



A MONTHLY JOURNAL
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

School Leader Update

January 2012

Enrollment figures show slight decline

The number of students who enrolled in Iowa's public schools for the 2011-12 school year decreased slightly from the year before, according to the official certified enrollment report released by the Iowa Department of Education.

A total of 473,213 students in kindergarten through 12th grade enrolled in public schools statewide. That represents a decrease of 0.06 percent, or 280 students, from the 2010-11 school year.

This is the 14th consecutive year that enrollment has declined in Iowa's public schools. Enrollment peaked in the 1972-73 school year, with 645,000 students.

Of Iowa's 351 school districts, 218 (62 percent) reported an enrollment decrease in the 2011-12 school year, while 129 districts (37 percent) reported an increase.

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New year marks new beginning in education

With students coming back to school after winter break and our entry into this new year of 2012, we are reminded of new beginnings – an opportunity to move education forward in Iowa through bold, meaningful change in this next legislative session.

For me, this new year is special because it also marks my first full year as an Iowan. When Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds asked me to come to Iowa, it was to work on making Iowa's schools among the best in the world. This unshakable vision for educational excellence drives and inspires me, and everyone at the Department of Education, every day.



Jason Glass, Director

Last summer, we held an education summit in Des Moines, where we brought in a number of state, national and international education leaders to discuss ideas on how Iowa might undertake this journey toward being a world-class school system. In October, an education blueprint was released, which was the starting point for discussion. Since then, I have traveled the state with members of the Branstad-Reynolds administration to get input and refine our proposals. Based on your feedback, we have changed some elements and added others.

Final recommendations to the 2012 Legislature will stay true to the blueprint's three target areas of highly effective educators; high expectations for all students with fair measures for results; and an innovative spirit that pushes our education system to take on new approaches.

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Response to Intervention is coming to Iowa

We all know we need to do better in our classrooms. Consider:

- 61 percent of our schools have not reached the point where 80 percent of students are proficient in reading.
- 35 percent of our children in grades 4 and 8 have not made at least one year's worth of growth in reading in a year's time.
- All students who did not make a year's worth of growth should receive targeted intervention, but we lack a way to verify that students received the support they needed.

To that end, Iowa will move to Response to Intervention (RtI) statewide, with the goal of it being in every Iowa classroom. What is RtI? It is a process for teachers/building teams to produce the most efficient and effective outcomes for student learning. Teachers will use research-based reading programs to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality universal curriculum. Teachers will assess all students at least three times a year, using a valid screener, to determine which students need more targeted instruction. Teachers then provide that instruction through evidence-based interventions.

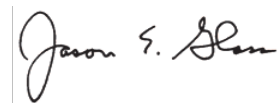
Watch for more updates on the Iowa Department of Education's website. The Department also will develop a section of Frequently Asked Questions to be posted on the website. Please send questions to consultant Tina Ross at tina.ross@iowa.gov. Read the RtI guidance document [here](#).

Director Glass continued from page 1...

Some highlights from our final recommendations will include:

- An innovation acceleration fund, with dollars made available to school districts on a competitive basis;
- Eliminating requirements around seat time for academic credit, which will allow school districts to advance students based on their mastery of subjects;
- A state clearinghouse of online courses taught by Iowa certified teachers;
- More rigorous standards for gaining entry into teacher preparation programs, including a 3.0 grade-point average and passing a cognitive and pedagogical knowledge assessment;
- Widening the pathway for starting charter schools;
- Widening the pathways to alternative teacher licensure with a number of quality assurance checks;
- An elementary literacy program that focuses on intensive reading instruction;
- Requiring an entrance exam for every 11th grader;
- A statewide job posting and hiring system for education jobs so that we can better recruit and screen talent for Iowa schools;
- And task forces to study critically important long-term issues like teacher leadership, compensation and questions on time and calendars in schools.

You'll hear a lot more about these final recommendations and our complete set of legislative proposals in the coming months. We will continue to engage Iowa's educators, students, parents and citizens in this ongoing discussion and count on the collective wisdom of our democracy to guide us to the best answers for our state and our kids. Once again, Happy New Year and, as always, thank you for your courage and commitment to students and to Iowa.





How to send written comments

The Iowa Department of Education is seeking public input on its decision to request a waiver from requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Written comments may be sent to wilma.gajdel@iowa.gov until 4 p.m. on Jan. 31.

Public meetings set for input on NCLB waiver request

The Iowa Department of Education will make a series of stops across the state to gather input on the decision to seek a waiver from the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The Department will submit a waiver request in mid-February to move beyond the accountability measures of No Child Left Behind. While NCLB has advanced some important reforms (including accountability for all students and disaggregation of results), it also has created some unrealistic measures. For example, the law evaluates schools based on whether students meet proficiency without regard to growth or improvement from year to year.

States that apply for flexibility must provide rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans to improve education outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity and improve the quality of instruction.

States must address the following principles in their waiver applications: College and career-ready expectations for all students; state-developed systems for differentiated recognition, accountability and support; and support for effective instruction and leadership, including new guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.

The Department will come to all Area Education Agencies between Jan. 31 and Feb. 9 to share Iowa's waiver application and to gather input from teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders. The Department will be in the AEAs on the following dates:

Jan. 31	AEA 267 Regional Meetings	Feb. 7	Grant Wood AEA Regional Meetings
Feb. 1	Keystone AEA Regional Meetings	Feb. 7	Heartland AEA Regional Meetings
Feb. 2	Great Prairie AEA Regional Meetings	Feb. 8	Green Hills AEA Regional Meetings
Feb. 6	Mississippi Bend AEA Regional Meetings	Feb. 9	Northwest AEA Regional Meetings
		Feb. 9	Prairie Lakes AEA Regional Meetings

More detailed information regarding meeting times and locations will be sent to superintendents and posted on the Department website by Jan. 10.

NCLB waiver details to be outlined at State Board meeting

Members of the State Board of Education will hear a presentation about Iowa's plan to request a No Child Left Behind waiver at a meeting Jan. 26 in Des Moines. At the meeting, State Board members also are expected to:

- Discuss education issues in a work session with legislators at the State Capitol
- Hear an update about competency-based education
- Receive the annual Condition of Community Colleges report

Watch for a complete agenda at www.educateiowa.gov.

Education bill will reflect shift in teaching standards

The Iowa Department of Education and other stakeholder groups are working together on a new effort to create consistency in the professional pipeline for teachers, from preparation to practice.

Experts in teacher education and evaluation broadly agree that the Iowa Teaching Standards used to evaluate educators are applied inconsistently across schools statewide and need to be strengthened in the area of transformative qualities. They also acknowledge that it's difficult for new teachers to adjust to being evaluated on the Iowa Teaching Standards after being prepared by colleges and universities for national standards (InTASC).

That's why two stakeholder groups – one made up of teachers, and the other representing leaders of school districts, Area Education Agencies, higher education, teachers and statewide education associations – recently joined together in a recommendation to move to the InTASC standards for Iowa schools.

"There were many voices in this process," said Mary Beth Schroeder Fracek, administrative consultant in the Department's Bureau of Teaching and Learning Services. The shift requires legislative approval, which is why it will be included in a comprehensive education bill that Gov. Branstad will present to state lawmakers in January.

The next step for the Department is to start collaborative work early this year on redesigning the teacher evaluation system.



Certified enrollment continued from page 1...

Four Iowa districts reported no change from the 2010-11 school year. School districts with the largest percentage increase in one year were Waukee, Creston, Gilbert (all at 6 percent), Rock Valley (5 percent) and Storm Lake (5 percent). Districts with the largest one-year increase in the number of students were Des Moines (571), Iowa City (442), Waukee (431), Ankeny (312) and Pleasant Valley (176).

Districts with the largest percentage increase over five years were Waukee (30 percent), Bondurant-Farrar (19 percent), North Polk (17 percent), Ankeny (16 percent) and College (14 percent). Districts with the largest five-year increase in the number of students were Waukee (1,623), Ankeny (1,261), Iowa City (735), College (563) and Johnston (511).

Under state law, certified enrollment is used in the formula that determines state funding for public school districts. Certified enrollment is based on the number of students living in each school district. It also includes the "weighting," or additional funding for students in certain programs, such as students who receive assistance in learning the English language.

The certified enrollment count is taken by districts on the first day of October each school year. Official numbers are confirmed by the Iowa Department of Education. Read the full 2011-12 certified enrollment report [here](#). Click [here](#) to see certified enrollment trends for each Iowa school district.

Save the date for statewide special education seminar

The Iowa Department of Education will host *Pursuing the Promise*, a three-day seminar in June that brings together special educators and parents with state and federal policymakers, school administrators and community partners. The seminar is set for June 11-13 in Des Moines.

Keynote speakers will focus on students with disabilities coming to school ready to learn, going through school in safe and caring environments, achieving at high levels and leaving school ready for life. Presenters will include Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass and state director of special education Martin Ikeda.

Additional details, including speakers, programming,

accommodations and registration will be available at www.educateiowa.gov at a later date. Please mark your calendars and join us as we work together to discuss the future of our children's education.



A call to those planning to hire Chinese teachers

Planning to hire a Chinese teacher for the 2012-13 school year? The Taiwanese Ministry of Education is inviting superintendents or principals to visit Taiwan's schools this spring. The ministry covers expenses for roundtrip airfare and one week of accommodations.



If you are interested in participating, send an outline of your plan to hire a Chinese language teacher (or teachers) from Taiwan. Include information such as the number of superintendents/principals who want to take part in the trip; how many teachers you plan to recruit; what qualifications you will look for; the teaching load they will be expected to fulfill (e.g. number of courses, hours per week); and what salaries and benefits are provided commensurate with qualifications.

For more information, contact John Lin at johnlin@edutw.org.

Do you foster teaching talent?

Tell the world by nominating one (or more) of your educators for Iowa's Teacher of the Year. It's a prestigious honor for the teacher, the school and your district.

In 53 years of the program, winners have come from large and small districts, teaching virtually all subjects. Winners are considered effective educators who are up to date on teaching practices and work in collaborative environments.

The nomination form is available [here](#), and the deadline is April 2. For more information, contact Deborah Humpal at 515-822-3472 or deborah.humpal@iowa.gov. Good luck!

USDA loans, grants available for community facilities

Low-interest loans and grants are available to public entities such as county and local governments, nonprofit organizations and tribal organizations in rural areas or towns with no more than 20,000 residents. The funds, administered through the USDA's Rural Development Community Facilities, can be used to construct, enlarge or improve community facilities that provide health care, education, public safety and public services, including improvements to school food service facilities, Head Start centers, preschools, adult daycare centers, child care centers, community food preparation centers, food banks and farmers markets. More information can be found [here](#).

Iowa schools develop safe rooms

Iowa schools continue to work with the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division to develop and fund school safe room projects. Twenty-nine safe room projects had been approved in 24 school districts for a total amount of \$33,135,113 as of Nov. 23. The projects are paid for by the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

These safe rooms provide life safety protection to students and staff during tornadoes and high winds. All school safe rooms will be multi-purpose rooms to include auditoriums, weight/wrestling rooms, classrooms, sports complex areas and school activity rooms.

Funding is still available to school districts for school safe rooms. Contact John Wageman at john.wageman@iowa.gov or 515-224-5650 or Linda Roose at linda.roose@iowa.gov or 515-224-5717 for more information.



Waverly-Shell Rock Middle School safe room

Are you a green school? (Part II)

In December, we told you about Green Ribbon Schools. The new U.S. Department of Education program honors public and nonpublic schools that have (or are working hard to get) energy-efficient buildings, environmentally friendly classrooms and healthy students who have a grasp of environmental and sustainability issues.



This month, we have details about how to apply. Iowa schools apply through the Iowa Department of Education, which may nominate up to four schools to the U.S. Department of Education. Among the four nominated, one must be a public school with a 40 percent disadvantaged population, and one must be a private school. All schools must meet high college- and career-readiness standards and must be in compliance with federal civil rights laws and all federal, state and local health and safety standards and regulations. An application form and more details are available [here](#).

For more information, contact Gary Schwartz, facilities consultant, at 515-281-4743 or gary.schwartz@iowa.gov. Visit the U. S. Department of Education [website](#) for more information about the program.

Student voices wanted in reform conversation

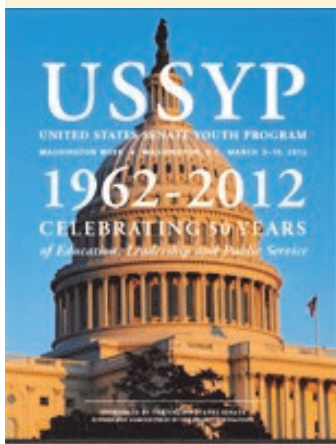
Iowa students have a say in the future of their schools. That's why their voices are needed on a new state advisory council formed by Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass.

Students in grades 8-12 from public and nonpublic schools statewide can apply for a seat on the Learning Council, whose members will meet with Director Glass in person and virtually this year.

Meetings will take place in March, May, September and December. The council also will communicate via e-mail. Applications can be found [here](#) and must be returned by Jan. 31. A committee will review and rate the applications. Students who are chosen to serve on the council will be notified by Feb. 10.



Iowa students headed to nation's capitol in March



Four Iowa high school students have been chosen as delegates or alternates to walk in the shoes of senators, federal judges, presidential advisors and other leaders who got their first taste of Washington, D.C., through the United States Senate Youth Program.

The distinguished program brings two talented students from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity to Washington for a week each year to deepen their understanding of America's political processes and to strengthen their resolve to pursue careers in public service.

The 2012 student delegation will mark the program's 50th anniversary when it meets March 3-10.

Each will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship and an all-expenses paid trip to the nation's capitol.

Student delegates must attend the entire program week in D.C. to receive the scholarship. Students who are unable to attend must forfeit the award to the first alternate for their state.

Iowa's delegates and alternates are:

Delegate: Blake McGhghy, Keokuk High School

Delegate: Scott Syroka, Johnston High School

1st Alternate: Eli Kirschbaum, Davenport West High School

2nd Alternate: Jacob Doerr, Shenandoah High School



World Food Prize expands youth programs

Student-teacher teams are encouraged to sign up for an April 30 Iowa Youth Institute to be held at Iowa State University. The institute is part of the World Food Prize Foundation's expansion announced last summer by Gov. Terry Branstad.



The institute challenges students to explore global issues and areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, encourages them to pursue careers in these areas and raises awareness about the vast career opportunities in Iowa. This new program is made possible through a generous donation from Paul and Claudia Schickler.

Up to 200 student-teacher teams may participate. The goal is to eventually offer this opportunity to every high school in the state. Participating students will present essays they have written to experts and peers in small groups, take part in interactive activities on campus and engage with past World Food Prize interns, industry experts and others to learn about opportunities to address hunger, poverty and other critical issues.



The top 80 students will attend the Global Youth Institute during October's World Food Prize events in the fall of 2012 and be eligible to apply for international and USDA internships.

Students must write an essay, under the guidance of their teacher; all registration and essay details are available [here](http://www.worldfoodprize.org). The deadline is April 1. Contact Catherine Swoboda at cswoboda@worldfoodprize.org to learn more.



Nominate a history teacher

Do you know an outstanding 7-12 teacher who is passionate about teaching American history? Full-time educators who teach American history qualify for the Gilder Lehrman Institute Preserve America History Teacher of the Year award.

The National History Teacher of the Year Award gives \$10,000 to the best American history teacher. The national winner is chosen from outstanding teachers in each state, district and U.S. territory. State winners receive \$1,000 and an archive of books and other resources for their schools. The award is sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute, Preserve America and HISTORY (The History Channel). Nominations may be made by a student, parent, colleague, supervisor or other education



professional familiar with the teacher's work. Candidates must have at least three years of experience teaching American history and must plan to teach for at least one year following the award year.

Elementary teachers (K-6) and middle/high school teachers (7-12) are honored in separate categories in alternate years. Middle and high school teachers will be considered for the 2012 award. Nominations are due by Feb. 1. All nominations must be submitted on the Gilder Lehrman [website](#). For more information, contact cheryl.mullenbach@iowa.gov.

National STEM Video Game Challenge

The [National STEM Video Game Challenge](#) is under way to cultivate interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning by tapping into students' passion for video games. This [competition is the culmination and continuation](#) of a two-year effort among the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), the White House, the U.S. Department of Education's Digital Promise Initiative and other public-private partners and co-sponsors.

The annual competition is accepting submissions of original video game concepts and designs in four categories: Middle School, High School, Collegiate and Educator. This year, new sub-categories are available to entering designers: the PBS KIDS stream and the Sesame Street stream. For more information and rules, click [here](#).

The National STEM Video Game Challenge recognizes that students learn outside of school, too – in afterschool programs, enrichment activities and at home.

The challenge asks children and educators to use the technology that students love to help them learn the skills they need to become the global innovators of tomorrow. Entries are accepted now through March 12. Guidelines and details are available [here](#).

Free Iowa travel brochures

The Iowa Tourism Office can provide free copies of the 2011 Iowa Travel Guide in bulk to schools in Iowa. The 184-page guide includes general information about the state and a listing of attractions and lodging facilities. The guides are an excellent resource for students who are learning about Iowa or who are studying Iowa history. To request the guides, call 1-800-345-IOWA or visit www.traveliowa.com and include an amount in the comments field.



Figge Art Museum in Davenport

Early Childhood Preschool Programs

Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards Verification

For school districts with upcoming Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) verification visits: The standards are comprised of all 10 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards and approximately 45 percent of the criteria. The program standards are designed to be a continuous improvement process to potentially culminate with accreditation from NAEYC. Standards include relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment of child progress, health, teachers, families, community relationships, physical environment and teaching and management. Districts should consult their Area Education Agencies for assistance in implementing the standards (including curriculum, instruction and assessment), developing portfolios and preparing for a verification visit.

Components of IQPPS verification visits that mirror Comprehensive School Improvement Plan visits include the district overview, family and teacher interviews, document reviews and summary meeting. If noncompliance is identified at the IQPPS verification visit, districts must provide evidence of compliance with Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Assurances and the 23 IQPPS Required Criteria within 45 days of the visit. In addition to the Assurances and Required Criteria, districts must meet 85 percent of the Other Criteria in each Standard. For those standards met at less than 85 percent, the district must develop a corrective action plan within 45 days of the last day of the verification visit. The district may choose which criteria will be addressed in the plan. Click [here](#) for more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children. Contact Judy Russell at judy.russell@iowa.gov or 515-281-4705, or Penny Milburn at penny.milburn@iowa.gov or 515-281-7844.



Student Health and Nutrition

HealthierUS School Challenge

Is your school one of the nation's best in nutrition and physical activity? Now's your chance to enter the first HealthierUS



School Challenge. The federal program is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign to raise a healthier generation of kids. The challenge recognizes schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program and promote nutrition and physical activity.

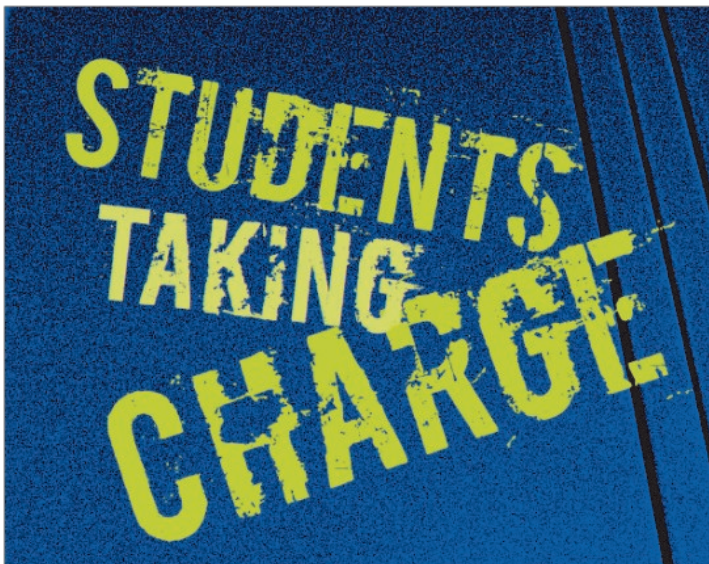
The first HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) TEAM trainings will be offered on Feb. 8 in Waverly ([click here to register](#)) and Feb. 16 in Ames ([click here to register](#)). The

trainings will include an explanation of the challenge, an overview of the online application and breakouts on the menu criteria, physical education and nutrition education resources to help meet HUSSC. School teams of three should include the food service director, P.E. teacher and principal. The registration deadline is Jan. 20.

For more training information, contact Patti Delger at patti.delger@iowa.gov. Click [here](#) for more information.



Students Taking Charge: a high school wellness workshop



Students Taking Charge is a national movement to mobilize, organize and speak out for healthy and active schools in every state. Encourage a team of high school students and an adult advisor to participate in a one-day workshop that help them develop leadership and advocacy skills, to gain knowledge about health issues and to connect them with other students statewide. The workshop will held in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa State University Extension, and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council. The workshop will be on Friday, March 2, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To register a team, [click here](#). For more information, contact Carrie Scheidel at carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov or 515-281-4758.



Legislative Update

Contact Mike Cormack for all legislative items: mike.cormack@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399.

Cormack at the Capitol

As I write this, I am concluding four years as mayor of Massena, a 125-year-old Cass County town of 350 people in southwest Iowa.

One of my favorite traditions as a teacher in Massena was to take my sixth-grade students on a field trip to a restored one-room schoolhouse in town. Both Massena and education have changed greatly in the past 125 years. When Massena began, Iowa's farm-based economy provided the basis of the need for schoolhouses throughout rural Iowa. The competition that students faced was down the road, not on the other side of the world. In its day, the network of one-room schoolhouses did a fantastic job of providing an education that children needed.

Agriculture remains tremendously important to Iowa, but the needs of our state have changed. Instead of small farms dotting our landscape, one farmer with the right technology does the work that took scores of people to do in the past. On or off the farm, today's students have educational needs that exceed those of early Iowans. It is not realistic to expect students to be successful in life without at least a high school diploma; agricultural and manufacturing jobs that once required minimal educational skills now require much more advanced training.

Today, the rolling hills that once greeted travelers on the Mormon Trail are now dotted with 196 windmills, providing green energy and good-paying jobs for young Iowa graduates with the proper education and training. Regardless of whether our students stay in Iowa, we have a moral obligation to prepare them for a world that has changed. Iowans always have been challenged by how to best prepare the next generation. That continues today, in a world where change is accelerating at a pace far faster than this state has ever faced.

Education has evolved, to be sure. Now, the chance to increase that pace of change is at our doorstep. This month, Gov. Terry Branstad will unveil a legislative proposal that's based on the blueprint he released in October, as well as input from Iowans. The proposal, if adopted, will result in major changes in how education is delivered. Some elements of the plan, such as a proposed state clearinghouse of online courses, reflect changes in technology. Other elements, such as changing how student progress is measured, reflect efforts to restore Iowa's standing as a national leader in education. I hope that meaningful changes can be signed into law.

As I leave the mayor's office in Massena, I can think of many changes that made life better in our community, from repairing old sidewalks downtown to putting up new basketball hoops. Some changes were big, while others were small. For example, Massena now is represented on a sign along Interstate 80. It is the sum of the parts that can create substantial long-term change. In turn, some of the Governor's proposals will be large, while others will be small. What matters is the sum of the parts: Ensuring our children are prepared to succeed.





Legal Lessons

Contact Carol Greta for all Legal Lessons items: carol.greta@iowa.gov or 515-281-8661.

Action on Administrative Rules

The State Board of Education will meet on Jan. 26 in Des Moines. The State Board will be asked to give public notice of its intent to amend the following chapters of administrative rules (for later adoption at the Board's March 29 meeting):

25. Academic Career and Employment Program (NEW chapter of rules)

- This new chapter of rules was written with the Iowa Workforce Development to implement community college programs designed to enhance meaningful employment of Iowans. This chapter has no effect on school districts or Area Education Agencies.

63. Funding of Instructional Programs in Juvenile Homes

- This chapter is rewritten to align the review of instructional programs in juvenile detention homes and shelters (for which AEAs are responsible) more closely with the existing accreditation process for AEAs.
- The rewrite also proposes to align the funding of these programs so that it's more parallel to the funding of instructional programs for students in state mental health institutions (MHIs), and the State Training Schools in Eldora and Toledo.

Also on Jan. 26, the State Board will be asked to adopt these proposed rule changes:

12. Accreditation Standards

- Rescinds the rule that requires schools to have proof of physical exams in each employee's personnel file (with the obvious exception of bus drivers).
- Adds terms and conditions by which a school district or accredited nonpublic school may confer secondary credit to students enrolled in 7th or 8th grade.
- Adds 21st century learning skills to accreditation requirements.

99. Business Procedures and Deadlines (NEW chapter of rules)

- This new chapter compiles annual deadlines of many reports due to the Department from LEAs and AEAs.
- Reminds LEAs and AEAs of possible consequences of not submitting a timely report.

97. Supplementary Weighting

- To match the statute, this rule changes the grade levels for a regional academy from grades 9-12 to grades 7-12.
- Also to conform to the statute, the districts in a regional academy must submit to the Department their agreement as to how they plan to use the supplementary weighting report.

Legal Lessons continued

98. Financial Rules for Categorical Funds

- To match the statute, changes are made to uses of funds for a home school assistance program.
- Also to conform to the PPEL statute, the rule removes the word “unit” from PPEL rule. The threshold for PPEL spending is still \$500, but it is not “per unit;” rather, it is “per transaction.”
- The rule has always included a definition of “repairing,” which is an allowable PPEL expenditure. It now also defines “maintenance” (which is NOT an allowable PPEL expenditure).

The above summaries are not intended to be exhaustive. The [rules calendar on the Department's website](#) includes links to the full wording of all specific changes.

Applications for Student Member of State Board of Education

Applications for the student member of the State Board of Education will be available on the Department's website within a few weeks. The student member's term starts May 1, 2012, and ends April 30, 2013. The Board meets at least seven times during that term, with most meetings taking place in the Grimes State Office Building in Des Moines. The application deadline is Feb. 6.

Besides being a full-time, regularly enrolled 10th or 11th grade student in a public high school, the student must meet these requirements:

- Has a GPA of at least 3.0 (4.0 scale) or 3.75 (5.0 scale).
- Has attended his/her present high school at least the past two consecutive semesters (or the equivalent thereof).
- Demonstrates participation in extracurricular and community activities, as well as an interest in serving on the board.

The application and all required supporting documents can be found [here](#).

Closing/Realigning Attendance Centers

Districts continue to face tough choices about whether to close one or more attendance centers or to realign the grade levels in existing attendance centers.

This is a reminder that in 2009, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that the “Barker guidelines” (the procedural steps to be followed by a local school board) were void. These rules no longer exist.

Therefore, when facing such decisions, a local board may follow the procedural steps, but if a parent appeals the decision, the local board's decision will not be judged on whether it followed any or all of the steps. The appeal will be based solely on whether the local board abused its discretion. This means that if a reasonable person could have found credible evidence supporting the school district's decision, the decision must be affirmed. For a more full discussion, click [here](#).

Legal Lessons continued

Student Attendance Rules

Truancy:

State law dictates that students who are 6 years old by Sept. 15 up to, and including, those who are under 16 by Sept. 15 are of compulsory attendance age and must be enrolled in school. The law (Iowa Code section 299.1A) also states that a student who turns 16 after Sept. 15 cannot legally drop out of a public or accredited nonpublic school. A student of compulsory attendance age who has more than seven unexcused absences in any one quarter is deemed truant and must be reported to your county attorney.

Local school attendance policy:

Districts and accredited nonpublic schools may have a more stringent local attendance policy for all students. In other words, just because a case is not reportable to the county attorney, local school officials may enforce a reasonable attendance policy. What does a reasonable local attendance policy look like? See the 501 series of sample policies of IASB. The Department has posted guidelines [here](#).

Employees who are Nursing Mothers

LEAs, AEAs, community colleges and nonpublic schools are subject to an amendment of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act regarding support of nursing mothers. Under the new law, an employer “shall” provide the following:

1. A reasonable break time (may be uncompensated) for the employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child’s birth each time the employee “has need to express the milk.”

and

2. A place (other than a bathroom) that is shielded from view and free from intrusion to be used to express breast milk.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees may show that the requirements of the law would impose an undue hardship, including expense. This law is not regulated by the Department. Any questions should be addressed to the U.S. Department of Labor. Find a link to “how to file a complaint” under General Guidance at this [web page](#).



eFile state tax returns

Get your Iowa income tax refund in 10 days or less when you file electronically. eFiling is fast, safe and easy. It's also great for the environment.

Most students are eligible to eFile for free. Beginning in mid-January, the Iowa Department of Revenue [website](#) will feature links to software companies offering online filing of income tax returns.

File your federal and Iowa income tax returns together from the Department's website.

Calendar

- Jan. 1 • Empowerment (ECI) Payment Schedule
- Jan. 1 • Juvenile Home Educational Program Budget
- Jan. 1 • Reorganization or Dissolution effective July 1, last day to notify department
- Jan. 9 • Winter EASIER test site opens
- Jan. 9 • CTE Courses In A Program opens
- Feb. 1 • Dropout Prevention Program—Last day to resubmit an unapproved application
- Feb. 1 • Whole Grade Sharing Agreement — Last day for board to sign

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