



February 2021

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Learning from our Learners

As we look forward and collectively imagine the future of education in Iowa in a post-COVID world, it is important to really hear and understand our students' experiences. Learning from our learners, actively listening and seeking their feedback is necessary in order to grow and build an even stronger education system that meets the needs of all of our students going forward.



We have learned a lot since last spring and need to be prepared to provide high-quality programs to students regardless of the educational setting. But we must also be mindful of the broader impact these disruptions and challenges have had on our students.

[Read more](#)

****NOTE: The Social Justice and Equity in Education Conference is being rescheduled for Fall 2021****

Register for equity conference; also seeking presenters

The Iowa Department of Education is hosting a virtual conference April 14 focusing on social justice and equity in education. [Register](#) now.

The conference is designed for educators, practitioners and industry experts to share best practices and to equip educators with research-based tools to promote the academic and social emotional learning for all students. The conference theme, "From Conversation to Practice - A Call to Action," is a culmination of the Department's ongoing webinar series starting last fall.

There also will be a pre-conference session (by invitation only) on April 13 that will provide training specifically targeting academic leadership in PK-12 and postsecondary, community-based and policy related decision-making roles.

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Digital learning guides now available

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology (OET) has [released](#) two new resource guides: the [Teacher Digital Learning Guide](#) and the [School Leader Digital Learning Guide](#).

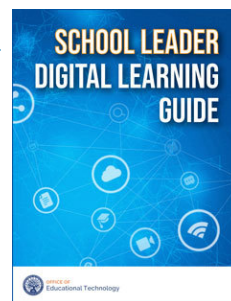
These guides provide strategies to help teachers and school leaders effectively incorporate digital learning strategies both inside and outside the classroom. They may also use the information to support parents and families as they navigate learning from home.

The Teacher Guide includes insights on ways to meet the unique needs of students by using educational technology, facilitating personalized learning for students, and embracing professional development opportunities.

The Leader Guide helps school leaders develop a vision for digital learning by planning, funding, implementing, maintaining, and adapting learning programs designed to best serve and empower students of all abilities.

These publications are a companion to the [Parent and Family Digital Learning Guide](#). All three guides are posted on OET's [web site](#).

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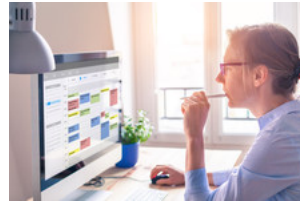


Mark your calendars for myIGDIs Q & A opportunities

Mark your calendars for opportunities for myIGDIs Q & A for the remainder of the school year:

- [Feb. 5](#), 8-9 a.m.
- [March 2](#), 3-4 p.m.
- [April 9](#), 8-9 a.m.
- [May 6](#), 3-4 p.m.
- [June 2](#), 8-9 a.m.

[Register](#) for a webinar about myIGDIs Data and MTSS planned for Feb. 24 for winter users. This webinar will be recorded. These opportunities and associated links will be shared by email with district administration contacts by Renaissance and will be included in a newsletter posted on the [Iowa myIGDIs page](#).



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Healthy Choices Count webinar - \$1,000 sub-grants available

The school environment plays a fundamental role in shaping lifelong healthy behaviors and can have a powerful influence on students' eating and physical activity habits. Learn about strategies and actions schools can take to create a healthy environment, including school wellness policies and 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count, during a webinar on Thursday, Feb. 11, from 2-3 p.m.



Schools that view the webinar (live or recorded version), will be eligible to apply for a \$1,000 sub-grant to support their school wellness environment. Examples of allowable expenditures:

- Equipment for recess, classroom activity breaks, and Physical Education classes
- Water bottle filling station
- Fresh fruit and vegetable taste tests
- Non-food rewards
- School garden supplies
- Nutrition education resources
- Teacher 5-2-1-0 School Wellness Licensure Course reimbursement (AEA Online)

The webinar will be recorded and sent out to all individuals that register. [Register today](#). Questions? Contact Carrie at carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov or 515-281-4758, or Lyn Jenkins at lyn.jenkins@iowa.gov or 515-689-3607.

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Webinar: Making it happen! School nutrition success stories

School nutrition programs have adapted the delivery of meals to meet safety protocols and align with school operations while meeting USDA requirements. School meals play an important role for many children and families, easing the financial strain and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus and providing a comforting source of consistency for students.



School meals are essential to student success and well-being. With collaboration and planning, meals can work for everyone. Hear school nutrition best practices across the state during the February School Nutrition News to Know Webinar on Feb. 22, from 2-3 p.m. All are welcomed to participate. [To register, click here](#).

Questions? Contact Carrie Scheidel at carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov.

Pictured: Evans Elementary (Ottumwa CSD) principal, Aaron Ruff, was spotted in the cafeteria helping serve lunch. Yvonne Johnson, food service director, said the Evans kitchen was short staffed. "We are all in this together!" she said.

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Accessing online postsecondary courses through Senior Year Plus Programs

The Iowa Department of Education has received inquiries regarding student use of online postsecondary coursework to meet high school graduation requirements delivered through concurrent enrollment and the postsecondary course enrollment options (PSEO) program. The Department offers the following [guidance](#) to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools contracting directly with a community college when handling student enrollments into online postsecondary coursework through these Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs.



Eligible students may access online postsecondary coursework and be awarded credit (high school and college) under the same general provisions outlined in statute and administrative rule for concurrent enrollment and PSEO programs. The mode of course delivery, such as online, may not be used as a means of limiting participation or the conferral of credit within these SYP programs.

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

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