively working to fill several vacant faculty and staff positions since as early as February 2022. Advertisements were placed nationwide on websites focused on deaf education and speech language pathology. Additionally, ISD targeted universities with these specialized programs. ISD leveraged postings on social media sites and actively pursued potential candidates. Unfortunately, ISD has not received applications to meet the current need.

ISD evaluated the number of students who must receive instruction or services in the impacted areas, including science and speech language pathology, to remain on track academically and determined that alternative resources would be necessary. During the 2022-2023 academic year, ISD engaged the services of the American School for the Deaf to provide necessary instruction services. ISD determined that the American School for the Deaf would be an appropriate resource for needs during the 2023-2024 academic year.

The Iowa School for the Deaf requests Board approval of an agreement with the American School for the Deaf (ASD) to provide online instructional and related services during the 2023-24 academic year. It is presently anticipated that online instructional services will be provided in the following core courses: High School Earth Science, High School Physical Science 1, High School Physical Science 2, and High School Physical Science 3. The total cost for the provision of these services is anticipated not to exceed $39,920. Depending on the success of current recruitment efforts in other areas, including speech pathology, ASD may be engaged to provide additional instructional or related services during the 2023-2024 academic years.

The American School for the Deaf is a Connecticut State Department of Education approved residential school serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing in Connecticut and the immediate region. As part of its educational programming, ASD offers an online academy providing virtual instruction in five core subject areas to students across the United States. Online instruction is provided by teachers licensed in various states throughout the country, with the proposed agreement contemplating the assignment of teachers primarily licensed in Connecticut. In consideration of Iowa Department of Education requirements regarding the provision of core instruction using an online delivery model, the Iowa School for the Deaf is working with ASD to assure that all teachers assigned to provide services under the proposed agreement are licensed to provide instruction in the State of Iowa.