



A MONTHLY JOURNAL  
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

# School Leader Update

February 2014

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### The latest on Rtl: A new name

An effort to implement Response to Intervention in schools statewide is continuing under a new name.

Leaders from the Iowa Department of Education, Area Education Agencies, and school districts recently agreed to rename this effort Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

"Both Rtl and MTSS essentially mean the same thing," said Rita Martens, a lead consultant at the Iowa Department of Education. "We're choosing MTSS because it is a more accurate description; it more accurately reflects the work. It is a multi-tiered focus, not just a focus on shoring up students who have fallen behind."

While the name has changed, the focus remains the same: Help all students read proficiently by the end of third grade. Read more by clicking [here](#).



## An exciting time to be in education in Iowa

There's a new legislative session under way in Iowa, but there's also a lot of exciting work ahead to put in place the historic education reform law that passed in 2013.

As a former teacher and school administrator, it's such an honor to help lead this work. And as the state director of education, it's important to recognize the progress we've made so far.



**Let's start with the teacher leadership and compensation system.** This was the centerpiece of last year's education reform legislation.

This system is about investing in our teachers, who are at the heart of great schools. The goal is to transform learning by using the expertise of top teachers to strengthen the teaching around them and raise student achievement.

All 346 Iowa school districts applied for planning grants to develop a local teacher leadership and compensation plan. And now, approximately 150 districts have taken the next step, which is to apply for funding for the local systems they have designed.

One of the important next steps is to ensure an equitable process for selecting districts for the first year of this three-year phase-in. A rigorous selection bar, diversity of size, and geography will be important factors. We expect that the first round of districts will be announced at the beginning of March.

**Next, we've had several task forces created by the Legislature and facilitated by the Department.** Let me highlight two of those task forces: The Council on Educator Development will work to recommend statewide systems for evaluating teachers and school leaders.

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## Iowa's enrollment climbs significantly

The overall number of students who enrolled in Iowa's public schools for the 2013-14 school year increased significantly from the year before. This is the second consecutive year that Iowa has seen a large one-year increase in statewide enrollment, following 17 years of declining enrollment.

A total of 478,921 students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade enrolled in public schools statewide for the 2013-14 school year. That represents an increase of 0.6 percent, or 2,676 students, from the 2012-13 school year. Enrollment peaked in the 1972-73 school year, with 645,000 students. The recent upward pattern is due in part to a spike in [birth rates](#) in Iowa starting in 2003. Certified enrollment trends for each Iowa school district can be found on the Iowa Department of Education's website:

One-year changes: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/newsroom/2014/01/2012-13-2013-14-certified-enrollment-comparison>

Five-year changes: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/newsroom/2014/01/five-year-certified-enrollment-changes-2009-2013>

### ***Continued from page 1***

This council has spent time defining the primary tasks of the group, examining data around current evaluation practices in Iowa, and reviewing the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria in comparison to national standards. Meanwhile, the Assessment Task Force is investigating options for a state assessment. While schools are still required to administer the Iowa Assessments for accountability purposes, we believe the Legislature intended to open the door to other options with the creation of this task force. To date, the group has defined the scope of its work, completed a request for information from major test vendors to identify assessments that would meet legislative requirements, and is in the process of building a mechanism to rate those potential assessments.

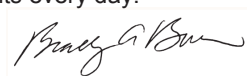
**The next update has to do with a yearlong student teaching pilot.** This project was created to provide a full year of student teaching rather than the typical one semester to students in participating teacher preparation programs. Legislators set aside funding for two higher education institutions to participate, and the awards went to the University of Northern Iowa and Dordt College.

**Next, I want to talk about TeachIowa.gov,** the new statewide online education job posting system. This system shows job listings in all Iowa school districts, the nine area education agencies, several nonpublic schools and systems, and five higher education institutions. Since the launch of the system at the beginning of this school year, more than 2,000 jobs have been posted, and there are over 3,500 applicants in the system.

**Finally, we have the expansion of Iowa Learning Online,** a state-run system that has provided high-quality online courses through the Iowa Communications Network since 2004. The goal is to provide a full array of course options, including language arts, social studies, math, science, health, physical education, fine arts, foreign language, and vocational education online. The Iowa Department of Education should have most of these options available in the fall.

**It's also worth mentioning that the early literacy component** of education reform legislation that passed in the 2012 legislative session was funded in 2013 through an \$8 million appropriation. Administrative rules for the use of those early literacy funds have now received approval by the State Board of Education and are subject to final review by a legislative committee. You'll find our guidance to school districts on the early literacy page of our website at [educateiowa.gov](http://educateiowa.gov).

I truly believe in this work. As director, I'm focused on helping our education system implement these initiatives in a way that respects and supports both the individuality of our Iowa communities and the priorities set at the state level. Let's keep working together in the best interests of our students. Thanks for all you do for your schools and students every day.



# Teachlowa.gov will help you find new teachers

It's hiring season in the field of education and the [Teachlowa.gov](http://Teachlowa.gov) job posting board is ready to help locate the right candidate for your district. To that end, a variety of training and learning opportunities have been scheduled around the state.

Each AEA will host face-to-face trainings. District users are welcome to register and attend training sessions in a location nearest them. The format for each of these trainings includes a three-hour beginner's session for users who may have posted a job, would like to add additional users to their district account or simply want to learn more about the potential of the Teachlowa.gov system. A second session will be held in each location and is intended for more advanced users who want to learn more about the enhanced features of the system and how Teachlowa.gov can make the process of the candidate search more efficient. Both the beginning and advanced training sessions will be held on the same day.

Keystone AEA	Jan. 22	Julie Tschirgi	<a href="mailto:jtschirgi@aea1.k12.ia.us">jtschirgi@aea1.k12.ia.us</a>
AEA 267	Feb. 26	Heather Gustafson	<a href="mailto:hgustafson@aea.267.k12.ia.us">hgustafson@aea.267.k12.ia.us</a>
Prairie Lakes AEA (FD)	Feb. 17	Cindy Toal	<a href="mailto:ctoal@aea8.k12.ia.us">ctoal@aea8.k12.ia.us</a>
Prairie Lakes AEA (Soebcer)	March 3	Cindy Toal	<a href="mailto:ctoal@aea8.k12.ia.us">ctoal@aea8.k12.ia.us</a>
Mississippi Bend AEA	Feb. 24	Dawn Meier	<a href="mailto:dmeier@aea9.k12.ia.us">dmeier@aea9.k12.ia.us</a>
Grant Wood AEA	Feb. 3	Jackie Schreder	<a href="mailto:jschreder@gwaea.org">jschreder@gwaea.org</a>
Heartland AEA	Jan. 28	Katie Streff	<a href="mailto:kstreff@heartlandaea.org">kstreff@heartlandaea.org</a>
Northwest AEA	Feb. 27	Jerom Schaefer	<a href="mailto:jschaefer@nwaea.org">jschaefer@nwaea.org</a>
Green Hills AEA	March 12	Lori Kinyon	<a href="mailto:lkinyon@ghaea.org">lkinyon@ghaea.org</a>
Great Prairie AEA	Feb. 20	Greg Manske	<a href="mailto:greg.manske@gpaea.org">greg.manske@gpaea.org</a>

Information about these sessions has been emailed to Teachlowa.gov system users and can be found by contacting the Area Education Agencies. Training dates and locations are listed on the left; registration is required. Contact the individual listed for registration information.

## Teacher intern license

The teacher intern program, designed for second-career adults, is an alternative pathway to become a secondary teacher. The program includes the same education requirements as in a traditional teacher preparation program, but the courses are offered in a concentrated manner by various delivery methods. Once coursework is completed, candidates may be hired as interns in lieu of going through the traditional student teaching program.

The program isn't intended as a workaround for the traditional program for college students, but rather for the second-career adult who has relevant work experience and now wants to become a teacher.

Teacher interns may be hired by a school district to fill teaching positions for the subjects listed on their licenses (no conditional licensure). The person may co-teach or substitute teach (including long-term subbing) at the secondary level.

District responsibilities include assigning a mentor, evaluating the teacher according to the Iowa teaching standards, and working with the intern program to determine eligibility for the full initial teaching license. If you know someone who has a bachelor's degree and would like to become a secondary teacher, direct them to the Board of Educational Examiners website: <http://www.boee.iowa.gov/tilal.html> or contact Joanne Tubbs at [joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov](mailto:joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov).

## Need a Spanish teacher?

The Visiting Teacher from Spain Program provides local school districts with the opportunity to fill vacant Spanish teaching positions. With this program, Iowa school systems have the option of recruiting highly qualified Spanish educators for a period of up to three years and at the same time provide Iowa students, parents, and communities the opportunity to work with professionals from other countries. Visiting teachers from Spain are certified Spanish language educators with at least two years of teaching experience.

For more information, click [here](#), or contact Isbelia Arzola at 515-281-3954 or [Isbelia.arzola@iowa.gov](mailto:Isbelia.arzola@iowa.gov).



## Migrant Education Program (Title I, Part C)

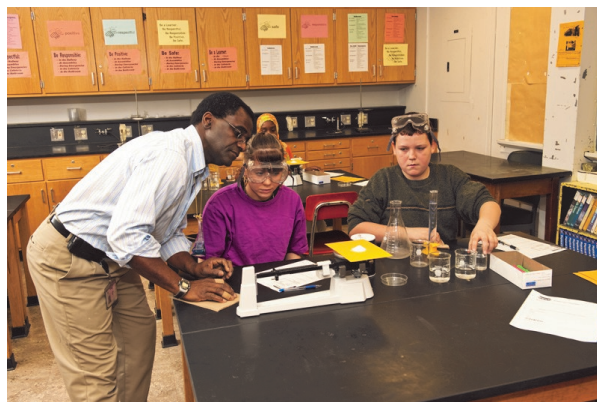
The Migrant Education Program (MEP) supports children of families who move on a frequent basis to obtain temporary or seasonal work in the agricultural industry. The purpose of the MEP is to ensure that migratory children benefit from the same free public education provided to other children. To fulfill the state's obligation of identifying students on a statewide basis, regional migrant recruiters will visit local employers to interview prospective migrant workers and may be in contact with school districts. If there are students enrolled in your district who are eligible for services, you will be contacted by Susan Selby of the Iowa Department of Education with additional information. Programs that have eligible students will be provided with access to the resources of the Midwest Migrant Educational Resource Center free of charge. Contact Susan Selby, Title I consultant, with questions at 515-281-4732 or [susan.selby@iowa.gov](mailto:susan.selby@iowa.gov).



## Nominate math, science teachers

Help us find the best elementary school teachers of math and science in Iowa.

The Iowa Department of Education is seeking nominations for kindergarten-through-sixth-grade math and science teachers for the 2014 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching award. Up to five teachers will be named as Iowa finalists and submitted



for consideration to be nationally recognized as a state winner. State winners receive \$10,000, and are invited to an all-expense-paid trip for two to Washington, D.C., to meet with the president of the United States.

Go to <https://www.paemst.org> to learn more and to nominate a teacher.

The deadline to nominate someone is April 1 with applications due May 1. For more information, contact Science Consultant Yvette McCulley at [yvette.mcculley@iowa.gov](mailto:yvette.mcculley@iowa.gov) or Math Consultant Judith Spitzle at [judith.spitzle@iowa.gov](mailto:judith.spitzle@iowa.gov).



## Iowa Core Commission named

Iowa Department of Education Director Brad Buck announced a new state commission to help ensure Iowa's academic standards for what students should know and be able to do from kindergarten through 12th grade are put into practice successfully in schools statewide.

"Clear, uniform standards raise the bar on what we expect from all students, and Iowa has a strong foundation in place with the Iowa Core standards," Buck said. "However, it's not enough to set rigorous standards and expect schools to figure out how to help students reach those standards. Schools need more support."

The Iowa Core Commission is an advisory group of 21 Iowans, including teachers, school administrators, education associations, higher education leaders, business leaders, and Iowa Department of Education staff members. This group's work will focus on strengthening a statewide implementation plan and improving communication from the state level to local schools. Read more by clicking [here](#).

## 2014'S Teacher of Year supports Iowa Core

Collaborative conversations, analytical thinking, inferences. Welcome to the 21st century classroom. Welcome to the Iowa Core. It is something the Jane Schmidt, 2014's Iowa Teacher of the Year, swears by. The Iowa Core isn't the flavor of the day, Schmidt says, but something that truly revolutionizes education.



The Iowa Core "makes us look at our units in a different way," she said. "It takes learning to a much deeper level. The emphasis is on higher-level thinking – such as analysis, critical-thinking – that you get through textual evidence." Schmidt says the Iowa Core is a departure from the past.

"No Child Left Behind required us to teach students skills, but not really to think," she said. "The Iowa Core makes them evaluate, discern." Read the full story on the department's [website](#).

## Aligning fine arts to the Iowa Core

The [Fine Arts Alignment with the Iowa Core Universal Constructs](#) were written to illustrate how fine arts teachers can align their instruction to the universal constructs from the Iowa Core. By showing connections between the universal constructs and fine arts, these resources demonstrate how fine arts support the implementation of the Iowa Core. Fine arts are particularly well-suited in supporting students in developing the universal constructs important for success in the 21st Century.



The documents are intended to fulfill the charge from the Iowa Department of Education that the work of implementing the Iowa Core is the responsibility of all educators in Iowa. The documents provide support and resources for educators wishing to identify connections to the Iowa Core. The information provided in the companion documents is not required of all schools or districts. For more information, contact Rosanne Malek at 515-281-3199 or [rosanne.malek@iowa.gov](mailto:rosanne.malek@iowa.gov).

## High-growth leads to high-performing schools

We talk a lot about academic proficiencies, and extol high-performing schools. That's natural, of course, because it's important to study our high-performing peers. But just as Rome wasn't built in a day, top-notch systems didn't get there over night. They did, however, get there through sustained and committed growth.

And growth was the focus of a recent study by the Iowa Department of Education in conjunction with Grant Wood Area Education Agency. The question fueling the study: Why are students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) not achieving at high levels? The study's findings are in the February issue of [Each and Every Child](#).

## Your team conquered the seemingly impossible? Share!

Do you have a story you would like to share pertaining to Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)?

You are invited to share your experiences with others at the Learning Supports Spring Conference, April 23-24, in Des Moines. Submit a brief summary of your Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 experiences and indicate up to four presenters who will do the sharing. Topics such as Using Data, Achieving Fidelity, Impacting Student Outcomes, Implementing Evidence Based Practices, Integrating Initiatives, Building Effective Teams, Incentives and Celebrations, Working with Families and much more are welcome. Deadline for submissions is Feb. 28. Up to 12 schools will be selected. Honorariums will be provided. For more information, contact Susan Bruce at [susan.bruce@iowa.gov](mailto:susan.bruce@iowa.gov).

## Time to order next year's alternative format textbooks

It is time to order alternative format textbooks for the 2014-15 school year. Alternative formats include Braille, large print, audio and digital text.

Principals should ask teachers and Individualized Education Program teams to order the textbooks now for next year so there is a smooth transition to the next grade and classes. Alternative format textbooks can also be included in a 504 plan.

Schools should order standard grade level books now and any others as soon as they are identified as needed. Elementary schools can order the textbooks for students' grade-related subjects, such as social studies or science. Middle or high school students might not have their schedules yet, but their schools will know many of the required classes for each grade level, like math or science. Some schools may

be able to confirm electives in advance (as a reasonable IEP accommodation) so alternative format textbooks can be provided in a timely manner to students who need them. Remember that "in a timely manner" is defined as the same time as other students. Follow-up as needed for other textbooks that may be identified later.

More information about the school's responsibilities for providing Accessible Instructional Materials can be found at <https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/true-aim> or contact Jim Stachowiak, Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research, at [james-stachowiak@uiowa.edu](mailto:james-stachowiak@uiowa.edu) or 319-335-5280.



## Implement early literacy system at no cost

An early literacy implementation support system is available to all Iowa school districts at no cost. The system includes:

1. Iowa TIER, Iowa's database to support administration of universal screening and progress monitoring assessments, and data-based decision-making;
2. List of approved universal screening and progress monitoring assessments;
3. Training and technical support on Iowa TIER, Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST), and Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs); and
4. Standards for evidence-based early literacy curricula and instructional materials.



The system meets the legislatively mandated requirement of Iowa Code section 279.68 and 281—Iowa Administrative Code 62 aimed at literacy. The statewide support system requires some training, and the state is interested in learning if districts are interested, and when they would be available for in-person professional development.

To indicate your interest in training and support for Iowa TIER, FAST and IGDIs, take time to complete a quick five-minute survey to indicate your interest, and optimal months for training.

To best complete this survey, you will need to go to the Iowa Department of Education's website to ascertain technology requirements as well as other important information: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/early-literacy-implementation>. To take the survey, click [here](#).

## Tournament aims at academic excellence

The state of Florida is hosting an academic tournament for students across the United States, the National Tournament of Academic Excellence (NTAE). The tournament will be held at the Convention Center of Walt Disney World's Contemporary Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., on June 14-16.

The NTAE showcases the excellence of the U.S. educational system and rewards individual scholastic achievement of student participants. The tournament hosts teams from many states, as well as teams from the District of Columbia, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



This is a highly academic national high school competition in which teams consist of six students (four players and two alternates) and one coach. Students enrolled in grades 9-12 during the school year are eligible.

The tournament is slower paced in which players are asked questions from the areas of mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, the fine arts, world languages (French and Spanish) and technology. The questions are written by educators from high schools and colleges throughout the nation.

To participate in this event, complete the [contact form](#) and return to Lisa W. Rawls, academic competitions coordinator. If you require additional information, click [here](#) or contact Lisa by phone at 863-968-5168 or email at [lisa.rawls@polk-fl.net](mailto:lisa.rawls@polk-fl.net). Information can also be found online at <http://www.academic-challenge.org/ntae/index.html>.



## It's time to file for college financial aid

It's time for college-bound students and their parents to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for financial aid for the 2014-15 academic year.

The FAFSA is a standardized application used to determine eligibility for grants, loans and work-study funds from the federal government. In addition, many colleges and states, including Iowa, use FAFSA information when determining eligibility for institutional and state financial aid programs.

To help spread the word to your students about the importance of completing the FAFSA, check out the U.S. Department of Education's blog post, [7 Ways to Promote FAFSA Completion at Your School](#). In addition, Iowa College Aid provides [FAFSA filing tips](#) to help Iowa families with the process.

Students and families who have questions about applying for financial aid can contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456 or visit [www.iowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.iowaCollegeAid.gov).



## Free tax preparation provided at sites across Iowa

To apply for financial aid for college, it is essential for high school seniors and their parents to complete 2013 federal tax returns. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) requires 2013 tax information for dependent students and parents when they file for financial aid for the 2014-15 academic year. Families needing assistance may be eligible for free tax preparation through a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site if they make \$57,000 or less.

VITA sites are run by trained, IRS-certified volunteers to assist Iowa families and individuals with tax preparation. In addition, some locations will also provide FAFSA filing assistance. Partnering organizations include: [GEAR UP Iowa](#), [United Way](#) and [ISED Ventures](#). Sites are hosted across the state in offices, churches, schools and more. Hours vary by site and some locations may require an appointment.

## Annual Condition of Education report is available

The 2013 edition of the Annual Condition of Education report provides a wide range of state-level data, including shifts in student populations and demographics, teacher salaries and characteristics, student achievement results and school financial information.

The 2013 report also includes two unique sections:

- An evaluation of the impact of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program on the third-grade assessment results of students who participated in the preschool program during the 2008-09 school year.
- A study that examines the relationship between student achievement and teacher retention in Iowa schools.

The report is available on the Iowa Department of Education's website: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/annual-condition-education-report-pk-12/2014/01/annual-condition-education-report-2013>



## Iowa students sought for state advisory group

Iowa students are invited to apply for a seat on a state advisory council that is focused on ensuring student voices are heard as the state continues its education reform efforts.

The Learning Council, created in 2012, complements state officials' efforts to get input from various stakeholders across the state on transforming Iowa's education system.

Students enrolled in grades 8-12 from public and nonpublic schools in Iowa may apply for a seat. Meetings will take place April 16 and Sept. 17. Council members also will communicate via e-mail.

Applications can be found [here](#) and must be returned by Feb. 28. New members will be notified by mid-March.

## Students are selected as senators

Two students were selected to represent Iowa in the United States Senate Youth Program. Pablo Haake from Davenport Central High School and Edgar Thornton from Iowa City High School will receive a \$5,000 scholarship and a fully funded trip to Washington, D.C., this March.



**Pablo Haake**  
*Davenport Central High School*

Haake and Thornton were among 30 Iowa students who applied for the prestigious 52-year-old program. Among the Senate Youth Program's alumni include Senator Susan Collins of Maine and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. The goals of the program include deepening the understanding of America's political process and strengthening the students' resolve to pursue careers in public service.

A total of 104 students are selected for the program: two from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Schools.

To be selected, students had to take rigorous public affairs examinations, provide personal essays and submit to an extensive application process.



**Edgar Thornton**  
*Iowa City High School*

Haake is involved in numerous activities that represent his commitment to leadership and service. This includes being the executive chair of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, serving in the Iowa Youth Congress, and being a part of his local school board as a student representative. He also is involved in sports, and participates in National History Day, OPUS Honor Choir, History Bowl and the Environment Club.

Thornton is an elected member of the Student Senate at his high school. He serves as the student representative on the State Board of Education, and is involved in many local, state, and national political campaigns. He also participates in sports and the student newspaper, in addition to being a section leader in band.

## Data and Reporting

### Iowa portal assists students with transfers

Iowa's Regent universities and community colleges have joined to create a web portal dedicated to assisting students with the transfer process. The site serves as a one-stop resource for students planning their future. The url for the site is [www.transferiniowa.org](http://www.transferiniowa.org).

Each year, thousands of students transfer from Iowa community colleges to one of the state's three public universities. Transferring



from one college to the next can be a big step, but need not be complicated. The Website contains resources helpful in educational planning as well as information for students to discuss with their counselor or advisor.

The top question transfer students ask is: How will my credits transfer? Students can learn about how their community college courses transfer to each of the three state public universities by following the links on the website. The website contains resources explaining statewide articulation agreements and individual program-to-program articulation agreements by community college. These resources are useful for students planning to transfer as well as counselors and advisors. In addition to online resources, it's always a good idea for students to discuss their plans with both a community college and university counselor or adviser. Contact information for the office or person responsible for transfer and articulation at each postsecondary institution is available on the site. School districts should communicate information about the articulation website to all elementary and secondary school students interested in or potentially interested in attending a community college or Regent university.

### Alternate assessment: DLM field test

The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Assessment is scheduled to be the new alternate assessment in English/language arts and math for students with significant cognitive disabilities for the 2014-2015 school year. In preparation for the new assessment, six districts are participating in the DLM field test. They are:

Cedar Rapids	Hampton-Dumont
Council Bluffs	Okoboji
Des Moines	Sioux City

The DLM Field test is comprised of three assessment windows beginning Feb. 10 and running through the end of the school year. Through their leadership and participation, field test districts will provide valuable feedback and support future administration of the DLM assessment. For more information, contact the Iowa Department of Education's Emily Thatcher at [emily.thatcher@iowa.gov](mailto:emily.thatcher@iowa.gov) or visit <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/>.

# Early Childhood Preschool Programs

## Early childhood special education services

The [District Developed Service Delivery Plan](#) must address the full continuum of services and placements for eligible individuals from age 3 to 21, including preschool. The Iowa Department of Education reiterates the Least Restrictive Environment requirements also apply to the placement of preschool children eligible for special education. Therefore, preschool children must be educated with children who are not eligible for special education to the maximum extent appropriate as determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Additionally, these Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood settings must implement [Preschool Program Standards](#).

The IEP team uses data regarding children's strengths, needs, performance and progress to make decisions about children's instructional needs. The removal from general education settings may occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education settings with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [Special Education Data Profiles](#) for 2011-2012 are available for each district on the percent of children, ages 3 to 5, receiving the majority of special education services in the general education setting.



For more information on Early Childhood Special Education, go to <https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/early-childhood-special-education> or contact Dee Gethmann at [dee.gethmann@iowa.gov](mailto:dee.gethmann@iowa.gov) or 515-281-5502, Kimberly Villotti at [kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov](mailto:kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov) or 515-281-4709 or Betsy Lin at [betsy.lin@iowa.gov](mailto:betsy.lin@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2039.

## Districts may apply to participate in voluntary preschool

School districts not currently participating in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program may apply to become part of the program. The new application to begin a preschool program in 2014-2015 is posted at the website below. The application is due May 19.



School districts currently participating do not need to reapply. For more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, go to <https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/statewide-voluntary-preschool-program-and-four-year-old-children> or contact Penny Milburn at [penny.milburn@iowa.gov](mailto:penny.milburn@iowa.gov) or 515-281-7844, Jennifer Adkins at [jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov](mailto:jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2219 or Amy Stegeman at [amy.stegeman@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.stegeman@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2273.



## Nutrition and Health Services

### Who knew? A smarter lunchroom

Did you know that by just suggesting to students that they can take some fruit will increase the number of them eating it by as much as 70 percent? And putting apples and oranges in a fruit bowl rather than a stainless steel pan more than doubled fruit sales?

The mission of Cornell University's Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs is to help researchers, food service directors, and policy makers design sustainable research-based lunchrooms that subtly guide smarter choices.

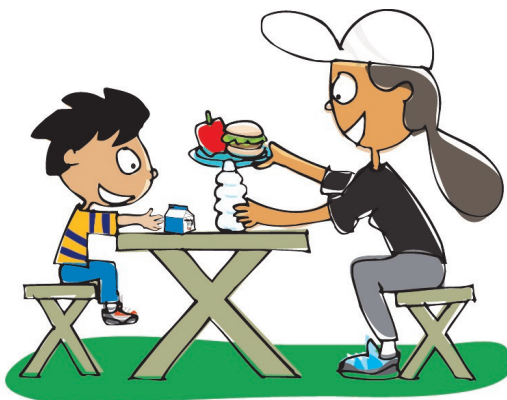
One of their initiatives, The Smarter Lunchroom, is being developed into a training series, and will be introduced at the Manager's Update Workshop which will be held June 19 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Convention Center in Cedar Rapids. This workshop is part of the School Lunch Short Courses held during the summer months. For more information on all short courses and a link to registration, go to [www.cpm.iastate.edu/schoolfoods](http://www.cpm.iastate.edu/schoolfoods). For questions or further information, contact [sandra.fiegen@iowa.gov](mailto:sandra.fiegen@iowa.gov).



### Summer food rocks!

Summer is an exciting time for children to enjoy moments with friends, a family vacation, or time at the pool. But it can also be a time of hunger when children no longer have access to a healthy breakfast or lunch.

The USDA's Summer Food Service Program helps to fill that gap by providing nutritious meals and snacks to low-income children during the summer months. While there are many summer serving sites across the state, the program currently reaches less than 10 percent of children in need.



Consider getting involved. An informational webinar will be held on Feb. 20 from 2 to 3 p.m. Join us to learn more about the program and what is involved.

To register for the webinar, go to the Iowa Department of Education [website](http://www.educateiowa.gov). For more information, contact the Department's Stephanie Dross at [stephanie.dross@iowa.gov](mailto:stephanie.dross@iowa.gov) or 515-281-4760.

## Summer Food Rocks!

## Nutrition and Health Services continued

### Regional workshops set for wellness policies

The Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Program is partnering with the Iowa Department of Public Health to hold two regional workshops for school teams to re-energize their local school wellness policies and engage students in the implementation and evaluation process.

School teams that attend need to consist of a physical education teacher, an additional school staff member, and two high school students.

The workshops will be held from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at both locations. The agenda will cover the following educational objectives that will increase participant's knowledge of:

- Wellness Policy Background Information
- How to Complete a School Wellness Assessment
- How to Build Awareness and Support
- How to Monitor and Evaluate Local Policies
- Regulations and Resources for the Following:
  - All Foods Available on Campus
  - Nutrition Education and Promotion
  - Physical Activity and Physical Education
  - Other School-Based Wellness Activities
- Funding Opportunities

The workshops will be held:

- Tuesday, Feb. 25, Cedar Rapids: Click [here](#) to register
- Wednesday, Feb. 26, Des Moines: Click [here](#) to register

Mileage reimbursement and substitute pay will be available for all school staff who attend.

CEUs for the Iowa School Nutrition Association and Iowa School Nurse Association have been submitted for approval.

For additional information, contact Carrie Scheidel at [carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov](mailto:carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov) or 515-281-4758.





## Legislative Update

Contact Mike Cormack for all legislative items: [mike.cormack@iowa.gov](mailto:mike.cormack@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3399.

### Cormack at the Capitol

### Doing the right thing: Honoring our vets

My coming of age was in the 1980s, so I don't have any direct memories that some reading this column might have had upon returning home from the Vietnam War. What I have read and heard was that the treatment of soldiers returning from service was something less than kind. Thankfully, I have been witness to a growing respect for those who serve their country in military service. My father was the Webster County veterans director and I was able to get to know so many who served through that connection. It was one of the greatest honors as a legislator when I was able, as a civilian, to participate in Memorial Day ceremonies in Fort Dodge.

One bill that I submitted as a legislator that became law allowed veterans' organizations such as the American Legion, VFW, Am-vets and other similar organizations to hold their honor guard ceremonies on school grounds. There had been some dispute as to whether such groups could fire their weapons, even though they were blanks, during memorial services due to zero tolerance weapons laws. With that legislation passed, no school could refuse their facilities to veterans. When I look back on the proposed bills that I got passed into law, it remains one of my highlights since it was a way to thank the veterans who protected our freedom.



As a season ticket holder to the Iowa Wild hockey team, I congratulate them for honoring a military service member during each game. I have yet to see a game where the honoree hasn't received a standing ovation or the loudest cheer of the night. These are our fellow lowans who are risking their lives, spending time away from their homes and providing the ultimate in service to us. They deserve such applause and ovation from the crowd.

Many of you may have watched a film that is presently showing in theaters, "Lone Survivor." It is a difficult film to view in many regards, both graphically and emotionally. It takes place in Afghanistan and follows the mission of one American unit in trying to eliminate the threat of a regional Taliban leader. Without spoiling the film for those who haven't seen it, I can simply say that I don't think that anyone watching that film can escape without appreciating the sacrifice so many have given for this country. The closing scene of that movie brought complete silence to the audience of the film I attended; that silence carried over all the way to the parking lot.

How can those of us who work directly in Iowa education honor those who currently serve, or have served, in the military? In the current Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) request, Iowa schools are requested to supply for the first time the number of military children in their district. Simply put, we are requesting this information so that we can have a better understanding of how many families we have in Iowa who are in this situation. Often, military children have not received the quality education that they should because they are transient and their school records don't follow them as seamlessly as they can.

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## Legislative Update continued

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In several states, advocates for military families have contacted state government to ask first for data so that we know how large this issue is; then, the hope is to work cooperatively to provide better solutions on how we can assist these families. Serving your country should not require that a child receives anything less than the best education that we can provide.

At the start of the legislative session, Governor Branstad shared his priorities in the 2014 Iowa General Assembly. Beyond continued implementation of the education reform package of 2013 that readers of this column are working to put into action, he has three priorities that impact the educational system in this state: a major initiative to increase broadband access throughout the state, an anti-bullying measure to continue to make progress against that insidious behavior, and a project known as Home Base Iowa to help those leaving military service.

There appears to be a larger number of heroes who will be leaving military service in the next few years due to downsizing nationally of our military forces. As a result, our state is welcoming military veterans to Iowa with a series of incentives. One of those requirements is in higher education, where veterans can receive credit for real-life experience in the military for college credit. For example, if a medic has served eight years in Iraq or Afghanistan, shouldn't some of that service count toward a college degree in nursing? In addition, our belief is that the package of non-educational incentives will increase the number of veterans returning to our state.

School systems should be prepared to have families who may have had that transient educational experience settling down into their schools. It is imperative that these students are both welcomed and that great effort is given to these individual circumstances to make their transition as smooth as possible.

Finally, in virtually every school in Iowa, we have students who have left and joined military service or plan to do so. I met one of my former students recently at a convenience store where he was working. He has signed up for eight years of military service. I told him I was proud of him and wished him nothing but the best moving forward. It was clear that this message was well received. All of us in these individual interactions can let our military service men and women know that we value what they do.

When veterans groups were told they couldn't fire an honor salute to their fallen brothers and sisters in the military on school grounds, a message was sent. I believe the vast majority in the educational community are supportive of their students and community members who serve their country in this manner. At my old middle school, community members were invited to a program put on by the students on Veterans Day. That was a message, too. To see the misty eyes of elderly community members and the respect of the youth toward them was heartwarming. Throughout Iowa, such salutes to veterans take place on a daily basis in our schools, both in formal ceremonies or in individual interactions.

I believe Home Base Iowa will pass, perhaps with unanimous support in both chambers, and it will simply state that Iowa puts veterans first. I know Iowa schools will step up to the challenge to continue to be supportive of the students and families who serve our country. Our Department is supportive of Home Base Iowa.

For those reading this who are currently serving or are veterans, simply thank you. For those like me who are not, let's do our best to take advantage of opportunities to be thankful. Iowa has a great chance to be the leading state in this country in welcoming our military servicemen and women back to civilian life. Being a lifelong Iowan, I believe individuals and communities will do just that.



## Legal Lessons

Contact Nicole Proesch for all Legal Lessons items: [nicole.proesch@iowa.gov](mailto:nicole.proesch@iowa.gov) or 515-281-8661

### The skinny on open enrollment

#### Fabulous February!

I realize that many of you are thinking, “What’s fabulous about February?” It’s cold, it’s snowy, the sun goes down early, and, well, it’s COLD!!!! But in my book, I can think of several things. First, February is the birth month of my oldest, so of course we have something to celebrate. However, I am always reminded that she was born three-and-a-half weeks early and in the middle of a crazy ice storm which made it impossible for anyone to come visit our new bundle of joy. February also means that we get to celebrate Valentine’s Day! This was one of my favorite holidays to celebrate in school because I loved making mail boxes and getting valentines from all of my classmates. Now that I am older, I appreciate the finer things in life – like a few hours out with my hubby or a simple card that he filled out while sitting in the driveway. Finally, February is so close to March that I can finally see spring is on the horizon. I hope you have a fabulous February!

#### Open enrollment nuts and bolts

In preparation for the March 1 Open Enrollment deadline this year, the Iowa Department of Education is issuing a press release to the media to highlight this statutory deadline to parents. To prepare districts for this release here is a rerun summary of the duties of school districts that receive late-filed open enrollment applications.

All of the following information comes from the Department’s Open Enrollment Handbook, at <https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2013-2014OpenEnrollmentHandbook.pdf>

For more information about open enrollment, you may look on our website at:  
<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/options-educational-choice/open-enrollment>

The table below indicates which district takes action:

	Receiving District	Resident District
OE filed on or before March 1	X	
OE filed after March 1	X	
OE filed after March 1 and alleges pervasive harassment or severe health need		X
Regardless of when OE filed, resident district has a diversity plan		X

**Notification** – Districts must notify parents of open enrollment deadlines, transportation assistance, and possible loss of athletic eligibility for open enrollment of students by Sept. 30 of each school year. Notification shall also be provided to any parent/guardian who transfers into the district during the school year. It may be helpful to provide information more than one time during the year.

**Board/superintendent action** – The local school board may give superintendents the authority to approve, but not deny applications. If the applicant files under good cause, the board must act within 30 days of receiving the request. The receiving district will notify the resident district and the parent within 15 days of board action to approve or deny an application.

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## Legal Lessons continued

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**Denial** - In order to deny OE based on class size of general or special education classrooms, the district must adopt an "insufficient classroom space" policy and review this policy annually. A district can deny an application based on insufficient classroom space, lack of appropriate program (a district does not have to hire additional staff to accommodate an OE applicant), or if a student will be under suspension or expulsion at the time of enrollment.

**Rescind** – A district can rescind an application due to a change in the student's program that cannot be accommodated by the district without hiring additional staff or due to an increase in enrollment that exceeds a class size policy. An OE cannot be rescinded based on discipline or attendance.

**Late filed applications** – the receiving district has an obligation to deny applications filed after March 1 unless the application meets good cause (see question # 10). The resident district does not have authority to act on an application filed after March 1 unless the applicant claims harassment or severe health need.

**Harassment/Severe Health Need/Diversity Plan** – In the case of applicants that claim harassment or severe health need, the resident district has the authority to approve or deny the application.

### **District Appeal Process**

A resident district may appeal a decision of a receiving district's board to approve a late-filed enrollment request to the director of the Iowa Department of Education. If the resident district believes that a receiving district has approved a late-filed OE request without good cause, the resident district may, within 15 days after the board action by the receiving district, follow these procedures:

- Submit an appeal to the director of the Department of Education.
- The director, or director's designee, shall attempt to mediate by telephone the dispute to reach approval of both parties.
- The director, or designee, shall conduct a hearing and hear testimony from both boards (and designees).
- The director shall render a decision within 10 days following the hearing.
- The local school board may appeal the director's decision to the State Board within five days of the decision.

Open enrollment questions are to be directed to Eric Heitz at 515-281-4726.

### **Recent open enrollment decisions**

Here are two recent open enrollment appeal decisions pertaining to pervasive harassment and serious medical conditions that were recently decided by the State Board of Education.

*In Re: Open Enrollment of Kali B.*, 26 D.o.E. App. Dec. 383 (2013) <https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Book%2026%20Decision%20383.pdf>

*In Re: Open Enrollment of Samantha H.*, 26 D.o.E. App. Dec. 373 (2013) <https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Book%2026%20Decision%20373.pdf>

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## Legal Lessons continued

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### School discipline guidance from U.S. Department of Education

On Jan. 8, 2014, the U.S. Department of Education released a guidance package on school discipline that explains the responsibilities of local school districts under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The guidance does not address other types of discrimination such as gender or disability discrimination. School districts should review this guidance package and compare the district's current disciplinary practices with the best practices outlined in the guidance to ensure legal compliance.

The package consists of the following four documents:

**A Dear Colleague Letter**, which details how schools can meet their legal obligations under federal law which may be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf>.

**A Guiding Principles** document, which explains three principles and related action steps to help state and local efforts to improve school discipline, which may be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

**A Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources**, which contains multiple resources related to school climate and school discipline, which may be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/appendix-1-directory.pdf>

**A Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations**, which contains a compilation of laws and regulations related to school discipline in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, which may be found at: <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/discipline-compendium/School%20Discipline%20Laws%20and%20Regulations%20Compendium.pdf>

For complete information on the Department's school discipline guidance package, use the following link: <http://www.ed.gov/school-discipline/>

### Students with disabilities

For questions regarding students with disabilities, please contact Thomas Mayes at 515-242-5614 or [Thomas.mayes@iowa.gov](mailto:Thomas.mayes@iowa.gov).

## New counseling framework

Following the work of state and national counselor leaders, the Iowa School Counseling Framework has been updated. It provides a framework to help school counselors design and implement a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program driven by data and based on standards in academic, career and personal/social development.

To review the framework, go to <https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/school-counseling/2014/01/iowa-school-counseling-framework>. For more information, contact the Department's Jan Kuhl at [janice.kuhl@iowa.gov](mailto:janice.kuhl@iowa.gov) or call 515-229-6425.

## Calendar

February 1 • MSA-DoP Amendments/Corrections due to Iowa Department of Education

February 1 • SBRC Administrative Costs charged/billed to Special Education  
Program due date

February 15 • Last day to bill for first semester tuition

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