



School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

January 1, 2005

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

NEWS FROM THE DE

Youth Leadership Forum for students with disabilities

The Division of Persons with Disabilities, in partnership with the Department of Education/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Department for the Blind, is currently accepting applications for the Iowa High School Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities. This successful forum is a unique summer program designed to teach leadership and self-advocacy skills. Iowa High School juniors and seniors with disabilities may apply and there is no cost to attend.

Please make this highly recommended forum available to all staff who work closely with students with disabilities and to students with any type of disability who are interested in enhancing their leadership and self-advocacy skills in preparation for post secondary education and employment. Each year, students attending this forum say that it has a tremendously positive impact upon their lives. This proven program can further the future success of Iowa's students.

If you and your students would like to know more about the forum, there will be an opportunity for those attending the 20th Annual Parent-Educator Connection Conference in Ames at the Schemen Center. The Conference will feature a panel presentation put on by alumni of the Youth Leadership Forums, on Tuesday, February 8th from 9:25 to 10:40 a.m. This is an excellent opportunity to speak with students who have benefited from the program and have used the program as they transition from high school to college and to employment.

Attached is the Youth Leadership Forum application in Word format and a downloadable version is online at state.ia.us/dhr/pd. For further details, contact Mike Williams, mike.williams@iowa.gov or 515/281-8088.

Applications for student member to State Board of Education due Feb. 1

The applications and attachments are on our web site for use by interested public school sophomores and juniors who desire to apply for the term of the nonvoting student member on the State Board. Interested students should go to: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/stateboard/nsm.htm>.

Qualified students are those who:

- a. Have at least a 3.0 GPA (4.0 scale);
- b. Have attended their public high school at least the past two consecutive semesters; and
- c. Have parental permission and district approval to apply.

The deadline for applications is February 1, 2005. A memorandum was emailed to all school district superintendents on November 18 with applications and supporting documents attached. For more details, please refer to said memorandum or contact Carol Greta, carol.greta@iowa.gov, 515/281-8661.

2003-04 Public School Profile

The Department of Education recently published a public school profile for 2003-04. This profile provides data on enrollments, performance, salaries, transportation, finance, nutrition averages for public schools in Iowa. Use the following link, <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/oofd/reports.html>, to access the profile.

Contact Kathi Slaughter, 515/281-5651, kathi.slaughter@iowa.gov or Jeff Berger, 515/281-3399, jeff.berger@iowa.gov.

Watch the DE website for "critical due dates" calendar

The DE is updating its K-12 "Critical Due Dates" calendar that summarizes important, mandatory filing and reporting deadlines for K-12 districts. The calendar will be available on the DE website at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/calendars.html> by mid-January.

Community college fall credit report available

The Community College 2004 Fall Credit Report includes such information as total fall credit enrollments, full- and part-time students, credit student residency, credit student gender, credit student age, credit student ethnicity, credit student program majors, and high school students. Highlights include:

- The fall 2004 unduplicated credit enrollment totals 81,803, an increase of 3,522 (4.50 percent) over fall 2003.
- The fall 2004 credit enrollment is comprised of 51.07 percent full-time students and 48.93 percent part-time students.
- 94.48 percent of the fall 2004 credit students are Iowa residents.
- Females comprise 56.99 percent of fall 2004 credit students.
- The majority of fall 2004 credit students (65.76 percent) are 18-22 years of age; less than one percent (0.64 percent) is over the age of 55.
- The total minority enrollment of fall 2004 credit students equals 9.29 percent of the total student population reporting ethnicity.
- High school students comprise 18.55 percent of the total fall 2004 enrollees, but only 8.95 percent of the credits taken.

Contact: Chris Evans, 515/281-3671, christopher.evans@iowa.gov.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Legislative updates to be available on DE website

The Department of Education will once again provide a website that allows any interested parties to access current information about legislative activity on educational issues. To access this web site, click on the following link: <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/legisupdate.asp>. This web site is updated daily, so the information accessed is up-to-the hour. Some interesting features are included on this web site.

- Hot links to the referenced bills
- A details page that provides a summary of the legislation and links to companion or study bills
- A "momentum gauge" that indicates how fast a bill is moving
- A status line that indicates the formal status of the bill, and
- Search capability that allows the reader to reorganize the information in different ways

For information on interim legislative committees meeting on educational issues, the School Finance Formula Review Committee and the Iowa Learning Technology Committee, use the following link: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Current/Interim/>.

The Department welcomes interest or concerns regarding legislative issues impacting education. To submit your feedback, contact Jeff Berger, Legislative Liaison, jeff.berger@iowa.gov, 515/281-3399.

State Board of Education 2005 Legislative Priorities

The State Board of Education has identified adequate funding and supports for student achievement to be its top priorities for the 2005 legislative session. Go to <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/stateboard/sppp.html> to see the brochure outlining the priorities in more detail.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Statewide High School Summit follow-up

More than 1,300 educators attended the first Statewide High School Summit on December 14 in Des Moines. The goal for the summit was to help teams from secondary schools understand the major strands implicit in making high schools more rigorous, relevant and relationship based. For those interested in the streaming videos or Kati Haycock's PowerPoint from the Summit, go to www.iptv.org/highschool_summit.cfm.

Community forums are being planned now as a follow-up to the summit. Districts interested in hosting a community forum should contact Laurie Phelan, laurie.phelan@iowa.gov; 515/242-5611.

Planning for migrant student comprehensive needs assessments

The Iowa Migrant Education Program staff is preparing surveys to be sent to the parents, students and program coordinators of the 24 funded migrant education programs in Iowa. The surveys will assist the Iowa Department of Education in identifying the needs perceived by the stakeholder groups as critical to increase student achievement. Once critical needs are identified, stakeholder groups will be formed to identify and prioritize strategies to meet the needs. Contact: Donna Eggleston, donna.eggleston@iowa.gov or 515/281-3999.

Status on Comprehensive School Improvement Plan approval

The department's school improvement consultants are working to complete CSIP review for all district plans. In January, we anticipate sending notification to each district regarding approval status of the CSIP. In cases where the CSIP needs some revision, instructions will be provided on how to make modifications. For more information, contact Brandie Gean, brandie.gean@iowa.gov or 515-281-5332.

Register for Conference on Bullying and Harassment in Schools

Registration on-line at <http://www.uni.edu/contined/ces/bullying/> for the Conference on Bullying and Harassment in Schools: Power and Empowerment, January 27 in Ames. Keynote speakers include Dr. Nan Stein, a senior research scientist at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College, Dr. Susan Limber, co-author of the internationally known, research-based "Blueprints" Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, and Dr. Russ Skiba, expert in emotional and behavioral disorders, school violence, zero tolerance and cultural diversity. The conference will include a youth panel that will share issues of bullying related to diversity, and will also have a strand specifically for middle school and high school youth. Schools are encouraged to bring a school/community team (including youth) so that anti-bullying and harassment plans can be discussed at the conference and implemented when the team returns to the school/district.

Contact Jane Todey, 515/281-8514, jane.todey@iowa.gov.

Iowa public charter schools update

In August of 2004, the first two Iowa public charter schools were established. Both charters provide different approaches to educational innovation. Buffalo Ridge at Sioux Central CSD hosts elementary students in a non-graded thematic instruction environment while Iowa Central Charter at Southeast Webster CSD provides high school students with options for a fast track to college.

Four more Iowa public school districts have applied for and been approved to receive funding for charter schools to open in the fall of 2005. Each of these charter proposals focuses on a different aspect of improving student achievement in schools. One of the districts, Howard-Winneshiek, has received approval for a planning grant. This planning application stated, "...elementary school is in need of a charter school to improve low academic achievement, address at-risk conditions, and enrich students' limited experiences due to isolated geographic location." Additional proposals from other charter applications included emphasis on increasing services to the English Language Learners, creating partnerships with other agencies, and reducing the achievement gap.

The application process for a charter school can be found on the DE website at www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/chart/index.html. Application materials and directions for completing an application are described at this site. The application process includes the following steps.

- a) Application for Planning Grant - must be completed by October 1 prior to the year for opening a charter.
- b) Application for Charter Status (Implementation Grant) - This application process includes approval from the local school board, teachers, and parents. Specifically, 50 percent of the parents and teachers that may be affected by the charter must approve the proposal.
- c) State Board Approval - the State Board of Education must approve the charter application prior to implementation.
- d) On-site Review - The final approval for a charter is granted following an on-site review prior to opening date.

Contact persons: Laurie Phelan, 515/242-5611, laurie.phelan@iowa.gov or Lois Irwin, 515/281-8582, lois.irwin@iowa.gov.

Clarification for additional contract days for professional development

The department has received a number of questions regarding Iowa Code 284.4(1)(c), specifically asking about the requirement to add the equivalent of two additional contracts days outside instruction time. This section of Code states:

1. A school district is eligible to receive moneys appropriated for purposes specified in this chapter if the school board applies to the department to participate in the student achievement and teacher quality program and submits a written statement declaring the school district's willingness to do all of the following:

(c). Provide, beginning in the fifth year of participation, the equivalent of two additional contract days, outside of instruction time, than were provided in the school year preceding the first year of participation, to provide additional time for teacher career development that aligns with student learning and teacher development needs, including the integration of technology into curriculum development, in order to achieve attendance center and district-wide student achievement goals outlined in the district comprehensive school improvement plan. School districts are encouraged to develop strategies for restructuring the school calendar to provide for the most effective professional development, evaluate their current career development alignment with their student achievement goals and research-based instructional strategies, and implement district career development plans. A school district that provides the equivalent of ten or more contract days for career development is exempt from this paragraph.

We wish to emphasize the statement in 284.4(1): "A school district is eligible to receive moneys appropriated for the purposes..." This section was written with the anticipation that there would be additional funding from the state to pay for two additional contract days. To date, funds have not been appropriated for this purpose. Due to the timing of the Iowa legislative session, we are not likely to know the status of any appropriation for this purpose until late spring 2005. We know that districts must plan for the possibility that such funds will be provided for the 2005-06 school year. Therefore, we recommend you develop a 2005-06 school calendar with the equivalent of two additional teacher contract days. This calendar should have a disclaimer that states that in the event that the Iowa legislature takes action to remove the requirement in 284.4(1)(c), those two equivalent contract days will be removed from the calendar.

Below are some questions we have received to date:

Question 1: Our district has a number of early releases for professional development. Do these hours count toward the additional two days?

Response: If these early releases did not result in additional contract days, they do not count toward the days in 284.4(1)(c). Our data indicate that most districts that utilize early releases are not adding contract hours/days but rather are substituting student contact hours for teacher professional development hours.

Question 2: We believe our district already has the equivalent of 10 professional development days. But some of our professional development days are for mandatory training such as blood-borne pathogens, child abuse prevention, etc. Do these days of mandatory training count as part of the professional development days in 284.4? Which days count toward the 10 days: Curriculum work? Action-based research? Grade preparation? Assessment work? Instructional preparation? Parent-teacher conferences? Seminars on school topics?

Response: Only days that are specifically designated as staff professional developments days qualify. The development should provide for alignment with the Iowa teaching standards; career development needs of teachers; research-based instructional strategies; alignment with CSIP student achievement goals; analysis, theory, classroom demonstration and practice, technology integration, observation, reflection, and peer coaching; and improvement in instructional practice and effect on student learning. This would NOT include mandatory training such as blood-borne pathogens, parent-teacher conference days, teacher work days, staff orientations or grade preparation.

Question 3: We filed for an innovative calendar waiver with the department. How does that application impact the requirement to add two additional contract days?

Response: In the innovative calendar waiver request form, the district makes an assurance that the innovative calendar waiver request is NOT to be used to add the equivalent of two teacher contract days for quality professional development. The innovative calendar waiver request is not used to add contract days.

Question 4: In planning for the equivalent of two additional contract days, does each of our attendance centers have to add the days in the same manner?

Response: No, not every attendance center must add days in the same way. For example, an elementary building may add contract hours from 4:00-6:00 p.m. once a month while the high school building may add 1/2 contract day four times a year.

Question 5: 284.4 mentions the fifth year of participation. What year was considered to be the first year of participation?

Response: The 2001-02 school year was the first possible year for participation. By 2002-03 all Iowa public school districts were participating. The district's base year is the year preceding the first year of participation (either 2000-01 or 2001-02).

Teacher evaluation program requirements and deadlines

Remember: By **July 1, 2005**, each public school district must have established a design to conduct performance reviews for teachers other than beginning teachers based on the Iowa teaching standards and criteria.

A participating school district shall review a teacher's performance at least once every three years for purposes of assisting teachers in making continuous improvement, documenting continued competence in the Iowa teaching standards, and identifying teachers in need of improvement. The review shall include, at minimum, classroom observation of the teacher, the teacher's progress, and implementation of the teacher's individual career development plan. It must also include supporting documentation from other evaluators, teachers, parents, and students; and may include video portfolios as evidence of teaching practices.

If a supervisor or an evaluator determines, at any time, as a result of a teacher's performance, that the teacher is not meeting district expectations under the Iowa teaching standards specified in section 284.3, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "g", the criteria for the Iowa teaching standards developed by the department in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 50, and any other standards or criteria established in the collective bargaining agreement, the evaluator shall, at the direction of the teacher's supervisor, recommend to the district that the teacher participate in an intensive assistance program. The intensive assistance program and its implementation are not subject to negotiation or grievance procedures established pursuant to chapter 20. By July 1, 2005, all school districts must be prepared to offer an intensive assistance program.

A local school board and its certified bargaining representative may negotiate, pursuant to chapter 20, evaluation and grievance procedures for teachers other than beginning teachers that are not in conflict with this chapter.

The following resources and information is available for local school use:

A current copy of the Iowa Code stating the requirements of the teacher evaluation design:
<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IACODE/Current/>

The Department's webpage including various school examples, a model of a teacher evaluation design and other related resources for beginning and career teachers:
<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/tqt/tc/teacheval.html>

The Department's webpage including frequently asked questions:
https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/tcdiscussion/faq_post.asp?g=3

The AEA website with a link to teacher evaluation resources for beginning and career teachers:
<http://www.iowaaea.org>

Each AEA has one or more consultants who are prepared to work with local schools regarding teacher evaluation. You may contact your AEA for who that person is and ask them for assistance as appropriate. You may also contact Warren Weber at the DE, 515/281-3750 (office), 515/669-7007 (cell) or warren.weber@iowa.gov

Iowa evaluator approval training

There will be a final session of the original Iowa Evaluator Approval Training Project offered for those participants who have already completed the Data Driven Leadership Training but have not yet taken Iowa Evaluator Approval Training. This is the last time this will be offered as a "stand alone" training session. Please check the schedule below for details regarding time, place and eligibility.

The department is in the process of revising and updating the current Iowa Evaluator Training Program. It still will be intended for participants who have never obtained their new teacher evaluator's license. It will be offered for the first time in the spring of 2005. This training is an updated version of the original training and will combine the components of IEATP and DDL. This training will continue to result in four credits of staff development from SAI and allow participants who successfully complete the training to obtain their new evaluator's license.

Statewide Training Schedule Iowa Evaluator Approval Training Program

Registration Information

This is the final session that will be offered of the original version of the IEATP training. It is intended strictly for anyone who has already completed the four-day DDL training and needs this original version of 6-day IEATP training to complete the requirements for the new evaluator's license. There will be one session offered in the eastern half and one in the western half of state.

Eligibility: Successful completion of the 4-day DDL training.
 Registration Fee: \$300
 Minimum Enrollment: 15 per session

Eastern Iowa			
Register at http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/leadership/evalapp.html Regional Coordinator: Christine Day Contact professional development at 319-399-6700 or 800-332-8488 to register.			
E27	Cedar Rapids	January 15, 22 February 5, 12, 26 March 5	Grant Wood AEA, Room 214, 1120 33 rd Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Western Iowa			
Register at http://www.aea13.org/LINKS_RESOURCES/EvaluatorApproval/EvaluatorApproval.htm Regional Coordinator: Joan Crowl Contact professional development at 712-366-0503 or 800-432-5804.			
W 27	Carroll	January 8, 15 (8:00 am to 3:30 pm) January 28 (5 - 8 pm) January 29 (8:00 am -12 pm) February 5 (8:00 am -3:30 pm) February 11 (5 - 8 pm) February 12 (8:00 am -12 pm) February 19 (8:00 am - 3:30 pm)	Des Moines Area Community College Carroll Campus North Grant Road Carroll, Iowa, Room 165

Western Iowa

Register at http://www.aea13.org/LINKS_RESOURCES/EvaluatorApproval/EvaluatorApproval.htm.
 Regional Coordinator: Joan Crowl. Contact professional development at 712/366-0503 or 800/432-5804.

Eastern Iowa

Register at <http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/leadership/evalapp.html>. Regional Coordinator: Christine Day.
 Contact professional development at 319/399-6700 or 800/332-8488.

There will be a revised training program provided beginning in the spring of 2005 that will combine the components of IEATP and DDL that focus on teacher evaluation.

Contact Warren K. Weber with any questions: 515/281-3750 (office), 515/669-7007 (cell) or warren.weber@iowa.gov.

School Reform Grant deadline

Comprehensive School Reform Grant applications will be due on February 23 at 4:00. The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSR) is a federally funded initiative that promotes whole school reform. The purpose of CSR is to provide financial incentives for schools to develop or adopt and implement comprehensive school reform programs based on reliable research and effective practices. The reform should focus on making coherent schoolwide improvements that affect virtually all aspects of a school's operations, rather than using a piecemeal, fragmented approach to reform. All CSR sites must receive technical support from an external partner with expertise in schoolwide reform and evaluate both the implementation of school reform and impact on student achievement.

Applications and information are at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/csr/index.html#apps>.

DO NOT transfer district funds to third party foundations or other money managers

The DE and the State Auditor are getting reports of area or community foundations that are courting school districts with offers to invest district funds for them. The typical agreement requires the district to turn over to the foundation certain funds that have been given to the district for endowment or similar purposes. In return for payment of an administrative fee paid by the district to the foundation, the foundation will pool the district's funds with other monies for more investment "bang for the buck."

The foundation then periodically distributes the interest income traceable to the district's portion of the pooled funds. The added attraction in some cases is that the foundation will match the district's money with its own money.

There are several problems with these arrangements. The problems are so significant that **a school district is prohibited from entering into such an agreement.**

1. The district shall not transfer ownership of funds it already owns to a foundation or any third party money manager.
2. There is no authorization under Iowa law for a district to pay an administrative fee to a third party for the management of funds.
3. The investments that a private foundation may legally make go beyond the type of investments that a school district may make pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 12B. A district may not invest public money indirectly (through a foundation, e.g.) in ways in which it may not invest the public's money directly.

Remember, this prohibition applies to funds already owned by the district. Gifts may be made directly to a foundation that exists to benefit a district. Such gifts, because they are not public funds, may be invested freely by the foundation.

Districts that may have already entered into such agreements should contact their legal counsel.

Increase your purchasing power

School districts planning to purchase vehicles can do so as part of the State of Iowa vehicle contracts. To see the catalogue of available vehicles, visit the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) website at <http://das.gse.iowa.gov/purchase/index.html>. Click 'Purchasing-Bids and Contracts' on the left margin and then click on "2005 DAS Vehicle Contract Catalog". The extended 2004 contracts are in green type, the re-negotiated 2004 contracts are in blue type, and the newly bid items are in black type. Each vehicle is hyperlinked to the short form contract, the dealer's website, and the detail page showing the vehicle options. All the dealer contact information follows the vehicles on this website.

Districts interested in purchasing any given vehicle simply notify the corresponding vehicle dealership directly. State of Iowa political subdivisions may purchase off of these vehicle contracts. The prices listed include FOB shipping costs to Des Moines. Political subdivisions will want to discuss what shipping costs may be to your location.

Contact Doug Reed in DAS at doug.reed@iowa.gov, 515/242-6151.

Transportation assistance reimbursement

The Transportation Assistance payment for 2004-05 was announced on the DE website in December. The maximum amount for reimbursement is \$316 per year. Parent reimbursement is limited to one high school student and three elementary students per family. If a parent/guardian qualifies for school transportation assistance, the resident district has the right to determine how the transportation assistance will be provided.

The type of transportation assistance is not a parent/guardian choice. The resident district may meet its statutory obligation in one of three ways:

- The resident district may actually provide transportation for the pupil(s) to a stop on the bus line of the receiving district.
- The resident district may allow the receiving district to enter the resident district to pick up the pupil(s) if the receiving district requests this arrangement. If either the sending or receiving district does not approve the arrangement, the resident district is still obligated to provide transportation assistance.
- The resident district may provide a parent/guardian reimbursement.

Funding for late transfers

If any open enrollment transfer (due to good cause) is made on or after the third Friday in September, the resident district is NOT required to pay per-pupil costs or applicable weighting or special education costs to the receiving district until the first full year of the open enrollment transfer.

LEGAL LESSONS

Correction to “Diploma requirements – alternative school programs”

The December School Leader Update included an item about diplomas and alternative school programs. A distinction was drawn between an alternative school *program* and an alternative *school*. One of the statements in that item with respect to alternative schools was that “the diploma must come from the alternative school.”

This statement is incorrect. For a student who completes his or her studies at an alternative school, the diploma may come from either the alternative school or the resident district. When a student enters the alternative school, staff should determine at the earliest practical time whose graduation requirements are going to be applied for the student.

Contracting for driver education with a private provider

Iowa Code section 321.178 provides that “every public school district in Iowa shall offer or make available to all students residing in the school district or Iowa students attending a nonpublic school in the district an approved course in driver education.” More districts are looking into contracting with a private provider to provide driver education to their students.

One issue that arises is how to deal with students who are eligible for full or partial waiver of the fee for the course.

A district is obliged to honor the waiver, even if the district uses a private provider as the means by which the course is offered to students. However, the private provider cannot be expected to receive no payment or reduced payment for waiver-eligible students. And, of course, the private provider cannot know the identity of free/reduced eligible students.

One way to avoid any potential problems is illustrated by the following hypothetical example: The contract between the district and the private provider states that the district shall pay to the provider a lump sum of money to provide driver education to no more than “x” number of students. The district computes how much it would charge to provide the course directly, taking into account the percentage of free/reduced students. For example, if the district knows it usually has 50 students sign up for driver education, 20% of whom are eligible for waiver of the fee, it contracts with the provider to pay to the provider whatever that lump sum is. The individual students then pay their fee to the district because the district knows how much of the fee it may charge to whom. This also relieves the provider of the headache of chasing down students who are late in paying for the course.

The “disadvantage” of having the district remain responsible for collecting the payments from students is self-evident. But bear in mind that the only way the provider is allowed to know which students get the course for free or reduced payment is to have the parents of those students provide written consent to the school to release the identity of the student to the provider.

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

"S" Endorsement update

The impending "S" endorsement for CDL licenses for school bus drivers is a federal mandate, so the only state issue to be determined relates to cost for the endorsement. Conventional thinking is that the "S" cost will be in line with other endorsements that are in the \$5 - \$10 range.

"S" endorsement legislation is expected to be smooth and noncontroversial. The legislative liaisons for both the DE and DOT have already begun working on the issue, and if passage occurs quickly then testing could begin as early as May 1 instead of the anticipated July 1.

The DE is not planning to sponsor classroom training for the testing. The material is considered basic information already familiar to drivers. However, a local transportation director may choose to offer a refresher course. Every district is encouraged to provide the training materials and information sessions to drivers, or to direct their drivers to the training material websites: <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/links.asp?l=trans00> (look for the third link down) or <http://www.iamvd.com/ods/index.htm> (scroll down to "Driver's Licenses and Identifications", then go to the second link).

DOT is not planning to offer group-testing opportunities. At this time, normal (current) testing practices and procedures will be used.

In an effort to make your bus drivers aware of this latest federal mandate, one of the topics of the annual 3-hour in-service training this year is the "S" endorsement. The latest information available is shared during each class.

Remember, this regulation takes effect on October 1, 2005. If your drivers don't have the "S" endorsement on their license by that time, they will no longer be qualified to operate a school bus.

Certification for non-public transportation claims

The school transportation office no longer needs you to certify and send a hard copy of the non-public transportation reimbursement claims as you have in the past. Pushing the "Certify" button upon completion of the report on the web is now sufficient. Please alert your school business managers of this change from past practice.

Contact Max Christensen, 515/281-4749 or Pat Ratcliff, 515/281-5812.

Driver Education Annual Report reminder

Iowa law requires that any public school offering Driver Education must file a Driver Education Annual Report and a Driver Education Program Approval & Teacher Approval/Update with the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Driver Services each year by December 24. A school not offering Driver Ed would only need to complete the upper portion of the Driver Education Annual Report showing which agency handles their Driver Ed needs. The reports may be found at www.dot.state.ia.us/mvd/ods/education/public.htm. If you cannot access the form or if you have questions, contact Steve Tudor, steven.tudor@dot.iowa.gov 515/237-3180.

Connecting students to health care

In Iowa there is an opportunity for school districts to help link children to low-cost or free health care coverage through the Free and Reduced Lunch Program Application. Iowa schools serve thousands of low-income children in school lunch and breakfast programs and can play a vital role in outreach for Medicaid and Healthy and Well Kids in Iowa (hawk-i). Hawk-i is part of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, a federal initiative designed to help states create a health insurance program for uninsured or underinsured children. The purpose of hawk-i is to make affordable health insurance available to children in families with limited incomes. Even a working family of four earning up to \$37,700 may qualify for hawk-i.

The number of uninsured children in Iowa continues to increase, due to layoffs and increasing health insurance premiums. The number of children without health care coverage climbed from about 34,000 in 2001 to approximately 60,000 in 2003. Research also tells us:

- 8 out of 10 uninsured children are from working families.

- More than three-fourths of the total number of uninsured children in Iowa are eligible for Medicaid or hawk-i but are not enrolled.
- Children 16 to 18 years old are more likely to be without health insurance, due to their lower coverage rate through government sources.
- Medical bills are one of the top reasons families declare bankruptcy.

Health insurance can directly impact a child’s performance in school. For example:

- Children with health insurance miss less school due to illness than uninsured children and have better school attendance.
- When children have access to comprehensive medical, dental, and vision insurance their school performance can improve by almost 70 percent.
- Retention in the classroom has been shown to increase by 68 percent and participation in school activities has also increased by 68 percent when children are healthy.

A portion of the Free and Reduced Lunch Program application allows parents to indicate an interest in receiving more information about hawk-i. School staff can help uninsured families by helping make parents aware of the availability of hawk-i, using the Free and Reduced Lunch Program application to help parents get more information, and by forwarding the names and addresses of parents, who have expressed interest in learning about hawk-i from the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program Application, to hawk-i customer service as indicated on the form.

CALENDAR

Deadlines and [Dates to Remember](#)

January 1	Open enrollment applications from parents are due to resident and receiving districts.
January 27	Conference on Bullying in Schools: Power & Empowerment
January 31	Public school claims for nonpublic transportation for the first semester are due to the DE.
February 16-17	Iowa Culture and Language Conference , Des Moines (brochure attached)
February 23	Applications due for Comprehensive School Reform Grant

SCHOOL LEADER UPDATE is produced monthly by the Iowa Department of Education for school leaders of Iowa. Comments and submissions should be sent to Kathi Slaughter, 515/281-5651, kathi.slaughter@iowa.gov.