



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADER BULLETIN

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## Work group to identify best practices in developmental education



Over the next six months, a new work group consisting of representatives from each of Iowa's 15 community colleges will conduct a statewide review of developmental education practices and make recommendations to enhance student success. These efforts support the Future Ready Iowa Alliance's recommendations and the statewide goal for 70 percent of all working-age Iowans having postsecondary credentials by 2025.

Because of their open-access mission, community colleges enroll students from all backgrounds, not all of whom are prepared for the rigor of college-level coursework. Developmental education strategies provide a means for helping these students acquire the knowledge they need to be successful in college-level courses.

The work group will review evidence-based strategies, identify inequities and opportunities for improvement, identify best practices that result in high retention and completion rates, and make recommendations to policy and practice.

The work group was formed in August following a discussion with community college presidents and other college representatives about the diversity of students in need of developmental education and how multiple approaches are necessary to assist them.

A list of work group members, meeting dates, and resources can be found on the [Department's website](#). Updates on the work group's progress will be provided in future bulletins. For more information, contact Chris Russell, education consultant, at 515-725-2247, or [chris.russell@iowa.gov](mailto:chris.russell@iowa.gov).

## Pilot to streamline reverse credit transfer process underway



COMMUNITY COLLEGES &  
WORKFORCE PREPARATION  
*PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION*

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The Reverse Credit Transfer (RCT) Advisory Committee reconvened on September 26 to continue efforts to streamline the reverse credit process between Iowa's three public universities and 15 community colleges. A key initiative for improving higher education outcomes, RCT enables students to be awarded associate degrees or other credentials retroactively by transferring credits earned while attending a four-year institution back to the community colleges from which they transferred.

The RCT Advisory Committee's work focuses on the following priorities:

1. increase student participation in the RCT process;
2. streamline the transfer of credits; and
3. assess the success of the RCT program in Iowa.

Increasing the number of opportunities for students to learn about RCT and "opt-in" to participate is a primary focus of the committee. The public universities are improving marketing efforts to eligible students and designing ways for students to opt-in to the RCT process through their portal systems. To streamline the credit transfer process, the committee investigated and encouraged all institutions to participate in the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Reverse Credit Transfer Program. By adding an amendment to their existing data-sharing agreements with the NSC, universities will submit student records to the NSC that are then made available to the community colleges to evaluate for degree completion. This electronic transfer of course data is a vast improvement over the paper transcript exchange previously employed. The amendments (memorandum of understanding) between Iowa's institutions and the NSC are being finalized and should be distributed to the colleges within the next month.

A pilot of the RCT process is being conducted between Hawkeye Community College and the University of Northern Iowa. The pilot's transfer of records through the NSC has already proven to streamline the process and allow for more degrees to be granted to Hawkeye's transfer students. The advisory committee's goal is for all of Iowa's public postsecondary institutions to be engaged in this process by the start of 2018.

More information about RCT can be found on the [Transfer in Iowa](#) and [Department](#) websites. Contact Chris Russell, education consultant, at 515-725-2247, or [chris.russell@iowa.gov](mailto:chris.russell@iowa.gov) with questions.

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## 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.

"It's too late by the time you get to high school because you are already on a certain path," said Valley High School Senior, Ethan Douglas. "I looked for opportunities in middle school and when I couldn't find any I went online and taught myself how to build my own computer. But, not everyone is going to do that."

The state of Iowa is looking to change that.

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## Progress made on statewide CTE redesign efforts



Statewide efforts are moving forward to implement the requirements of [H.F. 2392](#), which was signed into law last year to provide consistent and equitable access to high-quality career and technical education (CTE) programs for all Iowa students.

Some of those requirements include the establishment of secondary CTE regional planning partnerships (RPPs) across the state and for all secondary CTE programs to be reviewed and approved over the next five years.

Fifteen (15) RPPs, which approximately align to the 15 community college regions, have already been established. For the academic year 2017-18, these RPPs have three major tasks:

1. Develop multi-year plans for ensuring all Iowa students have access to high-quality CTE education.
2. Produce budgets and expenditure plans that are tied to the RPP multi-year plans.
3. Create schedules to ensure all CTE programs are reviewed over a period of five years.

The CTE Bureau has created a self-study template for program approval and is testing it using school districts within each RPP across several of the service areas. This “pilot” will begin in November and be completed by February 2018.

The first set of CTE programs that will come up for approval are expected to complete the self-study through spring and summer 2018. Programs will submit their self-studies to their respective RPPs. After completing a review, the RPPs will submit the self-studies to the Department in September.

To answer questions and share best practices in developing strong secondary CTE programs, the CTE Bureau is holding a series of [webinars](#) geared towards CTE instructors and high school administrators. Contact Pradeep Kotamraju, CTE bureau chief, at 515-281-4716, or [pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov](mailto:pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov) with questions.

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## **Moving towards full Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) implementation**



Iowa is moving toward full implementation of the statewide [VFA initiative](#) with all 15 colleges reporting and publishing data during the 2017 reporting year. As in past years, this included the two-year credit cohort; new this year, all colleges also reported credit and non-credit CTE and adult basic education (ABE) data. Additionally, three colleges (Western Iowa Tech, Hawkeye, and Iowa Central) also piloted the six-year credit cohort reporting process.

The addition of a comprehensive set of metrics for the credit cohort provides a new look into developmental education and its impact on retention and success, while the inclusion of noncredit programs in the CTE cohort provides a first look at educational and employment outcomes for these experiences. Prior to the VFA system, neither of these metrics was available

for national benchmarking purposes. Additionally, noncredit CTE outcomes data, available for the first time, was included in the Future Ready Iowa [Metrics That Matter](#) report to show the impact of noncredit CTE program completion through wage gain.

Each VFA reporting section has an Iowa work group comprised of data and content specialists, institutional researchers, and DE liaisons charged with reviewing the [VFA Metrics Manual](#) and defining the [Iowa Calculations Methods](#). Both manuals are used by the colleges and the division for compiling and validating the data submissions. In the upcoming months, the workgroups will review the 2017 reporting process, make clarifications to the calculations methods for 2018 reporting, review the CTE and ABE data for national VFA metrics discussions, design supports for the 2018 reporting and validation processes, and design a communication plan for utilizing VFA as a tool for informing practice and improving outcomes.

The efforts of the workgroups and contributing colleges have not gone unnoticed. Iowa's interest and scrutiny of noncredit CTE and ABE/ESL metrics have captured the attention of national VFA experts who intend to do an in-depth review of these metrics and invite Iowa to join those discussions. Additionally, Iowa has been highlighted by American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and VFA as a best practice example for college-driven, statewide implementation via two invited [webinar presentations](#) and an [article](#) in the Community College Daily newsletter.

More information about the VFA initiative and timeline is available on the [Department's website](#). Contact Zoë M. Thornton at or 515-281-4700, or [zoe.thornton@iowa.gov](mailto:zoe.thornton@iowa.gov) with comments or questions.

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## New sector partnership toolkit released



Under the guidance of the [Sector Partnership Leadership Council \(SPLC\)](#), the Iowa Department of Education has developed a series of informative toolkits created to help guide sector partnership work in Iowa through the three general levels of development: planning, emerging, and sustaining. The latest addition, [Toolkit: 3.0: Sustaining](#), was just released last month and focuses on the sustainability of sector partnerships as they mature and evolve over time.

The latest toolkit includes best practices and potential areas of concern identified by Iowa's current sector partnerships, as well as national trends and industry best practices. The goal is to provide current and future sector partnership teams with the tools to help make data-informed critical decisions necessary to remain successful and thriving.

These toolkits, an interactive map of the current sector partnership landscape, and an expanding library of additional resources are available on the [Department's website](#). Additional resources and interactive tools are also being developed for the [Future Ready Iowa portal](#).

Contact Joe Collins, education consultant for sector partnerships, at 515-725-0646, or [joe.collins@iowa.gov](mailto:joe.collins@iowa.gov) with comments or questions.

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## Work-based learning guide available



The Department recently released a [work-based learning guide](#) to assist school districts in establishing high-quality work-based learning experiences for students.

The guide includes information on high-quality work-based learning program components, different types of work-based learning experiences, legal requirements, licensure, and illustrates how work-based learning experiences can help students make informed decisions about post-high school opportunities.

Contact Kelli Diemer, education consultant, at 515-281-3615, or [kelli.diemer@iowa.gov](mailto:kelli.diemer@iowa.gov) with comments or questions.

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## Tuition and fees report available



The Department recently released the fiscal year 2018 [Tuition and Fees Report](#), which provides information about the tuition and fees charged at each of Iowa's 15 community colleges.

According to the report, average total in-state cost of enrollment (tuition and fees) is \$175.98 per credit hour, up 3.4 percent from last year. The highest in-state tuition charged for 24 credit hours at an Iowa community college is 41.7 percent less than the lowest public university in-state tuition for the same number of credit hours.

Contact Barbara Burrows, chief for the Bureau of Community Colleges, at 515-281-0319, or [barbara.burrows@iowa.gov](mailto:barbara.burrows@iowa.gov) with comments or questions.

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## Learn about good-paying jobs

Though manufacturing jobs across the country have become more technical, employers say the workforce hasn't kept up, creating a skills gap where good-paying, in-demand jobs go unfilled.

To build awareness of this growing field and the job opportunities available, school districts, employers and community colleges across the state participated in Manufacturing Day on October 5.



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