



School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

JUNE 2006

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

NEWS FROM THE DE

Jeffrey to chair CCSSO task force

Judy Jeffrey has been named co-chair of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) newly created Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education. This CCSSO task force has been assembled to examine policy and practice to improve math and science education across the P-12 system, particularly at the middle and high school levels. The group of chief state school officers, deputies, practitioners, representatives of the business community, and researchers will work collectively to identify current successful models and practices in P-12 mathematics and science education, as well as principles of practice in high-quality professional development and delivery of instruction in P-12 mathematics and science education.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The contact for all Legislative items is Jeff Berger, jeff.berger@iowa.gov; 515/281-3399.

Bills await Governor's action

Although the legislature has adjourned, the legislative process for 2006 is not quite complete as the passed bills await action by Governor Vilsack. All bills must be approved or vetoed by June 2.

Four major education bills, along with several other minor bills, were passed this session. The major bills are:

- SF 2272 - DE Code Corrections/Education Negotiations Policy bill
- HF 2792 - Education Omnibus Policy and Funding bill
- HF 2527 - Education Appropriations bill
- HF 2797 - Standing Appropriations bill

The Department expects some line-item vetoes among the education policy and funding bills, which we expect to be completed by the end of May. The Governor's Office has planned a June 1 signing ceremony to highlight the major education bills. Once the Governor has acted on all the bills and we have final versions of the language, we will provide more detailed information, guidance, and technical support to schools.

The Department understands there are several issues of immediate interest to many in the field, including: 1) Teacher librarian program and staffing requirements, 2) statewide graduation requirements, 3) teacher quality professional development funding, 4) new administrator mentoring and induction, 5) additional local district student achievement reporting requirements, 6) market factor teacher salaries program, 7) pay for performance study, and 8) ELL funding expansion.

The Department will take appropriate action to provide technical assistance and guidance on these and other issues as quickly as possible. However, it is prudent to let the process run to completion. At this point, two broad summary documents are planned for release in early June. The first is a general summary of legislative action. The second is a letter to the field summarizing those changes that will directly affect school districts and staff. Additionally, several pieces of legislation will require detailed and specific guidance under separate cover.

In the interim, interested parties can access enrolled bill information through the Department's Legislative Update web site at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/legisupdate.asp> or from the Department's Legislative Liaison, Jeff Berger, 515/281-3399, jeff.berger@iowa.gov.

Iowa Youth Survey data emailed to superintendents

Iowa Youth Survey district reports are in the process of being emailed to each superintendent. The email message will come from Pam Pfitzenmaier with a pdf file attachment. Please note that districts will not receive a hard copy. Superintendents are encouraged to watch for this message and share the information with their staff and community.

This year the report includes a special section that contains "constructs" or groups of questions that are related to each other. These constructs are designed to facilitate collaboration with community members to address the needs of students. AEAs will have raw data from all participating districts to help with analyses of specific constructs or survey items.

Other reports such as state, county, and AEA level reports will be posted on the Iowa Youth Survey website, www.iowa.gov/government/dhr/cjip/iys/YouthSurvey/ythsurvey.html. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Iowa Youth Survey can be found at www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/cfcs/iys/index.html. For additional information, contact Janell Brandhorst, 515/281-5288, Janell.Brandhorst@iowa.gov or Jane Todey, 515/281-8514, Jane.Todey@iowa.gov.

Model Core Curriculum endorsed by State Board

The State Board endorsed the [Model Core Curriculum](#) for science, literacy, and mathematics during its May 11 meeting. As reported in the May SLU, the Model Core defines essential concept and skill sets for each of the three content areas. The Model Core is posted on the DE website at http://www.iowa.gov/educate/ecese/hsmcc/doc/06_MCC_final-report.pdf, and the DE is now in the process of developing a website that will provide educators a more detailed look at this curriculum, including an explanation and an example of each of the concepts and skills illustrated through the International Center for Leadership in Education's Rigor and Relevance Framework.

Also being planned is technical assistance for educators to learn how this model can be used to evaluate local curriculum and meet the new state graduation requirements and college prep coursework mandated by the state legislature.

The website is expected to be available mid-August with additional technical assistance to follow. For additional information, contact Rita Martens, 515/281-3145, rita.martens@iowa.gov.

Iowa Learning Technology Commission expects more grant funding

Legislation this year (HF 2782) appropriated an additional \$500,000 to the Iowa Learning Technology Commission for the implementation of additional innovative technology grants during the 2006-07 school year. The Iowa Learning Technology Commission will meet Tuesday, May 30, 2006, to review and update the pilot grant application process. It is anticipated that the next round of application requests will be opened in June with applications for new grants due to the Department sometime in August or September. Additional details will follow. Look for additional information in the July SLU or on the Iowa Learning Technology Commission's website at <http://homepage.mac.com/albodespanish/iltc/iltc.html>. For further information, contact Jeff Berger, 515/281-3399, jeff.berger@iowa.gov; or John O'Connell at 515/242-6354 or john.oconnell@iowa.gov.

Volunteer for a Site Visit Team

Iowa educators are encouraged to volunteer to participate on one of the Department of Education School Improvement site visits scheduled for the 2006-2007 school year. Serving on a site visit team has many benefits: It helps participants understand site visit expectations, the preparation process, and allows educators to obtain in-depth information and examples from other districts. The site visit schedule and participation information is available at the following website: www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/csi/sv.html. For more information, contact Annette Mathieu, 515/281-3170 or annette.mathieu@iowa.gov.

Superintendent's Evaluator License

Currently the Department of Education, School Administrators of Iowa, and the Iowa Wallace Grant are working with one another to design a separate evaluator training for superintendents. The focus of that training will be on the superintendents' use of the Iowa Leadership Standards in the context of their responsibility in the evaluation of principals.

From *June 1-15, 2006*, there will be an online survey for use by anyone who wishes to provide input on the major concepts and skill sets to be included in this training along with possible formats for the training.

Beginning June 1 and no later than June 15, please go to <http://survey.aea267.k12.ia.us/survey/4277/e8e2/> and provide a response to items related to the renewal training focused on the evaluation of administrators using the new leadership standards.

This input along with the input provided by an existing advisory group of superintendents will be used to continue the design work on the training.

Please contact Warren K. Weber at warren.weber@iowa.gov or Troyce Fisher at troyce@sai-iowa.org for more information.

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

Expulsion appeal decision, expelled student seeks to change districts

A regular education secondary student was expelled for fighting. She had an extensive disciplinary record with the school of insubordination to teachers and fighting her peers. The expulsion was upheld by the State Board (see [http://www.state.ia.us/educate/dc/ad/doc/Criqui%20\(Chariton\)%20Decision.doc](http://www.state.ia.us/educate/dc/ad/doc/Criqui%20(Chariton)%20Decision.doc)) as a reasonable exercise of the local board's statutory authority.

Of special note in the case is the fact that the student asked the State Board to address how she may enroll in another school district if her family moves before the period of expulsion expires. This is covered in Iowa Code section 282.4(3), which states, "...[I]f a student has been expelled or suspended from school and has not met the conditions of the expulsion or suspension, the student shall not be permitted to enroll in a school district until the board of directors of the school district approves, by a majority vote, the enrollment of the student."

The guidance of the State Board is that if an expelled student seeks to enroll elsewhere before the period of expulsion expires, the board of the school district to which enrollment is sought must approve. The decision states, "We also believe that a board in that position is well-advised to also seek permission from the board that expelled [the student]. Local school boards in Iowa should recognize and honor the authority of another board to discipline its students. As a matter of courtesy and good faith, no school board should take action that effectively negates an expulsion decision reached by another board."

The decision is silent regarding whether local boards *should* grant permission when asked. Such a decision is at the discretion of the local board. Bear in mind that obligations under the compulsory education law (Iowa Code chapter 299) are imposed on the student's parent/guardian....*not* the district.

Lessons from recent appeals of school closings

In March and May of this year, the State Board of Education upheld decisions of local school boards to close attendance centers. While the decisions of both local boards were affirmed, there are valuable tips to be derived from both cases.

- Be as specific as possible as early as possible.
 - Publicly state that closing one or more attendance centers is under consideration.
 - Name the specific building(s) as soon as possible.
- Caution board and staff members to refrain from making statements that could be interpreted as promises to keep any attendance center "safe" from consideration for closure.
- Board and staff members should be encouraged to attend all public meetings to hear firsthand what the public has to say.
- Be clear when setting the times and dates of public meetings that the board is seeking input from the public specifically on building closures.

Administrators in districts facing possible building closures are encouraged to read both of these recent cases: Ames: www.state.ia.us/educate/dc/ad/doc/Ames%20bldg%20closing%20decision.doc and Des Moines: [www.state.ia.us/educate/dc/ad/doc/Wallace%20\(DSM\)%20decision.doc](http://www.state.ia.us/educate/dc/ad/doc/Wallace%20(DSM)%20decision.doc).

Refunds: Do's and don'ts

This is the time of year when schools have questions about leftovers. Not food leftovers; left over *money* in a student's meal account or unused punches remaining on a meal ticket. **Schools have no statutory authority to retain any overages, no matter how small the amount.** Therefore, the following set of guidelines addresses these questions:

- What must a school do at the end of a school year with money that remains in a student's meal account or unused punches on a meal ticket?
 - If a student will be returning to the school the next school year, any remaining money or unused punches must accrue to the benefit of the student for use the next fall. If meal prices will be increasing for next school year or differ between grade levels, it may be best to refund any remaining ticket value unless the district chooses to honor outstanding punches for a meal even though the cost of those meals is now higher.
 - If a student has graduated or will otherwise not be returning, the school must refund the money to the student's parent or guardian. The parent/guardian paid the money in return for certain goods – the meals. The school may not keep any part of the money if it has not provided all of the purchased goods. To do so is *theft*.
- What if the amount remaining in the account is just a few cents?
 - The amount is irrelevant. The money is the property of the parent, not the school.
- May a school have a policy to the effect that a refund will be made upon request of a parent/guardian/adult student?
 - No. The school cannot put the burden of requesting a refund (for what belongs to the parent anyway) on the parent. The school could give parents the option of receiving a refund or making a donation of the remaining money to the school, but cannot sit back and wait for a parent to make the first move.
- How is the remaining money to be returned?
 - This can be done at the discretion of the school, as long as the means are reasonable. Different circumstances will determine whether it is reasonable to send a check home with a student vs. mailing the check to the parent. If a school sends cash home with a student, the school should take some common sense steps such as documenting that it has done so, putting the money in an envelope with the parent's name on it, making sure that other students are not aware that a student will be carrying home cash, etc. Carefully consider the age and maturity level of the student, as well as safety factors (will this make the student a target of thieves?), before sending cash home with a student.
- What about students who are "no shows" with no notice to the school?
 - Once a school is reasonably certain that a student will not be returning, the school needs to take reasonable steps to ascertain a forwarding address. If another school makes contact to ask for the student's records, work with that school. If no other school makes such contact, the school holding money that belongs to the student's family may have to work with other public officials (city hall, e.g.) to try to locate the family.
 - If, after making reasonable attempts, the school cannot locate the family, the school should ask its accountant and/or auditor how to handle the funds that remain in the student's account.
- How are schools to handle the issue of lost tickets?
 - Students – of all ages! – lose things. If a school can figure out from its records how many punches are remaining on the ticket, the school may issue a replacement, but this is at the discretion of the school. It may not be unreasonable for the school to say "sorry" and require that a new ticket be purchased.
- What rights does a school have when the family owes the school money?
 - When parents or guardians owe money for meals, a school has but one option – to file a small claim against the parent or guardian. (Of course, this follows letters and phone calls to appeal to the adult to make payment.) Presumably, if the family does not qualify for free or reduced meals, the family has the wherewithal to pay for the meals. A school may want to offer to have the family apply (or reapply) for f/r meals.

- Once certain that the ability to pay is not an issue, it is relatively painless to file a small claim. The clerk of court in the county in which the family resides has all the forms a school needs. The filing fee and service fee (the clerk will take care of service, which is usually via certified mail) are approximately \$50, and the parent/guardian will be ordered to reimburse the school for those amounts if judgment is entered in favor of the school. Someone from the school must appear at the small claims hearing, so there is an investment in someone's time. But a school may not punish the student by withholding a report card, for example. There is no legal obligation to feed a student whose parent/guardian has not purchased meals. Use good judgment here; younger children need the nutrition and cannot be held to account for the actions or inactions of the adults in their lives.

Guidance on new athletic eligibility rule

A guidance document, including an extensive FAQ, is available on the DE's home page (www.state.ia.us/educate) under *New or Revised Content*.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Competent Private Instruction deadline for reporting student progress

The deadline for parents to report the results of standardized tests or portfolio evaluations to the resident district is June 30. Districts shall submit Form C-1 to the Department of Education for each student who has a national percentile rank of 30 or below in any one of the test areas indicated OR who has less than 6 months progress on national grade equivalent from one year to another. (See 299A.6 for further details) Districts shall NOT report test scores to the Department of Education for students who are served by licensed teachers or who were younger than age 7 or older than age 16 on September 15 of the current school year. For additional information, contact Elizabeth Calhoun, 515/281-8170, elizabeth.calhoun@iowa.gov

Electronic Annual Progress Report (APR) for 2005-06

An electronic version of the 2005-06 APR will be launched this summer, and all districts will be encouraged to participate.

DE staff will pre-populate most of the data reporting requirements from the Project EASIER data system (non-public schools that do not use Project Easier will be able to report student achievement data manually on this system later in the summer). Districts/schools will be asked to input the information for the portions of the APR that cannot be pre-populated. This process will be much like the process used to complete the Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIPs) using text boxes (though districts will be required to fill out much less information for the APR than the CSIP).

ICN sessions to explain this process are scheduled at various times throughout June (see below). Administrators unable to attend one of these sessions may request a videotape of the ICN session from their AEA office.

Four ICN sessions have been scheduled. Requests to have an ICN room added to a session should be emailed to Annette Mathieu at Annette.Mathieu@iowa.gov by Friday, June 9, and must include the date and ICN location preferred. Requests will be confirmed via email.

Please note that due to the large number of ICN sites in each session, the sessions will be broadcast only (no interactivity via the ICN). **Questions during the broadcast** should be emailed to Debbie.boring@iowa.gov and they will be answered as time permits during the session.

Districts/schools will retain the option of completing "paper" copies of the APR for distribution to the public, but they are encouraged to use the electronic version.

The deadline for submission of the APR is September 15, 2006. The completed electronic APR reports will be available to the public via the DE website, and districts/schools may print a summary from the APR website to distribute to stakeholders who may not have Internet access.

Districts and schools that choose not to participate in the electronic system may request a copy of the APR checklist from Debbie Boring at 515/281-3198 or debbie.boring@iowa.gov after June 30, following the completion of the ICN informational sessions. Districts/Schools are **strongly encouraged** to attend an ICN session before making this decision.

APR ICN Dates and Times

Dates	Times
Wednesday, June 14	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Wednesday, June 21	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Thursday, June 22	9:00 am to 11:00 am
Friday, June 30	9:00 am to 11:00 am

ICN locations already scheduled are listed in the attachments.

Project EASIER spring reporting deadline June 16, 2006

The deadline for certifying Spring Project EASIER files is June 16, 2006. Districts unable to meet the deadline should contact Coleen McClanahan at 515/281-7509 or coleen.mcclanahan@iowa.gov for the purpose of identifying the cause of the delay and to jointly develop a completion plan that includes a timeline. Timely completion of the spring reporting process is a high priority for the Department. Your cooperation and assistance in bringing this initiative to timely closure will be appreciated.

Project EASIER file upload assistance

To facilitate a timely completion of Project EASIER file processing and subsequent certification of the BEDS summary reports, direct assistance from Project EASIER consultants is available to walk local staff through this entire process. To sign-up for assistance, contact Kim Wilson at kim.wilson@iowa.gov or 515/281-3757.

Project EASIER fall training set (preliminary information)

Two fall training options will be available.

- June ICN session covering content changes only
- September (five regional meetings)
 - Half-day (morning)
 - Structured to include four concurrent sessions
- Optional additional session for participants new to the project

Specific information regarding dates and locations will be provided soon.

Project EASIER curriculum reporting

Student level curriculum data will **not** be included in the 2006 fall reporting requirements. Rather, a mid-year collection is planned that will accommodate a more accurate reflection of courses offered and taught for the entire school year. However, a web-based curriculum summary report based on courses offered and taught in 2005-2006 will be posted in the fall for districts to certify. This is necessary for accreditation purposes.

Project EASIER fall/mid-year timeline

Note: the official count day for student enrollment has been changed from the third Friday in September to October 1. This year, October 1 falls on a Sunday, so the count day will be October 2.

October 2	Count Day Fall Production Site Opens for File Submissions
November 3	Fall Deadline for Files to be Certified Production Site Closes
January 2	Mid-Year Production Site Opens for File Submissions
February 1	Mid-Year Production Site Closes

Districts eligible for Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) funding

There are more than 170 Iowa school districts eligible for the Rural Education Achievement Program - Small Rural School Achievement Program for the 2006-07 school year (federal fiscal year 06). The USDE list of eligible districts has been posted on the USDE website at www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligible06/ia.xls. Information about the program is located at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligibility.html>. For more information, contact Jim Reese, jim.reese@iowa.gov or 515/281-4158.

STUDENT HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Deadline approaching for School Wellness Policy requirement

The 2004 Reauthorization of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs included a requirement that all local education agencies participating in the School Meal Programs establish a School Wellness Policy by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.

As indicated in previous School Leader Updates and a variety of trainings offered this past school year, the Iowa Association of School Boards has posted on its website a sample wellness policy and resources for Iowa school districts. IASB worked with Iowa Partners: Action for Healthy Kids to develop the sample policy and supporting documents. These documents include recommended best practices for school districts. This process begins with a needs assessment. An online assessment tool has been developed to assist with this process, and to provide a means for gathering data from numerous school sites as well as for comparison to a statewide profile. School districts need to involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy. School districts are required to have goals in five areas. In addition, each local board is required to have a plan for monitoring implementation of the wellness policy. A link to the self assessment tool, the sample policy, support materials and resources can be found on the IASB Web site at: <http://www.ia-sb.org/policylegal/wellnesspolicy.asp>.

Questions regarding the requirements may be directed to Janet Wendland, janet.wendland@iowa.gov, 515/281-5676 or Patti Harding, patti.harding@iowa.gov, 515/281-4754.

School Food Safety Program requirement deadline

School Districts have had the past year to implement the School Food Safety Program requirement included with the 2004 Reauthorization of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. This program should be fully in place for the beginning of next school year.

In 2005, USDA issued *Guidance for School Food Authorities; Developing a School Food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP*. Hard copies of this guidance were mailed to all school districts participating in the school meal programs. Information regarding this requirement and copies of PowerPoints from training offered this past year and other resources related to this new requirement can be found on the Department's web site, <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/fn/training/haccp.html>.

The DE did not receive additional copies of the USDA guidance document. Districts that need additional copies can go to the USDA web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd>; look under school food safety for a copy of the memo and the guidance.

Questions about this new requirement for schools should be directed to Sandra.Fiegen@iowa.gov, 563/452-3390 or MaryKay.Madsen@iowa.gov, 319/236-3416.

CALENDAR

- July 17-20** [Annual School Transportation Conference](#), Des Moines
July 18-20 Governor's [Homeland Security Conference](#), Des Moines
August 16 Iowa [Grant Symposium](#) (how to find and complete proposals), Des Moines

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.