



School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

MARCH 2005

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

NEWS FROM THE DE

Community Conversations scheduled to discuss high schools

One of the follow-up measures from the High School Summit is the scheduling of 12 community conversations around the state as a way to help citizens understand the Iowa Learns Council recommendations and other key high school issues and initiatives for improvement.

The conversations will be small group discussions comprised of a cross-section of citizens. The host site will invite about 20 participants and provide a trained facilitator to moderate the discussion.

Director plans High School Review visits

After Governor Vilsack emphasized high school "rigor, relevance and relationships" during his Condition of the State address last month, DE Director Judy Jeffrey and State Board members agreed to travel statewide and meet with groups of district superintendents, high school principals and local school board presidents to discuss high school expectations, curriculum and graduation data, as well as opportunities for making expansions and improvements, with appropriate support from the state and AEAs.

The meetings will be casual, with no formal presentations. Each district is asked to attend as a team of superintendent, principal(s), and local board president (or other local board representative). When the visits are complete, the DE will provide a summary to the State Board and Governor, with recommendations for future high school improvements.

Unsafe School Choice option

As districts implement Chapter 11, the state's policy pertaining to the Unsafe Schools Choice Option (aka persistently dangerous schools), they are reminded of the parent/guardian notification clause 281—11.4(PL107-110). The clause **requires districts to notify the parent/guardian** of a student who meets the definition of "a victim of a violent crime" of their option to transfer their child to a safe school within the district within ten (10) calendar days of the incident. For those districts where there is not an option within the district, the policy encourages, but does not require, districts to enter into agreements with contiguous districts.

The complete text of Chapter 11 including the definition of a "victim of a violent criminal offense" may be found at <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Rules/2003/iac/281iac/28111/28111.pdf>.

Questions? Contact Linda Miller, 515/281-4605, Linda.miller@iowa.gov.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Visit website for legislative updates

The Department of Education provides legislative updates on its website at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/legisupdate.asp>. This website 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
- The names of the sponsors of the bill
- 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/>.

If you have comments or questions about legislation or the legislative process, contact Jeff Berger, 515/281-3399 or jeff.berger@iowa.gov.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Alternate assessment: Who, what, when, how and why

It is important that students with IEPs receive appropriate and meaningful assessments, and that alternate assessments meet all prescribed guidelines. The attached brochure provides a good summary of alternate assessments, who should receive them and why, and when and how they should be provided. Questions? Contact Steven Maurer, 515/281-3576, steve.maurer@iowa.gov.

Interpreters will need licenses by July 1

In May 2004, Governor Vilsack signed a bill requiring licensure for all interpreters, including educational interpreters. Effective July 1, 2005, all interpreters must hold either a provisional or professional license.

The board of Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired Examiners, established in the Bureau of Professional Licensure, is in the process of writing administrative rules for this new requirement (see www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure; go to "board navigation," then select "interpreter for hearing impaired).

To date, requirements and procedures for obtaining a provisional licensure have not been set. The licenses will be non-renewable and will expire on July 1, 2007. Professional licenses will be required of all interpreters by July 1, 2007.

Administrative rules outlining requirements for professional licensure have been placed on notice, and a public hearing is scheduled for April 25 at 1 p.m. in Room 526 of the Lucas State Office Building. The requirements state interpreters must hold one of the following to obtain a license:

- NAD Level III or above, or
- RID certification (CI, CT, CI/CT, IC/TC, CSC, CDI), or
- NCI generalist test (or certified deaf interpreter or oral transliteration), or
- EIPA Level 4.0 or above.

Questions? Contact Marsha Gunderson, 515/366-3284.

QUALITY TEACHING

Teacher Development Academies scheduled for this summer

The Iowa Department of Education is sponsoring a series of professional development events to local district teams this summer. Each Academy will feature research based content and nationally recognized trainers. The intent of these academies is to support AEAs and local districts in their efforts to offer professional development content that is well grounded in research. The Iowa Professional Development Model will provide the structure for each Academy. The target audiences for the Academies are local building teams (teachers and principal) and AEA consultants that deliver training in academic instructional content.

The 2005-2006 Academies will feature the content listed below and will be scheduled on a regional basis. Each Academy will include follow-up training and support during the 2005-06 school year. Schools will be asked to review their student data and district goals to ensure that the content featured in an Academy aligns with the needs of students as described in the district's CSIP.

Details regarding the location of the Academies, conditions for participation, expectations of teams, and application procedures will be provided in upcoming issues of School Leader Update and posted to the DE website. ICN sessions will also be conducted to provide additional information.

Academy I

Middle School and High School Reading: August 2 - 5 and August 8 – 11

- Second Chance Reading Program (for struggling readers)
- Cross-curricular Reading Strategies

Academy II

Elementary Mathematics: July 18 - 22 and August 8 -12

- Cognitively Guided Instruction

Academy III

Upper Elementary and Middle School Reading: August 2 - 5 and August 8 – 12

- Concept Oriented Reading Instruction

For more information, contact Deb Hansen at 515/281-6131 or deb.hansen@iowa.gov or Jim Reese at 515/281-4158 or jim.reese@iowa.gov.

Sign up for Iowa Mentoring and Induction Institute

The second annual Iowa Mentoring and Induction Institute addresses effective practices to support beginning teachers from pre-service experience to the classroom. The 2005 Institute is in a new location and is co-sponsored by the University of Northern Iowa.

When: April 20-22, 2005 • PIPAC Centre on the Lake • Cedar Falls, Iowa

Who should attend? PreK-16 teachers and educational leaders

Distinguished keynote speakers include:

Dr. Edward Britton

Associate Director, National Center for Improving Science Education, WestEd

Dr. Richard Elmore

Gregory Anrig Professor of Educational Leadership, Co-Director, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Dr. Edmund Gordon

Director, Institute of Urban and Minority Education, Columbia University Teacher's College; Emeritus, Yale and Columbia Universities; and

Judy Jeffrey

Director, Iowa Department of Education

Iowa models that support new teachers will be featured in breakout sessions. A new highlight of the Institute is the Mildred Middleton Crystal Key Award for Outstanding Mentoring. This award is provided by the Iowa State Education Association and will be presented annually, beginning in 2005. For more information and to register on-line, go to www.uni.edu/contined/ces/mentoring/registration/. Contact: Mary Beth Schroeder Fracek 515-281-3160 or marybeth.schroederfracek@iowa.gov.

IDEA 2004 requirements for highly qualified personnel

Special Education Teachers

The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) brings significant changes to Iowa requirements for "highly qualified" special education teachers. These requirements apply to elementary special education teachers and middle and high school special education teachers who teach one or more core academic subjects including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

In Iowa, the new IDEA legislation requires all special education teachers to hold a bachelor's degree and an endorsement in special education. Class C special education endorsements (formerly termed conditional endorsements) do not meet the highly qualified mandate. Elementary special education teachers are considered highly qualified if they hold an elementary classroom endorsement and special education endorsement or if they

hold an elementary special education endorsement. Middle and high school special education teachers of core content areas are required to hold a secondary special education endorsement and endorsements for each subject area they teach.

Special education teachers whose sole responsibility is to provide consultative services to core content teachers are considered highly qualified if they hold a special education endorsement for the grade levels they serve. This consultative model calls for the student to receive subject matter instruction from general education teachers. Such an option is supported in a statement of intent from the IDEA 2004 Conference Committee:

For the purposes of both NCLB and the IDEA, a special education teacher providing only consultative services to a highly qualified teacher should be considered a highly qualified special education teacher if he or she meets the requirements [of having obtained at least a baccalaureate degree and be fully state certified as a special education teacher]. Such consultative services do not include instruction in core academic subjects, but may include adjustments to the learning environment, modifications of instructional methods, adaptation of curricula, the use of positive behavioral supports and interventions or the use of appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of individual children.

Special education teachers who teach to the alternate assessment (for students who have the most severe, cognitive disabilities) are required to hold an elementary special education endorsement or, for those teaching above the elementary level for this population, to demonstrate the "ability to teach at the appropriate instructional level for their students." In Iowa, that ability would be demonstrated through the Strategist II endorsement or the Severe and Profound endorsement.

The highly qualified requirements relating to core content endorsements and the elementary endorsement go into effect at the end of the 2005-2006 school year for veteran special education teachers. New special education teachers, who hold an endorsement in language, math, or science, must complete endorsements for other subjects they teach within two years of employment.

Iowa special education teachers who hold Class C endorsements will need full special education endorsement by July 1, 2005 to be considered highly qualified under IDEA 2004.

Related Services and Paraeducators

IDEA 2004 requires related service provider and paraeducator qualifications to be "consistent with any state-approved or state-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services." Iowa meets this requirement for all related service providers. Iowa's voluntary credentialing system for paraeducators also meets the mandate of the new IDEA.

Policy of Measurable Steps

The Iowa Department of Education has several support systems in place to help school districts and AEAs meet the IDEA 2004 requirement that "local educational agencies in the state take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train, and retain highly qualified personnel to provide special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities." The state supports include, but are not limited to, Iowa's Teacher Quality Act, financial support for National Board certification, performance-based licensure, a legislative requirement that all teachers hold a valid teaching license, the Strategist I Network, and Teach Iowa (web-based national recruitment site).

Additionally, Iowa has recently implemented a financial incentive system to encourage special education paraeducators to acquire skill-based competencies through Iowa's voluntary credentialing system.

The attached flowchart, entitled *What Constitutes a Highly Qualified Special Education Teacher In Iowa*, provides a visual representation of the IDEA 2004 highly qualified requirements.

For more information on the highly qualified personnel component of IDEA 2004, contact Norma Lynch at 515/281-6038, Norma.Lynch@iowa.gov or Toni Van Cleve at 515/242-6241, Toni.VanCleve@iowa.gov.

Connecting improved instruction and student learning through professional development

Superintendents, principals, central office administrators, professional development leadership team members, and area education agency staff are invited to a professional development series for administrators.

Participants will learn:

- Processes that will lead to increased student learning.
- Practical tools for providing leadership to direct professional development at the building and central office level.
- How to use data to answer:
 - “Is our district career development plan working?”
 - “Are teachers using newly learned practices often and accurately?”
 - “Are students learning?”

“Are we meeting our goals for student achievement?”

- How to establish a clear focus and select powerful professional development content.
- How to form and support leadership teams at the district and building level.
- How to engage the school board in distributed leadership.

These sessions are follow-up to WINTER INSTITUTE 2005, but participation in a February Winter Institute session is not a requirement for participation.

Spring Session (choose one)

April 6 in Carroll, Carrollton Inn

April 12 in Cedar Rapids, Clarion Hotel

April 13 in Des Moines, Hotel Fort Des Moines

Summer Session

June 30 in Des Moines, Hotel Fort Des Moines

Fall Session (choose one)

October 3 in Cedar Rapids, Clarion Hotel

October 5 in Carroll, Carrollton Inn

October 6 in Des Moines, Savery Hotel

Administrators are encouraged to bring a building/district team. Teams should include administrators and other individuals who make decisions about professional development, such as teachers on the professional development leadership team.

Fees for the Spring, Summer, and Fall sessions are \$75. If a district brings a team (minimum of four participants) to the full series, the cost will be reduced to \$60 per person for the full series. On-line registration: www.register123.com/event/profile/web/index.cfm?PKwebID=0x168169e78. For more information, contact Deb Hansen, 515/281-6131, deb.Hansen@iowa.gov.

Educators need adequate time for quality professional development

The Iowa Legislature established a policy to ensure that districts allocate adequate time for professional development as part of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program (2001). This policy requires that districts add two days of professional development until reaching a total of 10 days per year.

Several questions have been raised about how to calculate the number of professional development days. The January School Leaders Update offered procedural interpretations of the policy to answer many of these questions. To apply this policy in a manner that results in positive outcomes for students and teachers, and meets the letter of the law, it is important to recognize not only the procedural aspects of the code but also the purposes of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program.

Research points to two primary reasons for increasing the number of professional development days.

1. Fully implemented professional development will increase teacher quality and increase student learning and achievement. Professional development that has the attributes needed to increase student achievement requires a commitment of time.
2. Teacher salaries in Iowa need to be increased. Iowa's teachers should be compensated at a level that is comparable to other states, and Iowa's current compensation levels are not at the desired level. For the purpose of recruiting and retaining quality teachers, adding two additional days will raise teacher compensation.

Adequate time allocation is essential for this type of professional development. The additional days will enable districts to provide more time for essential professional development processes including:

- Training opportunities distributed through the school year. Training opportunities include time for learning new instructional strategies and methods. Learning opportunities should enable teachers to fully understand the research base that undergirds the practice, the rationale for using this strategy with their students, why the strategy/program works, when to use it, etc.
- Practicing the new strategy with other teachers and with students.
- Watching demonstrations to see what the strategy looks like when implemented accurately.
- Collaborating with other teachers – designing lessons, developing materials to support lessons, analyzing student data, solving problems.
- Analyzing implementation and formative data – measuring how well and how often teachers are implementing the new strategies and continuously checking for student results.

Professional development time is not to be used for:

- Grading papers.

- Preparing grades.
- Parent/teacher conferences.
- Organizing the classroom for the start or end of the school year.
- Routine faculty meetings to address day-to-day tasks and events.
- Committee work tied to organizational issues.

Additional days must be an increase in the number of days that are used to determine teacher salaries. As calendars are determined, the following key points should be considered: Professional development time should be distributed through the year. Full-day in-service days, half-day in-service days, early release/late start, and common team meeting times planned into the school week may be arranged so that teachers are learning and studying together frequently and often through the year. In-service days should not be grouped in the fall or summer, unless there are also adequate days intermittently scheduled throughout the year.

Content Network update

The last School Leader Update reviewed the changes being made to the Content Network to make the site more user friendly. How can the new design of the Content Network assist you in your work? The following step-by-step example illustrates the use of the Content Network.

1. If your data indicates that math is an area your district needs to concentrate on to meet AYP, head to the Content Network at www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/tqt/tc/prodev/mathematics.html
2. You will see grade spans down the left hand column. Choose the grade span you are interested in (for example, 3-5).
3. You are now on the page that will contain the most current reviews the CN math team has completed.
4. The Mathematic Strands are listed on this page. Your item analysis of student math data should lead you to choose a specific strand of your highest need area. Click on the strand you want to see (for example, measurement), and you will be taken to all the current reviews for 3-5 measurement. The table below is an example of what you will see.
5. In reading this table, you will find the study's authors, title, and access to the full review in column one.

| Study Name | Design Rating | Strategy, Subjects, Effects | Strands |
|--|---------------|---|--|
| Table information is abbreviated. Click "Read full review" links for full citations of author and journal names and details about the studies. | | | |
| Carroll and Isaacs. Achievement of students using the University of Chicago school mathematics project's Everyday mathematics. Read full review math_k2_1 | 4 | Strategy: Everyday Mathematics Subjects: 1,885 third graders from suburban Chicago 78 fifth grade students in four classes 246 sixth grade students in six classes 166 fifth grade students in six districts, 4 in Illinois, 1 each in Pennsylvania and Minnesota (three districts were suburban, two rural and one urban) Effects: Overall, Everyday Mathematics students had a mean score of 47% correct compared with 24% correct for control group. Everyday Mathematics students' mean score on the Comprehensive Testing Program was at the 94th percentile compared to the control group at the 85th percentile. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry • Data Analysis & Probability • Measurement • Numbers & Operations (Multiple grade levels) |

6. Column two gives a rating of the quality of the design for each study. This is **not** an indication of whether the study yielded student results. This will tell you whether the study is a "Gold Standard" (#5) which means the researchers randomly assigned subjects to treatment and control groups. Articles that show promise but did not have elements of an experimental design are rated 1.
7. Column three shows the name of the strategy, describes the subjects and what affect the strategy had on the subjects. You can use this to compare your students with the subjects of the study as well as look at the effects this study had.
8. Column four indicates the other areas, in this case Strands that the study covers.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Cynthia Knight, Ph.D., 515/281-5287, cynthia.knight@iowa.gov.

Teacher Evaluation: Sources of documentation

The DE has received questions about the phrase “other evaluators” in chapter/section 284.8 of Iowa Code. It reads as follows: “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; shall include supporting documentation from *other evaluators*, teachers, parents, and students; and may include video portfolios as evidence of teaching practices.” (Italics added.)

Chapter/section 284.2 defines evaluator as follows: “Evaluator” means an administrator or other practitioner who successfully completes an evaluator training program pursuant to section 284.10.

The intent of this requirement is that a teacher’s evaluation must be based upon multiple sources of information regarding their performance and whether or not they meet the district’s expectations in relation to the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria. When other evaluators are used as a source of information for any teacher’s evaluation, they must be people who have completed the evaluator approval training.

What is not specified is the kind, amount, or level of specificity that the other evaluator must provide as a source of supporting documentation. That is a determination that must be made by the local district. The requirement does not specify what position the “other evaluator” must hold in order to be included as a source of documentation. The local district also makes that determination in cooperation with the person or people who may serve as the other evaluator.

A variety of other questions have also been asked regarding teachers, parents, and students serving as sources of documentation for teacher evaluation.

- Teachers can be involved as a source of information in a variety of ways. As an example, a teacher being evaluated may ask other teachers they work with to provide information to the evaluator regarding some aspect of their work with students, with professional development, or other aspects of their work in the school. A teacher may be part of a study team, grade level team, and/or department. Those teachers could be a source of information. The evaluator and any teacher whose performance is being reviewed can work with one another on identifying how other teachers may be involved as a source of information.
- When parents serve as a source of documentation, it may be information the teacher has obtained from one or more parents that they feel contributes to the evaluation conversation. For example, the teacher and/or the evaluator may have communications from parents, which can serve as one point of information. Another example may be when the teacher presents parents with a survey or questionnaire regarding their child’s experience in school in order to know more about the student’s interests, areas of strength, areas of difficulty, etc.
- When students serve as a source of documentation, it may be in the form of work samples the teacher collects over time to judge student progress and the implications that may have for planning. Students may be surveyed regarding their experience in a teacher’s classes if that provides information useful to the review of the teacher’s performance. The teacher may assess students to determine their interests, learning styles, etc. to help with planning and delivering instruction. These are options that may be used as points of information provided by students and can become part of the evaluation process.

Again, the underlying intent is that the review of the teacher’s performance be as based on data from a variety of sources in a way that helps the teacher and the evaluator as they work with one another through this process. There is considerable flexibility in how each of these sources is used, the kind of information that is provided by each one, the frequency of their involvement, and the level of specificity that they are expected to provide. The local district determines that as it proceeds. Contact: Warren K. Weber, 515/281-3750 (O), 515/669-7007 (Mobile), or warren.weber@iowa.gov.

Evaluator Approval spring training schedule

The revised version of the evaluator approval training schedule is outlined below. The training now includes both DDL and IEATP in one training program. Please review the details of the schedule and contact Warren K. Weber with any questions.

Statewide Training Schedule Iowa Evaluator Approval Training Program Spring, 2005

Description

This training is a revision of the original training. It includes both Iowa Evaluator Approval Training and training in Data Driven Leadership combined into one training program. There are six days of formal training along with an increase in the number extended/independent study/onsite activities that participants will conduct

outside of the training sessions. Four staff development credits will be issued by SAI, which can be used for obtaining a new evaluator's license from the Board of Educational Examiners.

Registration Information

In each of the five regions, registration information is available at the listed web site or by using the contact information provided. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis, but priority will be given as follows:

- District administrators (principals and/or superintendents) hired for the 2004-05 school year that will be evaluating beginning teachers, but have not had the IEATP training.
- Administrators who are first time administrators in Iowa who have not had the training as a part of their administrative preparation program or who have come from another state.
- Activity directors who evaluate coaches but are not assigned to evaluate teachers whether or not they have completed an administrative preparation program. (Any activity director currently involved in an administrative preparation program at the university level should check with his or her university to determine the transfer value of this training to the universities program.)

All times will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. unless specified differently. Registration Fee is \$400.

| Cohort | Location | Dates | Site |
|--|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Central Region (AEA 11) | | | |
| Register at www.aea11.k12.ia.us . Click on the Professional Development Catalog link. Regional Coordinator: Lora Wunsch. Contact professional development at 515-270-9030 or 800-362-2720. | | | |
| C30 | Waukee | March 5, 19 April 2, 9, 23, 30 | Waukee CSD, District Office |

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|--|--------------|---|--|
| East Region (AEAs 9 and 10) | | | |
| Register at http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/profdev/pdf/evalappform.pdf Regional Coordinators: Christine Day. Contact professional development at 319-399-6700 or 800-332-8488. | | | |
| E 30 | Cedar Rapids | March 19 April 2, 9, 23 May 7, 21 | Grant Wood AEA 33 rd Avenue Facility |

| | | | |
|--|-------------|--|---|
| Northeast Region (AEAs 1, 267) | | | |
| Register at http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/pd Regional Coordinator: Denise Schares. Contact educational services at 319-273-8200 or 800-542-8375. | | | |
| NE 30 | Cedar Falls | March 19 April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | AEA 267, Cedar Falls Office |
| NE 31 | Dubuque | March 17, 31 April 12 May 11, 24 June 9 | Keystone AEA Office 2300 Cheney Road |

| | | | |
|--|------------|---|--|
| Northwest Region (AEAs 4, 8, 12) | | | |
| Register at http://www.aea12.k12.ia.us . Regional Coordinator: Judy Keith, Sioux City CSD. Contact at 712-279-6676. Martha Kaufman, AEA 12, at 712-274-6000 or 1-800-352-9040. | | | |
| NW 30 | Sioux City | June 15, 22 July 13, 20 September 7, 14, 21, 28 (5:30-9:00 p.m.) | AEA 12 |
| NW 31 | Spencer | June 21, 28 July 19, 26 September 10, 24 | Spencer CSD District Office 27 th E 7 th Street |

| | | | |
|--|----------------|--|--|
| South Region (AEAs 13, 14, 15, 16) | | | |
| 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. | | | |
| S 30 | Council Bluffs | March 12, 19 April 2, 9 April 23, 30 | AEA 13, Halverson Center |
| S 26 | Fairfield | March 5, 19 April 2, 9 April 23, 30 April 16 (makeup) | Fairfield High School Media Center 306 East Broadway |

South Region (AEAs 13, 14, 15, 16)

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.

Central Region (AEA 11)

Register at www.aea11.k12.ia.us. Click on the Professional Development Catalog link. Regional

Coordinator: Lora Wunsch. Contact professional development at 515-270-9030 or 800-362-2720.

Northeast Region (AEAs 1, 267)

Register at <http://edservices.aea7.k12.ia.us/sd/>. Regional Coordinator: Denise Schares. Contact educational services at 319-273-8200 or 800-542-8375.

East Region (AEAs 9 & 10)

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

Northwest Region (AEAs 4, 8, 12)

Register at <http://www.aea12.k12.ia.us>. Regional Coordinator: Judy Keith, Sioux City CSD. Contact at 712-279-6676. Martha Kauffman, AEA 12, at 712-274-6000 or 1-800-352-9040.

LEGAL LESSONS

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

Guidelines regarding use of credit cards

[The following article was prepared by the Office of the Auditor of the State of Iowa, and is used with the permission of that Office. Questions may be directed to Sue Battani (515/281-5464) or Carol Greta.]

Chapter 279.8 of the Code of Iowa authorizes the local Board of Education to establish a policy to allow employees to use credit cards issued to the District to pay the actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their work-related duties. Accordingly, the District may establish payment methods such as charge accounts established with specific vendors or the use of a credit card established in the District's name with the Board's approval. If a credit card is established in the District's name, the District should establish policy and procedures associated with physical custody of the card, appropriate use of the card and independent review and approval to ensure appropriate segregation of duties and internal control. Board policy should also include a requirement for adequate supporting documentation of the credit card charges rather than payment solely based upon the credit card statement.

Chapter 279.30 of the Code of Iowa states in part, "Each warrant must be made payable only to the person performing the service or presenting the verified bill, and must state the purpose for which the warrant is issued." To improve controls over purchases made on behalf of the District, all payments should be made directly to the vendor by the District.

If there is no District credit card and if an employee needs to use a personal credit card for his or her own district-related travel, for instance, that is allowable. There should be very limited occasions, if any, when an employee needs to use a personal credit card to pay for district expenses that are not incurred by the employee, such as office or classroom supplies. If a District allows teachers or employees in these limited instances to purchase office or classroom supplies and receive reimbursement, a formal, written policy related to supplies reimbursement should be developed and approved by the Board. The District's purchase order system and use of purchase orders should be reviewed and revised, as necessary for consistency and to ensure adequate internal control over the District's budget and related expenditures.

Districts should not allow one employee to pay for and submit reimbursement requests for travel expenses for several employees. Consistent with Chapter 279.30 of the Code of Iowa, payment for actual and necessary travel costs and/or other employee expenses should be reimbursed directly to the employee incurring the expense on behalf of the District. In addition to compliance with Chapter 279.30, this enables the District to better ensure the propriety and allowability of costs submitted for reimbursement.

Seniors and snow days – a correction

We don't like to confuse you, and we apologize when we do so. The correct answer to the question, "Do Seniors have to make up "snow days?" is as follows:

Answer: Iowa Code 279.10 states, "the district may excuse a graduating senior who has met district or school requirements for graduation from attendance during the extended school calendar." Note, however, rule 281-IAC 12.1(7) requires that there be a board policy to excuse seniors from making up "snow days." Furthermore, this policy may only excuse seniors who have met graduation requirements. This requires that two conditions be met: (1) a board policy exists regarding seniors and make up days, and (2) that policy must be limited to seniors who have met graduation requirements. A senior who will not get a diploma with the rest of his/her class may not be excused from making up any days. A district in need of a sample policy may contact Angie Kendall at IASB (akendall@ia-sb.org).

Attorney General asked to clarify "Junior/Senior Rule"

[NOTE: The following particular scenario is fictional, but the circumstances occur regularly.]

A high school junior, presently enrolled in his resident district of Dubuque, moves with his family to Galena, Illinois. The student desires to complete his education at Dubuque Community School District. Had his family moved to Epworth (Western Dubuque CSD), there would be no question that he could do so and that Dubuque would continue to "count" the student and receive state foundation aid for him under Iowa Code section 257.6(d), the "junior/senior rule." But, the student and his family no longer live in Iowa. Does the rule still apply?

The DE has asked for a formal Attorney General Opinion to get an answer to this question. We'll provide an update when we receive a response.

Update on "slip and fall" case and liability of schools

Alert readers may recall that the February 2004 issue of this fine publication reported on an Iowa Court of Appeals decision setting for trial the issue of whether UNI officials should have closed the college library earlier than its set closing time on an evening when freezing rain or sleet iced over the library's sidewalks. A coed slipped on the sidewalk when she left the library at closing time, breaking her leg. At issue was whether UNI [this applies to all public entities, including school districts and community colleges] was entitled to immunity based on the "discretionary function" in Iowa's Tort Liability Act, Iowa Code chapter 670. The Court of Appeals decision had indicated that weather-related school decisions (delays, cancellations, and the like) are NOT discretionary decisions entitled to immunity from lawsuit.

Good news: This case was appealed further to the Iowa Supreme Court, which decided that UNI's decision to keep the library open was immune from liability under the discretionary function exception. **This does not mean that all weather-related decisions are immune from liability.** The Supreme Court was clear that UNI prevailed because of the following:

1. UNI had a policy (case doesn't indicate that the policy was written) of continuing the normal hours of operation for the library during periods of severe weather, the purpose of which was to afford maximum opportunity for students and staff to use the facility.
2. UNI demonstrated in court that its staff had engaged in a public policy analysis the night in question, including factoring in the number of patrons in the library that night, whether there was sufficient personnel to staff the library, the ability to close if weather conditions further deteriorated, and knowing that people entered and exited the library that night without incident.

The lesson to be gleaned from this case is that weather-related or other emergency decisions must be governed by public policy considerations. Then make sure that the considerations behind each decision are documented.

The full text of the Iowa Supreme Court case at:

<http://www.judicial.state.ia.us/supreme/opinions/20050211/03-0322.asp?printable=True>.

CALENDAR

Deadlines and [Dates to Remember](#)

| | |
|------------|--|
| March 7-11 | National School Breakfast Week |
| March 14 | School Budget Review Meeting |

HELPFUL EDUCATION LINKS

The DE Electronic Mailbag: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/oofd/mailbag.html>
Iowa Association of School Boards: www.ia-sb.org
Iowa State Education Association: www.isea.org
Free federal learning resources: <http://www.ed.gov/free>
Public Education Network: <http://www.publiceducation.org/index.asp>
National Association of Secondary School Principals: http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/index.asp
National Education Association: <http://www.nea.org/index.html>
Education grant opportunities: <http://www.grantsalert.com/>
Teacher loan forgiveness: <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/GEN0414.html>
Grant writing tips and techniques: http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml
School health grants: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/funding/index.htm>

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.