



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADER BULLETIN

A Publication from the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

Volume 12, Issue 9  
[educateiowa.gov](http://educateiowa.gov)

April 2022

## Inside this issue

- [Work-based learning professional development puts teachers in the workplace](#)
- [Updated State Accreditation Guide now available](#)
- [Pathway navigators lead the way to second chances](#)
- [Community colleges work to address CDL workforce needs](#)
- [Department announces Iowa Meaningful Career Conversations training](#)
- [Students shine with transfer majors](#)
- [Department releases two toolkits to support work-based learning](#)
- [Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee approves audit report, plan](#)
- [Save the dates: Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Summer Conference](#)

### Jeremy Varner

Administrator, Division of  
Community Colleges and Workforce  
Preparation  
515-281-8260  
[jeremy.varner@iowa.gov](mailto:jeremy.varner@iowa.gov)

### Dennis Harden

Chief, Bureau of Career and Technical  
Education  
515-281-4716  
[dennis.harden@iowa.gov](mailto:dennis.harden@iowa.gov)

### Amy Gieseke

Chief, Bureau of Community Colleges  
515-858-2234  
[amy.gieseke@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.gieseke@iowa.gov)

## Work-based learning professional development puts teachers in the workplace



A new opportunity to increase quality work-based learning experiences in Iowa schools is coming soon for educators across the state.

Provided through a public-private partnership with the [Iowa Intermediary Network](#), [Iowa's Area Education Agencies](#), [Iowa Business Council](#) and [Iowa Association of Business and Industry](#), the [Educators in the Workplace Program](#) offers teachers a first-hand look at work-based learning opportunities and what they can offer their students.

"The Educators in the Workplace Program provides an on-site glimpse into what work-based learning opportunities are actually like," said Kristy Volesky, Iowa Department of Education consultant for work-based learning. "Teachers can also get a better understanding of the workforce needs in their area and how education can align with business."

The program takes an innovative approach by condensing the enriched experience within a one-week timeframe. It is anticipated that the week-long time commitment will allow for more educators to fit the training opportunity into their schedules.

"Although the experience is capped at a week, there is still a lot of learning that takes place," Volesky said. "All experiences can be taken back to the classroom and shared with students to enhance curriculum and future career exploration."

All participants of the Educators in the Workplace Program will receive continuing education credits and a \$1,000 stipend.

The [Educators in the Workplace Program is now accepting registrations](#). Iowa administrators and teachers from all grade levels, elementary through high school, are welcome to participate. Placements for the program will take place during summer break.

Additional information for the Educators in the Workplace Program can be found on the [Iowa Intermediary Network's website](#).

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

**Alison Jepsen**  
Executive Officer, Division of  
Community Colleges and Workforce  
Preparation  
515-314-8328  
[alison.jepsen@iowa.gov](mailto:alison.jepsen@iowa.gov)

---

## Updated State Accreditation Guide now available



The Iowa Department of Education has released an updated *Iowa Community Colleges State Accreditation Guide* to assist community colleges administrators with the state accreditation process. This comprehensive guide is designed to explain the history of state accreditation, the evaluation schedule, the steps of the state process and more. The guide contains state standards for faculty qualifications, CTE program evaluation, strategic planning, Senior Year Plus Programs, as well as other useful resources. The State Accreditation Guide is available on the [Department's website](#).

For more information, contact Amy Gieseke, Bureau Chief ([amy.gieseke@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.gieseke@iowa.gov) or (515) 858-2234).

---

## Pathway navigators lead the way to second chances



As part of an initiative through the [Iowa Consortium for Higher Education in Prisons \(ICHEP\)](#) – which brings together the Iowa Department of Education, [Iowa Department of Corrections](#), [Board of Regents](#) and higher education institutions – the five corrections pathway navigators are tasked with the broad goal of connecting students within Iowa's nine correctional facilities with education resources, trainings and college courses.

However, this definition is oversimplified as pathway navigators wear many hats. They serve as academic advisors, point-of-contacts, support systems and all-around coordinators for incarcerated students who are looking to earn high school equivalency diplomas, new vocational skills or even college degrees.

“Students will actually have someone they can see and connect with in the prisons,” said Peggy Long, education consultant at the Iowa Department of Education. “Prior to now, students had to coordinate everything on their own. The pathway navigators will be present in the prisons and can guide students through their entire process and educational journey.”

Inmates interested in pursuing education can seek assistance through pathway navigators on items such as securing financial aid, setting up courses, completing paperwork and applications and understanding next steps. For example, federal Pell grant eligibility opens up for incarcerated students in 2023. Pathway navigators will undoubtedly need to provide guidance on the rules, deadlines and application requirements for the funding, but they are ready for it.

“It will be exciting to see more people utilize Pell for classes while incarcerated,” said Madison Stearns, corrections pathway navigator for Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility and Iowa State Penitentiary. “It’s an amazing opportunity that I can help with.”

Corrections pathway navigators are highly experienced and resourceful in working with this special population as well as the supports available within their regions. They will be vital for students who are transferring to other Iowa facilities or will be released back to their home communities, and their coordination will provide a better transition for each student. All five pathway navigators will work together when students move to different regions.

**READ MORE**

For more information, contact Peggy Long, Education Program Consultant ([peggy.long@iowa.gov](mailto:peggy.long@iowa.gov) or (515) 975-8398).

---

## Community colleges work to address CDL workforce needs

Representatives of Iowa's community colleges across the state have met several times since the beginning of the year to



discuss strategies to improve and expand skilled driving programs that result in a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). A specific point of discussion has been how to adapt programs to address the implementation of new Entry Level Driver Training ([ELDT](#)) national standards and new regulations by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) that were released in February that impact all transportation training providers. Recommendations from the working group include identifying ways to further streamline or standardize curriculum offered between

colleges, exploring new potential sources of financial or technical support and setting up a new data sharing agreement between the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Department of Transportation to leverage available education, workforce and licensing data to better understand skilled driver workforce needs in Iowa.

For more information, contact Joe Collins, Education Program Consultant ([joe.collins@iowa.gov](mailto:joe.collins@iowa.gov) or (515) 419-5190).

---

## **Department announces Iowa Meaningful Career Conversations training**



The Department has set dates for the Iowa Meaningful Career Conversations (MCC) training. These trainings have been developed in line with research that demonstrates that when students engage in meaningful career conversations, they begin to understand how their unique aptitudes, skills, talents, self-identity and values influence the decision-making process for life-long learning. Iowa MCC trainings will begin this May with nine (9) training sessions held either virtually or in a hybrid format. All PK-20 educators and community college staff are invited to

attend a session. Dates and details for these training sessions are listed below. [Register here.](#)

- May 10: Great Prairie AEA (Virtual) - 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
- May 11: Central Rivers AEA (Hybrid) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- May 11: Heartland AEA (Hybrid) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- May 12: Keystone AEA (Virtual) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- May 18: Grant Wood AEA (Virtual) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- May 18: Northwest AEA (Hybrid) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- May 19: Green Hills AEA- Red Oak location (Hybrid) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- May 19: Mississippi Bend (Virtual) - 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
- May 19: Prairie Lakes AEA (Hybrid) - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

For more information, contact Katy Blatnick-Gagne, Education Program Consultant ([katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov](mailto:katy.blatnick-gagne@iowa.gov) or (515) 681-6733).

---

## **Students shine with transfer majors**



At first glance, Iowa State University psychology majors Taylor Mathis and Chasity Foster are very different. Mathis is a 20-year-old student finding her way in her post-high school years while Foster is an adult learner looking to make a bold career change. However, both women share a similar bond: They are students who have successfully transferred from an Iowa community college.

Mathis and Foster both transferred from [Des Moines Area Community College \(DMACC\)](#) and like other transfer students, found many advantages to beginning their academic journey outside of a traditional four-year institution.

"I saved a lot of money," Mathis said. "It allowed me to work and still live at home while earning my associate degree. I was able to explore the psychology field and see what I liked and didn't like.

"It also gave me valuable time to grow and explore."

Iowa is one of the leading states in the nation for transfer student success.

Compared to approximately 40 percent nationally, over 52 percent of students who start at an Iowa community college and move onward to a four-year U.S. institution graduate with a bachelor's degree within three years.

“There has been a dedicated effort in Iowa to create a better transfer experience for students,” said Kelly Friesleben, education consultant at the Iowa Department of Education. “Our goal is to streamline the transfer process and ensure students avoid taking unnecessary credits once they move to the four-year institution.”

**READ MORE**

For more information, contact Kelly Friesleben, Education Program Consultant ([kelly.friesleben@iowa.gov](mailto:kelly.friesleben@iowa.gov) or (515) 868-2847).

---

## **Department releases two toolkits to support work-based learning**



The Department of Education has released two new toolkits to support educators in the work-based learning space.

The [Career-Based Service Learning Toolkit](#) outlines how to move a service learning project into a recognized work-based learning experience through career-based service learning. Career and technical education student organizations (CTSOs), which are connected to career and technical education programs, provide the optimal opportunity to integrate projects with a career-based service learning experience.

The [Developing Professional Skills in CTE Toolkit](#) supports student professional skill development in career and technical education programs. The toolkit contains information including methods for developing professional skills, how to assess student professional growth, standards for teaching professional skills and other resources for educators to integrate professional skills development

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

---

## **Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee approves audit report, plan**



The Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee convened on April 13 to discuss the role of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) and review the accreditation status for each of Iowa’s 15 community colleges with NACEP. The committee also unanimously voted to approve the [2022-2023 audit plan](#), which requires all community colleges to continue to demonstrate that state standards are met through NACEP accreditation.

As mandated by [Iowa Code section 257.17](#), the Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee includes representatives from K-12 school districts, community colleges and Regent universities. The committee includes three representatives from each sector; current members include:

- Andrew Beckett, Associate Dean, Office of the Provost, University of Iowa
- Liang Chee Wee, President, Northeast Iowa Community College
- Mike Van Sickle, Superintendent, Louisa-Muscatine School District
- Rachel Raemaker, Secondary Programs Coordinator, Southwestern Iowa Community College
- Oattie Maxey, Superintendent, Ballard CSD
- Stacy Mentzer, Vice President of Instruction, Iowa Central Community College
- Patrick Pease, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs, University of Northern Iowa
- Cynthia Phillips, Executive Director of High Schools, Cedar Rapids CSD
- Zoë Thornton, Assistant Professor of Practice, Iowa State University

For more information, contact Jen Rathje, Education Program Consultant ([jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov](mailto:jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov) or (515) 326-5389).

---

## **Save the dates: Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Summer Conference**

The Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Literacy Council are inviting adult education administrators, staff and instructors to attend the Iowa Adult Literacy and Education Summer Conference July 26-28, 2022. We are excited to return to an in-



person event and plan to celebrate as we move forward with this year's theme: *Facing the Future Together*. The event will be held at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. Pre-conference sessions will take place on July 26 with the conference scheduled for July 27-28.

The conference committee is looking for presentations on innovative practices in all aspects of adult education. Please complete the [Call for Proposals](#) by Monday, May 9.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Johnson ([elizabeth.johnson2@iowa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.johnson2@iowa.gov)) or Helene Fein ([ilcexecutivedirector@iowa.gov](mailto:ilcexecutivedirector@iowa.gov)).

---

## **Iowa Department of Education**

400 E 14th Street  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Ph: 515-281-5294  
[www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov)