



A MONTHLY JOURNAL  
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

# School Leader Update

May 2010

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## Iowa teacher receives national honor

Johnston Community School District teacher Sarah Brown Wessling was named the 2010 National Teacher of the Year by President Barack Obama at a White House ceremony on April 29, 2010.

She was among four finalists for the honor, which is a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and sponsored by Target and the ING Foundation. The other finalists were from California, Florida, and Michigan.

Wessling was named the [2010 Iowa Teacher of the Year](#) by the Iowa Department of Education.

## Expecting great work from Iowa's educators

Last week I had the privilege to be in Washington, D.C., to witness President Obama name an Iowa teacher as National Teacher of the Year.

In many ways, the honor given to Johnston High School teacher Sarah Brown Wessling embodied what I have so loved about working in education.

The White House event focused on educators and the truly astounding impact they can have not only on individual children, but our country as a whole by shaping the minds of our young citizens. The event also focused on Iowa, a place where educational excellence lives and breathes every day.



*Judy Jeffrey, Director*

The life and vitality of Iowa's education comes from so many, including you, Iowa's education leaders. I thank you for your tireless work for our students.

I also want to thank you for supporting me during my years as director of the Iowa Department of Education (DE). We all know our work is not easy and the demands are never ending, but it is work with a moral obligation—to serve our children so their future is better and brighter than our own.

The work we are now doing, including our efforts with the Iowa Core, has the potential to be a model for education nationally. Make no mistake—all eyes are on us. What we can accomplish for Iowa's children in our own towns and communities will resonate across this country, if we do our work well. I expect to see great things from Iowa in the future.

This is why I am proud to support Kevin Fangman, who will become acting director of the DE upon my retirement effective May 4. He is someone who will continue this vision for an outstanding educational system and I encourage you to support him as you have supported me.

Good luck and best wishes to all of you.

## RACE TO THE TOP: Know the facts, ask the questions

### CONFERENCE CALLS

Three conference calls have been scheduled to answer your Race to the Top questions. Plan to join any of the 30-minute calls by dialing 877-366-0711, and enter pass code 959 02 110#.

- Thursday, May 6, 8:30-9:00 a.m.
- Thursday, May 6, 6:30-7:00 p.m.
- Friday, May 7, 3:00-3:30 p.m.

### VIDEO SERIES—NOW POSTED

A series of informational videos that addresses key information about Iowa's Race to the Top plans and district requirements is now posted. ([http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1910&Itemid=2616](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1910&Itemid=2616)).

### DOCUMENTS

The following information is currently available on the Iowa Department of Education's website ([www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)):

- Memorandum of Understanding: Must be signed by the school board president and returned by May 14 at 4:30 p.m.
- "Information about Iowa's Phase 2 Race to the Top Application"

## Iowa applies for Race to the Top

In order to help support and expand current education reform efforts that are right for our state, Iowa is applying for the second round of funding under Race to the Top.

Our vision for education was outlined, in part, in the state's first application for the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top grant. Iowa applied in Phase 1 but was not selected as a finalist.

Having analyzed reviewer scores and comments on Iowa's Phase 1 application, as well as feedback from superintendents, school board presidents, and teachers' association presidents, we believe that Iowa can be competitive in the Phase

2 Race to the Top application process without turning our backs on our education reform priorities or our commitment to local control.

Iowa is applying for \$175 million, the maximum allowable for the state. If Iowa wins, 50 percent of this amount will go directly to participating districts. The Iowa Department of Education (DE) has further determined that additional funds will be made available to districts through sub-grants from the state's share of the grant.

Participation by districts in the Race to the Top program is voluntary, but will be critical to the success of our application. In order to be eligible to receive funding through the Race to the Top grant, the federal government requires that a district sign and submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DE. The MOU outlines the actions the district must agree to take in order to get a Race to the Top sub-grant. Districts have considerable control in determining exactly how they will perform the scope of work in the Race to the Top program. If Iowa receives a Race to the Top grant, districts will have 90 days to finalize their scope of work with support from the DE.

For more information, please email [RacetotheTop@iowa.gov](mailto:RacetotheTop@iowa.gov).

## MOU for school districts to participate

Iowa school board presidents must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order for school districts to directly receive Race to the Top funds, should Iowa's application be approved. Supporting signatures from superintendents and teachers' association presidents strengthen Iowa's chances of receiving the grant.

The MOU is available on the Iowa Department of Education's website at [www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate).

*The MOU is due Friday, May 14, 2010, at 4:30 p.m.*

Contact Bonnie McIntosh at [bonnie@westwinded.com](mailto:bonnie@westwinded.com) or 877-354-9378 ext. 102 with technical questions about submitting the MOU.

### Key Points Every District Should Know

If you choose to participate:

- Your district is guaranteed to receive funds.
- Your district is NOT required to implement one of the four intervention models provided by the U.S. Department of Education just by signing on to Race to the Top.
- If your district joins in this effort, it will help Iowa's chances to receive this grant.

## Paraeducator roles, duties information

In response to numerous inquiries seeking clarification on appropriate duties and roles of paraeducators, the Iowa Department of Education has developed the



*Appropriate Paraeducator Services Matrix* that outlines parameters of suitable assignments for paraeducators (aides, associates, etc.) in general and special education settings.

The document provides direction on issues that are frequently raised by parents, teachers, administrators, and paraeducators regarding paraeducator roles in instruction, assessment, unsupervised settings, and other related areas.

The *Appropriate Paraeducator Services Matrix* can be found at [http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=773&Itemid=1297](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=773&Itemid=1297).

For more information, contact Norma Lynch at 515-281-6038 or at [norma.lynch@iowa.gov](mailto:norma.lynch@iowa.gov).

## Safe & Drug Free Schools, Title IV funding

The 2009-2010 academic year is the last time that formula funds are available to districts for Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities. The president's budget for fiscal year 2010 eliminates Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, which will be replaced by competitive grants to states and districts for drug and violence prevention activities. Additional details about competitive grant opportunities will be provided as they become available.

All funds must be expended by June 30, 2010. At this time, it is not expected that carryover funds will be available for 2010-2011. When federal guidance is available on closeout procedures, that information will be made available to you. All quarterly claims for Safe and Drug Free Schools expenditures must be submitted by August 15, 2010.

Comments on impact of loss of funding or questions about Safe and Drug Free Schools programming can also be directed to Cyndy Erickson at 515-281-8514 or [cyndy.erickson@iowa.gov](mailto:cyndy.erickson@iowa.gov).

For fiscal questions, please contact Tana Mullen at 515-281-3333 or [tana.mullen@iowa.gov](mailto:tana.mullen@iowa.gov).



## 2010-2011 site visit schedule

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) has asked districts and schools having site visits in 2010-2011 to submit three preferences for weeks to schedule their visits.

The site visit schedule, however, will not be finalized until late June or early July.

The DE asks districts and schools to reserve all three of the weeks they have submitted until they have received notification from the DE of the final dates for their site visit.

Contact your School Improvement Consultant to submit the preference or for further information.



## AYP MEETING: Webinar to provide updates

Please join Iowa Department of Education Consultant Paul Cahill for a Connect Pro webinar meeting regarding updated information on Iowa Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).

The webinar will take place on May 19, from 9:00-10:00 a.m.

## Iowa receives school improvement funds

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced that Iowa will receive \$18.7 million through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program.

The purpose of this program is to help turn around schools identified as persistently lowest achieving. In order for a school district to apply for these funds, it must have a Tier I or Tier II state-identified "persistently lowest achieving school (PLAS)."

School Improvement Grant applications are due to the Iowa Department of Education on May 21, 2010. Award notifications to districts with approved applications will be made June 4, 2010.

Approved districts implementing the Transformation, School Closure, or Turnaround intervention models can move forward with SIG implementation with the start of 2010-2011 school year .

For more information, please visit <http://bit.ly/dwpEjC> or contact Paul Cahill at [paul.cahill@iowa.gov](mailto:paul.cahill@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3944.

## Microsoft Cy Pres Program closing

The Microsoft Cy Pres program application will be closing soon. Districts are reminded that they need to have their application and assurance letters for the Microsoft Cy Pres program in no later than May 11, 2010.

The application and budget must be competed online. These are located at the [www.edinfo.state.ia.us](http://www.edinfo.state.ia.us).

Vouchers may be redeemed for eligible products purchased between August 17, 2009, and May 31, 2014. The assurance letter is available at the following URL [http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1571&Itemid=1](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1571&Itemid=1).

*Reminder:* This is a voluntary program. There is no requirement that districts change their testing period. Districts can continue to test for Annual Yearly Progress and other district measures anytime they wish. Districts continue to test when they have always tested, as they are not required to participate in this program.

The mailing address is: Mary Smith, Bureau of Teaching and Learning Services, Iowa Department of Education, 400 E 14th St, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146.

Superintendents are reminded to send all notification of building/district closure or consolidation that have occurred **since October 2007** to John O'Connell at [john.oconnell@mchsi.com](mailto:john.oconnell@mchsi.com).

The email should include the following information:

- District Number, District Name, School Number, School Name, PK -12 Enrollment (2007 enrollment) of the building closed or consolidated.
- District Number, District Name, School Number, School Name, Number of students received by this building from the closed or consolidated building listed above.

Direct questions or concerns to John O'Connell at [john.oconnell@mchsi.com](mailto:john.oconnell@mchsi.com).

## NAEP 2011: Districts to be notified

Notification letters will be distributed to all districts and schools selected to participate in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 2011 in May 2010. The NAEP 2011 assessment will be administered in reading, mathematics, and science in grades four and eight and writing in grade 12.

Assessment dates will be emailed to principals in June. The NAEP assessment window for 2011 will be January 24 to March 4, 2011. In the fall of 2011, the results from the reading and mathematics assessment will be reported in *The Nation's Report Card*. Results from the science assessment will be reported later.

In addition, two international assessments will be given in 2011. Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) will be administered to a sample of students in grades four and eight in over 50 countries.

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), the companion assessment to TIMSS, will also be administered to a grade four sample. A linking report for NAEP and TIMSS mathematics and science will be released following the TIMSS publication in late 2012.

Visit the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> for complete information about the assessment, sample questions, previous results, and other NAEP publications.

For additional information, contact Dianne Chadwick, the Iowa NAEP Coordinator, at (515) 281-3718 or [dianne.chadwick@iowa.gov](mailto:dianne.chadwick@iowa.gov).



## IHaveAPlanIowa update

The Iowa Department of Education has been receiving feedback that students who forget their password for IHaveAPlan experience difficulty accessing the system.

Please share the following information with guidance counselors and students:

- Click on "Forgot My Password" to reset.
- Students will be asked to answer the challenge questions to which they responded when initially creating the account.
- If the student is able to answer the questions, they can then reset the password.
- If the student is unable to answer the challenge questions, call Iowa College Aid at 1-877-272-4456 for assistance in resetting the password.

Reminder: The state designated career/educational information system in Iowa is IHaveAPlanIowa™. The website is <http://www.IHaveAPlanIowa.gov>.

For assistance with the IHaveAPlan™ website, contact Iowa College Aid, 1-877-272-4456 or [info@iowacollegeaid.gov](mailto:info@iowacollegeaid.gov).



## IEP TEAMS and assistive technology

Did you know that Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams are required to consider the need for assistive technology devices and services for every student with IEP on a yearly basis?

In many instances, this consideration is not occurring. The attached brochure provides information to IEP teams on how to fulfill this IDEA (The Individual with Disabilities Education Act) requirement.

For further information, please see the attached flyer or contact Steve Maurer at [steve.maurer@iowa.gov](mailto:steve.maurer@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3576.

### ANNUAL GOALS: 2010-2011 APR

If you are writing your Annual Progress Report (APR) goals based on an assessment other than Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)/Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED), please be aware that you will need to complete the Alternative Assessment portion of the APR.

If you have questions, please contact Holly Barnes at 515-242-6173 or [holly.barnes@iowa.gov](mailto:holly.barnes@iowa.gov).

## Annual Progress Report deadline

The deadline for submission of the Annual Progress Report (APR) is September 15, 2010. The secure website will be available in July for updating.

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)/Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) data will be available in August for public school districts. Further information for nonpublic schools will be forthcoming.

The completed electronic APR will be available to the public via the Iowa Department of Education's website to distribute to stakeholders who may not have Internet access.

Technical assistance can be accessed at [http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=368](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=368).

## CSIP updates for districts, nonpublics

School districts and nonpublic schools that received a school improvement site visit during the 2009-2010 school year are required to revise and recertify their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) by September 15, 2010. CSIP revisions are also required for any or all of the following actions (in accordance to Chapter 12):

- Grade level changes (as in cases of reorganizations, but does not include dissolution or Phase II), and
- Funding stream changes.

School districts and schools will be certifying their CSIP each year due to legislative changes that impact the assurances section of the plan each year.

Districts will not need to

port their information forward this year. This has been done for you. You need to update and certify the 2009-2010 CSIP. The certify button will not be available until September 1, 2010, although the CSIP is available for you to update at all times. Please certify your 2009-2010 CSIP by September 15, 2010.

If you have questions or need assistance with the CSIP update and certification process, please contact your assigned School Improvement Consultant from the DE first. If you need further assistance, contact either Brandie Gean ([brandie.gean@iowa.gov](mailto:brandie.gean@iowa.gov), 515-281-4726) or Holly Barnes ([holly.barnes@iowa.gov](mailto:holly.barnes@iowa.gov), 515-242-6173).



## Data & Reporting

### Electronic Transcripts: training, testing

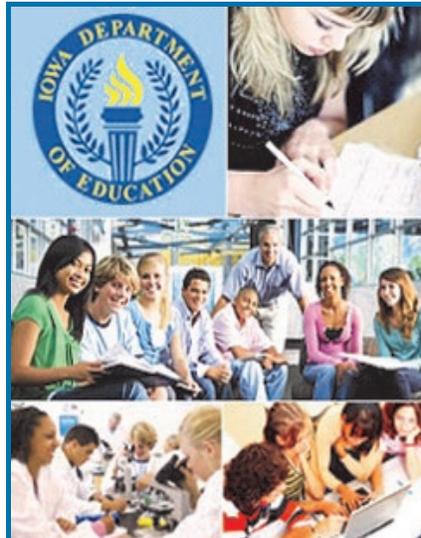
April brought crucial information to Iowa schools on the upcoming Iowa Transcript Center (ITC), its functionality, its implications.

This introductory training explained the extensive data element list ([http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1970&Itemid=1](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1970&Itemid=1)) – all drawn from those already entered into district student information systems (SIS) – that will be sent from secondary to postsecondary, let stakeholders view and walk through the ITC application, and introduced how the project fit into the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). A SLDS is something both the Iowa Department of Education (DE) and districts agreed to construct and participate in to receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money.

Currently, SIS vendors are finishing programming changes to create an extract. As soon as vendors are ready, in-depth training will be rolled out to districts by type of SIS, so software specific support can be provided. There will be information technology training on the administration of accounts and district staff training on using the ITC. Powerschool and JMC are nearly ready, beta testing of extracts is occurring in the beginning of May, and ITC will be rolled out to districts using these vendors first. The DE will contact districts. When ITC is rolled out to your district is dependent upon your vendor.

Registering for and using the ITC, which are free for public secondary to public postsecondary, will have an impact beyond just graduation time. Several community colleges are working with DE to use this as part of the registration, monitoring, and tracking of concurrent enrollment and postsecondary enrollment options.

As equally exciting as transcripts to some K-12 districts is the electronic student record exchange between districts that will be part of the system in the fall of 2010 ([http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1970&Itemid=1](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1970&Itemid=1)).



Iowa Transcript Center

[www.transcriptcenter.com/iowa](http://www.transcriptcenter.com/iowa)

### COMPETITION for Promise Neighborhoods

The U.S. Department of Education recently launched the Promise Neighborhood program, the first federal initiative to put education at the center of comprehensive efforts to fight poverty in urban and rural areas.

The \$10 million available in fiscal 2010 will support up to 20 organizations with one year of funding to plan.

Under the Promise Neighborhood program, nonprofits and institutions of higher education will be eligible for one-year grants supporting the design of comprehensive community programs.

The programs must have the specific goal of preparing students for success in college and careers.

As part of the planning process, applicants must focus their efforts on schools in the neighborhood and build services for students in those schools from birth through college to career.

For more information, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html>.

## District Developed Service Delivery Plans

If a district has had a School Improvement site visit scheduled for this school year (2009-2010), administrators will need to make sure that their District Developed Service Delivery Plans (DDSDP) is reviewed and readopted.

This is to ensure that the DDSDP is on the same track as your district's five-year accreditation cycle. Once this is done, the plan will only need to be reviewed every five years in conjunction with the accreditation cycle, unless required by a determination given by the state.

The DDSDP will then need to be uploaded to the correct forms within the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan between June 1 and September 15, 2010. If it is not possible for you to meet this timeline, please contact the Iowa Department of Education to discuss an extension, if appropriate.

For questions, please email Kiersten Hensley at [kiersten.hensley@iowa.gov](mailto:kiersten.hensley@iowa.gov) or 515-281-4123.

## Licensure rules on tutoring, more

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BoEE) has a code of ethical conduct for all licensees in its chapter 25 rules, accessible at <http://www.boee.iowa.gov>.

Rule 282—25.3(6)“f” states that it is a violation of the BoEE’s Standard VI, (unethical practice toward other members of the profession, parents, students, and the community to solicit “students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the practitioner for the practitioner’s personal advantage.”

According to Beth Myers, who is the BoEE’s attorney/investigator, this means that an educator is prohibited from the following:

- Selling the educator’s services as a photographer to students in the school or school district in which the educator is employed.
- Selling the educator’s services as a tutor to students in the school or school district in which the educator is employed.
- Working for a supplementary education services provider such as a Sylvan Learning Center, but only with respect to students enrolled in the school or school district in which the educator is employed.

Questions must be directed to Beth Myers at [beth.myers@iowa.gov](mailto:beth.myers@iowa.gov) or 515-242-6506.

## Early Childhood Preschool Programs

### 2010-2011 preschool application posted

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) has posted the revised 2010-2011 Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children application and the revised 2010-2011 Technical Assistance Guidance Manual at [http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279).

The revised 2010-2011 application must be used in applying for funding in year four (2010-2011). Districts seeking to participate in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program must apply this year.

The application is due May 14, 2010.

The Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children Grant Application awards will be based on the 2011 legislative appropriation.

Please direct questions to Judy Russell at [judy.russell@iowa.gov](mailto:judy.russell@iowa.gov) or Penny Milburn at [penny.milburn@iowa.gov](mailto:penny.milburn@iowa.gov).



## National Common Core standards and Iowa

When it comes to education, the talk of standards is inevitable. Today, the discussion is not only at the state level, but also the national level. Specifically regarding the national Common Core Standards.

These standards are currently being developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The initiative is a state-led effort to establish educational standards for English-language arts and mathematics.

As has been shared in previous *School Leader Update* articles, Iowa was an early signatory to the Common Core Standards initiative, in which 48 states in total have agreed to participate. Iowa has played a leadership role in the Common Core initiative, having met with authors of the standards. Specifically, the drafters of the Common Core Standards came to Iowa in February to receive feedback and hear concerns.

The Iowa Core is much more comprehensive than the Common Core Standards. For example, the Iowa Core includes five content areas, whereas the Common Core Standards only include English language arts and mathematics.

When the Common Core Standards are finished, the Iowa Department of Education will align the standards to the Iowa Core. School districts will be expected to work from one document.

It is important to remember that the final guidelines for states to adopt the standards have not been established. Iowa is sending a team to a meeting in early May to learn more about the alignment and adoption of the Common Core Standards.

The Iowa Department of Education will continue to provide information about its progress with the national Common Core Standards in the near future.



### Legislative Update

The contact for all legislative items is Konni Cawiezell (konni.cawiezell@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399).

## Education legislation summary to come

With a flood of signatures and item-vetoes in the last week, Governor Culver has completed action on all enrolled legislation from the 2010 legislative session. The Education Appropriations, Senate File 2376, was signed in full and contains several policy changes that will impact districts. No appropriations for education were item-vetoes. There are also several interim studies to be completed before the end of this year.

As the Iowa Department of Education finalizes review of the new laws impacting districts, a separate letter to the field will be sent. Until then, please contact Konni Cawiezell at [konni.cawiezell@iowa.gov](mailto:konni.cawiezell@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3399.

Enrolled legislation impacting education can be found at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/legisupdate.asp>.



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## Legal Lessons

The contact for all Legal Lessons items is Carol Greta ([carol.greta@iowa.gov](mailto:carol.greta@iowa.gov) or 515-281-8661).

# End of the year reminders, School threats

### **Miscellaneous End-of-Year Reminders**

**Graduation prayer, songs.** A school district cannot sponsor prayer at graduation – spoken or sung. This includes a prohibition on songs that a reasonable person would perceive to have religion as the songs' primary focus. Should a student speaker spontaneously pray, without any prior knowledge by school officials, it is not considered school sponsored. However, the district has an affirmative obligation to inform all speakers that prayer at a public school graduation is not legal. If, given the district's prior knowledge of the speaker, it is not unreasonable to assume that the speaker may offer a prayer, the district has an affirmative obligation to pre-screen the content of the planned speech.

A school board in Florida just paid \$140,000 to settle a lawsuit filed by parents of students who were forced to practice and sing a religious song. Some school officials still have staff that do not agree with court cases regarding the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment; perhaps knowing about this latest settlement will help those administrators get the point across that any song that overtly espouses a specific religious viewpoint cannot be part of a public school district event.

**Baccalaureate.** A school district cannot sponsor a Baccalaureate; this is an event that must be left to the local churches or similar organizations. Students cannot be required to participate in a Baccalaureate ceremony nor punished for failure to do so. Prayers and religious songs are unrestricted at a properly-sponsored (i.e., non-district-sponsored) Baccalaureate.

**Senior trip.** If a school district still schedules a senior trip as part of the 175 instructional days, the presumption is that the trip is curricular in nature, and thus, the district cannot charge a fee. See Declaratory Order (upheld by district court) at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp?book=25&decision=62>.

**Diploma.** School boards cannot withhold diplomas for failure to pay fines, fees, etc. A student who has met graduation requirements has an undisputed right to receive his/her diploma. To withhold a diploma for non-academic reasons is tantamount to academic fraud. Having said that, the student does not have an undisputed right to receive the diploma at a commencement ceremony. If the student has committed some egregious misbehavior, the student may be properly banned from taking part in graduation exercises and the diploma can be mailed then to the student. Do not charge a fee for the diploma.

### **Potential School Threats**

As was the case this past February 24, the DE may periodically be asked by the Iowa Intelligence Fusion Center (part of the Iowa Department of Public Safety) to forward to school administrators information from the Center regarding potential school threats. At the time, the Iowa Department of Education had no means by which to prepare schools administrators for the email; it just showed up "cold" in the inbox.

Now, with the twin luxuries of time and hindsight, we have put together the following further information in hopes that all of us will be ready when and if the Center makes a similar request of the DE.

- Make sure the school's spam filter allows all incoming email from DE personnel. Visit with your local IT folks. Some school administrators commented that the email was stuck in cyberspace for several days before landing in their inboxes. This is an issue at the receiving – not sending – end.
- Empower someone at the school to monitor your email when you will be out of the office for more than a few hours. Many of you were at an SAI meeting on February 24. For our part, we shall include SAI and IASB on future emails of this nature, and ask that they spread the word to any school administrator at any event they may be hosting on that day.
- Assume the email is neither a "test" nor a joke.
- The DE is merely the "go-between." The information we pass along cannot be interpreted by us, nor have we edited the information in any way. Questions may be directed to the Center via toll free number (800-308-5983), fax (515-725-6320), or email ([ialein@mocic.riss.net](mailto:ialein@mocic.riss.net)).

When school officials receive information from the Center via the DE, the purpose is merely to put you and appropriate staff on heightened awareness. Who exactly constitutes "appropriate staff" is for the school administrator to determine, given the nature of the alert. The Center asks that schools not pass along the information to students and their families. The Center states that if a threat is specific to Iowa, it will alert the media.

## State Board blog

The State Board of Education now has a blog at [iaeducation.wordpress.com](http://iaeducation.wordpress.com).

For information on the Iowa Core to innovative initiatives happening in schools throughout our state, this blog provides a central location for news about education across the state.

## Calendar

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| May 1   | • Bond Resolution (if any) with the Control County Auditor   |
| May 1   | • Copy of PPEL Ballot Due to DOM   |
| May 1   | • Special Education Web Based Claims Due   |
| May 1   | • Competent Private Instruction/Homeschooling (Deadline for Conducting Annual Assessment for Homeschooled Students.) |
| May 10  | • Spring BEDS Open   |
| May 11  | • Microsoft Cy Pres Program Application Due  |
| May 12  | • Spring EASIER Test Site Closes   |
| May 14  | • Race to the Top MOU Due  |
|         | • Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children Application Due                                   |
| May 17  | • Spring EASIER Collection Site Open   |
| May 31  | • Certified Budget – last day for district to amend  |
| June 18 | • Spring BEDS Certification Deadline   |
| June 21 | • Spring EASIER Certification Deadline   |

[Click here for a complete Iowa Department of Education Calendar](#)

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## Iowa Department of Education

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

## CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (CONTINUED)

Consideration is not an assistive technology assessment. The most obvious differences between "consideration and assessment" are those of depth and duration. Consideration is a short discussion that takes place during the IEP meeting using known information and results in the decision to continue something already in place or to try or not to try assistive technology. Assessment goes into much more detail, looking closely at the student's abilities and difficulties and the demands of the environments and tasks. Assessment also includes the acquisition of new information.

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### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Iowa's True AIM: <http://trueaimiowa.gov/>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

**Iowa Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 East 14th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146



## CONSIDERING THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

#### MUST ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY BE CONSIDERED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY?

Yes, the amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team consider whether the child requires assistive technology and services (20 U.S.C. Section 1414[d] [3] [B] [v]).

#### WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES?

IDEA (20 U.S.C. Section 1401) includes the following definitions:

1. Assistive Technology Device: The term "assistive technology device" means any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.
2. Assistive Technology Service: The term "assistive technology service" means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes:
  - A. the evaluation of the needs of such child, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;
  - B. purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by such child;
  - C. selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices;
  - D. coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
  - E. training or technical assistance for such child, or, when appropriate, the family of such child; and training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services) to, employ, or otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of such child

## WHAT KINDS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES ARE TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE IEP TEAM?

It is important that members of the IEP team recognize that technology is just one strategy in a multi-faceted approach in addressing the needs and strengths of students with disabilities. IEP teams will therefore need to balance the degree of technology assistance with the student's learning potential, motivation, chronological age, developmental level, and goals/objectives, which include:

Low-Tech - Equipment and other supports readily available in schools, including off-the-shelf items to accommodate the needs of students, which can be provided by general/special education through the IEP process (e.g., calculators, tape, recorder, pencil grip, and larger pencils).

High-Tech - Supports students who may need more specialized equipment and support services beyond basic assistive technology, such as students with high incidence needs related to reading and writing and low incidence and/or significant/severe disabilities, who requires more in-depth assessment (e.g., closed circuit television (CCTV), FM systems, augmentative communication devices, sound field systems, alternative computer access, and specialized software).

## CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

IEP teams are required to consider the need for AT devices and services for every student with a disability. Assistive technology consideration must address the student's need to access the general education curriculum and specially designed goals and objectives. IEP teams must ask the question, "What does the student need to do that he/she cannot do because of his/her disability? Consideration does not apply a mandate for an AT assessment or for the actual provision of devices for every child with a disability. It is important to understand that consideration should occur after the IEP goals and objectives have been identified as provision of assistive technology should support identified instructional needs and not be the goal itself.

Every IEP Team is required to "consider" the student's need for assistive technology. When you "consider" assistive technology, that process should involve some discussion and examination of potential assistive technology. It should not be ignored or skipped over. It should not be someone saying, "Assistive technology? No, he/she doesn't need that." There clearly needs to be some thought about whether assistive technology may be needed by this student.

## CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (CONTINUED)

This "thoughtful look" should include at least a brief discussion of which assistive technology might be useful and whether it is needed. In order to do that, someone on the IEP team will need to be sufficiently knowledgeable about assistive technology to help lead the discussion.

Because this discussion should be brief, it should last at least 3-5 minutes, but no more than 15 to 20 minutes. If an understanding and agreement cannot be reached in twenty minutes, then it is possible that there are questions that need to be addressed by a more systematic and comprehensive review of the student's needs related to assistive technology

In addition to talking about the assistive technology itself, there should be a discussion about assistive technology services. School districts are required to provide both the devices and the services, and the "consideration" requirement also includes assistive technology services (refer to Law).

When considering a student's need for assistive technology, there are only four general types of conclusions that can be reached:

1. The first is that current interventions (whatever they may be) are working and nothing new is needed, including assistive technology. This might be true if the student's progress in the curriculum seems to be commensurate with his/her abilities.
2. The second possibility is that assistive technology is already being used currently or as a part of a trial to determine applicability, so that we know that it does work. In that case the IEP team should write the specific assistive technology into the IEP to insure that it continues to be available for the student.
3. The third possibility is that the IEP team may conclude that new assistive technology should be tried. In that case, the IEP team will need to describe in the IEP the type of assistive technology to be tried, including the features they think may help, such as "having the computer speak the text as the student writes". The IEP team may not know at this point a specific brand or model, and should not attempt to include a product by name, since they do not know if it will perform as expected. Describing the features is the key step for the IEP team in this situation.
4. Finally, the last possibility is that the IEP team will find that they do not know enough to make a decision. In this case, they will need to gather more information. That could be a simple process of calling someone for help, or it could also be an indication that they need to request assistance looking at the assistive technology needs of this students.