



School Leader Update

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

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December 2020

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Reaching the halfway point

As we near the end of 2020, and undoubtedly one of the most unconventional school years any of us have experienced, it is important to take note of how far we have come since the pandemic changed the face of our education system nearly nine months ago.

What seemed insurmountable in the spring became part of our learning landscapes this fall, with classrooms coexisting as physical and virtual spaces, shifting the framework for what and how learning looks like for our school communities.

As I visit with teachers and administrators, I witness how they are working harder than ever. Access, equity, delivery of instruction and monitoring the physical and mental health of students and staff are among the many challenges of this school year. All of our educational staff and partners, including school nurses, administrative assistants, aides, food service workers, bus drivers, custodial and maintenance staff and every member of our school communities, share the challenge of taking on additional responsibilities to ensure learning continues for students. But in a year full of unpredictability and pitfalls, the reassurance of their efforts is helping our students and communities with the resources they need as we work together to find a way forward.



[Read more](#)

More equity webinars announced; get them on your calendar

The Iowa Department of Education's ongoing equity webinars have been updated into January. All sessions run from 3 to 4:30 p.m., and registration for each is required.

Note that one session in December will feature students who will talk about their in-school experiences. Join us to explore these all-important topics.

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There's still time to register for the Dec. 5 Emerging Educators Academy

"Building a Foundation for the Future" is the theme for the Sixth Annual Emerging Educators Academy on Dec. 5.

Designed for preservice teachers up through third-year teachers and their mentors, the academy is hosted and run by Iowa's Outstanding Educators.

A day of interaction will focus upon elevating, inspiring and educating the new teachers. With a virtual format taking the place of the traditional face-to-face interactions, attendees will join via Zoom to engage in quality presentations from some of Iowa's finest educators.

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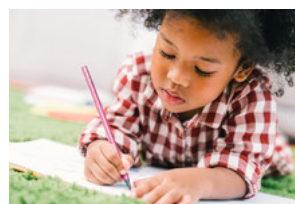


myIGDIs Early Literacy Assessment

Winter continues to bring us educational challenges and the need for high quality data for decision-making is great. Winter screening for preschool is available to enhance the learning opportunities and play offered for 4-year-olds in Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program classrooms. To reserve myIGDIs screening seats for preschool students, contact Jennifer Adkins at jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov or complete this [myIGDIs Winter Survey](#).

If you did not screen in fall, you may still administer myIGDIs in the winter and spring windows. Preschool screening with myIGDIs is provided at no cost in Iowa and is voluntary. Further information including access to training is available on the [Iowa-specific myIGDIs website](#).

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Preschool updates

Updated documents have been posted on the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program \(SWVPP\) webpage](#). These documents include an updated version of the [FAQ for Implementation](#) and the [Finance FAQs for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program](#).

Administrators with questions about any of these documents or questions in general relating to preschool programming are encouraged to join Mary Breyfogle's virtual office hours on Dec. 10, 3-5 pm. Office hours are held the **second Thursday of the month** and can be joined using [this link](#).



The [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children Application Packet 2021-2022](#) is also posted on the SWVPP webpage. School districts not currently participating in the SWVPP may apply to begin a preschool program in 2021-22. Applications are due April 6, 2021.

For information about the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children, contact Jennifer Adkins at Jennifer.Adkins@iowa.gov or 515-954-5652, or Mary Breyfogle at Mary.Breyfogle@iowa.gov or 515-326-1030.

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Important dates for Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI)

Another season of Certified Enrollment has closed. The Iowa Department of Education SRI team commends and thanks you all for your patience and hard work during that process.

Upcoming dates to remember for Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI):

- Cedar Connect will open for Winter SRI Testing Dec. 1
- SRI will open for Winter SRI Testing Dec. 7
- Dropout Verification opens Dec. 1 and closes Dec. 15. If you are not familiar with the Dropout Verification application, or want a refresher, there is a short webinar available [here](#).



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Student culinary competition

Student culinary competition

The Iowa Department of Education is hosting a Choose Iowa Recipe Contest for students enrolled in a culinary arts class or foods-based course. Students are invited to put on their chef hats to cook up creative school meal recipes that incorporate locally grown food items.

The concept for the competition is to plan a student-friendly recipe that features a local food item, can be replicated in large quantities, and follows the USDA school meal guidelines. Students learning virtually, hybrid, or in person are eligible to participate.



The student(s) that submit one of the top 12 recipes will be invited to be part of a culinary competition to be held Spring 2021. In addition, the school will receive a \$2,000 sub-grant to support collaborative activities with their school nutrition program. The recipes will be tested and standardized to be utilized by school nutrition programs across the state and country.

The deadline to submit entries is March 1. For more information, visit the [Iowa Team Nutrition Webpage](#) or contact Carrie Scheidel at carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov or 515-281-4758, or Katy Blatnick-Gagne at katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov or 515-281-8353.

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Computer Science legislation: House File 2629

[HF 2629](#) was signed into law in June. The legislation, relating to the Future Ready Iowa Act and other efforts to strengthen Iowa's workforce, includes provisions for computer science. Here's what the legislation says and you need to know:

- Computer science instruction incorporating the standards shall be offered, beginning July 1, 2023, in at least one grade level 1-6.
- Computer science instruction incorporating the standards shall be offered, beginning July 1, 2023, in at least one grade level 7-8.
- One-half unit of computer science incorporating the standards shall be offered, beginning July 1, 2022 in high school.
- Each public school district and nonpublic school shall develop and implement a K-12 computer science plan by July 1, 2022.
- The Department of Education shall develop and implement a statewide K-12 computer science plan by July 1, 2022.



Additional guidance will be forthcoming. For questions, contact Wren Hoffman at wren.hoffman@iowa.gov or 515-981-3306.

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Clearinghouse for Work-based Learning mini-grant opportunities

The Clearinghouse for Work-based Learning, in conjunction with the AEA system, is announcing a mini-grant opportunity where teachers can work with their Area Education Agency consultant to launch a project and capture the process. Participants are asked to create a video of their experience and also build a project facilitation guide. [Full details can be found here](#). The goal is to distribute grants across the AEA regions (four projects launched per region). This opportunity is open to PK-12 educators, any discipline. The aim is to get a wide variety of classes (and standards) in which projects are launched. Reach out

to jake_welchans@iowa.gov or 515-281-5494 with questions.

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