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Date: August 15, 1997
To: All Staff
From: Ted Stilwill
Subject: Attached Document

This is your copy of *Guidelines for Preparing and Disseminating DE Documents*. It was developed at my request for two major purposes: to help staff prepare print and electronic documents of high quality and to create greater consistency across the Department in finished documents and related procedures.

The *Guidelines* are printed in a loose-leaf format for easy updating. The sample State Board page, for example, will be revised as necessary, and a replacement page will be distributed. The loose-leaf format also permits additions. Among the additional guidelines being planned or considered are ones on outline format, copyright issues, technology issues, footnotes and bibliographies, additional mechanics and usage tips, internal review procedures and distribution procedures, including use of the Mailbag. Suggestions from staff on other topics that would be helpful are welcome.

The *Guidelines* were developed by Mary Bartlow, Bureau of Special Education; Klark Jessen, Office of the Director; and Sharon Slezak, Office of the Director. They will also develop the additional sections. Questions, suggestions and requests for assistance may be referred to them.


T.S.



Guidelines for Preparing and Disseminating DE Documents



Iowa Department of Education
1997

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

State Board of Education

Corine A. Hadley, President, Newton
C. W. Callison, Vice President, Burlington
Gregory A. Forristall, Macedonia
Sally J. Frudden, Charles City
Gregory D. McClain, Cedar Falls
Mary Jean Montgomery, Spencer
Gene E. Vincent, Carroll
Kay Wagner, Bettendorf
John C. White, Iowa City

Administration

Ted Stilwill, Director and Executive Officer
of the State Board of Education
Dwight R. Carlson, Assistant to the Director
Gail Sullivan, Chief of Policy and Planning

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age or marital status in its programs or employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy please contact Debra Van Gorp, Chief, Bureau of Administration, Instruction and School Improvement, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, (515) 281-5811.

Acknowledgments

These guidelines were developed by a project team led by Susan J. Donielson, administrator, Office of Educational Services for Children, Families and Communities. Members of the team were Mary Bartlow, publications secretary, Bureau of Special Education; Klark Jessen, communication specialist, Office of the Director; and Sharon Slezak, administrative communication consultant, Office of the Director.

Becky Erickson, graphic artist in the Bureau of Planning, Research and Evaluation, did the word processing and graphics.

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Nondiscrimination Statement

As part of its leadership role in the area of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination, the Department has adopted a nondiscrimination statement.

Wording

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Use

It is Department policy that the nondiscrimination statement appear on major Department documents. Items on which it must appear are one-time and annual publications such as directories, reports and state plans; newsletters; and official recruitment materials. The statement need not appear on correspondence; data collection forms; workshop handouts; flyers and announcements; conference registrations, programs and folders; and materials prepared for in-house use only.

The nondiscrimination statement should appear in a prominent location on the document. The preferred location is the bottom of the "State Board Page."

The Department's nondiscrimination statement meets the requirements of the federal and state governments. No other such statement, in whole or in part, should appear on DE documents.



State Board Page

Format

It is Department policy that a State Board page be included in major Department documents. The sample illustrates the format that is to be followed.

There are four parts to the Board page, as numbered on the sample. Parts 1, 2 and 3 identify the Department and its address, the State Board members and the Department's administration. These should be shown as they appear on the sample. Staff will be notified of changes in Board membership or the administration so these parts will be current at the time a document is published.

The purpose of part 4 is to identify the developers of the document; therefore, part 4 is unique to each document. The name of the originating division is centered. Under that are shown the division administrator, the chief of the originating bureau and the authors with their job titles. Variations on the format of part 4 are permissible for projects developed by more than one bureau or division. Projects co-developed with non-Department personnel or with other agencies are special circumstances and should be handled individually. See a resource person for guidance.

A sample State Board page can be accessed by computer. In Word for Windows, select FILE and then NEW. Select the "State Board Page" template from the list. If the graphic does not look right, select VIEW and then PAGE LAYOUT.

Use

The State Board page should appear in all major Department documents such as directories, state plans, one-time and annual reports, research studies and any other document designed to be a long-term source of information. An easy-to-remember rule of thumb: If it is important enough to have a cover, it should have a Board page.

The Board page should be placed prominently in the front of the document. It can be on a separate page after the inside title page. It can also be placed on the reverse of the inside title page or on the reverse of the front cover.



Sample

Part 1

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

Part 2

State Board of Education

Corine A. Hadley, President, Newton
C. W. Callison, Vice President, Burlington
Gregory A. Forristall, Macedonia
Sally J. Frudden, Charles City
Gregory D. McClain, Cedar Falls
Mary Jean Montgomery, Spencer
Gene E. Vincent, Carroll
Kay E. Wagner, Bettendorf
John C. White, Iowa City

Part 3

Administration

Ted Stilwill, Director and Executive Officer
of the State Board of Education
Dwight R. Carlson, Assistant to the Director
Gail Sullivan, Chief of Policy and Planning

Part 4

Division of _____

_____(Name)_____, Administrator
_____(Name)_____, Chief, Bureau of _____
_____(Name)_____, Consultant
_____(Name)_____, Consultant

Optional: (The Department's nondiscrimination statement may appear at the bottom of this page. This is the preferred location. The nondiscrimination statement may appear in another prominent location, however.)

Minimum Standards for Identifying DE Documents

Department documents need to be clearly identified as Department documents for two good reasons:

1. When they are distributed or circulated outside the agency, they represent official Department policies and positions on issues.
2. DE documents are important, long-term sources of information for educators and members of the public, both in Iowa and nationally. As such, they are entered into a variety of information storage and retrieval systems, including library collections and databases. So they can be cataloged and located in such systems, documents must contain basic identifying information.

For these reasons, minimum standards for covers and newsletters have been established.

Covers

All covers must include the following elements:

- One group of words readily identifiable as the title;
- The full name of the Department (Iowa Department of Education) to identify it as the publisher; and
- The year of publication.

The sample illustrates these elements. Please remember that documents that have a cover and circulate outside the agency should include a "State Board Page" and the Department's nondiscrimination statement.

Newsletters

Newsletters must be clearly identified as Department publications. The date of publication, usually the year plus a month or a season, should appear on the first page near the title. A contact person or a phone number for further information is required. The nondiscrimination statement must appear in newsletters.

More Information

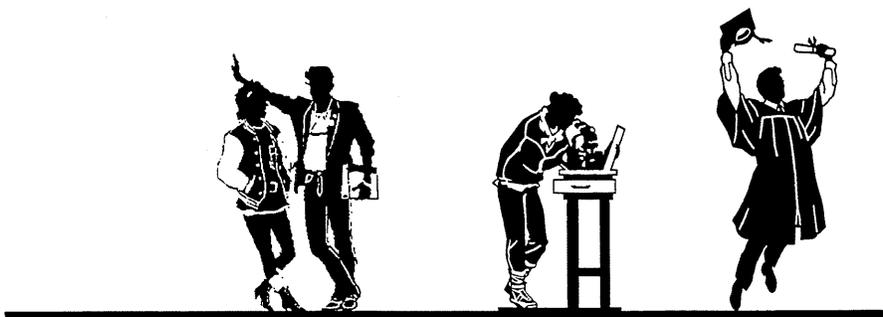
All documents that circulate outside the Department should include a contact for more information. This may be a person or a unit of the Department. A phone number should be included. An e-mail address is optional. This information should be in a prominent location, but not on the State Board page.

Sample of Cover with Correct Identifying Elements



Directory of Iowa Community Colleges

*Iowa Department of Education
1997*



Samples of Newsletters with Correct Identifying Elements



The Lunch Line

a newsletter
of
The Bureau of Food & Nutrition
The Iowa Department of Education

Please route to:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Service Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Record Keeper | <input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

VOL. XLVII, No. 3

January, 1997

*Published in September, November, January, March, and May
by the Bureau of Food and Nutrition, Iowa Department of
Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa
50319-0146. Phone 515-281-5356.*

SAMPLE 1

*Head Start & Early Childhood
Special Education*

Iowa Collaborative Newsletter

Iowa Department of Education

Spring 1997

Iowa Department of Education
Office of Educational Services for
Children, Families and Communities
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

This newsletter is published and distributed on a semiannual basis. Comments or suggestions may be directed to the editor, Anita Varne at 515-242-6024, or fax 515-242-6025 or write Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146 or co-editor, Penny Milburn at 515-965-9355 or fax at 515-965-9388 or write to DMACC-ISU Extension, 2020 DMACC Blvd., Ankeny, IA 50021.

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**SAMPLE 2
(also shows
nondiscrimination
statement)**

Format for Letters and Memos

The Department's goal is to maintain a uniform and business-like appearance in all correspondence.

- A type face with serifs, the little vertical and horizontal lines at the ends of letter strokes, should be used. Examples are Times, Times Roman, Palatino, Bookman.
- Use 10 to 12 point type for readability.
- A block style format should be used for letters and memos.
- On letters and external memos, always list telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses.
- If more than one enclosure is being sent, show the total number in parentheses after the word "Enclosure."
- Use reference initials as follows when an author and a typist have prepared a letter or memo: TS:sw. For a signer, an author and a typist, the reference initials are as follows: TS:JR:sw.
- The pagination of letters and memos of more than one page should be labeled across the top with the name of the author, the topic, the page number and the date. For example:

Ted Stilwill Legislation Page 2 March 27, 1997

- The signature line on letters should read as follows:

Internal:

Sincerely,

Ted Stilwill
Director

External:

Sincerely,

Ted Stilwill
Director
515-281-3436

- When the signature includes a bureau or division designation, it should read as follows:

Internal:

Sincerely,

Jeananne Hagen, Chief
Bureau of Special Education

External:

Sincerely,

Jeananne Hagen, Chief
Bureau of Special Education
515-281-5735

For memos, use the following headings, double spaced:

DATE:

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT:

- On external memos, a title following each person's name should be used on the "To" and "From" lines.
- On all memos, use the standard initial line below the last line of the text. For example:

J.C.

Confidential Material

- All documents should be clearly marked "confidential" at the top of the letter or memo.
- All documents should be placed in a sealed envelope which should also be clearly marked "confidential." The word "confidential" should be highlighted with a highlighter marker.
- A confidential document could include a personnel issue, politically sensitive issues, etc.
- Copies will be placed in a secure file.



Sample Internal Memo

DATE: March 24, 1997

TO: Jean Linder
Sharon Hawthorne
Nancy Brees
Norman Lynch

FROM: Jeananne Hagen

SUBJECT: Communication Committee

I want to thank each of you for your efforts on the communication committee. I finally had an opportunity to read your report of March 17. Your work is making a difference. It is one of those things that is easy to go unrecognized by the rest of us. I'm glad you've made the decision to do interviews again. This gives us good information about where we're making progress and things we need to attend to. Without seeing the new survey data, I'm aware that the staff meetings are one place where I've not fulfilled my earlier commitment, but am certainly willing to sit down with you and regroup.

My job would be impossible without the willingness of individuals in the bureau to get together and provide leadership. This is a good example. I know you don't get much recognition - it's easy to take things for granted. But I do thank you very much.

J. H.

JH:bd



Sample Letter

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TED STILWILL, DIRECTOR

February 11, 1997

Sandra Dickinson
Reading Recovery Teacher
Madison Elementary School
506 Hoffman Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50316-1036

Dear Sandra:

Thank you for your fax. I think you have a really good idea here and would encourage you to pursue it. This would seem to fit with the collaborative consultation model that special education consultants and teachers are beginning to develop. I would urge you to contact Faith Huitt in the Des Moines school district to discuss this as perhaps a pilot project.

I really enjoyed learning more about Reading Recovery and meeting a group of excellent teachers.

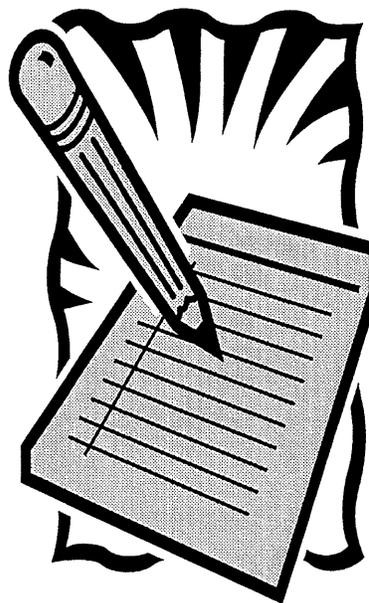
Sincerely,

Jeananne Hagen, Chief
Bureau of Special Education
515-281-5735

JH:bd

When to Use Letterhead

1. Letterhead is used anytime correspondence is going outside of the Department of Education.
2. Use letterhead for:
 - A fax.
 - A memo/letter to another government agency.
 - A memo/letter to an elected official.
 - A memo/letter to a constituent or other taxpayer.
3. Correspondence within the Department of Education should be on plain white paper.



Correspondence to Officials

State Elected Officials

Letter Format:

Honorable (first and last name)
(Official Entity-Senate, House of Representatives)
Statehouse
City, State Zip

Dear (Title) (Last Name):

State Senator:

Honorable Dennis Black
Iowa Senate
Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0066

Dear Senator Black:

Envelope:

Senator Dennis Black
Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0066

Envelope from DE:

Senator Dennis Black
Capitol Building
LOCAL

State Representative:

Honorable Ron Corbett
Iowa House of Representatives
Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0066

Dear Representative Corbett:

Envelope:

Representative Ron Corbett
Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0066

Envelope from DE:

Representative Ron Corbett
Capitol Building
LOCAL

Governor:

Honorable Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa
Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0056

Dear Governor Branstad:

Envelope:

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0056

Envelope from DE:

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Capitol Building
LOCAL

Federal Elected Officials

Letter Format:

Honorable (first and last name)
(Official Entity-U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, etc.)
Address
Washington, DC Zip

Dear (Title) (Last Name):

United States Representative:

Honorable Jim Leach
House of Representatives
2186 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515-1501

Envelope:

Representative Jim Leach
2186 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515-1501

Dear Representative Leach:

United States Senator:

Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
SH-135 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510-1501

Envelope:

Senator Charles Grassley
SH-135 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510-1501

Dear Senator Grassley:

United States Vice President:

Honorable Al Gore
Vice President of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

Envelope:

Vice President Al Gore
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Vice President Gore:

United States President:

Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

Envelope:

President Bill Clinton
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

A listing of the names and addresses of your legislative representatives can be found in the Capitol Directory, from the Legislative Information Offices at the capitol and from the Iowa Internet homepage (<http://www.state.ia.us>).

External Relations

The Iowa Department of Education, as a public agency, recognizes its responsibility to respond promptly and accurately to requests for information or assistance from all constituents, including parents, educators, policymakers, government officials, and the news media.

Media Relations

Q. *What should I do if I am contacted directly by a member of the news media?*

- A.** Department staff should respond promptly to any request for information, if the request is within their areas of expertise and unless the information requested is confidential. Any staff member who is uncertain whether the information is confidential should contact a member of the legal or communications staff.

Upon completion of any communication with the news media, an external communication form, such as the SAMPLE, should be completed and returned to the Office of the Director. The form can be accessed by computer. In Word for Windows, select FILE and then NEW. Select the "External Contact Reporting Form" template from the list. If the graphic does not look right, select VIEW and then PAGE LAYOUT.

Q. *What should I do if I wish to initiate contact with the news media?*

- A.** The Department's communications staff has the responsibility for initiating contacts with members of the news media. Individual staff members generally should not initiate any oral or written communication with the news media concerning Department policy or programs.

Any staff member with information worthy of release to the news media should contact the communications staff for advice regarding news releases, media alerts, e-mail, and other forms of contact with the news media.

Contact:

Klark Jessen, Communications Specialist, 281-5651, kjessen@max.state.ia.us

Sharon Slezak, Administrative Consultant, 281-3750, sslezak@max.state.ia.us

Legislative Relations

Q. *What should I do if I am contacted by a legislator, Legislative Service Bureau, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, or other government support staff?*

- A.** Department staff should respond promptly and accurately to requests for information from a legislator, legislative staff, or other government official, if the request is within the staff member's areas of expertise and unless the information is confidential. Staff members with questions about responding to a legislative or government request should contact the policy consultant in the Office of the Director or their immediate supervisor.

Q. *What should I do if I wish to initiate contact with a legislator or government official about a policy matter?*

A. The Department's policy consultant has the responsibility for initiating contacts with members of the legislature, legislative staff, and other governmental officials concerning Department-related policy matters.

Any staff member wishing to initiate contact with legislators, legislative staff, or other government officials concerning department policy or programs should first contact the policy consultant and her/his immediate supervisor for direction.

Q. *What should I do if I am requested to appear before a legislative committee or interim committee?*

A. Check with your immediate supervisor and the director or the policy consultant before agreeing to appear before a legislative committee to discuss Department policy or programs.

Contact:

Ann Molis, Policy Consultant, 281-5296, amolis@max.state.ia.us

Bev Adams, Administrative Assistant, 281-5296, badams@max.state.ia.us



Sample

DATE:

TO: Office of the Director (Bev. Adams)

FROM:

SPECIAL EXTERNAL CONTACT REPORTING

Purposes

- To ensure consistent communications on policy.
- To provide accurate information
- To understand the trends or needs expressed by customers, policymakers, and others.

Contact

Name

_____ Media _____
_____ State Board Member _____
_____ State Legislator/Caucus Staff _____
_____ Congressional Representative _____
_____ Governor's Office _____
_____ National/Federal Agency _____
_____ Fiscal Bureau/Service Bureau _____
_____ Other _____

Type of Contact/Date _____

_____ Informational (Describe)

_____ Relating to policy or position of Department or State Board (Describe)

cc: Bureau Chief
Division Administrator

State Board Presentations

Before the Meeting: A Checklist

- A. Discuss the content of your presentation with your division administrator.
- B. Rehearse your presentation, especially if you are using the ICN.
- C. Use visuals where possible, such as overhead transparencies or computer-generated graphics. All visuals should be clearly seen and understandable, using large type, few words per visual, and simple graphs and charts. Bring 11 copies for distribution to the Board members, director, and Board secretary, allowing space on each page for Board member notes.
- D. Develop an executive summary of your presentation for the Board notebook, following the SAMPLE. A template can be accessed by computer. In Word for Windows, select FILE and then NEW. Select the "External Contact Reporting Form" template from the list. If the graphic does not look right, select VIEW and then PAGE LAYOUT.
- E. If you have related materials for the Board, provide three copies to Bev Adams for further duplication. If you have a previously printed document, supply Bev with 40 copies, three-hole punched. All materials must be submitted by the materials due date for that Board meeting, so that the materials may be sent to Board members in advance of your presentation. The due dates are established in August, and a list of them is distributed to division administrators and bureau chiefs. Due-date information is also available from Bev Adams in the Office of the Director.
- F. If you are working with co-presenters from outside the Department, brief them specifically about the purpose of the session and time limitations. Outside presenters should focus only on their area of expertise, leaving the overall presentation context to a Department staff person.

During the Board Meeting

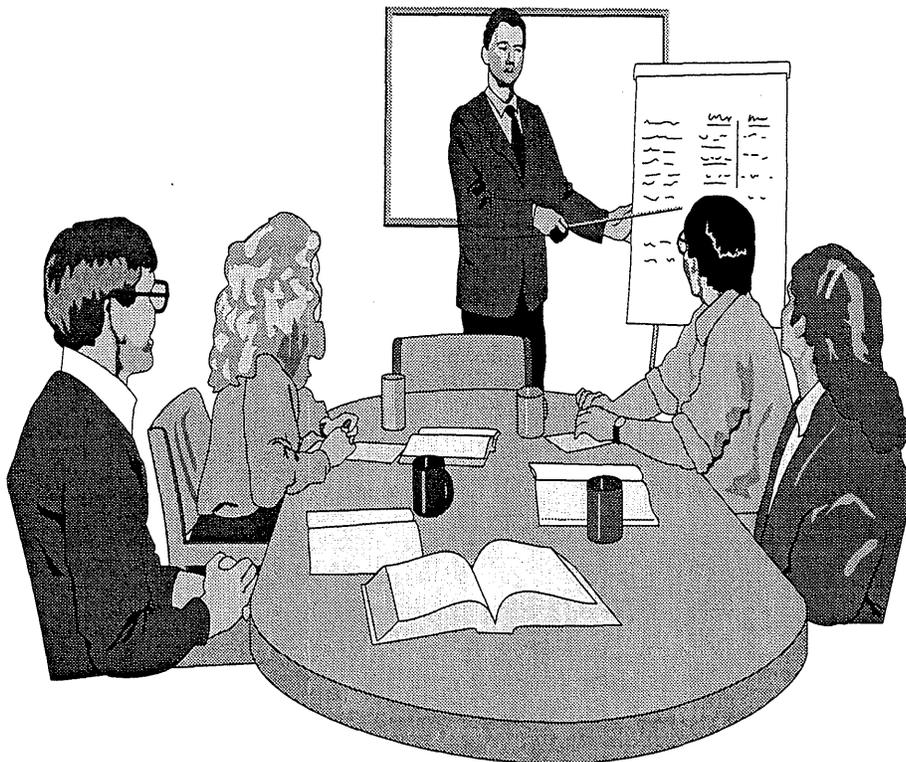
- A. Presentations should be limited to **20 minutes or less**. A longer presentation, where necessary, should be arranged and approved in advance.
- B. Presentations should be succinct, focused on key points, and should expand upon, not merely repeat, information sent to Board members prior to the meeting. Limit the number of individuals participating to maintain focus and stay within the time limit.
- C. Consider the Board's information needs. A topic new to the Board, for example, may require background and context, while updates on familiar topics would call for a brief historical review.
- D. Tell the Board members what you are asking of them, whether it is to adopt rules, approve a recommendation, or simply listen to information about a topic of concern to the Board.
- E. **Avoid** using unexplained acronyms, abbreviations, and technical terms that would be unfamiliar to Board members.

- F. Board members may ask questions for context or clarification, or seek additional information or copies of materials. Respond positively to such requests. However, allow the director to respond if a question takes the discussion to a different policy level, or if a Board member requests information that would be time-consuming to compile.

Contact:

Gail Sullivan, Chief of Policy and Planning, 281-5296, gsulliv@max.state.ia.us

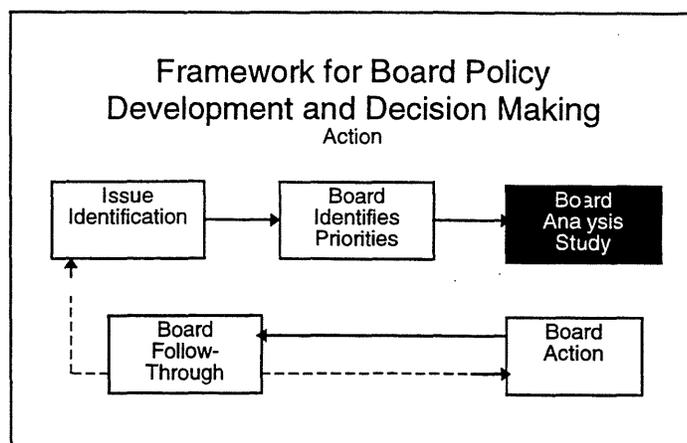
Bev Adams, Administrative Assistant, 281-5296, badams@max.state.ia.us



Sample

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary
April 10-11, 1997



Agenda Item: Community College Accreditation Rules

Iowa Goal: (A) To help schools and their communities obtain the training and resources they need to meet the learning needs of all their children and adults.

Equity Impact Statement: A major part of the mission of Iowa's community colleges and secondary schools is to provide high quality programs and services that are accessible to students. The accreditation process ensures that all programs and services provided by community colleges shall be of high quality and accessible for all students.

Presenter: Dwight R. Carlson, Acting Administrator, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Evelyn Anderson, Consultant, Bureau of Community Colleges

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board receive and discuss the draft of the proposed rules for the accreditation of Iowa's Community Colleges.

Background: The Iowa Code 260C.47 states that the State Board of Education shall establish an accreditation process for community college programs by July 1, 1997. The process shall be jointly developed and agreed upon by the Department of Education and the community colleges. These rules will be brought to the State Board for action in May.

Mechanics and Usage

This section is devoted to areas of mechanics and usage that generate frequent questions and in which errors easily occur. The section is not comprehensive. A reputable style manual should be consulted for assistance on these and other mechanics or usage topics. Examples are *The Gregg Reference Manual*, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (“APA style manual”), and *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

Subject and Verb Agreement

A basic pattern of English is that a verb always agrees with its subject in number. There are no exceptions.

There are two common causes of subject and verb agreement errors: losing track of what the subject is and failure to accurately determine whether the subject is singular or plural. Following are some troublesome sentence patterns.

- Subject and Verb Separated by Other Words

ex: One (s) of our goals for the community organizations and businesses in our area is (v) greater support for our school.

- Inverted sentence (Verb First, Subject Following)

ex: Among the Department’s priorities is (v) increased parental and community involvement (s) in public education. There are (v) four priorities (s) among the Department’s goals for the year.

- Subject Looks Plural But Isn’t

Titles of books, magazines, articles and similar works are singular as are the names of organizations and countries. A single unit of time or amount is also singular.

ex: The Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (s) is (v) sponsoring the meeting at its office.

ex: Three hours (s) was (v) not enough time for that meeting.

- Collective Noun as Subject

A collective noun names a group of people or things. When the group is considered to be one unit, the subject is singular. Occasionally, the sense of the sentence is that the members of the group are acting individually, in which case the subject is plural. These latter sentences are usually awkward and should be rewritten slightly.

- Correct: The State Board has discussed this issue. (singular)
- Awkward: The State Board have differing opinions on this issue. (plural)
- Better: The State Board members have differing opinions on this issue. (plural)

Pronouns

- It's and Its

“It’s” is a contraction of “it is”. “Its” means “belonging to it.”

ex: It's scheduled for Thursday.

ex: The board will have its regular meeting on Thursday.

- Compound Constructions

Compounds are two or more similar sentence elements joined by a conjunction, usually “and” or “or”. A frequent error is the use of “he,” “she,” “I” or “they” when “him,” “her,” “me,” or “them” should be used. A simple test is to split the compound into two singular constructions.

ex: The district faxed a response to he/him and I/me.

The district faxed a response to him.

The district faxed a response to me.

The district faxed a response to him and me.

- Who and Whom

The distinction between who and whom is gradually disappearing in informal speech; it should be observed in formal speech and in writing. Who is always a subject, either of a sentence or of a clause. Whom is an object. Check a style manual if you are not certain, or rewrite to avoid the problem.

Titles

- Courtesy Title (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Dr.)

Be consistent in the use of courtesy titles when listing people, such as on a conference program or as members of a committee. Either give everyone a courtesy title, or omit titles completely.

<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>YES</u>
Dr. Jane Doe	Dr. Jane Doe	Jane Doe
Dr. Robert Roe	Dr. Robert Roe	Robert Roe
John Smith	Mr. John Smith	John Smith
Ms. Mary Smith	Ms. Mary Smith	Mary Smith

- Formal Titles

Most people do not have formal titles. Occupational descriptions or names of jobs, such as accountant, attorney, consultant, bureau chief, are not titles. These are not capitalized in text.

In text, confine capitalization of titles to formal titles that immediately precede a person's name.

President Bill Clinton; President Clinton
Queen Elizabeth
General Ulysses S. Grant
Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

In text, titles following a person's name or used in place of the name are usually lowercase.

Bill Clinton, president of the United States; the president
Elizabeth II, queen of England; the queen
Ulysses S. Grant, general; the general
Sandra Day O'Connor, justice of the Supreme Court; the justice

Capitalization

A good rule of thumb is to capitalize only if there is a specific reason to do so. Following are guidelines for some common situations.

- titles of persons - see above
- governmental bodies - capitalize the name of the full body and its major subdivisions. Shortened forms of the full name used in close proximity to the full name (the Department of Education, the Department; the State Board of Education, the State Board, the Board) may be capitalized.
- federal, state and county - capitalize when used with other words to form proper nouns (Federal Communication Commission). Do not capitalize when used as a simple adjective (a federal highway).
- academic degrees - capitalize the abbreviation and the words when they follow a person's name. When they are referred to in general terms, they are not capitalized. (Jane Doe, Ph.D.; Jane Doe has a doctorate or doctor's degree.)
- titles of works (books, articles, reports, speeches, works of art, divisions of long works, etc.) - capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. Capitalize an article (a, an, the) or a word of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.
- calendar periods - capitalize the names of days and months but not the seasons.

Punctuating a Series



- In a series of three or more elements, a conjunction usually joins the last two elements. Formal style calls for a comma before this conjunction. (Attending the conference were Doe, Roe, and Smith.) There is a growing trend toward omitting the final comma if the elements in the series are simple, as in the example sentence, and if there is no danger of misunderstanding the meaning. Within a written work, consistency in following one style or the other is desirable.
- If the elements in a series are long and complex or contain internal punctuation, they should be separated by semicolons.

Troublesome Words

The following list establishes Departmental style for capitalizing, punctuating and spelling a number of common but troublesome words. Observing these guidelines will create greater consistency in Department documents.

This list is not all-inclusive. Additional entries will be added as necessary.

acknowledgment	fax
areawide (see “wide”)	follow-up (noun & adjective)
audiovisual	follow up (verb)
biannual (twice a year)	full-time (full-time job)
biennial (once every two years)	full time (works full time)
bimonthly (once every two months)	full tuition
biweekly (once every two weeks)	hard of hearing
Board (when short for State Board of Education)	Home Page (on the Internet)
Bureau (as the short form of the name of a specific bureau)	individualized education program (no caps) (abbreviation: IEP)
bylaw	individualized family service plan (no caps) (abbreviation: IFSP)
byproduct	in-depth
catalog	inhouse
chairperson	innercity
cocurricular	in-school (adj)
coed	inservice
coeducational	instate
cooperate	intercity
cosponsor	Internet
coursework	internship
courthouse	interoffice
co-worker	interracial
day care (all usages)	interrelated
decision making (noun)	intramural
decision-making (adjective)	judgment
Department (when short for Dept. of Education)	lunchroom
Division (as the short form of the name of a specific division)	multimedia
drop out (noun)	non (as a prefix, no hyphen)
drop out (verb)	nonacademic
e-mail (all lowercase)	nonadministrative
ex-president	nonathletic
extracurricular	nonbasic
	noncategorical
	noncompliance

noncredit
nondegree
nonfederal
nongraded
non-high school
nonprint
nonprofessional
nonpublic
nonresident
nontaxable
nonteaching
nonvocational
nonwhite
offset
one-on-one
ongoing
open enrollment student
out-of-school (adj)
out-of-state (adj)
overall
overuse
part-time (part-time job)
part time (works part time)
percent
per pupil
policymaking (all usages)
postcard
postdate
postgraduate
post high school
postmaster
post office
postpaid
postsecondary
posttest
pre (as a prefix, no hyphen unless the
word is hard to read)
preappeal
predate
pre-elementary
prekindergarten
prepay
prereferral
preschool
preservice

president-elect
pretest
prevocational
prewar
program
programmer
reeducate
reevaluate
schoolhouse
schoolwide (see "wide")
secondary school
self- (as a prefix, should be hyphenated)
semiannual (twice a year)
semimonthly (twice a month)
semiweekly (twice a week)
socioeconomic
statehouse
statewide (see "wide")
systemwide (see "wide")
T square
teenage
ungraded
upgraded
up-to-date (adj)
vice president
weekend
wide (as a suffix, no hyphen)
World Wide Web

