



School Leader Update

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

April 2021

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[Connecting, engaging and leading](#)

There is a critical connection between schools, communities and student engagement. While embarking on school visits this spring, I am excited to connect directly with teachers and administrators, witness their enthusiasm and see these partnerships and connections in action.

Observing firsthand all the amazing things that are happening in our schools is one of the best parts of getting back into classrooms. When students are truly engaged, the connection between the classroom and their future is clear, which was on full display in Marshalltown where I saw students engaged in a career-based simulation class called Modular Technology. A required class in the 7th grade, students explore careers through hands-on activities in fields such as health care, construction, food and nutrition, aviation and engineering. Students were locating a vein to give their patient (a stuffed bear) a blood transfusion, calculating the caloric content of a balanced meal and designing, engineering and constructing a model bridge, to name a few. Each module is sponsored by a local business and students get a glimpse into the education that goes into each field.



[Read more](#)

[Two programs available for housing, utility assistance](#)

Students whose families have fallen behind in rent or mortgage payments due to COVID-19 may apply for assistance through two programs.

The Iowa Rent and Utility Assistance Program will provide eligible COVID-19 impacted renters with rent and/or utility assistance for a total of up to 12 months. The state of Iowa was awarded \$195 million for the program through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, which was passed by Congress late last year and is administered by the Department of Treasury.

Full eligibility details for the Iowa Rent and Utility Assistance Program, including an eligibility precheck, are available at iowahousingrecovery.com.

In addition, the Iowa Homeowner Eviction Prevention Program will be reopened to provide eligible COVID-19 impacted homeowners at imminent risk of eviction with mortgage assistance for up to four months, with a maximum assistance per household of \$3,600. The short-term program will be available until funds are exhausted or a new federal program is launched. Program funding is provided through federal CARES Act funds. Program eligibility details are available at iowahousingrecovery.com.



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Spring Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI)

Cedar Connect will open for Spring snapshots on April 5.

The test site for Spring SRI will open the week of April 10. Districts are highly encouraged to make full use of the SRI test site in order to catch any issues (e.g., attendance, discipline, absenteeism) prior to crunch time in May and June.

The Assessment Accountability application will also open in mid-late April. As we receive the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) and Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) records, districts will use this application to confirm the students tested, subgroups and accommodations. There will be a webinar in early May that will walk districts through this application.



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Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) End-of-Year Report 2020-2021

This year's Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) report will follow the same format as the 2019-20 report in the portal. The report is due on July 1.

TLC teams can access to the TLC End-of-Year Reporting webinar guidance on the [Department's TLC page](#). There is also a copy of the slide show without the presentation that can be accessed for copies of the slides. Once on the page, click on End-of-Year Reporting in the light blue box, then click on 2020-21 TLC End-of-Year Reporting Webinar in the dark blue box to access the webinar and slides show guidance.



For questions regarding this guidance, contact Lora Rasey at lora.rasey@iowa.gov or 515-725-0648, or Scott Dryer at scott.dryer@iowa.gov or 515-402-8700.

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Title I A Basic - Selection of schools opens April 15

The Title I - Selection of Schools collection will open in the Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA) on April 15. In order to complete this collection, the certified information in the [School Information Update \(SIU\)](#) must be correct. Access the School Information Update (SIU), found in the [Education Portal](#) under EdInfo, as soon as possible to either correct information or to certify that the information remains unchanged for the 2021-22 school year. These data will be pulled from the SIU on April 13. If the data are not correct, your district will be unable to work on the Selection of Schools.

Questions about SIU should be directed to Margaret Hanson at margaret.hanson@iowa.gov or 515-281-3214.

Questions about the Selection of Schools should be directed to Geri McMahon at geri.mcmahon@iowa.gov or 515-281-3944.

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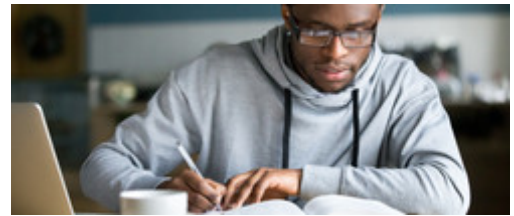
Measures of college readiness for Senior Year Plus Programs

House File 308, passed during the 2021 legislative session, provides an option for students to meet the required proficiency requirements of the Senior Year Plus program through measures of college readiness jointly established between a school district



and postsecondary institution. The following [guidance](#) is issued to postsecondary institutions and school districts for the purpose of establishing measures of college readiness.

The primary means for determining proficiency for purposes of Senior Year Plus is through a student's scores on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP); however, if a student is not proficient in one or more of the content areas of reading (English-language arts), mathematics and science on the statewide assessment, students may qualify to access arts and sciences postsecondary coursework through measures of college readiness jointly agreed upon by the school board and eligible postsecondary institution.



This statutory change took effect on March 8, 2021.

Contact Jen Rathje at Jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov or 515-326-5389 with comments or questions.

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[School Nutrition News to Know Webinar: Making Sense of School Nutrition Finances](#)

Are you confused by what is considered an allowable expense for School Nutrition funds? Do you understand the difference between direct and indirect costs? You are not the only one with questions.

The April News to Know in School Nutrition Webinar will feature Janice Evans and Denise Ragias from the Bureau of School Business Operations. They will share updates of how finance code applies to School Nutrition as well as answer some frequently asked questions.

School Business Managers, Superintendents, Food Service Directors, and others responsible for coding expenses to the non-profit food service account will not want to miss this informative presentation on Monday April 26, from 2-3 p.m.

[Register here](#)

For questions, contact Brenda Windmuller at Brenda.windmuller@iowa.gov or 515-681-5752.

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[Choose Iowa Food of the Month webinar and sub-grants](#)

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Choose Iowa campaign was developed to create support for farmers, drive demand for the products they produce, and generate excitement about agriculture innovation happening in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Education received a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm to School grant to expand the campaign to schools, childcare and summer food programs through the development of Iowa Food of the Month learning activities and promotional materials that feature locally grown and produced foods.

Participate in the Choose Iowa Food of the Month webinar on Thursday, April 8, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. to learn about the new resources and the opportunity to apply for sub-grants to support implementation. [Register here](#)

For questions, contact Carrie Scheidel at carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov or 515-281-4758.

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[USDA extends meal flexibilities through summer 2021](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the nationwide extension of [several USDA Summer Food Service](#)



[Program \(SFSP\) waivers](#) that allow all children to continue to receive meals this summer when schools are out of session. These flexibilities are now available through Sept. 30, 2021 or the start of the school year. The waivers were previously extended only through June 30, 2021.

The extended waivers allow:

- Meal sites to serve all children for free, regardless of income;
- Meals to be served outside of the normally required group settings and meal times, including bulk pick-up to include multiple days of meals; and
- Parents and guardians to pick-up meals for their children.

Additional guidance will be issued regarding updates needed to the SFSP application to reflect summer 2021 operations. School Nutrition Directors can connect with their Regional School Nutrition Consultant for more information. While these memos pertain specifically to summer meals, more guidance on the 2021-22 school year is forthcoming from USDA.



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[MyTeachingStrategies™ GOLD Assessment System Checkpoints for 2021-22](#)



The three checkpoint dates for the 2021-22 school year will be Nov. 19, 2021, Feb. 25, 2022, and May 27, 2022. Utilizing the three checkpoint periods ensures fidelity in administration of the assessment in a valid and reliable manner. Additionally, data from the three checkpoints is best used both in formative and summative means as teachers and administrators are determining appropriate instructional decisions for students. Districts are encouraged to complete the fall and spring checkpoints to represent the beginning and end of the preschool program year as represented in Iowa Code § 279.60.

Completing fewer than three checkpoints will affect the availability of various reports in the MyTeachingStrategies™ system. Guidance and procedures regarding GOLD® may be found on the [Teaching Strategies in Iowa web page](#) and the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program web page](#) under the subheading Assessment.

For information about GOLD® checkpoints, contact Mary Breyfogle at mary.breyfogle@iowa.gov or 515-326-1030, or Teaching Strategies Tech Support for Iowa 866-246-5352.

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[myIGDIs Opportunities and Resources](#)

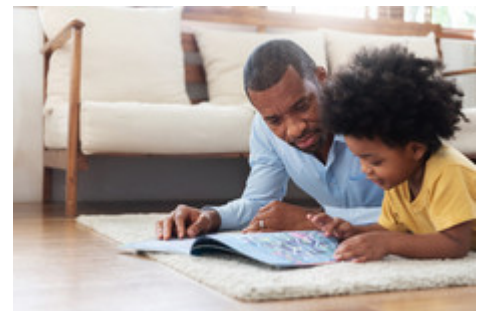
Districts and their community partners still have more than a month to conduct early literacy screening with myIGDIs. The spring window ends May 14. A new resource is available to support bluetooth-enabled iPad [administration](#). Use the following links to participate in myIGDIs Q & A opportunities for the remainder of the school year:

[April 9](#), 8-9 a.m.

[May 6](#), 3-4 p.m.

[June 2](#), 8-9 a.m.

On April 9, we will have a short overview of accessing reports and talking about results with parents and families, in addition to our open Q & A time. You may also want to [register](#) for a webinar about myIGDIs Data and MTSS planned for May 14. This webinar will be recorded and sent to those who register. These opportunities are also included in a monthly newsletter posted on the [Iowa myIGDIs page](#).



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