



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADER BULLETIN

A Publication from the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

Volume 8, Issue 1  
[www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov)

July 2018

## *Inside this issue*

- [Iowa's passing rate on the HiSET high school equivalency exam is highest in the nation](#)
- [Iowa awarded Great Lakes Foundation planning grant to improve education-to-workforce pipeline](#)
- [Perkins reauthorization bill passes Senate, awaits President's signature](#)
- [Statewide Future Ready Iowa summits announced](#)
- [Registration open for focus groups on career pathway development in health sciences](#)
- [Indian Hills Community College instructor wins prestigious award](#)
- ['Giving up is never an option'](#)
- [Girl power in full force at summer construction camp](#)
- [Career opportunities within the Division](#)
- [Division staffing changes](#)

## Iowa's passing rate on the HiSET high school equivalency exam is highest in the nation



Among states and U.S. territories that use HiSET, a high school equivalency exam, Iowa ranks the highest for the percent of individuals who passed the test. Last year, 95.9 percent of Iowans seeking a high school equivalency diploma passed the exam compared to 76.5 percent nationally.

A total of 1,581 Iowans passed the HiSET, which was developed by the nonprofit Educational Testing Service. The HiSET is administered in 27 states, including Iowa, as well as several U.S. territories.

The HiSET has served as the state-approved test since 2014. The exam measures the knowledge and proficiency equivalent to those of an Iowa high school graduate.

[READ MORE](#)



COMMUNITY COLLEGES &  
WORKFORCE PREPARATION  
*PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION*

## Iowa awarded Great Lakes Foundation planning grant to improve education-to-workforce pipeline

### **Jeremy Varner**

Administrator, Division of  
Community Colleges and Workforce  
Preparation  
515-281-8260  
[jeremy.varner@iowa.gov](mailto:jeremy.varner@iowa.gov)

**Barbara Burrows**  
Chief, Bureau of Community Colleges  
515-281-0319  
[barbara.burrows@iowa.gov](mailto:barbara.burrows@iowa.gov)

**Pradeep Kotamraju**  
Chief, Bureau of Career and Technical  
Education  
515-281-4716  
[pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov](mailto:pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov)

**Heather Doe**  
Communications Consultant, Bureau of  
Community Colleges  
515-281-7967  
[heather.doe2@iowa.gov](mailto:heather.doe2@iowa.gov)



The Iowa Department of Education has been awarded an \$88,700 planning grant by the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation (Great Lakes) to convene Iowa's 15 community colleges in a collaborative effort to improve and scale current guided pathway initiatives statewide with a focus on closing equity gaps among students.

The Department will serve as the grant's fiscal agent and staff within the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation will work collaboratively with consultants at HCM Strategists, LLC, to perform activities related to this statewide initiative for colleges to provide career-focused academic guidance to improve student success, completion, and ensure a seamless transfer process for students who wish to further their studies. The planning grant will result in interested colleges applying for an implementation grant to further this guided pathways work.

Information and updates regarding this work will be available on the [Grant Initiatives](#) page on the Department's website. Contact Barbara Burrows, Chief, Bureau of Community Colleges, at [barbara.burrows@iowa.gov](mailto:barbara.burrows@iowa.gov) or 515-281-0319, with questions about this guided pathways work.

---

## **Perkins reauthorization bill passes Senate, awaits President's signature**



The [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#) passed the Senate on July 24, 2018, and awaits the President's signature, which is anticipated to occur on Tuesday, July 31.

The law would amend and reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, which provides almost \$1.3 billion in federal support for career and technical education programs in all 50 states, including support for integrated career pathways programs. Iowa receives nearly \$12 million annually, divided between secondary education and community colleges.

The Department is preparing to start work on an inclusive state plan development process and is gearing up to help institutions understand the changes in the new law. Much of the work that has been accomplished in Iowa as part of the statewide secondary CTE redesign effort, which was signed into law in 2016, already aligns well with this new federal legislation.

For more information about CTE reauthorization, contact Pradeep Kotamraju, Chief, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, at [pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov](mailto:pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov), or 515-281-4716.

---

## **Statewide Future Ready Iowa summits announced**

Registration is now open to attend Future Ready Iowa Regional Summits throughout the state and collaborate with local stakeholders on workforce solutions.

The day-long summits are scheduled for late September and early October in the following communities: Atlantic, Burlington, Davenport, Denison, Fort Dodge, Muscatine, Pella, Sheffield, Sioux City, and Spencer. The events will bring together key stakeholders in education, business, economic development, and the community to create local strategies that ensure all Iowans are future ready.



Additional summits are being planned in Ames, Des Moines, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids/Iowa City, Sioux City, and Waterloo. For more information about those planning efforts or to inquire about planning a summit in your area, contact Kathy Leggett, Future Ready Iowa policy advisor, at [kathy.leggett@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:kathy.leggett@iwd.iowa.gov).

READ MORE

## Registration open for focus groups on career pathway development in health sciences



The Iowa Department of Education, in support of the Future Ready Iowa Initiative, is partnering with the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Iowa Hospital Association, and the Iowa Health Care Association to develop promotional materials to highlight a wide range of exciting and fulfilling careers offered in the critically important health sciences industry in Iowa. Similar projects were successfully completed for Iowa's advanced manufacturing, information technology, and energy/utilities industries and are available for download at [SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov](http://SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov).

Registration is now live for a series of four in-person focus groups to run August 14-23, 2018 to gain direct input from employers and health care providers from around the state. Locations have been confirmed in Cedar Rapids, Mason City, Des Moines, and Sioux City. Feedback from the focus groups and a follow-up survey will be combined to create a final product scheduled for release in early October 2018.

Visit [SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov](http://SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov) or contact Joe Collins, education program consultant, at [joe.collins@iowa.gov](mailto:joe.collins@iowa.gov), or 515-725-0646 to learn more and to register to participate. This collaborative public/private partnership will help ensure that Iowa's health care providers remain competitive, growing, and strong!

## Indian Hills Community College instructor wins prestigious award



Stacy Conley, a high school equivalency instructor at Indian Hills Community College, is the recipient of the 2018 Archie Willard Adult Education and Literacy Educator of the Year. She is pictured here with Eric Idehen (L), president of the Iowa Literacy Council and vice president of community development at Wells Fargo, and Juan Garcia (R), vice president of the Iowa Literacy Council and assistant vice president of client relations at ACT Inc.

The annual award honors an adult education and literacy instructor for exemplary service through advocating, developing, implementing and teaching adult education in Iowa. Conley received the award and was recognized for her achievements during the statewide Adult Education and Literacy Conference.

Colleagues recognized Conley as a lead instructor who has become an expert in numeracy and creating explicit, contextualized, hands-on lesson plans in math for students in the high school equivalency diploma (HSED) program. Her students excel and have very high program completion rates. Conley sets high expectations for her students to get them ready for college or career. In addition, she mentors new instructors and assists them in creating professional development plans each year.

READ MORE

## 'Giving up is never an option'



Juan Garcia, assistant vice president of client relations with ACT Inc., was the keynote speaker at the Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Conference that was held July 16-18 in Ankeny. Garcia is a graduate of the University of Lima in Lima, Peru, the prestigious Harvard Business School Leadership Best Practices program, and Des Moines Area Community College's English as a Second Language (ESL) program. A former English language learner, Garcia shared his own unique path and how his experience drives him to promote educational opportunities to ensure all students have the support they need to succeed.

In a question and answer format, Garcia reflects on equity in education, focusing on obstacles, opportunity gaps, and why we need to better serve the most vulnerable students.

[READ MORE](#)

---

## Girl power in full force at summer construction camp



The power of electricity isn't just measured in watts. At this construction camp for girls, it's also measured in enthusiasm.

"I enjoy working with my hands and building things," said Haylee Flynn, a sophomore from Des Moines' Hoover High School, who constructed an ethernet cable during a tour of the Des Moines Electrical Apprenticeship's training facility.

"I really wanted to go to this camp to give me more insight into construction and to see if I really want to do it," Haylee said.

That is exactly what the Iowa Department of Education and Des Moines Public Schools had in mind when they teamed up to sponsor the area's first construction camp for girls. More than 30 female students from 14 area schools, ranging in age from 14 to 18, explored construction-related careers and learned how they aren't just for the boys.

[READ MORE](#)

---

## Career opportunities within the Division



The Department is seeking talented individuals who are passionate about excellence in education to fill eight (8) positions over the next several months within the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation (Division).

Opportunities will include positions in the areas of career and technical education (particularly with expertise in skilled trades and information technology), work-based learning and apprenticeships,

data/accountability, policy analysis, AmeriCorps, and adult education and literacy. These positions will be posted over the next several months at [teachiowa.gov](http://teachiowa.gov).

To learn more about these opportunities, please don't hesitate to reach out to Jeremy Varner, Administrator, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation, at [jeremy.varner@iowa.gov](mailto:jeremy.varner@iowa.gov), or 515-281-8260.

---

## Division staffing changes

After decades of service to the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation (Division), two seasoned professionals are retiring from the Iowa Department of Education (Department).

Andrew Wermes retired as education program consultant for skilled and technical sciences (STS) at the end of June, after 11 years of service. While with the Department, Andy covered the related STS disciplines within industrial technology. Prior to working at the Department, his experience included over 25 years working and supervising construction projects, and teaching and administering apprenticeship programs, utilizing his experience as a journeyman carpenter. His last construction project was in supervision of the Four Seasons Hotel, Newport Beach, CA. He has extensive experience in architectural millwork and cabinetmaking, and supervised interior finish work on the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Laguna Niguel, CA. Wermes plans to continue providing selective consultant support in the STS and safety-related areas of workforce education and training.

Fidelis Ubadigbo first started with the Department in 1991. During his 27 years of service within the Division, he worked as an education program consultant where he implemented the state program review and evaluation system for Iowa's community colleges, served as the Perkins accountability specialist, and was a state and national resource for his academic work in data transformation, cluster analysis, instrument design, and data interpretation. His last day at the Department will be August 31.

In addition, Marcela Hermosillo-Tarin left the Department this month after nearly three years working as an education program consultant in adult education and literacy. In her role, she worked with state and federal grants related to English as a Second Language, provided training and support to meet the professional development needs for the state's adult education programs, and was instrumental in re-establishing and growing the Iowa Literacy Council. She is starting a new position as the senior talent development consultant at LCS Companies in Des Moines.

The Department thanks Andy, Fidelis, and Marcela for their service and dedication to the citizens of Iowa and wishes them the best in their future endeavors.

---

**Iowa Department of Education**

400 E 14th Street  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Ph: 515-281-5294  
[www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov)