



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADER BULLETIN

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## Inside this issue

- [Department of Education and Governor Reynolds awards \\$4 million in career academy grants to prepare more students for high-demand fields](#)
- [TOMORROW: Join us for the final guided pathways webinar](#)
- [College and career transition counselors initiative grows, supports post-graduation readiness](#)
- [Registration open: Iowa Work-based Learning Conference](#)
- [Regional planning partnerships strengthen CTE through collaboration](#)
- [Iowa Western sets goal to train 100 nursing assistants](#)
- [Year 3 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment released](#)
- [State Board of Education approves middle school CTE standards](#)
- [Division congratulates Chris Russell on retirement](#)

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## Department of Education and Governor Reynolds awards \$4 million in career academy grants to prepare more students for high-demand fields



Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Education have awarded four \$1 million competitive grants through the Career Academy Incentive Fund to prepare more high school students for success in college, postsecondary training and

the workforce.

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), Iowa Lakes Community College, Iowa Western Community College and North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) each received a \$1 million grant to increase access to career academy programs in high-demand fields through new regional centers. Students in partnering school districts will benefit from industry partnerships, earn high school and college credit and gain technical and traditional academic skills offered through career and technical education (CTE) programs. This is the third round of awards.

“Expanding career academies develops our workforce talent pipeline and prepares high school students for high-skill, high-demand careers that are available right here in Iowa,” said Gov. Reynolds. “I commend DMACC, Iowa Lakes, Iowa Western and NIACC for their leadership in growing career academies which inspire and develop some of Iowa’s most valuable workers beginning at a young age and, at the same time, expands opportunities to meet the needs of students, families, schools and employers in their local communities.”

DMACC’s grant will be used to create a new regional center in Templeton that will serve students from four rural districts in west central Iowa. Iowa Lakes will use the funding to establish a new regional center on its Spirit Lake campus that will expand career academy programming to students in four surrounding districts. Iowa Western will work with four rural school districts to establish a new regional center in Missouri Valley. NIACC will establish a new regional center in Charles City to serve students from seven school districts in north central Iowa. This is the second Career Academy Incentive Fund award for NIACC. The college was awarded the state’s first grant in 2020, which was used to establish the new John V. Hanson Career Center in Forest City.

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At these new locations, students will have access to CTE programs and state-of-the-art equipment in high-demand fields, including advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, building trades, electrical trades, health care, information technology and welding.

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“These innovative partnerships are vital to introducing more students to high-demand fields in programs where they can earn industry-recognized credentials and college credit,” said Iowa Department of Education Director Ann Lebo. “The new regional centers will help more students leave high school prepared for the workforce or ready for further postsecondary education, and I am thankful to these community college and school district leaders for their dedication to expanding career academy opportunities.”

**READ MORE**

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## **TOMORROW: Join us for the final guided pathways webinar**



Join us for a final webinar on Thursday, December 16 from 2-3:30 p.m. to celebrate the work that has been done throughout the Guided Pathways grant period and to also look forward to the work that will continue statewide on this initiative. Please use the [link here](#) to join the webinar.

For more information, please contact Kelly Friesleben, Education Program Consultant, ([kelly.friesleben@iowa.gov](mailto:kelly.friesleben@iowa.gov) or (515) 725-0046).

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## **College and career transition counselors initiative grows, supports post-graduation readiness**



At Linn-Mar High School in Marion, she is known simply as Mrs. Bass. But don't be fooled. Sheryl Bass is more than just a name. She is one of the standouts in an expanding, statewide guidance program initiative that prepares high school juniors and seniors for life after graduation.

Although Bass has been a school counselor at Linn-Mar for the past six years, this school year, through a partnership with [Kirkwood Community College](#), marks her first as one of Iowa's new [college and career transition counselors \(CCTC\)](#). CCTCs are markedly different from general school counselors and have the distinct assignment of connecting targeted students in high school to postsecondary education or other opportunities, such as the workforce or the military. Bass and other CCTCs work with students starting in eleventh grade and have the unique potential to continue their assistance through the summer after graduation and during the student's first year at a community college. It is an opportunity to truly help transition a student from high school to what lies next.

“Having that specific role of working with college and career readiness, I can focus conversations solely on those things,” Bass said. “I can provide more intensive support for the student and their family. I can help with things like completing a college application, [FAFSA \(Free Application for Financial Student Aid\)](#), and student loan applications or arranging college visits.”

CCTCs are designed to work specifically with students who may need additional support for planning beyond graduation. They often reach out to students from varied backgrounds, such as students from lower socio-economic means, first-generation students, students who report as racial or ethnic minorities, teen mothers and students with disabilities. Oftentimes, the CCTC will also keep in touch regarding college applications and financial aid deadlines with the student's parents, who may also have very limited first-hand college experience.

“I have met with over 100 students already,” Bass said.

Together, the CCTC and student plot out a feasible college and career pathway to see what steps are needed prior to graduation. The student's [individual career and academic planning \(ICAP\)](#) can be tied into these steps, too, to help determine what career possibilities may be available based on their interests and skills. The CCTC can also identify [concurrent enrollment](#) possibilities to get a jump start on college credits and career readiness or coordinate [work-based learning](#) opportunities, such as job shadows, internships or apprenticeships, that could further benefit the student's career exploration.

**READ MORE**

For more information, please contact Katy Blatnick-Gagne, Education Program Consultant, ([katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov](mailto:katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov) or (515) 281-8353).

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## **Registration open: Iowa Work-based Learning Conference**



The Iowa Work-Based Learning Coordinators' executive board is excited to invite MOC/WEC coordinators, CTE teachers, work-based learning coordinators, school-to-work coordinators, business partners and interested colleagues to join us for our professional development conference on Thursday, April 14th at The Meadows Event Center in Altoona. This collaborative conference is a personalized learning and networking event for anyone interested in providing quality work-based learning for students.

This year's breakout sessions and speakers will help you develop or expand the best work-based learning program possible by offering sessions covering the entire work-based learning continuum. This event also includes our annual business meeting and voting for new executive board positions.

[REGISTER HERE.](#)

For more information, please contact Kristy Volesky, Education Program Consultant, ([kristy.volesky@iowa.gov](mailto:kristy.volesky@iowa.gov) or (515) 971-0669).

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## **Regional planning partnerships strengthen CTE through collaboration**



North Scott High School applied sciences teacher David Linnenbrink is on to something. He knows that teachers in career and technical education need support and shared practices, professional development and industry-standard equipment in order to teach and develop Iowa's future skilled workforce. So what's his plan of attack to accomplish these things? It's collaborating with his local regional planning partnership.

[Regional planning partnerships](#), known as RPPs, were established through state legislation in 2017 to provide a regional focus on the quality and access to [career and technical education \(CTE\)](#) programs. RPPs consist of representation from school districts, community colleges, [intermediaries](#), business leaders, economic development groups, Iowa [Area Education Agencies](#), teachers and other faculty members. RPPs throughout the state are similarly tasked with supporting and promoting CTE programs for their region's students, but goals and priorities are individualized for local education and workforce needs.

"RPPs bring the right players and representatives together," said Jane Bradley, administrative consultant at the Iowa Department of Education. "These 15 collaborative groups truly make a difference at a regional level that impacts students in their career and technical education and work-based learning activities."

In Iowa, RPP boards are split into regions coordinating with Iowa's 15 community colleges. They meet at least twice a year and focus on five main areas: promoting access to career and academic planning, supporting districts in providing high-quality CTE programs, aligning CTE programming with the region's workforce needs, supporting innovation among CTE teachers and promoting equity in the access of CTE programs to disparate populations. Additionally, smaller groups of CTE teachers will meet regularly to collaborate and share best practices.

Through these initiatives, RPPs, such as regions 9, 13 and 14, are able to strengthen their CTE programming and capacity for student learning and success through funding support and group recommendations. CTE programs are evaluated through RPPs on a five-year cycle where feedback on strengths and improvement needs are provided to school districts.

“Each CTE program is evaluated every five years,” said Marta Brooks, coordinator for RPP 9 in eastern Iowa. “This self-study evaluates the program and helps to see where programming updates are needed in order to meet the needs of students as well as the local labor market.”

For Linnenbrink, who serves as the welding chairperson for RPP 9’s advisory council, he has seen how impactful support and funding from an RPP can be.

“We have had several professional development opportunities and equipment upgrades funded through the RPP,” Linnenbrink said. “For instance, we have learned how to make the workplace safer and more efficient through trainings, purchased welding curriculum videos and learned cutting-edge welding techniques.”

A large part of an RPP’s role is providing collaboration opportunities and shared resources with its region’s school districts. Linnenbrink reports he and six other welding instructors from different high schools in his region were able to attend an American Welding Society (AWS) certification training, and they were able to also offer the training for another 17 teachers across the state at no additional cost. This RPP 9-funded project helped to ensure that more welding instructors in Iowa have this industry-standard credential and are well-equipped to provide quality training to CTE students.

[READ MORE](#)

For more information, contact Jane Bradley, Administrative Consultant ([jane.bradley@iowa.gov](mailto:jane.bradley@iowa.gov) or (515) 281-4707).

## [Iowa Western sets goal to train 100 nursing assistants](#)



Growing up as a nurse’s daughter, 21-year-old Chloe McIntosh seemed destined for a career in nursing. As such, it isn’t too surprising to learn that McIntosh recently became certified as a nursing assistant through a short-term program at [Iowa Western Community College](#). What is surprising, though, is that she – along with 99 others – was able to do it for free.

Through a new, innovative initiative offered at Iowa Western, 100 students will become trained as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at no cost. Each student of the two-week course will receive free tuition and exams as well as a set of scrubs, shoes and a stethoscope. The average cost savings for these 100 students is estimated around \$1,200 each.

“I’m not eligible for other financial assistance because they use my parents’ income when calculating eligibility,” said McIntosh, who lives in Council Bluffs. “The tuition assistance for the CNA class provided a great opportunity for me.”

To support the 100 CNA students, Iowa Western has utilized a mix of funding, including [Gap Tuition Assistance](#) and the [Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund \(GEER II Gap Expansion\)](#). Both funds provide financial support for tuition, fees and equipment for training in a high-demand job field.

Eligibility for Gap Tuition Assistance is based on the student’s household finances. Persons who are between 150-250 percent of the federal poverty level and show the capacity to achieve success and employment are given first priority for tuition assistance.

Comparatively, the GEER II Gap Expansion funds reach more students by offering funding support to those who do not qualify for other financial assistance such as the general Gap Tuition Assistance, Last Dollar Scholarship or Pell grants. GEER II Gap Expansion is a part of the \$11.5 million in discretionary funds received through the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2020. Iowa’s 15 community colleges received nearly \$2.9 million for GEER II Gap Expansion funding.

“Having the GAP and GEER II Gap Expansion funding allows us the resources to eliminate barriers for students who would otherwise not be able to afford additional education and training,” said Libby Woods, director of adult education at Iowa Western Community College. “This can lead them to a career pathway or employment opportunities with a livable wage.”

[READ MORE](#)

For more information, contact Mike Williams, Education Program Consultant ([mike.williams@iowa.gov](mailto:mike.williams@iowa.gov) or (515) 725-2005).



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## **Year 3 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment released**



The new Year 3, 2021-22 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) was released on Nov. 29. All individual school districts, school districts that are part of a consortium, and community colleges that receive Perkins funding will complete the CLNA at the local level.

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) introduced the concept of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). The needs assessment is to be used by each eligible recipient as a guidepost, informing the development of the local application and, in particular, how the eligible recipient uses its federal Perkins funds.

The CLNA focuses on six broad elements:

- Student Performance
- Size, Scope and Quality; and Implementation of CTE Programs/Programs of Study
- Labor Market Alignment
- Recruitment, Retention, and Training of CTE Educators
- Equity and Access
- Safety for CTE Program(s)/Building(s)/District(s)

The CLNA is to be used by the eligible recipient to inform the development of the Perkins V local application. The CLNA is intended to ensure eligible recipients are using federal Perkins funds to advance the priorities established in the law, with a focus on better serving special populations, robust stakeholder engagement and ensuring that quality CTE programming is aligned with education and workforce needs.

Visit [perkins.educateiowa.gov](https://perkins.educateiowa.gov) for additional information or contact Katy Blatnick-Gagne, Education Program Consultant, ([katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov](mailto:katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov) or 515-281-8353).

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## **State Board of Education approves middle school CTE standards**



The State Board of Education approved [Middle School Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) standards](#) at its November meeting, which are designed to ensure students gain a full range of desired technical, academic and employability knowledge and skills that are appropriate for middle school CTE programs. These standards are one of eight requirements set forth in Iowa's Perkins V state plan in order for Perkins funds to be used for middle school CTE programs.

For more information, contact Dennis Harden, Bureau Chief ([dennis.harden@iowa.gov](mailto:dennis.harden@iowa.gov) or (515) 281-4716).

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## **Division congratulates Chris Russell on retirement**



The Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation congratulates Chris Russell on his upcoming retirement on Monday, December 27. Chris joined the Iowa Department of Education in 2015 after spending 20 years with Iowa Valley Community College District as a faculty member, dean and chief academic officer.

Heather Meissen, former associate dean of articulation, assessment and general education program review at Eastern Iowa Community College, joined the team September 27 and has already made many connections to community college representatives.

You can send Chris messages of congratulations at [chris.russell@iowa.gov](mailto:chris.russell@iowa.gov)

For questions about community college programs, please contact Heather Meissen ([heather.meissen@iowa.gov](mailto:heather.meissen@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2247).

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