



A MONTHLY JOURNAL  
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

# School Leader Update

May 2013

## Smarter Balanced pilot broadens into practice test

Due to the overwhelming demand for access to the Volunteer Pilot assessment from principals, teachers, parents, and the public, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium has decided to release a more complete and more broadly available "Practice Test" in lieu of the Volunteer Pilot assessment. The Practice Test will be available starting May 29.

The change to a Practice Test does not impact current testing in support of the Scientific Pilot; all schools signed up for the Scientific Pilot will continue to test as scheduled.

Like the planned Volunteer Pilot, the Practice Test will allow students to experience items that look and function like those found on the Scientific Pilot.

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## Task force will vet new science standards

Great school systems set high expectations and clear standards for all students to reach.

In Iowa, we've worked for several years to customize the Iowa Core, which represents the knowledge and skills that our students need to graduate from high school prepared to go to college or to enter the workforce. Most recently, our Iowa Core work has focused on math and literacy.

Now, our focus shifts to science.

Our state has played a key role in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards, a common set of learning expectations in science for voluntary adoption in states. Now it is time for Iowa to vet the standards and to decide whether they should be adopted as part of the Iowa Core.

The Next Generation Science Standards were developed by a coalition of states, including teams of science experts from Iowa. These standards are internationally benchmarked and clearly define the content and practices for students to learn from kindergarten through high school.

Iowa was involved in this work in part because we know that STEM-driven fields are so vital to Iowa's economic future.



*Jason Glass, Director*

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# Learning the ropes of effective mathematics instruction

Registration is under way for the Cognitively Guided Instruction 7th Biennial National Mathematics Conference to be held July 10-12 in Des Moines.

Cognitively Guided Instruction, or CGI, emphasizes teaching mathematics in a way that taps into how children think in order to maximize their understanding. It is particularly important in elementary school to ensure they will have a firm foundation upon which they can learn more advanced mathematics.



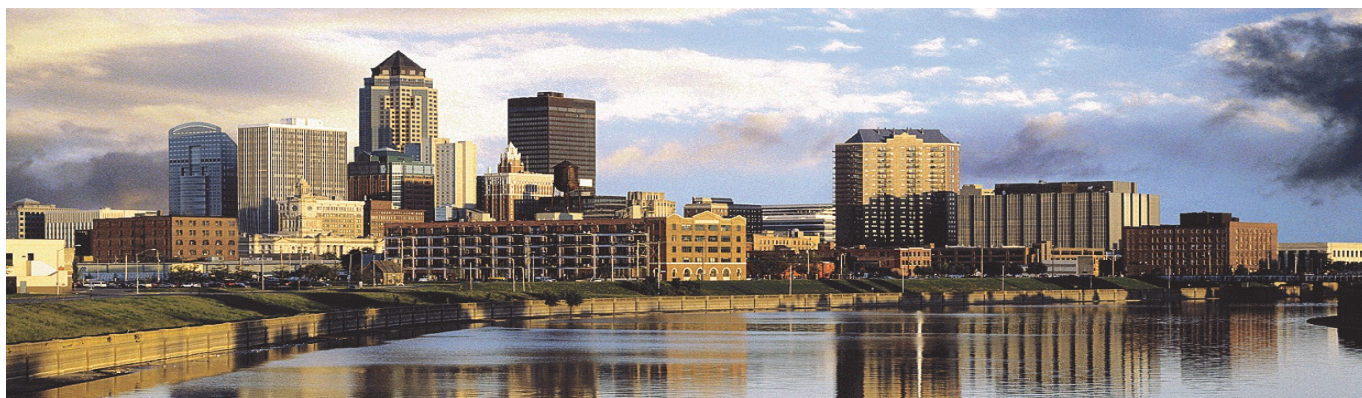
The conference is co-hosted by the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa State University's Center for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Education.

The event will feature nationally renowned mathematics education expert James Hiebert, a professor at the University of Delaware, and authors of the book *Children's Mathematics*: Thomas Carpenter, Elizabeth Fennema, Megan Loef Franke, Linda Levi and Susan Empson.

CGI is a professional development program based on well-established research that shows children come to school with rich informal systems of mathematical knowledge and problem-solving strategies, and these can serve as a basis for learning mathematics with understanding.

The Iowa Department of Education has worked with schools districts and area education agencies across the state for several years to implement CGI professional development.

The conference will be held at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. Registration before April 30 is \$250, and after that it's \$325. Registration closes June 28. More information about the conference can be found at <http://cesmee.iastate.edu/cgi>.



# Preparations for the August 2013 AEA PD Online Trainings

Does your district or school use the training available from AEA PD Online? If so, here are some tips and tricks for districts to consider when planning their online trainings for their employees in 2013-2014.

1. Encourage employees to take trainings earlier. If your district sends out welcome-back-to-school letters in July to employees, encourage them then to take the trainings. July is a down time for usage of the server.
2. If you are having staff complete the training in August, avoid the heavy usage dates. Below, you can see our projected usage chart for next August, the darker the color, the heavier the usage.
3. Avoid having your entire staff take the training at once. While this practice might be very convenient for the planning of pre-service days, it also greatly enhances your chances of hitting the cap, meaning some will be logged into the site and some will not. Plus, all the individuals from your school accessing the same training could impact your own district bandwidth, slowing down the experience as well.
4. Target district in-service days. Waiting until your first early-out can save a lot of frustration for your teachers.

## ***Continued from page 1, Smarter Balanced pilot broadens into practice test***

The Practice Test will also include performance tasks (not previously planned for the Volunteer Pilot), and will be constructed to follow a test blueprint similar to the blueprint intended for the operational test.

With the Practice Test, teachers will be able to construct simulated assessment events for their students. Additionally, online access to the Practice Test will not require a unique username and password, meaning that schools and districts can use the Practice Test for professional development activities and for discussions with parents, policymakers, and other interested stakeholders.

The Practice Test will provide access to:

- test questions and performance tasks planned and designed for new assessment;
- a full array of item types, including performance tasks; and
- test forms supporting several of the digital accessibility tools that will be available on the operational test.

The Practice Test will be open to the public beginning May 29. Iowa schools may choose to use the Practice Tests in professional development activities that focus on the rigor of the Iowa Core or with students to practice using online tests.

Please contact the Smarter Balanced Help Desk with any questions at 1-866-815-7246 or [smarterbalancedhelpdesk@air.org](mailto:smarterbalancedhelpdesk@air.org).

# No-cost professional development: Fine arts and Iowa Core

A *Fine Arts in the Iowa Core* professional development opportunity is being offered at no cost to participants in May and June. In addition, an online one-credit course will be offered as a re-licensure or graduate credit.

The no-cost session includes Fine Arts and Iowa Core history, supportive research, and participant interaction with lessons and assessments developed in the areas of K-8 general music, secondary music (vocal, instrumental, orchestra), K-12 drama and theatre, and K-12 visual art. The presenters include practicing Iowa teachers who will provide examples for how fine arts educators incorporate the universal constructs of the Iowa Core into fine arts instruction. For more information on the sessions, contact the Iowa Department of Education's Rosanne Malek at [rosanne.malek@iowa.gov](mailto:rosanne.malek@iowa.gov). The fine arts professional development days and locations are:

Wednesday, May 29	<a href="#">Great Prairie AEA</a>	Ottumwa
Thursday, May 30	<a href="#">Green Hills AEA</a>	Red Oak
Thursday, June 6	<a href="#">AEA 267</a>	Cedar Falls
Friday, June 7	<a href="#">Great Prairie AEA</a>	Burlington
Monday, June 17	<a href="#">Keystone AEA</a>	Elkader
Tuesday, June 18	<a href="#">Prairie Lakes AEA</a>	Fort Dodge—Iowa Central Community College
Friday, June 21	<a href="#">Mississippi Bend AEA</a>	Bettendorf
Monday, June 24	<a href="#">Prairie Lakes AEA</a>	Emmetsburg—Iowa Lakes Community College
Tuesday, June 25	<a href="#">Heartland AEA</a>	Johnston—Summit Middle School
Thursday, June 27	<a href="#">Northwest AEA</a>	Sioux City

The professional development is sponsored by the Department in partnership with Area Education Agencies. The AEAs are providing the registration and location for the one-day sessions. Invited participants include fine arts teachers, general classroom teachers, administrators, curriculum directors, and college and university departments of education. For the no-cost sessions, participants should sign up through the AEA website that aligns with the date they wish to attend.

Options for credit will be available through a week-long online session. This AEA PD Online course is a continuation of *Fine Arts in the Iowa Core*. Attendance at one of the *Fine Arts in the Iowa Core* events is a prerequisite for this course. That's because online participants will need to use and connect the explanations, examples, sample lessons, and assessments in discipline-specific fine arts.

During the online course, participants will discuss their reflections of the professional development, and create an action plan and unit for use and implementation. The AEA PD Online Moodle platform will be used for the online portion. There are three sections being offered to allow scheduling flexibility for participants.

Online class dates: June 24-June 29 ([Activity #: 22015999991401](#))  
Online class dates: June 30-July 5 ([Activity #: 22015999991402](#))  
Online class dates: online July 8-July 12 ([Activity #: 22015999991403](#))

Check out more information on AEA PD Online website: <http://moodle.aeapdonline.org/>.

Additional questions should be directed to Liz Fritz, Fine Arts Writing Team member and course instructor, at [lizfritz@mac.com](mailto:lizfritz@mac.com).



## Avoid the summer slide!

Did you know students can back slide in their reading abilities by a full month during the summer break? Even worse: A student can lose 2.6 months in math skills in the same time period!

Avoid the summer slide by joining the Council of Chief State School Officers' summer reading and math challenges.

The reading challenge enables kindergarten-through-12<sup>th</sup>-grade students to find books of interest within their reading level. The website also shows where the book can be checked out at a library or purchased. Find your book at [www.Lexile.com/fab/iowa](http://www.Lexile.com/fab/iowa). For more information on the reading challenge, visit [www.Lexile.com/chiefs-challenge](http://www.Lexile.com/chiefs-challenge). For summer reading flyers and materials, visit our *Find a Book, Iowa* on our [webpage](#).

The math challenge is more structured, and requires registration starting May 1. It's aimed at students who will be in the third through sixth grades in the fall. It is a six-week, email-based initiative designed to help students maintain math skills acquired during the previous school year. Families will receive a weekly targeted instructional activity and materials along with daily personalized email suggestions and resources. The math challenge runs June 24 through Aug. 2.

To register for the math challenge, go to <http://quantiles.com/accounts/registration/>. For more information on the math challenge, go to [www.Quantiles.com/summer-math](http://www.Quantiles.com/summer-math).



## Iowa school districts honored for 'green' efforts

Two Iowa school districts have been honored for their efforts to create campuses and education programs that stress environmentally sound practices.

Des Moines and Starmont were among 78 schools and districts honored nationwide in the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools' recognition. Des Moines was recognized for saving the district \$2.4 million in energy costs since 2007, or the equivalent of 66 first-time teachers. Starmont was honored for its preschool-through-12<sup>th</sup> grade work to create a sustainable campus and its environmental education efforts.



Sixty-four schools nationwide, including Starmont, were honored for their exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways.

In addition, 14 districts, including Des Moines, were honored for the first-ever District Sustainability Award. This is the second year of the national recognition program. Both Des Moines and Starmont were nominated by the Iowa Department of Education.

Read more by clicking the link: [http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2848:iowa-school-districts-honored-for-green-efforts&catid=666:headlines](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2848:iowa-school-districts-honored-for-green-efforts&catid=666:headlines).



### A chance to go green

The U.S. Green Building Council Iowa Chapter, the Energy Program within the Iowa Department of Administrative Services and the Center for Green Schools want to help you "green" your school!

Show your commitment to improving your school and we will provide both funding and expertise to help make it a healthier, efficient, and motivating place to work, learn, and play.

Grants range from \$100 to \$500. To learn more, visit the USGBC Iowa Chapter website at: [www.usgbc-iowa.org](http://www.usgbc-iowa.org) or email [iowagreenschools@gmail.com](mailto:iowagreenschools@gmail.com). Hurry! Applications are due June 1.

## Use less energy, save more \$\$\$

School leaders want to run their organizations more efficiently. Knowing where to focus resources for the greatest result can make their efficiency investment go further. Iowa's school building owners have the chance to participate in the Iowa Benchmarking System (IBS) – a system that helps facilities use less energy while giving them more focus on their facility's energy needs.

The Iowa Benchmarking System, offered in partnership between the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Energy Center, University of Northern Iowa, Iowa Department of Administrative Services, and The Weidt Group, announces a new opportunity for public facilities owners to join more than 100 leading Iowa building managers already using the system. Through the use of this

proven technology-based system, school facility managers can target buildings and energy saving improvements with the greatest return for their investment. You can also access reports to learn more about how your facility compares to similar facilities in Iowa and around the country. When energy saving improvements are made to your facility, the IBS can be used as a tool to track the results over time and ensure your investment is reaping the anticipated energy reductions.

Participation in the [Iowa Benchmarking Program](http://www.iowaenergycenter.org/benchmark/) for qualified public facilities is available at no cost for up to 800 additional selected buildings. Assistance for data entry and management is provided through the [Iowa Energy Center](http://www.iowaenergycenter.org/), freeing your time and money to focus on achieving and measuring results. If you need assistance in identifying ways to make facility improvements based on the results you see, the Iowa Benchmarking Program partnership can help you gain easy access to the energy assistance programs offered in your area. Selection for this enrollment period ends on June 1.

To learn more about the opportunity, or if your organization is interested in participating, please visit our website at <http://www.iowaenergycenter.org/benchmark/> or email [jeff.beneke@uni.edu](mailto:jeff.beneke@uni.edu).

### Enrollment Period for school buildings will end June 1, 2013

To participate, please visit our website at:

<http://www.iowaenergycenter.org/benchmark/>



# Early Childhood Preschool Programs

## Starting a state-funded preschool program?

The Iowa Department of Education has released an application for districts that currently do not have preschool programs to apply for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children. This non-competitive application will require districts to fund the preschool program using their own funding in 2013-14. In the following school year, these districts will receive 50 percent of the K-12 per pupil amount based on the number of students in October 2013. Districts that are currently funded do not need to apply. New districts are encouraged to review the application as well as the FAQs for implementation posted at [http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279). For information about the application, contact Penny Milburn at [penny.milburn@iowa.gov](mailto:penny.milburn@iowa.gov) or 515-281-7844.

## Preschool verification visits for 2013-2014

The Iowa Department of Education will soon complete the 2012-2013 verification visits for the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS). Forty-six districts will have received an IQPPS verification visit in 2012-2013. Another 38 districts will be visited next year completing the IQPPS verification visits for all districts funded during the four-year grant funding 2010-2011.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program districts funded in 2010-2011 (funding Year 4) will receive IQPPS verification visits based on the year of the district School Improvement Visit. Districts that change program standards to IQPPS will receive a verification visit during the first year of IQPPS implementation.

A district changing to the IQPPS must notify the Department and report it in the Early Childhood Application located on the secure reporting site at <http://educateiowa.gov>.

A complete list of districts (Year 4) receiving an IQPPS Verification Visit in 2013-2014 will be posted by in May. Refer to the webpage for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children: [http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1279)



## Compulsory school age for 5-year-olds

A kindergarten-age eligible student enrolled in a district pre-kindergarten or kindergarten classroom is of compulsory attendance age, according to Iowa law. Students need to comply with local attendance policies that are put in place by the districts, and districts must offer 180 days of instruction. There may be excused and unexcused absences given to individual students, according to district policy. However, if a parent of a kindergartner notifies the district in writing of the intent to withdraw the student, then the child is no longer required to comply with compulsory attendance. Districts are required to report the number of days offered to the Iowa Department of Education.



For information about the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, contact Penny Milburn at [penny.milburn@iowa.gov](mailto:penny.milburn@iowa.gov) or 515-281-7844 or Amy Stegeman at [amy.stegeman@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.stegeman@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2273.



## Data and Reporting

### Iowa Youth Survey reports are available

The 2012 Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) district reports are now available online for all districts that:

- Took the IYS in September-October 2012; *and*
- Had enough students participate to receive a report.

Please use the following steps to download your district's report from the Iowa Department of Education's secure site, EdInfo:

- 1) Have the person in charge of EdInfo security in your district login to EdInfo (<https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/>) and give you access to the application "Download – DE to District".
- 2) Login to EdInfo using your ID and Password. Click on the button "Download – DE to District". A new screen will appear with three PDF files: (1) 2010 report, (2) trend report (2002 – 2010), and (3) 2012 report. The 2012 report ends in 04-01-12.
- 3) Click on the name of the file to open it, and then save it to your local computer.

For more information, contact the Department's Molly Hammer at [molly.hammer@iowa.gov](mailto:molly.hammer@iowa.gov) or 515-242-6241.

### New teachers must pass two tests before receiving license

Iowa now requires passing test scores on two Praxis II exams before candidates are eligible for licensure. Graduates must pass a pedagogy exam and a content exam. No temporary or provisional licensure will be issued without passing test scores. The candidates must pass the approved chosen Iowa assessments using Iowa's cut scores. Testing requirements may be found at this link: [Iowa Test Scores](#)

Iowa graduates will not be recommended for licensure without passing test scores. Out-of-state graduates cannot apply for licensure without the Iowa passing test scores.

The Praxis tests are offered as infrequently as every four months, so it is highly recommended that you verify Iowa licensure or passing test scores before offering a position to a new graduate.

Contact Joanne Tubbs, [joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov](mailto:joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov), at the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners for additional information.



## Nutrition and Health Services

### Adult meal price for FY14 must be at least \$3.16



The expressed purpose of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs is to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children. To that end, meals served to adults are neither eligible under legislation or regulations for federal cash reimbursement, nor do they earn donated food assistance for the School Food Authority (SFA). For program year 2013-2014, the adult charge should be at least the amount of reimbursement received for a "free" lunch and the per-meal rate of USDA foods. Since FY14 free meal reimbursement rate and USDA food per-meal rate are not released until July, SFAs will base the FY14 adult meal price on FY13 reimbursement rates. For FY14, the adult meal price must be at least \$3.16 (\$2.86 free reimbursement rate plus 24 cents USDA food per-meal rate plus the 6 cents for the Performance Based Menu Incentive). National School Lunch Program FY14 applications will not be approved until the adult meal price is at least \$3.16. Please take the necessary action now to ensure compliance.

## Transportation

### Don't forget the bus safety practice drills

The Iowa Department of Education reminds schools that all students who are transported in a school vehicle are required to be instructed in safe riding practices and must participate in emergency evacuation drills at least twice per school year, according to the Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 281-43.40. Typically these drills are conducted once in the fall and once in the spring. This includes all students who are transported any time during the year, which would include not just bus routes, but also those going on activity trips or field trips. For more information, contact the Department's Max Christensen at 515-281-4749 or [max.christensen@iowa.gov](mailto:max.christensen@iowa.gov)





## Legislative Update

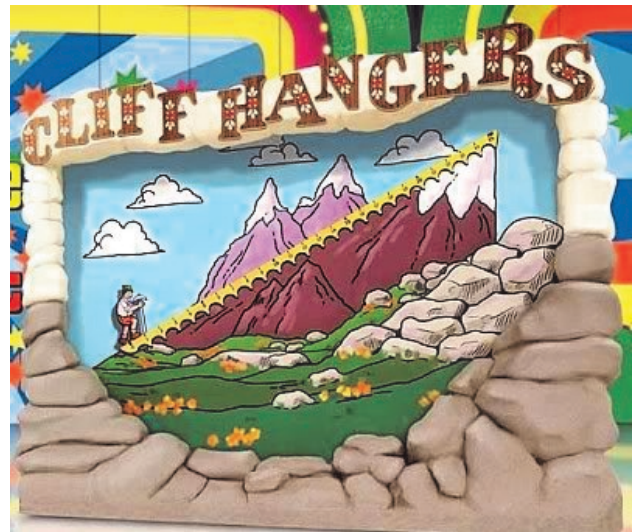
Contact Mike Cormack for all legislative items: [mike.cormack@iowa.gov](mailto:mike.cormack@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3399.

### Cormack at the Capitol

### Education reform: The price is right

Plinko! At the Des Moines Civic Center last week, I was amazed by Plinko, the Showcase, the Hole in One game and, of course, the Big Wheel. I attended the *Price is Right Live* when it came to Des Moines. It did not disappoint. When the curtains opened to reveal the Plinko board to the crowd, it was as loud as a game-winning shot at a college basketball game. Even though I didn't make it to Television City in Hollywood, it was great to see the next closest thing. Drew Carey and Bob Barker were nowhere to be found in person, but we did get to hear all the 1970s theme show music they could muster blaring out of the loudspeakers. How can you not love the *Price is Right*?

My favorite game to watch has always been Cliffhangers, with the Alps mountain climber either saved from harm due to good pricing by the contestant or plunging to a tragic death. It might be the only portion of any game show that includes yodeling, which is an added plus in my book. It also might be the only game show where I root for the player to lose. On second thought, I always liked watching the dragon wipe out all winnings on the classic *Tic Tac Dough* with the ever talented Wink Martindale. On third thought, the whammy on *Press Your Luck* also brought some joy to my life as a youngster. But seeing in person the mountain climber rise up the mountain because a player inaccurately guessed the price of a homemade cotton candy maker is now added to life experiences such as watching the 3,000<sup>th</sup> hit by Cal Ripken, Jr. The yodeler won the battle of wits when the cost of an automatic bubbling machine was beyond the grasp of the player.



At this point of the legislative season, education reform is climbing the mountain and the yodeler is hitting all of the high notes. There are parallels to that game and what is taking place on an extremely important bill. It is not hyperbole to suggest that the direction of Iowa education will be determined in no small measure for decades to come based upon the work by this Iowa General Assembly. Will the yodeler stop climbing the mountain with a new education reform law or will it just plummet over the edge?

Education reform need not free fall. In January, the governor introduced education reform to both chambers. First, the House passed a modified version of the bill with the Senate following with its own version. Both sides agreed to use House File 215 as the vehicle for this legislation. Since then, the House made an offer to compromise and the Senate did the same. The House made another counteroffer on the legislation and then there was a delay until the latest Senate offer last Monday.

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## Legislative Update continued

Where is there agreement? Largely, the financial items outside of teacher compensation are agreed upon. These include a supplemental state aid increase (formerly allowable growth) as proposed by the Iowa House of 2 percent with a 2 percent bonus payment, continuing to fund the early intervention and class-size reduction block grant, as well as a second-year increase in state aid of 4 percent. The minimum state teaching salary would be \$33,500. There also is agreement to fund Iowa Learning Online expansion and to develop a new Teach Iowa educational jobs posting board. They appear close to agreement on letting schools decide to either have a 180-day or 1,080-hour school year.

They also appear close in funding competency-based education pilot projects, changes in preschool funding uses and determining statewide preschool and kindergarten assessments. While not exhaustive, these are the major areas of agreement.

Where is there disagreement? On financial issues, how much per student money should be allocated to this and how soon that teacher leadership money needs to be allocated is still being discussed.. In addition, the House has proposed changes in teacher evaluation while the Senate has not. Certificates of distinction for college graduates, assessment changes, private and home-school provisions, home rule authority for districts, and school building evaluations are some of the items where the two sides are apart.

Most important, the two sides differ on how to best define what the teacher compensation system will look like in this state. While they both have committed large amounts of money toward this effort, they have a host of issues to work through on how to do this. Everything from whether this should be an optional program for local districts to participate to who will pick the teachers in leadership roles remain on the table. If this system is to work well, there needs to be a clear guideline on what is expected and how to best accomplish it in this legislation, with buy-in and consensus in a bipartisan manner.

Decisions still are being made on this legislation and certainly everyone in the educational field who has an interest in it needs to make their voices heard. The 10-member conference committee will need to produce a report that three members of each chamber will support for the bill to go to the House and Senate for final approval. I want to see a resolution on this immediately so that districts can plan for the future. I know the vast majority of readers are justifiably upset at the pace of this legislation.

It is my sincere hope that legislators find common ground on and produce good public policy that all Iowans can be proud of. There still is time to do that. Otherwise, education reform and increases in supplemental state aid will go off the cliff like a losing contestant's entry. That doesn't have to happen, and the opportunity still exists for meaningful, historic legislation. May is a crucial month in determining which path we take as a state.

Let's hope my June column will reflect on the successful legislative session. It is time for education reform to "come on down" to the governor's desk for a signature, not to wait in limbo in contestant's row. In the meantime, I'm going to research the price of Rice-A-Roni and Turtle Wax, just in case I make it out west for a taping.







## Legal Lessons

Contact Nicole Proesch for all Legal Lessons items: [nicole.proesch@iowa.gov](mailto:nicole.proesch@iowa.gov) or 515-281-8661

### Some graduation no-no's

#### April snow brings May flowers

Snow in April brings May flowers and, better yet, May Day baskets. I am reminiscing of the days when the simple gift of a May Day basket brought a smile to my face and now to the faces of my two children. It isn't just the receiving of the basket that brings a smile but the fun of running and hiding while you watch someone else receive a basket. It's a great reminder that small acts of kindness can brighten the day of just one person. Let me fill your baskets this May with my appreciation for the hard work you do – and some more legal lessons to help you along the way.

#### Top Five graduation don'ts

*"These are days, you'll remember"* ~ 10,000 Maniacs. That was one song we sang at my high school commencement. I hope sharing that information with you does not date me; if it does, please ignore the dates. I have reviewed the lyrics of that song and it wouldn't fall under the Number One "Don't" listed below. Since graduation is near, here are the Top Five Graduation Don'ts to keep you in the clear.



#### 1. **Don't allow sponsored prayer at commencement.**

School districts cannot sponsor prayer at graduation regardless of the form of delivery. This includes the school choir singing a hymn that includes religious references. This does not mean that the school is going to get in trouble if a student speaker spontaneously begins to pray during the middle of his or her commencement speech. As long as school officials do not have prior knowledge of the student's intent to pray, it is not considered school-sponsored. The district should take affirmative steps 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 obligation to pre-screen the content of the planned speech.

#### 2. **Don't charge fees on these.**

Diplomas. Schools cannot charge a fee for a diploma if earned. The district must provide a diploma.

School districts can charge a fee for graduation cap, gown, tassel, and a diploma cover – as long as the purchase is voluntary; state law does not regulate this.

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 (upheld by district court) at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp?book=25&decision=62>.

#### 3. **Don't withhold diplomas for failure to pay.** 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

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## Legal Lessons continued

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 to the student.

#### **4. Don't use a breathalyzer or search students without reasonable suspicion.**

Iowa law prohibits searches of students without reasonable suspicion. So, in order for a school district to search a student, including use of a breathalyzer, the employee administering it must have a reasonable suspicion that the specific student has violated school rules. The suspicion has to be individualized to a student. There is no broad authority to search a group of students unless there is reasonable suspicion that they have all violated school rules.

#### **5. Don't sponsor a bacculaureate, or religious service.**

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

#### **Public property, equipment and funds**

In recent months, I have received several questions regarding the use of school district property, equipment, and funds for private purposes. The Iowa Constitution prohibits the use of public property, equipment, or funds for private purposes unless a usage fee is charged. See Article 3, § 31, and Iowa Code § 297.9 below.

#### **I.C.A. Const. Art. 3, § 31**

§ 31. Extra compensation – payment of claims – appropriations for local or private purposes

No extra compensation shall be made to any officer, public agent, or contractor, after the service shall have been rendered, or the contract entered into; nor, shall any money be paid on any claim, the subject matter of which shall not have been provided for by preexisting laws, and **no public money or property shall be appropriated for local, or private purposes**, unless such appropriation, compensation, or claim, be allowed by two-thirds of the members elected to each branch of the general assembly.

#### **297.9. Use for other than school purposes**

The board of directors of any school district may authorize the use of any schoolhouse and its grounds within the district for the purpose of meetings of lodges, agricultural societies, and similar societies, for parent-teacher associations, for community recreational activities, community education programs, election purposes, other meetings of public interest, public forums and similar community purposes; provided that such use shall in no way interfere with school activities; **such use to be for such compensation and upon such terms and conditions as may be fixed by said board for the proper protection of the schoolhouse and the property belonging therein**, including that of pupils, except that in the case of community education programs, any compensation necessary for programs provided specifically by community education and not those provided through community education by other agencies or organizations shall be compensated from the funding provided for community education programs.

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## Legal Lessons continued

Here are a few examples of application of these statutes to school districts:

1) Can public schools allow for-profit groups to use public school facilities at no charge?

No, you must charge a usage fee to groups using the facilities for private purposes. Additionally, you should check with your insurance carrier about any liabilities that may result from allowing this usage.

2) Can public schools allow students to borrow school equipment for personal use at no charge?

No, you must charge a usage fee. Additionally, you should check with your insurance carrier about any liabilities that may result from allowing this usage.

3) Can public schools use a school district's student activities account to purchase entry fees for a private/nonschool sponsored athletic tournament?

No, if the funds are property of the school district, they cannot be used for this private purpose.

If you have other situations that come up regarding the use of public property, equipment, or funds, you may direct your questions to Nicole Proesch at [nicole.proesch@iowa.gov](mailto:nicole.proesch@iowa.gov) or 515-281-8661.

### **School safety tips brought to you by the Iowa School Safety Coalition**

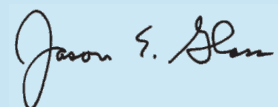
The Iowa School Safety Coalition (ISSC) is a committee made up of individuals from School Administrators of Iowa, Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa State Education Association, the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Iowa Division of Intelligence and Fusion Center, the State of Iowa Fire Marshal, EMC Insurance Companies, Iowa Emergency Management Association, Des Moines Police Department and the American Institute of Architects – Iowa Chapter. The mission of ISSC is to provide information on school safety to schools and school leaders. This group will be providing periodic bulletins regarding several focus areas on school safety issues. This month the focus area is on Access Control. This first bulletin will be distributed in the next few weeks. Please see the letter from ISSC at the following link: <http://www.educateiowa.gov/index.php?>

### ***Continued from page 1, Director Glass***

Students who are prepared in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are better positioned to energize Iowa's workforce and to lead successful and rewarding lives. As a next step, the Iowa Department of Education will convene a state-wide task force to review the Next Generation Science Standards. Later this year, the task force will make a recommendation to the State Board of Education on whether to adopt the science standards as part of the Iowa Core.

If you are interested in being considered for serving on this task force, please send an email to [malinda.hugh-reynolds@iowa.gov](mailto:malinda.hugh-reynolds@iowa.gov). To find a link to the Next Generation Science Standards or to comment on Iowa's review process, please visit the Iowa Department of Education's website at [www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov).

Thanks for all of your efforts on behalf of our state, our schools, and our students. You are appreciated.



## State enrollment continues to grow

Enrollment in Iowa's public schools continues an upward trend, with the number of students in Iowa's classrooms expected to grow an additional 1 percent in the coming five years.

The trend derails a 16-year decrease in Iowa's student population, according to enrollment projections from the Iowa Department of Education.

Depending on where you sit, it is a mixed good-news, bad-news bag.

Read [more](#).

## Calendar

- May 1 • Bond resolution filing (if any) with control county auditor
- May 1 • VPPEL ballot due to Department of Management
- May 1 • Second semester parental claim forms for nonpublic transportation reimbursement
- May 10 • Spring student-level reporting test site closes
- May 14 • Spring student-level reporting site opens
- May 31 • CTE students in a program closes
- May 31 • Certified budget—last day for districts to amend

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



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