



School Leader Update

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

November 2017r

We need your input

We know you're busy, so we'll get right to the point: Is School Leader Update (SLU) meeting *your* needs?

[We want to know.](#)

As you know, SLU comes to you monthly. Would you like to receive shorter versions twice a month?

How about content: Too much? Too little? Are we giving you what you want? Are we giving you things you don't want?

Please let us know by taking our three-minute [survey](#). We want to ensure SLU is meeting *your* needs.

Thank you for your interest and quick response.



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21st century goals, 21st century vision

Last month I mentioned the five big issues most on my mind this fall, which included submission and implementation of Iowa's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, adoption of a new statewide assessment, the release of the Future Ready Iowa recommendations, the development of the Computer Science work group recommendations, and the exploration of instructional frameworks. My [last column](#) focused on the first two and this month I'll provide some insight into the remaining three items.



Director Ryan Wise

For the past year, I have had the privilege of being a member of the Future Ready Iowa Alliance. The Alliance's membership spans the public and private sectors and includes leaders from all levels of the education system, business and industry, nonprofits, and state government. The Alliance's focus has been on developing recommendations that will help Iowa achieve an ambitious goal: By 2025, 70 percent of Iowans in the workforce will complete postsecondary education or training. On October 17, Governor Reynolds and Principal President and CEO Dan Houston announced the [Alliance's recommendations](#), which include:

- Create a Future Ready Iowa Last Dollar Scholarship and Grant Program.
- Better align and expand the ecosystem of support for Iowans beginning college or career training or returning to complete, with a focus on Iowans who are low income and/or underrepresented minorities.
- Expand high-quality work-based learning experiences in high-demand fields and careers for all students, particularly traditionally underrepresented students.
- Identify and scale effective early academic and career development and delivery approaches so all students are prepared for a changing world.
- Develop a grassroots strategy to engage the business community, sector boards, regional workforce boards, STEM regions and other regional

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- collaborations to align with Alliance recommendations.

I'm excited because the recommendations both build upon the work schools have focused on for the last several years and challenge the education system to examine areas ripe for continued growth. For example, the work-based learning recommendation emphasizes leveraging current examples, including [STEM BEST](#) and [work-based learning intermediary networks](#), while also calling for an increase in pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, internships and other employer-driven work-based learning programs. In order to reach the Future Ready goal, an additional 127,700 residents need to earn a two- or four-year college degree or other postsecondary credential. While this is a huge lift, I'm confident Iowans will work together to achieve this ambitious goal.

A similarly ambitious effort is also moving forward in expanding computer science education in Iowa. Last spring, the Iowa legislature passed [Senate File 274](#), which established the Computer Science Education Work Group and set a goal that by July 1, 2019, every elementary school will offer instruction in the fundamentals of computer science; every middle school will offer exploratory computer science; and every high school will offer at least one high-quality computer science course. As Governor Reynolds has stated, computer science is a new basic skill in the technology-driven, 21st century economy. Building a strong foundation in computer science helps prepare students for personal and professional success and strengthen Iowa's workforce talent pipeline. The work group [recommendations](#), released on November 1, address five critical areas for expanding computer science education in Iowa, including:

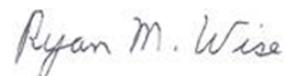
- How computer science courses could satisfy graduation requirements for math or science.
- How these courses could be integrated into a career and technical education pathway.
- The settings in which courses could be delivered (including in traditional high school settings, concurrent enrollment classes, and online).
- Guidelines for an appropriate scope and sequence of computer science instruction at each grade level.
- How the computer science professional development fund created in the legislation could be used to meet the goals of the law.

The work group included both educators and business leaders. As you will read in the report, their recommendations, if enacted and supported, will help Iowa become a national leader in computer science education by ensuring more students have access to high-quality courses and schools have the ability to recruit, train and develop effective computer science teachers. I'm looking forward to developing the computer science education professional development incentive fund to support this work and to launching a group to write academic standards for this important field.

Finally, I've been meeting this fall with a team of educators from across Iowa to examine the use of instructional frameworks, which are also referred to as instructional rubrics or learning progressions, and to determine how we might expand the usage of these tools across the state. While the idea may have multiple names, the focus is on creating a common language and vision for quality teaching across an entire school district.

At the beginning of the school year, the Iowa Department of Education surveyed all school districts about their use of instructional frameworks. We found that roughly 40 percent of districts currently use a framework. Districts that utilize a framework find it has helped maximize the impact of teacher leaders. For example, one respondent stated, "It has helped us be very specific in current performance levels, opportunities for growth and helped to guide our conversations in a specific and meaningful way for teachers."

Expanding the use of instructional frameworks in Iowa would also build upon a recommendation of the [Council on Educator Development](#), which supported the use of learning progressions to improve educator practice. I look forward to further discussion on how we can continue to strengthen Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) system through a focus on improved instruction.



References, best practices available to address chronic absence

Attendance in school matters because kids need to be in school to learn. Children who miss 10 percent or more of the days they should be in school - for any reason - are considered chronically absent. Children who are chronically absent from school are at risk of falling behind, which can hurt their chances of success in school and in careers they pursue as adults. In response, the Iowa Department of Education has created a [webpage](#) offering districts references to combat chronic absences as well as a [report](#) showing best practices.

Registration under way for Emerging Educators Conference

Register for the Third Annual Emerging Educators Conference to be held in Indianola on Jan. 22.

The conference, called New Year's Resolution for Effective Educators, is aimed at first- through third-year teachers as well as mentors, facilitators, instructional coaches and administrators. College-level juniors and seniors and their professors also are encouraged to attend.

Beginning educator breakout sessions will focus on Ethics, Classroom Management, Iowa Teaching Standards, 21st Century Skills, and Characteristics of Effective Instruction. Administrators, mentor, and coaches will focus on the Iowa Mentoring Program, effective teacher induction programs, and important statewide updates. Participants will have the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with outstanding Iowa educators, professional leaders, and Department of Education consultants to focus on recruiting and retaining effective educators.

The conference is part of the Outstanding Educators' Academy of the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa State Education Association, and Simpson College's Department of Education. The conference will be held at the Kent Campus Center, Simpson College, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Early Bird registration is \$20 by Nov. 22; after Nov. 22 the cost is \$25. Registration includes a box lunch and a T-shirt. [Register today.](#)

New services help schools start their own online program

Iowa Learning Online (ILO) is offering a new service to help schools take the first step to offering their own online service to meet local district needs. ILO provides the infrastructure and high school courses, and the local school provides the teacher.

- Leverage your local teaching talent with your own students
- Low-risk, more affordable pricing without compromising local needs
- Access to ILO's top-notch and customizable online curriculum
- Courses all delivered on ILO's modern intuitive learning management platform
- Detailed program, course and student learning analytics for data-driven decision making
- Planning and implementation assistance from ILO's family of experienced online learning consultants
- Introductory teacher support
- Prepare your school for a more globalized future



Retain your local focus by partnering with Iowa Learning Online.

For more information on how ILO can help your school or district, contact Jonnie Becker, jonnie.becker@iowa.gov or 515-725-2075.

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Implementing math standards, unpacking to understanding

Often educators are overwhelmed with the number of standards and are not sure what standards are more important than others if any. Below are some tips and a process that can be used to support those conversations.

Implementing the Standards Tips

- Start with Focus and make the time in the instruction to go deeper with the Major Clusters (these are in bold in the Iowa standards).
- Remember not all standards are the same size and the number of them does not really matter.
- The individual standards in a Major Clusters build the understanding of the skills and concepts students need at each grade level.
- Major Clusters are the non-negotiable.
- Even the Major Clusters are not the same size and do not have the same number of standards in them.
- Up to 85 percent of instructional time can be used make sure students have learned the Major Clusters
- Then and only then, can Coherence be considered and then Rigor.

Implementing the Standards

READ: [Moving from “unpacking to understanding the math standards](#)

SELECT: Choose a cluster or standard(s) to study that is both part of upcoming instruction and a [Major Focus](#) for your grade.

DO: [Approach for Understanding Math Standards](#)

USE: [This map](#), created by Achieve the Core, is a go-to resource for helping you to deepen your understanding of the standards.

Other resources:

[Implementing the Shifts in the Mathematic Standards](#)

[Implementing the math standards](#)

For questions, contact April Pforts at april.pforts@iowa.gov.

Nov. 15 deadline for MTSS in literacy survey

Over the past two years, the Iowa Department of Education has hosted the Celebrating Iowa's Success conference. The purpose of this conference is to provide a venue for districts and schools to share their knowledge and successes in Multi Tiered System of Supports in literacy with others across the state.

We would like to assess the extent of district/school desire to continue sponsoring such an event. Please complete the linked survey to help us gauge the level of interest - if interest is high, we will include communication for applications to present at - and registration to attend- the conference in the December or January School Leader Update. Registration for this conference will be between \$0 and \$25. The survey link is [here](#). The survey deadline is Nov. 15.

Governor honors Iowa careers in energy

National Careers in Energy Week, Oct. 16-20, helped build awareness about the careers available in today's rapidly changing and growing energy field. With influences in science, engineering, finance, business, policy, and even design, energy jobs offer many high-growth career opportunities for both experienced workers and those just starting their careers.

Helping students attain the education and skills required for the jobs of today and tomorrow is integral to the [Future Ready Iowa](#) initiative, which calls for 70 percent of Iowans to have education or training beyond high school by 2025. Currently, 58 percent of Iowans have training or education beyond high school. [Read more](#).



Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a proclamation recognizing Oct. 16-20

The young tech crowd

How do you grow the next generation of high-tech workers for the in-demand technology jobs Iowa employers are struggling to fill?

Get them started at a younger age, according to high school students enrolled in the computer programming career academy regional center at Des Moines Area Community College's (DMACC) Ankeny campus.

Last year, [legislation](#) was passed that is helping shape the future of career and technical education (CTE) across the state. Among other things, the redesign of secondary CTE aims to introduce exploratory coursework earlier to better prepare students for higher-level academic and technical training. [Read more.](#)



Students from 10 different area high schools take college-level computer programming and networking classes as part of a computer programming career academy offered at DMACC Ankeny.

Harvesting deeper-level thinking

Gilmore City-Bradgate Elementary school has planted some seeds for success. OK, they have planted a lot of seeds.

Across an acre-and-a-half, there are vegetable gardens and fruit orchards. A chicken coop houses four friendly egg-bearing hens. And 98 percent of what's grown ends up in the school cafeteria. Oh, and let's not forget the learning kitchen.



Vegetables grow in abundance in the school's garden.

Clearly this is no ordinary school garden. More to the point: It's an integral part of learning at this small school of 70-or-so students. It's creating opportunities for deeper-level thinking, incorporating academic standards and 21st century skills. [Read more.](#)

Beyond nuts and bolts. Safety, with heart

Newton's laws of motion are clearly visible every time a school bus driver starts the ignition and steps on the accelerator. What isn't clear is that the principles of physics alone are not enough to run student transportation services for the entire state of Iowa. That requires much more than just the laws of gravity.



Enter Joe Funk, an Iowa Department of Education school bus inspector extraordinaire, and no stranger to the automotive industry.

School buses are queued up and ready for inspection. Vehicles that transport children must undergo official inspection twice a year.

"People ask me, 'What is the safest mode of transportation?,' and I say, 'a school bus.' As an inspector, it's my job to see anything that might be a potential hazard. The transportation safety of the students is number one." [Read more.](#)

A teacher-leader returns to the classroom

As Jenni Pudenz was approaching a decade-and-a-half of teaching, she started questioning what she wanted to do for the next 20 years.

Carrie Clark, Gilbert Elementary School's curriculum director, had seen the signs in other teachers before. But this time Clark had a tool up her sleeve: the [Teacher Leadership and Compensation \(TLC\)](#) program, which is designed to get high-performing teachers out of the classroom to mentor other teachers. TLC is a win-win in schools: It gives a professional path for teachers, and it improves performance in classrooms. [Read more.](#)



Jenni Pudenz

Progress made in expanding computer science instruction

A work group charged with studying ways to expand computer science opportunities for all students released [recommendations](#) that will position Iowa to become a national leader in computer science education. The recommendations include a vision that computer science will eventually become a high school graduation requirement for all students.

The Computer Science Education Work Group's recommendations center on giving more students access to high-quality computer science courses and giving schools the tools they need to effectively teach computer science. [Read more.](#)

One teacher's journey from STEM to SpEd

Ben Jass was a top-notch industrial technology high school teacher. After all, he had won the Iowa STEM Award in north central Iowa.

But even a celebrated educator occasionally has to generate interest in his classes. So, in his spare time, he started going to Brian Foster's special education classes in the Nashua-Plainfield Community School District. And something funny happened along the way: Jass became hooked on special education. [Read more.](#)



Teacher Ben Jass says building relationships are key.

Data and Reporting

Update district coordinators for the ELPA21 Assessment

In order to receive communications regarding the ELPA21 Assessment, now is the time to make sure your district coordinator has access to the Iowa ELPA21 application of the [Iowa Education Portal](#). District coordinators for public districts should



request the role of "ELPA21_Dist_Coord" for the Iowa ELPA21 application. New for this year, coordinators for non-public schools should request the role of "ELPA21_NP_Coord".

Having the correct district coordinator specified is important to be sure you receive up-to-date communication needed to prepare for training and administration of the 2017-18 ELPA21 assessment. For assistance, contact the Portal Helpdesk at 515-725-2040 or ed.portal@iowa.gov.

Early Childhood Preschool Programs

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

School district administrators are encouraged to review and share with their community partners updated resources available on the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program \(SWVPP\) web page](#).

There are two FAQs under the Guidance subheading on the SWVPP web page. The [Finance FAQ](#) and [Implementation FAQ](#) address questions frequently received from schools or their community partners. The [Qualifications for Preschool Teacher Assistants](#), under the Staff Qualifications and Staff Development subheading on the SWVPP web page, is an additional resource that has been updated.

For more information on the SWVPP, go to the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program web page](#) or contact Jennifer Adkins at 515-954-5652 or jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov.

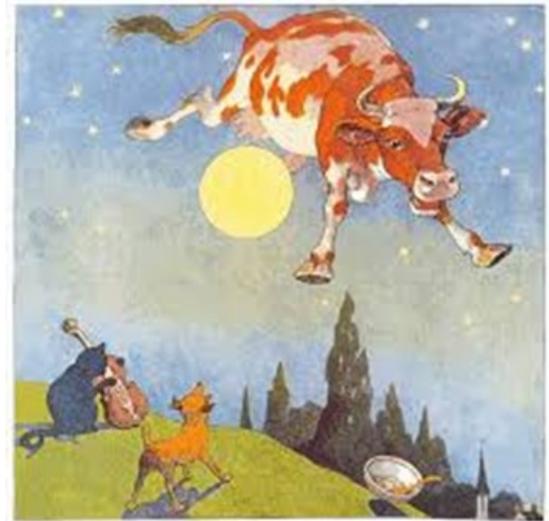


Some options for unpaid-meal balances

Goodnight Moon

*“In the great green room
There was a telephone
And a red balloon,
And a picture of –
The cow jumping over the moon . . .”*

On Nov. 1 we celebrate National Author’s Day. One of my favorite authors for children’s books is Margaret Wise Brown, who is the author of Good-night Moon. This is one of my favorite books for settling the kids into bed at night and calming them down for a good night’s rest.



My son is a really big fan of Mo Williams. Williams writes the Elephant, Piggy, and the Pigeon books. These were some of the first books that he learned to read and he still loves reading them and looking for the Pigeon that can be found hiding in the pages.

One of the best things that we have done since school started was to establish a reading hour every night. We shut off all the electronics, get ready for bed, and then snuggle in our beds to read for an hour before lights out. It gives us all time to wind down for bed and spend some quality time together reading. It has really improved their love of books in a short amount of time and made going to bed a lot easier. Now, I can settle into bed a little easier, too.

*“Goodnight stars
Goodnight air
Good night noises everywhere.”*

Now, in this edition of Legal Lessons I bring to you Unpaid Meal Policies – Best Practices to Ensure Access to Meals, Updated Guidance from the United States Department of Education (USDE) on Campus Sexual Assaults, A Recap of Iowa Safe Schools Week, and The Winners of the Iowa School Safety Alliance (ISSA) Video Contest.

Unpaid Meal Policies – Best Practices to Ensure Access to Meals

Many of you are dealing with unpaid meals debts and it’s a real struggle to determine the best way to handle these growing debts for your schools. You want to feed the kids, but this growing debt is a real concern. It is certainly not the children’s fault if they have an unpaid debt – and yet they are the ones who may go without meals or be faced with the stigma of not having the money to eat. None of you went into administration thinking that being a debt collector was part of the job. From a health standpoint we know that students are more alert, more attentive, and can do better in school if they are not sitting in class with an empty stomach. So how can schools ensure access to good nutrition for kids and not incur debt?

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Legal Lessons continued

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Here are some best practices tips to help you draft these policies to protect children from stigma, to ensure children who qualify receive free or reduced meals, and to make sure students get the nutrition they need.

- 1) School meals debt is the parent's debt and not the child's, and as such the district should communicate directly with the parents to collect any unpaid meals fees. Districts should not stamp the student's hand or put a sticker on the student's shirt as a way to communicate this debt because this may be stigmatizing to the child. Schools can send an email notification or discrete note to the parent or guardian indicating the negative balance. Be sure that if a note is sent home it is addressed to the parent or guardian and that you cannot see the contents of the note from the outside.
- 2) Iowa Code Chapter 537 (Iowa's Consumer Credit Code) prohibits schools from doing any of the following: 1) Posting a list of names of students or meals ID numbers who owe money for school meals (or any other debt) – even if the amount is not listed. 2) Communicating to anyone except the student and student's family that money is owed. Schools may still hire an attorney or agent to collect the debt. 3) If a note or letter regarding the debt is sent home with the student or mailed, including anything on the outside of the envelope that indicates that the letter is about money owed to the school.
- 3) Positioning your point of service at the beginning of the lunch line will avoid serving a student who has a negative account. Once you have already served a student you should not confiscate food for a student who has a negative balance.
- 4) If a student has a negative balance check eLook up to see if the student is now eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Send an application for free or reduced meals home if the negative balances reach a certain level.
- 5) Consider starting a meals account fund in your district where the community can donate money to fund unpaid meals. If parents have a negative balance they can ask for access to the meals account fund until they can afford to pay for meals. Be sure to set procedures for how the donated funds will be approved to be applied to an individual student account.
- 6) Consider non-pricing options to prevent further unpaid meals debt such as the Community Eligibility Provision if available, Provision 2, or universal free breakfast (in the classroom or grab n' go) if a break-even analysis shows feasibility. If the nonprofit school food service can maintain operations and meal quality without children's payments for reduced-price meals, they may charge less than the maximum reduced-price meal prices of 30 cents for breakfast and 40 cents for lunch. This can have a positive impact on student performance in the morning if students are in class on a full stomach.
- 7) Implement the flexibility allowed for determining the start date of eligibility as the date a complete application is received or the date of the direct certification data file *instead of* the date processed by the School Food Authority (SFA) or posted on the Iowa Department of Education site.
- 8) When determining whether or not to send an unpaid debt to collections, consider the cost of the unpaid balance compared to the cost of collections. Please note: this cost is a cost of the General Fund, not the non-profit school food service fund.
- 9) Combat hunger in other ways – Consider opening a food pantry or a backpack program in your district with the help of community partners. This can be a great way to help feed kids who don't have the means at home. This undertaking can have an enormous impact on the health, well-being, and learning capacity of your students.

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Legal Lessons continued

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Here are some resources from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Unpaid Meal Charges (complete July 1) that can help you review your local policies. As always be sure to consult with your district legal counsel about how to draft these policies and legally collect on student meals debts.

Updated Guidance from the United States Department of Education on Campus Sexual Assaults

[USDA – School Meals Website](#)

[SP 29-2017](#): 2017 Edition of Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools

[SP 23-2017](#): Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A

[SP 47-2016](#): Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments

[SP 46-2016](#): Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies

[SP 51-2016](#): Ensuring Year-long Eligibility in the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

[SP 43-2016](#): Ensuring Access to Free and Reduced Price School Meals for Low-Income Students

On Sept. 22 the United States Department of Education (USDOE) withdrew its Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Violence dated April 4, 2011. The withdrawal was accompanied by new interim guidance on Campus Sexual Misconduct that includes a Q&A on Campus Sexual Misconduct. "This interim guidance will help schools as they work to combat sexual misconduct and will treat all students fairly," said Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. "Schools must continue to confront these horrific crimes and behaviors head-on. There will be no more sweeping them under the rug. But the process also must be fair and impartial, giving everyone more confidence in its outcomes."

USDOE will engage in a rulemaking on Title IX responsibilities arising from complaints of sexual misconduct. During this process stakeholders will be able to provide public comment on the proposed rules.

[New Interim Guidance on Campus Sexual Misconduct](#)

[Withdrawal of Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Violence dated April 4, 2011](#)

[September 2017 - Q&A on Campus Sexual Misconduct](#)

If you have an issue involving sexual misconduct, contact your school counsel immediately for advice on how to move forward under this new guidance.

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Legal Lessons continued

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Safe Schools Week

Governor Reynolds signs proclamation celebrating School Safety Week

America's Safe Schools week was October 15-21, 2017. To commemorate the week on Wednesday, October 18, Governor Kim Reynolds signed a proclamation celebrating Iowa's support of the national week of observance. The proclamation was supported by the Iowa School Safety Alliance to memorialize the importance of safe schools in Iowa.

ISSA focuses on low cost initiatives that schools can implement to make their environments safe. Several students from Council Bluffs and Dowling Catholic High School were also present for the event. These students were also selected as the top two finalist for the Iowa Safe Schools Alliance Video Contest.



“See Something, Say Something”

The 2017 Winners of the Iowa School Safety Alliance (ISSA) Video Contest are in. The theme of the submission was to focus on the mission of the ISSA with emphasis on “See Something, Say Something.” The mission of ISSA is to *Assist schools in preparing for, mitigating, responding to and recovering from natural and man-made threats and incidents.*

Here are the two winners who will receive awards from sponsor Electronic Engineering:

First Place Prize of \$1,000: “See Something, Say Something” By Ayin Monge and Moises Morales of Abraham Lincoln, Council Bluffs Community School District.

Second Place Prize \$600: “See Something, Say Something” By Emily Gibson, Saffron Edwards, Linh Nguyen, and Kasey Tickel, of Dowling Catholic High School, Des Moines, Iowa.

You may view their videos by going to the [Iowa School Safety Alliance](http://www.issaia.org) website. The website also contains bulletins and other information on school safety. Please consider having a school safety campaign at your school.

Students with Disabilities

For questions regarding students with disabilities please contact Thomas Mayes at 515-242-5614 or thomas.mayes@iowa.gov.

Calendar

- Nov 1 • Last date for an election to reorganize effective July 1: 1st Tuesday in December (even numbered years), 1st Tuesday after 1st Monday in November (odd numbered years effective November 2019)
- Nov 1 • School board officers report due
- Nov 3 • School associations report due



It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312-730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, e-mail: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov



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