



School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

February 2007

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

NEWS FROM THE DE

Taiwan Scholarship Available for High School Graduates

The Republic of China's Ministry of Education is offering the Taiwan Scholarship to high school graduates interested in pursuing a bachelor's degree in Taiwan. This program is an excellent opportunity for high school graduates to gain international experience and receive a rewarding university education.

To view additional information about the Taiwan Scholarship, go to their website at <http://www.edutw.org/english/news/index.html>.

American Stars of Teaching Award

The U.S. Department of Education is currently accepting nominations for its 2007 American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize teachers who are improving student achievement by using innovative strategies and making a difference in the lives of their students. Anyone can nominate an American Star. After the U.S. Department of Education receives a nomination, a verification form is sent to the teacher's principal. One teacher will be recognized from each state and the District of Columbia. The deadline for nominations is April 1, 2007. For more information, please go to <https://www.t2tweb.us/AmStar/About.asp>. (Note: Previous award winners are posted at <https://www.t2tweb.us/AmStar/Prior.asp>.)

On-Street Parking and Shuttle Service on the Capitol Complex

For those of you who may be visiting the Capitol Complex during the legislative session and need guidance about where to park, the Department of Administrative Services has added on-street parking around the Capitol Complex, and they are initiating a new shuttle service for easy access to the Capitol.

The shuttle is a six-week pilot service offered by the Iowa Legislature, the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART), and the city of Des Moines. Attached is a brochure that will provide additional details. If you have questions about the shuttle service, please call DART Customer Service at 515-283-8100

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

School Financial Reporting Requirements in House File 2792

House File 2792 created a new section of Iowa Code 279.63, that requires school districts to develop, maintain, and distribute a finance report to its community on an annual basis. The objective of the financial report is to facilitate public access to a variety of information and statistics relating to the education funding received by the school district, enrollment and employment figures, and additional information. The language also requires school districts to post the report to an Internet website maintained by the school district. If the school district does not maintain or develop a website, the school district shall either distribute or post written copies of the financial report at specified locations throughout the school district.

To facilitate this reporting, the Iowa Department of Education (DE) will create a website that provides the information for six of the seven requirements in the Code. All districts will need to do is to create a link to the DE website to create access to this information. The seventh required item ("e") relates to the collection of data on teacher and administrator insurance benefits. Because this information is not currently compiled by any system, the DE will continue to work with several stakeholders on this reporting issue and will keep you informed of progress.

For additional information, contact Jeff Berger at jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399.

Live Legislative Update

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) will again maintain a website that captures all legislation affecting education. Interested parties can access this information at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/legisupdate.asp>. If a specific bill of interest is filed, but not included on this website, simply use the information below to request that the information be included. General information regarding the legislature can be accessed <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/>.

The DE has submitted 10 prefilled bills in the following areas:

- Educator Quality (Teacher and Administrator Quality)
- Universal access to quality four-year-old preschool programming
- District sharing incentives
- Changes to the compulsory attendance age
- Inclusion of Phase I and II of the Education Excellence Program into the school funding formula
- Authority to conduct fiscal Phase II visits for districts with two or more consecutive years of negative fund balances
- Including foreign exchange students in the official school count
- Misc. code corrections
- Modification to the IPERS reemployment clause for the DE
- Full funding of area education agencies (AEAs)

Information regarding these bills can be found at the above website. For any additional questions regarding legislation or the legislative process, contact Jeff Berger at jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399.

Pay for Performance Commission Final Report

Last year, House File 2792 and Executive Order 48 created the Pay for Performance (PFP) Commission and charged them with creating a study of teacher pay for performance systems and to provide recommendations regarding the possible implementation of teacher pay for performance pilots. The PFP Commission contracted with the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce (ITW) (<http://www.tomorrowworkforce.org/>) for the development of a study on this issue.

The ITW submitted its recommendations to the PFP Commission in early January. The PFP Commission used this study as the basis to form its final report on this issue. The report includes recommendations related to the possible implementation of pilot projects. The final report can be found at http://www.dom.state.ia.us/pfp_commission/index.html. The PFP Commission is recommending some additional legislative action prior to the implementation of any pilot programs related to pay for performance, so this issue will continue to evolve this spring.

For additional information, contact Jeff Berger, jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Waivers and Exemptions

Waiver forms to be used during the 2007-2008 school year are now located on the Iowa Department of Education (DE) website at http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=483&Itemid=530. There are six waivers available from the DE:

- Foreign Language
- Chapter 12 (accreditation rules)
- New Innovative Calendar
- Continued Innovative Calendar
- Teacher Librarian/Media Program
- Early Start Date, Spring BEDS

If you have any questions, please contact Del Hoover at del.hoover@iowa.gov or 515-281-8402.

Students with Disabilities Access to the General Education Curriculum

In the December issue of *School Leader Update*, an article titled "Instructional Materials for Students with Vision Impairment and Print Disabilities" discussed the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It also said the State of Iowa adopted the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) and will work with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC) to provide instructional materials and texts in a timely manner to students who are blind, visually impaired, or students with a reading disability.

Guidance on how to implement the NIMAS process in local school districts is attached. This step-by-step guidance will allow local districts to provide textbooks and related core materials in a timely manner to students with disabilities who qualify under NIMAS regulations. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs has a topic brief on NIMAS that provides additional introductory information. You can download a copy of it at: (<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C12%2C>).

If you require additional information, please contact Steve Maurer at steve.maurer@iowa.gov or 515-281-3576

Updated Statewide Graduation and Eighth Grade Plan Guidance

In October 2006, the Iowa Department of Education (DE) distributed information on Senate File 2272, which established the 4-3-3-3 graduation requirements and was passed in the 2006 legislative session. The DE has updated and clarified the graduation and eighth grade plan information. Please discard the previous guidance and use the updated information at

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=3033

For more information, contact Rita Martens at rita.martens@iowa.gov or 515-281-3145.

Instruction at the Core of Improved Student Learning

"Instruction at the Core: 2007" is a series of professional development opportunities provided to school administrators and school teams responsible for leading school improvement at the building, district, area education agency, and state level. School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) are sponsoring this series, and the target audience includes superintendents, middle school and high-school principals, central office personnel, curriculum directors, teacher leaders, and area education agency (AEA) consultants. The first event will be April 4, 2007. Dr. Richard Elmore will share his experiences with creating communities of practice in which school administrators focus on leading and supporting reform efforts that target instructional improvements and increase student achievement. This event will be held at the West Des Moines Marriott, 1250 74th Street, West Des Moines.

For further details, you can view the informational brochure on SAI's website at <http://www.sai-iowa.org/April4brochure.pdf>. You may also contact Deb Hansen at deb.hansen@iowa.gov or 515-281-3161.

Iowa Alternate Assessment

The Iowa Alternate Assessment Rating Scales have been sent to all teachers in the state who have students taking the alternate assessment. Teachers have until April 30, 2007 to collect student evidence and complete the Reading, Math, and Science Rating Scales. Information about this process can be found on the Iowa Department of Education (DE) website at: <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/461/926/1/5/> If you have any questions, contact Steve Maurer at steve.maurer@iowa.gov or 515-281-3576.

Department Developing Transition Plan for Perkins IV

With the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act (Perkins IV), the State of Iowa is developing a one-year transition plan and a new application for the first program year starting July 1, 2007. The Iowa Department of Education's Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation is preparing to coordinate the development of a five-year transition plan during Fiscal Year 2008 through a structure that will include constituent input and review. Major changes with implementation of Perkins IV will include:

- During the transition year (Fiscal Year 2008), each recipient (consortia or independent district) will be required to develop at least one Program of Study. Each Program of Study will be a cohesive,

non-duplicative sequence of rigorous and relevant academic and technical content that seamlessly connects high school career and technical courses with postsecondary programs.

- The State has chosen not to merge Tech Prep into the Perkins Basic Grant and accountability requirements for Tech Prep will be expanded to include 23 performance measures.
- The accountability requirements are placed on recipients (consortia or independent districts) and include a sanctioning process for those failing to meet performance standards. The accountability requirements may result in districts evaluating current consortia arrangements. Please contact Roger Foelske at roger.foelske@iowa.gov or 515-281-4700, if your consortium plans to change its makeup.

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) anticipates developing and implementing professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors within each region related to Perkins IV requirements, including Programs of Study and performance measures. Career and technical education consultants from the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation will be present at superintendents' meetings in each region to provide a brief overview of Perkins IV and answer questions. The consultants will attend the first superintendents' meeting in each region following the Iowa State Board of Education meeting on February 7, 2007. The Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006, a presentation on Perkins IV developed by the DE, and a side-by-side comparison of Perkins III and Perkins IV are available at the DE website at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/265/402/>.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Janice Friedel at janice.friedel@iowa.gov or 515-281-8260

Choices Reselected as State-Supported CIDS

Iowa Choices was reselected as the state-supported career information and decision-making system (CIDS). The system is made available to middle schools and high schools through a partnership between the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC), the College Planning Center (a division of the Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corporation), and the Iowa Department of Education. Iowa Choices, developed by the vendor Bridges, is a customized, online career planning and exploration tool with Iowa-specific occupational and educational information. All Iowa middle schools, high schools, and postsecondary institutions are provided with free access to certain Choices products, and Iowa users receive free training and technical support from the ICSAC and the College Planning Center.

For additional information, contact Linda Berg at linda.berg@iowa.gov or 515-242-5032.

QUALITY TEACHING

Paraeducator Recognition Week and New Resources

School districts and other educational agencies are encouraged to recognize the contributions of paraeducators Feb. 5 - 9, 2007, in observance of Paraeducator Recognition Week. The proclamation recognizing paraeducators was issued by Iowa's governor in 2006.

Two Iowa Department of Education resources that can be used to inform constituents about the roles and contributions of paraeducators are now available at no cost. The resources include an 18-minute DVD that highlights a variety of paraeducator assignments and a brochure that provides information about paraeducator roles, responsibilities, and certification opportunities. The professional quality of the video and production makes them excellent resources for informing audiences, such as families, educational boards, professional organizations, clubs, businesses, and other community organizations, about contributions of paraeducators. The two resources were conceived and developed by Iowa's Paraeducator Task Force. Later this spring, a revised edition of the *Guide to Effective Paraeducator Practices* will be widely disseminated throughout the state. Please contact Norma Lynch at norma.lynch@iowa.gov or 515-281-6038 to access the resources.

Iowa School for the Deaf Outreach ICN

A free education and support group for families living with a child's hearing loss will be offered once a month beginning in February. Professionals are welcome to attend. The group is held statewide through the ICN. Parent requests will determine the site location. The first session addresses how parents and students can best work with their educational interpreters. More information on the four sessions scheduled for 2007 may be found

at www.iowaschoolforthe deaf.org/. You may also contact Cynthia Angeroth, Iowa School for the Deaf outreach coordinator, at cangeroth@iowaschoolforthe deaf.org or 712-366-3213 .

The Iowa Evaluator Training Program Level II: Evaluation of Teachers

Training will begin in the fall of 2007 for principals responsible for the evaluation of teachers. The intended outcome of this course is to enhance principals' skill in evaluating quality teaching and teachers' content knowledge. Principals whose license expires in 2007-2008 will be the first participants to take this course and will have priority as enrollment decisions for the classes are determined.

This course will continue to be offered at the area education agencies (AEAs) after the Fall 2007 date. Registration for this class will be through each AEA. The cost is \$250 per participant, which includes all materials and the two renewal credits through School Administrators of Iowa. Several large districts and consortiums of districts may conduct training onsite. The course consists of 30 contact hours, delivered in either five six-hour sessions or ten three-hour sessions.

Please contact Chris Day at dayc@central.edu or 515-402-8600, if you have any questions.

LEGAL LESSONS

The contact for all Legal Lessons items is Carol Greta, carol.greta@iowa.gov or 515-281-8661.

Revised 'Blue Book' for Level One Investigators Now Available!

The manual for all Chapter 102 (Abuse of Students by School Employees) Level One Investigators has been revised and is now available. Go to <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/860/985/> to view the new PDF version.

The manual is in two parts. The first deals with mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse to the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), and the second part deals with reporting and investigating alleged abuse of students by school employees. The Table of Contents is reproduced below.

PART A [Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse (Reportable to DHS)]

- Sample Policy
- Reporting Procedures
- DHS Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Form
- Frequently Asked Questions

PART B [Allegations of Abuse of Students By School Employees]

- Sample Policy
- Chapter 102 Rules and Comments
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Complaint Form
- Report of Level One Investigation
- Board of Educational Examiners Complaint Form
- Sex Crimes
- Reasonable Force Law

Open Enrollment and Nonpublic School Students

Parents or guardians whose children are presently in a nonpublic school but who will attend a public school next year (2007-2008) have the open enrollment option available to them, but must comply with open enrollment deadlines. Therefore, if parents want their child enrolled in a school district that is not their district of residence, they must file a request for open enrollment by **March 1, 2007**. The open enrollment request must be filed with both the district of residence and the receiving district by this deadline.

The open enrollment request form is available from any school district and is available online at: http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=649&Itemid=636.

Three Notes about Athletic Eligibility

Three of the more frequently asked questions are as follows:

1. When does the bona fide part of the rule become effective?
ANSWER: Now. Students other than ninth graders established those activities in which they are bona fide participants last year and the preceding year(s). This school year is NOT to be considered the year in which bona fide activities are established.
Example: Susie Sophomore participated in volleyball and track her freshman year (2005-2006). Those two sports are her bona fide sports. If she competes in basketball this year, it will be added to volleyball and track for her junior and senior years, but cannot be used this year as a sport in which she is ineligible if she had an F the first grading period.
2. What is the period of ineligibility for softball/baseball participants?
ANSWER: Four weeks...28 calendar days. This is roughly equivalent to 20 school days, but because most softball and baseball seasons take place after school has ended, the rule had to be modified for those activities.
3. If a student (bona fide in both football and track) sits out 13 days of football season for an F (first term of block scheduling), then gets another F during the second block, how many days of ineligibility does the student serve in track?
ANSWER: The seven days leftover from football season must be served, so they are served during track, commencing with the first allowable day of competition. The additional 20 days get served commencing with the first allowable day of competition. Thus, the leftover seven days are served concurrently with the 20 new days. The net result is 20 days during track, unless local policy imposes more time. Another example for softball/baseball: A student fails first semester and begins the 28 days while school is still in session in May, then fails a second semester course. Grades for second semester are posted after the student sits out eight calendar days. This student has two 28-day periods, but 20 (28 minus eight) are served concurrently with the new 28. Net result is eight plus 28 days served. In both examples, a school could impose a LONGER period of ineligibility by local rule.

The vast majority of schools are doing a great job of helping their students and the students' families understand the new expectations and the new consequences. If a specific question is not covered in the guidance piece (<http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/767/985/>), contact Carol Greta.

Iowa's Gift Law and 'Educational Events' Sponsored by Corporations

Scenario: ABC Computers wants to sell its product to your school district. ABC invites a group of district employees and maybe a board member or two to its executive offices (NOT located in Iowa) and tells the district that Iowa's gift law allows ABC to pay the food, beverage, travel, and lodging expenses of all who attend from the district because the attendees will be "participating" in the event.

Reality: According to Charlie Smithson, executive director of the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Finance Board, this is NOT allowable. Yes, there is an exception in the gift law that allows companies to pay such expenses for conference participants, but the intent behind the exception is to pay speakers who have true expertise in the subject area and from whom other attendees learn something. (For example, when Carol Greta receives free meals for speaking to groups of school attorneys). ABC in the example above is convening nothing more than a *sales pitch* at which district employees and officials (the board members) are allowed to state their visions for how they want to use ABC's technology back home in the district. Not only does this violate Iowa's gift law (Iowa Code section 68B.22), but it very well might be an unlawful avoidance of the district's public bidding policy.

Bottom line: If an opportunity truly is nothing more than Company A wanting to sell District B a product, District B shall not accept any type of compensation to send employees or board members to hear the sales pitch. If District B needs computers, District B should issue a Request for Proposal (RFP), including in the RFP an invitation for bidders to come to District B to demonstrate their products. As always, work with your district's attorney when in doubt. Mr. Smithson has also stated that questions may be directly sent to him by either e-mail (charlie.smithson@iowa.gov) or phone (515-281-3489).

Technology Grants Awarded

The Iowa Learning Technology Commission (ILTC) is pleased to announce the awarding of six more technology grants to the following school districts:

- Cedar Rapids
- Ankeny
- Southeast Polk
- Williamsburg
- Okoboji
- Anita

A total of 61 Part I grant applications were submitted, 11 in the district size 0-600 category, 32 in the district size 601-1,500 category, 13 in the district size 1,501-9,000 category, and five in the district size 9,001+ category. Of these Part I applications, 22 were invited to participate in Part II of the ILTC grant application process, three in the 0-600 category, 11 in the 601-1,500 category, six in the 1,501-9,000 category, and two in the 9,000+ category.

For additional information regarding the focus of these grants and any additional information regarding the Iowa Learning Technology Commission, access the ILTC website at:

<http://homepage.mac.com/albodespanish/iltc/iltc.html>. Contact Jeff Berger, jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399 for additional information.

Early Reading First Grant Opportunity

The Federal Register has recently posted the Request for Proposal (RFP) for this year's Early Reading First Grants. Early Reading First Grants are intended to support greater gains in children's language and literacy skills through intensive high quality early childhood education programs. Pre-application proposals are due February 21, 2007, and complete applications are due May 29, 2007 for those applicants invited to submit a full application. The estimated average size of awards is \$3 million.

Eligible applicants include: (a) one or more school districts that are eligible to receive a subgrant under the Reading First program; (b) one or more public or private organizations or agencies (including faith-based organizations) located in a community served by an eligible district; or (c) one or more eligible districts, applying in collaboration with one or more eligible organizations or agencies. To qualify under paragraph (b) of this definition, the organization's or agency's application must be on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool age children (such as a Head Start program, a child care program, or a family literacy program, such as Even Start or a lab school at a university), unless the organization or agency itself operates a preschool program. A list of eligible districts that qualify under paragraph (a) of this definition for this Fiscal Year 2007 competition will be posted on the Early Reading First website at:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/index.html>. Also, here is a link to the notice in the Federal Register: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-834.htm>.

The Iowa Department of Education has designated a state contact for your convenience. If you have further questions please contact Penny Milburn at penny.milburn@iowa.gov or 515-727-0656.

FY 2007 Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign Grant Solicitation

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has posted the Fiscal Year 2007 Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign (SC3) Grant Solicitation and is actively seeking initial proposals from interested applicants. The solicitation can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/oswer/grants-funding.htm#epa-oswer-osw-07-06> and <http://www.grants.gov/>, and the deadline for submitting initial proposals is March 14, 2007. Funding awarded under this solicitation will not exceed \$150,000.

The objective of this grant is to support an innovative project that advances the goals of SC3 by using lessons learned from other programs/demonstration projects to establish a SC3 "infrastructure" in a specific community that assists K-12 schools with their chemical management.

For additional information on this grant opportunity, please contact Kristina Meson at 703-308-8488 or meson.kristina@epa.gov.

Go the Distance Day Mini-Grant Opportunity

Iowa's Team Nutrition program is supporting the message of increasing physical activity through its partnership with Go The Distance Day, which will be held on May 2, 2007. This event is designed to engage the entire school in at least 30 minutes of physical activity. Team Nutrition wants to encourage all team sponsors to include healthy nutrition messages with their physical activity efforts. To support this effort, Team Nutrition will offer five mini-grants of \$500 each to schools that include a nutrition education component in their Go The Distance Day activity. Funds may be used to purchase food, supplies, and/or educational materials that encourage eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods. Schools interested in competing for the Go the Distance Team Nutrition mini-grants can find them at:

<http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/373/438/1/2/>.

You will also find the Team Nutrition enrollment forms if you are not already enrolled. These grant applications are due April 1, 2007. If you have questions, please contact Gretchen Watznauer at Gretchen.Watznauer@iowa.gov. To learn more about Go the Distance you can go to: <http://www.iowasportsfoundation.org/goTheDistance/youthOpportunities.aspx>.

Iowa Team Nutrition Local Wellness Demonstration Project Opportunity

The Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Nutrition Programs and School Transportation and the states of California and Pennsylvania have been awarded United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition Local Wellness Demonstration Project Grants to examine the implementation of Local Wellness Policy in schools. Iowa schools will have the unique opportunity to impact national practices by participating in this project while enhancing implementation of School Wellness Policy within their own district. By participating, schools will identify successful strategies that will be incorporated into a national implementation guide. The project will:

- 1) provide training and technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) using the three Team Nutrition implementation strategies,
- 2) assess the types and levels of technical assistance that need to be provided at the state level,
- 3) measure the implementation of local wellness policies in selected schools, and
- 4) measure school environmental change for selected schools.

Schools will receive \$4,000-\$8,000 in funding during the two-year project depending on the level of involvement, to support data collection efforts at the building level. In addition resources, training, and technical assistance to support local level needs related to Local Wellness Policy will be funded through the project. Over the next few months, approximately 32 schools from 16 districts in Iowa will be selected to participate in this project. A number of criteria, some common to all states and other aspects unique to Iowa, will be considered in the school selection process. A broad cross section of schools is needed for the project. Once selected, eight districts will be randomly designated as implementation sites and eight districts will be designated as comparison districts.

To request your district be considered for inclusion in the project and/or to request additional information, please contact Janet Wendland, project director, at janet.wendland@iowa.gov before March 1, 2007.

Iowa Influenza (Flu)

The Iowa Department of Public Health recently reported an increase in the number of Iowa children missing school because of illness, with the flu being the most likely culprit. State health officials are urging Iowans to take proactive steps to limit the spread of influenza and to protect their friends and family. Receiving the flu vaccination is a part of those recommendations. For a full listing of general and school influenza recommendations, please visit <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp> and http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/flu/flu_school.pdf.

If you have questions or need additional information, contact your local health department, The Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology at 800-362-2736, or Charlotte Burt with the Iowa Department of Education at charlotte.burt@iowa.gov.

TRANSPORTATION

Contact Max Christensen at 515-281-4749 or max.christensen@iowa.gov with questions about transportation

Transporting Speech & Music Equipment

Be sure to remind your speech and music coaches of the importance of properly transporting props, sets, and large instrumental equipment. When loading these items on school buses, do not set them on top of the seats or load them in such a way that the aisle or access to exits is blocked. Doing so presents a severe safety hazard to anyone riding in or driving that vehicle. It's recommended that those types of items be transported separately in trailers or other vehicles and NOT be transported in the same vehicle with the students.

Pre-Delivery Vehicle Inspections

On occasion school bus dealers ask the Iowa Department of Education (DE) to inspect a school bus prior to the actual delivery date of that vehicle. This is normally done with the consent of the school district to which the bus will be sold. The process has been that the dealer contacts the DE bus inspector(s) and makes arrangements for the vehicle to be inspected. Our inspector performs the inspection and then the school district is billed for that inspection upon delivery.

Effective Feb. 1, 2007, we will continue to inspect pre-delivered school buses, new or used, as needed, using the following criteria:

- Prior to inspecting the vehicle, we will require a written request from the school district to which the bus is being sold. We will not perform the inspection(s) without this written request.
- This written request may be sent directly to our office or conveyed to us via the school bus dealer.
- This written request should be sent directly to the school bus inspector who will be performing the vehicle inspection.
- This written request may be in the form of a fax, email, or handwritten letter.
- Upon receipt of this letter and upon performing the school bus inspection, the school district will be billed for the inspection per our usual procedure, regardless of whether the school district accepts or refuses delivery of the vehicle.

DATA AND REPORTING

Annual Report Available on Website

The annual Student Achievement and Accountability report for 2007 has been distributed to legislators pursuant to Iowa Code Section 284.12 and is available on our website at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/542/565/>. For additional information, please contact Dianne Chadwick at dianne.chadwick@iowa.gov or 515-281-3718.

CALENDAR

Deadlines and Dates to Remember

February 21, 2007 Due date for pre-application proposals for the Early Reading First Grants

You can view a complete Iowa Department of Education calendar of events at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/calendar/calendar.html>.

SCHOOL LEADER UPDATE is produced monthly by the Iowa Department of Education for school leaders of Iowa. Comments and submissions should be sent to Elaine Watkins-Miller at Elaine.Watkins-Miller@iowa.gov or 515-281-5295.

Catch a free ride to the Capitol!

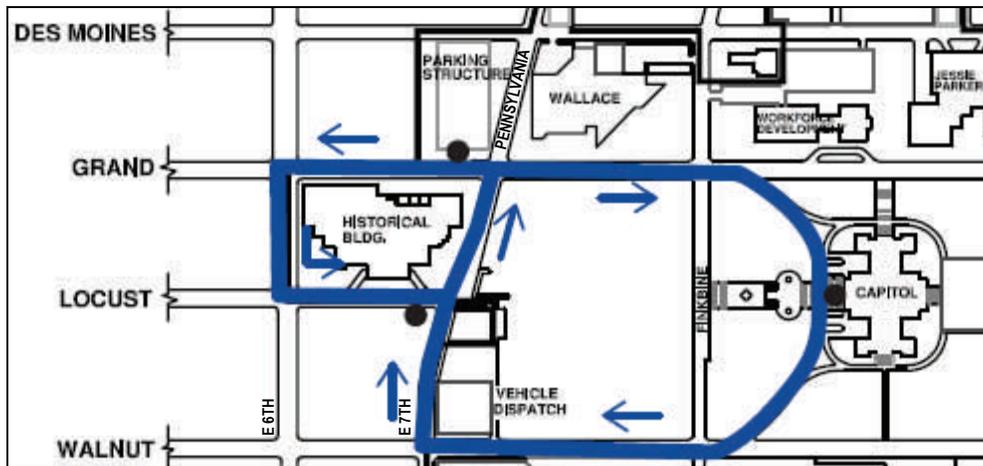


The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) is piloting a new, **free** shuttle service between the State Capitol Building, the State Historical Building, and the parking ramp at the corner of East Grand and Pennsylvania Avenues

January 29 – March 9, 2007

It's easy!

1. **Park** in the ramp at East Grand and Pennsylvania Avenues. (Parking in the ramp is free, too!)
2. **Board** the shuttle at the northwest corner of East Grand and Pennsylvania, adjacent to the ramp. Or, if you're coming from the State Historical Building, board at the southwest corner of East Locust and East 7th/Pennsylvania. The shuttle will run continuously between 7 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. It takes about 10 minutes for the shuttle to make one loop, so you'll never have to wait long.
3. **Arrive** at the west entrance of the Capitol Building and get dropped off at the door!
4. **Return** to the parking ramp or Historical Building by boarding the shuttle at the same point where you were dropped off.



This shuttle service is being provided through a partnership between the city of Des Moines, the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) and the Iowa Legislature, with assistance provided by the Department of Administrative Services. If you have any questions or comments, please call DART Customer Service at 283-8100.



NIMAS GUIDANCE

The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included a requirement that students who are visually impaired and students who are print disabled receive their textbooks and core instructional materials in specialized formats at the same time as their non-disabled peers.

The 2006 regulations implementing the 2004 IDEA include directions on how states and local districts are to respond to this legislation. The two sections of this legislation are the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) and the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC). Providing accessible formats in a timely manner is not a new requirement. The new NIMAS process will improve this process for the students covered under these regulations.

The NIMAS establishes standards to be used by textbook publishers to prepare electronic files of textbooks, which can be converted to specialized formats. Specialized formats means Braille, Audio, Large Print, Text to Speech or Digital Text, which can be used by students who are blind, vision impaired, physically disabled, and reading disabled. The NIMAC's duties are to receive and maintain a catalog of these electronic files. Publishers at the direction of local school districts send these files to NIMAC. When a student in a local school district requires one of these specialized formats to have access to the general education curriculum, the local district will contact an Authorized User designated by the State of Iowa to search the NIMAC for the particular textbook and associated materials. The Authorized User can access the electronic file and convert it into the specialized format requested or identify an Accessible Media Producer to convert the file into the specialized format. Once the specialized format has been converted, the Authorized User will send it to the local district making the initial request.

NIMAS ELIGIBLE STUDENTS (IEP/504 Students)

Blind

Blind persons whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses, or whose widest diameter if visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.

Visually impaired

Persons whose visual disability, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, is certified by competent authority as preventing the reading of standard printed material.

Physically disabled

Persons certified by competent authority as unable to read or unable to use standard printed material as a result of physical limitations.

Reading disabled

Persons certified by competent authority as having a reading disability resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material in a normal manner. Competent authority must be a doctor of medicine who may consult with practitioners in other disciplines. Persons with reading disabilities, regardless of severity, that do not have physical origins are not covered. Nonorganic factors - such as emotional or environmental causes, intellectual or educational deficiencies, or other possible nonorganic or nonphysical causes – must be ruled out and not taken into consideration. The following diagnoses or disorders do not create automatic eligibility: learning disabilities, dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, chronic-fatigue syndrome, autism, functional illiteracy, or mental retardation.

CERTIFICATION FOR NIMAS ELIGIBILITY

In cases of Blindness, Visual Impairment, or Physical disability, certifying authorities include doctors of medicine or osteopathy, ophthalmologists, optometrists, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, therapists, professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public agencies (e.g., AEA support and related service personnel, teachers of the visually impaired, social workers, counselors, or rehabilitation teachers). In the absence of any of these, certification may be made by professional librarians or by any person whose competence under special circumstances is acceptable to the Library of Congress. In the case of a Reading Disability from an organic dysfunction, the certifying authority must be a doctor of medicine or osteopathy, who may consult with colleagues in associated disciplines. A family member is not eligible to be the certifying authority.

LEA RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Textbook adoption guidance – textbooks published after July 19, 2006 and hence forth – for adoption of elementary and secondary textbooks and core related materials, the district must require the publisher to prepare and, on or before delivery of the print instructional materials, provide to NIMAC electronic files containing the content of the print instructional materials using the NIMAS or purchase instructional materials from the publisher that are produced in, or may be rendered in, specialized formats. If the district has purchased new textbooks on or after July 19, 2006, these should contact the publisher and request that the textbook files be sent to NIMAC in order to comply with the NIMAS regulations.
2. Suggested Language for Textbook Adoption Contracts and LEA Purchase Orders:

“By agreeing to deliver the materials marked with NIMAS on this contract or purchase order, the publisher agrees to prepare and submit, on or before ___/___/___ a NIMAS file to the NIMAC that complies with the terms and procedures set forth by the NIMAC. Should the vendor be a distributor of the materials and not the publisher, the distributor agrees to immediately notify the publisher of its obligation to submit NIMAS file sets of the purchased products to the NIMAC. The files will be used for the production of alternate formats as permitted under the law for students with print disabilities.”
3. Identifying NIMAS eligible students:
 - Follow all AEA special education eligibility standards and child find/evaluation procedures including the policies and procedures for paying for a medical diagnosis.
 - Follow competent authority guidance

- Identify NIMAS eligibility on the IEP form
4. Identifying Accessible formats:
- Use appropriate assessments such as the Learning Media Assessment given by the Teachers of the Visually Impaired
 - Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Assistive Technology Consultants, and others with specific information must be involved and present at IEP meetings. If they cannot be present, their reports need to be available to IEP team members.
 - Identify accessible formats on page B of the IEP form in “Special Considerations”
 - Describe on page D of the IEP form how the accessible format will be used.
 - Describe textbooks and related core materials to be converted to accessible formats on page B of the IEP form in “Describe the effect...” If an assessment to determine the accessible format has been completed, results should be reported here.
5. Timely Manner Process
- Definition: “timely manner” language has been interpreted by OSEP as “at the same time as other children receive instructional materials.” The regulation requires the Department to “ensure that all public agencies take all reasonable steps to provide instructional materials in accessible formats to children with disabilities who need those instructional materials at the same time as other children receive instructional materials.” 34 C.F.R. § 300.172(b)(4). OSEP’s commentary lists the following examples of reasonable steps:

Reasonable steps, for example, would include requiring publishers or other contractors to provide instructional materials in accessible formats by the beginning of the school year for children whom the public agency has reason to believe will be attending its schools. Reasonable steps also might include having a means of acquiring instructional materials in accessible formats as quickly as possible for children who might transfer into the public agency in the middle of the year. Reasonable steps would not include withholding instructional materials from other children until instructional materials in accessible formats are available.

6. Process for obtaining accessible formats in a timely manner:
- Accessible formats include braille, audio, large print, text to speech or digital text specialized formats.
 - The Department of Education has determined that the sole entity in Iowa which will interact with the NIMAC and provide accessible formats to districts and students is the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB). Eligibility and Ordering process/forms will be provided by the Iowa Department for the Blind. Contact the Instructional Materials Center at 1-800-362-2587. to obtain these forms or go to www.blind.state.ia.us/library/IMC/overviewIMC.htm
 - On this webpage you will find links to information about eligibility and the application form (Qualifying for Services) and a link to the order form (on-line order form for Braille, recorded or electronic textbooks). On the Eligibility/Certification form you must complete pages 1-4 (page 4 requires a parent signature), ignore page 5 and review the contents of page 6. Return the completed form to the Iowa Department for the Blind at the address provided on the form. The eligibility and certification form is collected only once by the Iowa Department for the Blind and maintained in their data-base.
 - IEP teams make the determination of need using competent authorities. Team members also make the decision about need and type of accessible format required by an individual student.
 - The LEA representative on the IEP team will assume responsibility for contacting the district person designated as the liaison to the Iowa Department for the Blind. The contact

between the LEA representative and the District NIMAS liaison will be identified on the IEP services page as a linkage that needs to occur within 10 days of the IEP meeting so all textbooks and related core materials can be ordered in the accessible format required by students in a timely manner.

- Local District NIMAS liaisons will contact the Iowa Department for the Blind using forms prepared by the IDB to identify textbooks and related core materials needed and the type of accessible format required and identify when these materials need to be in the hands of the students.
- This order form must be completed at least six months prior to the time the textbooks and related core materials will be needed in the classroom by the student.

7. Non-NIMAS Students – LEAs have an obligation under IDEA to provide accessible instructional materials in a timely manner to non-NIMAS students. A state work group is currently working on the process that LEAs should use.