



COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADER BULLETIN

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Inside this issue

- [Guided pathways webinars allow community colleges and national experts to discuss best practices](#)
- [Measures of college readiness legislation passes for Senior Year Plus Programs](#)
- [Application for round 2 on GEER 1, Component 2 funds now open](#)
- [Ability-to-benefit provides expanded financial aid opportunity for current and prospective students](#)
- [2020 Joint Enrollment Report now available](#)
- [Gap pilot project expands tuition assistance to incarcerated students](#)
- [State of Iowa curricular system \(STICS\) contract awarded](#)
- [Iowa Intermediary Network gets innovative with live events](#)
- [ACTE National & Iowa's Annual Hybrid Work-based Learning Conference 2021 open for registration](#)
- [Rules update: 281 IAC Chapter 48 \(Notice\) - Drinking Driver Course](#)
- [Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee approves audit report, plan](#)
- [Indian Hills Community College develops new regional center for southern Iowa students](#)
- [Eastern Iowa will expand hands-on learning opportunities through new regional center](#)

Guided pathways webinars allow community colleges and national experts to discuss best practices



This spring, Iowa's community colleges will continue to learn about high-impact strategies to strengthen college approaches to guided pathways through statewide

webinars on the topics of onboarding students, faculty involvement in guided pathways and branding pathway initiatives. March 24th marked the first webinar, which featured an update from the state on developmental education recommendations as well as data from a recent survey of community colleges on multiple measures. Individual colleges shared their initiatives, and Tina Hart, former vice president of enrollment services at Indian River State College of Florida, shared how to overcome barriers of placement in the guided pathways onboarding process. This meeting also covered college pathway designs that include student transfer and career exploration with predictive analysis.

In webinars later this spring, colleges will share their guided pathways success highlights and experts from the Community College Research Center (CCRC) or the Continuous Learning Institute will provide input into the challenges and opportunities around these initiatives. Save the following dates for these webinars, which will feature the topics listed here:

- **Thursday, April 8, 2021, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.** - Faculty Roles & Support, including training, high school engagement and student support
- **Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 12 p.m.-2 p.m.** - Communication & Branding, including the use of a toolkit

Since 2018, Iowa's community colleges have been learning about the national guided pathways movement and implementing strategies to put them into place locally. Each college has a unique work plan and strategy and has also been a part of a statewide initiative to learn and share ideas with each other through a grant received by the Iowa Department of Education in 2019 from Ascendium. Due to the COVID pandemic, several of the grant's planned face-to-face convenings in each of spring, summer and fall terms have been replaced by

- [Applications now open for the Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program Expansion Grant](#)
- [CompTIA names Jeff Fletcher to National Career and Technical Education Advisory Council](#)



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virtual gatherings to learn about topics related to the successful implementation of key tenets of pathway initiatives. This series of technical assistance webinars are held for about two hours and function as a way for the colleges to learn from each other as well as from national research and speakers.

Contact Amy Gieseke, Chief, Bureau of Community Colleges (amy.gieseke@iowa.gov or 515-858-2234) , or Kelly Friesleben, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Community Colleges (kelly.friesleben@iowa.gov or 515-868-2847) with comments or questions.

Measures of college readiness legislation passes 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 guidance linked here](#) 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, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Career and Technical Education (jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov or (515) 326-5389) with comments or questions.

Application for round 2 on GEER 1, Component 2 funds now open



The application for round 2 of GEER 1, Component 2 funds is now open. These funds are set to support capacity building and professional development.

Competitive grants are available to eligible institutions, or a consortium of eligible institutions, to be used to ensure equitable access to quality online courses and curriculum in postsecondary education. Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Recipients will have until **June 30, 2022** to claim reimbursement for eligible expenses.

The project and major activities should address at least one of the following areas for component 2:

1. Promote best practices and strategies for effective online and remote instruction in postsecondary education, which may include high school teachers qualified to teach concurrent enrollment coursework, non-credit and adult basic education instructors;
2. Support and train students and families, which may include credit, non-credit, adult and nontraditional students, to be successful in college/university virtual learning environments, e.g., advising, mentoring, tutoring and other support and retention strategies; and/or,
3. Develop, curate, and support the adoption of open educational resources.

[Application materials can be accessed here.](#)

Individual institutions are encouraged to apply, and preference will be given to applications that demonstrate consortia-based systemic approaches or the ability to expand and share best practices with other institutions.

Please contact Kelly Friesleben, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Community Colleges (kelly.friesleben@iowa.gov or (515) 868-2847) with comments or questions.

Ability-to-benefit provides expanded financial aid opportunity for current and prospective students



On March 11, approval was received from the U.S. Department of Education to provide a new option for students to demonstrate ability-to-benefit (ATB) for purposes of federal financial aid (Title IV HEA) at Iowa's 15 community colleges. The process will expand opportunities for Iowans to obtain aid when enrolled in a career pathway with wrap-around supports. Iowa was the third state to receive approval and the new process was approved for the three-year period ending March 9, 2024.

Iowa's state plan for accessing ability-to-benefit is designed to assist students and prospective students that have not earned a high school diploma or equivalency and have not met the other ATB eligibility criteria, such as successfully completing a standardized assessment/exam or successfully completing six college-level credits. The Iowa process recommends that participating students be required to complete a thorough academic and preparatory support process that includes the completion of preparatory requirements aimed at successfully transitioning to postsecondary education and career exploration. The design also requires continued adult education and literacy services through WIOA Title II providers to submit attendance, wherein the student is making progress toward a high school equivalency credential and an approved postsecondary occupational program/career pathway. In addition, the design must include mandatory counseling and advising sessions with ATB participants which will assist with follow-up support and progression reporting.

Counseling, advising, support and follow up for participants of the program will be in partnership with the PACE initiative, along with for-credit advising and adult basic education coordination. Five (\$5) million is dedicated to Iowa's 15 community colleges for the purpose of implementing a streamlined and comprehensive process, coupled with support services, to enable students to acquire quality education and training to secure a job. Specifically, PACE can be used for integrated basic skills instruction and occupational training, counseling and case management staff called Pathway Navigators.

Pathway Navigators will provide support to Iowa's ATB state plan in various ways, including:

- Interviewing students.
- Assessing students' skills, interests, and previous academic and work experience.
- Continuing to work with students to develop academic and career plans and to adjust such plans, as needed.
- Assisting students in applying for and receiving resources for financial aid and other forms of tuition assistance.
- Assisting students with the admissions process, academic credit transfer, course registration and other procedures necessary for successful completion of career pathways.
- Assisting in identifying and resolving obstacles to students' successful completion of their chosen career pathway.
- Connecting students with useful college resources or outside support services such as access to child care, transportation and tutorial assistance, as needed.

- Maintaining ongoing contact with students enrolled in ATB and ensuring students are making satisfactory progress toward the successful completion of projects.
- Providing support to students transitioning from adult education and literacy, short-term training and classroom experience to employment.
- Coordinating adult basic education services.

Ability-to-benefit offers on ramps to education and off ramps to employment for flexibility with life circumstances. Funding covers the cost of barriers, like child care, personal finances and transportation to prevent students from dropping out. Each community college choosing to participate in Iowa's ATB state plan shall incorporate this option as part of its efforts through adult education and PACE to develop a strong, streamlined pipeline system to better serve the academic, training and employment needs of low-income, low-skilled individuals.

For more information, contact Mike Williams, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Community Colleges (mike.williams@iowa.gov or (515) 418-0186).

2020 Joint Enrollment Report now available



The Iowa Department of Education today released the latest edition of an annual report that documents the academic year trend data on joint enrollment. The [Joint Enrollment Report](#) includes data on headcount enrollment, credit hours taken, student demographics and enrollment by program type and offering arrangement.

Highlights from the report are from the 2019-20 school year and include the following:

- 51,800 students enrolled in joint enrollment courses—a 2.4 percent increase over the previous academic year.
- Ten community colleges experienced increased enrollments, and eight colleges experienced an increase in the number of credits taken by high school students.
- High school students participating in joint enrollment programs accounted for 40.8 percent of total community college enrollment.
- Joint enrollment programs account for 25.6 percent of total credit hours.
- Jointly enrolled students earned 216 associate degrees, 49 diplomas and 642 certificates simultaneously with their high school diplomas.
- The percent of participants in joint enrollment programs who reported a minority racial or ethnic background was 16.4 compared to 23.3 percent of total credit student enrollment.
- The most common subject areas in which students jointly enrolled were English, social science and history, mathematics, healthcare and life and physical sciences.

Most jointly enrolled students enroll through Senior Year Plus programs, such as Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and concurrent enrollment. Other students enroll independently as tuition-paying students or enroll in courses delivered through contractual agreements that do not meet the definition of concurrent enrollment. For more information about Senior Year Plus programs, please refer to the [Department's website](#).

Contact Jen Rathje, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Career and Technical Education (jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov or (515) 326-5389) with comments or questions.

Gap pilot project expands tuition assistance to incarcerated students

The Gap Tuition Assistance Program provides funding to Iowa's community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to applicants interested in completing approved continuing education noncredit certificate training programs. Eligible noncredit programs must align with a credit-bearing certificate, diploma or degree program. The program must offer training for an in-demand occupation within industries such as information technology, health care or advanced manufacturing.

Eligibility for the program is based on several factors, including financial need, which is met with an income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level, by individuals demonstrating the ability to complete an eligible certificate program, entering a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree program for credit and gaining or maintaining full-time employment. Though incarcerated students may appear eligible, the program has not previously been offered to this group. Making funds



available to these students aligns with Governor Reynolds' "second chances" initiative for supporting successful reentry for formerly incarcerated individuals.

This Gap Pilot project is in partnership with the Department of Corrections and Iowa Western Community College with participants working toward a certificate in manufacturing. The program will be designed for those who are currently qualified for work release at the Clarinda Corrections Facility and are scheduled for release within six months. Applicants are vetted by Department of Corrections employees, led by Director of Adult Education & Clarinda Corrections Facility Education Liaison Libby Woods.

Program benefits include reduced recidivism rates; improved opportunities for immediate employment for approved participants and more skilled workers for local high-demand fields. Participants receive access to interview workshop with interview skills, resume creation, application assistance and soft skills training; opportunities to connect with and engage employers prior to release; employment resources and resume copies and access to an Iowa Workforce Development-hosted job fair.

Please contact Mike Williams, Education Program Consultant (mike.williams@iowa.gov or (515) 725-2247) with any questions or comments.

State of Iowa curricular system (STICS) contract awarded



The Department of Education issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in fall 2020 to select a new state of Iowa curricular system for the community colleges system (STICS); this system will house programs as well as for the secondary program review and approval database. A contract was awarded in February to Quality Consulting, Inc (QCI) to develop the software for managing that system. Since 2012, the state of Iowa and the 15 community colleges utilized CurriQunet's software to house and manage the community college's programs, courses, data reports and historical changes.

For the past few weeks, QCI has been meeting with staff at the Department of Education to review and discuss key database features and workflow requirements of the community college program as they establish a working prototype of the new STICS database. By late spring and early summer of 2021, some features of this system should allow preliminary testing by community college staff with course and program demos. Until then, colleges will continue to submit curriculum course and program submissions manually to the Department.

Please contact Chris Russell, Education Program Consultant (chris.russell@iowa.gov or (515) 725-2247) with any questions or comments.

Iowa Intermediary Network gets innovative with live events



The [Iowa Intermediary Network](#), like many education groups during the COVID-19 pandemic, has made significant changes to continue to serve students and educators, particularly with quality work-based learning experiences.

Kristy Volesky, education program consultant with the Department of Education notes, "The Iowa Intermediary Network connects industry professionals with classrooms across the state. With the pandemic, planned in-person events were being cancelled, so we knew the method for connecting industry partners with schools and students needed to shift."

The Iowa Intermediary Network is a system of 15 regions centered around Iowa's community colleges as well as local business partners and industry councils. The network's coordinators connect school districts, students and educators to businesses through work-based learning programs, career awareness,

career exploration and workplace learning activities. Participants have the opportunity to gain more information on internships, job shadows, career tours, hands-on career events and additional regional work-based learning experiences. Through these connections, students are better prepared to make informed decisions about their education and career futures.



ACTE National & Iowa's Annual Hybrid Work-based Learning Conference 2021 open for registration



The Association for Career and Technical Education's National and Iowa's Annual Hybrid Work-based Learning Conference 2021 will take place April 29-30, 2021. The conference is an opportunity for participants to learn about best practices in work-based learning from across the country. This conference will take place April 29-30 online.

[Register here.](#)

Please contact Kristy Volesky, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Career and Technical Education (kristy.volesky@iowa.gov or (515) 281-3615) with comments or questions.

Rules update: 281 IAC Chapter 48 (Notice) - Drinking Driver Course



The state board of education has proposed an amendment to Chapter 21, Iowa Administrative Code that updates language pertaining to in-person and online delivery of the instructional course for drinking drivers. This past year, a significant portion of these courses were delivered online due to the pandemic. Additionally, online delivery of the course was permitted under certain circumstances (e.g., medical necessity). The rule changes ensure consistency between the two formats. [More information on this rule change can be found here.](#)

For more information, please contact Thomas Mayes, Iowa Department of Education Legal Counsel (thomas.mayes@iowa.gov or (515) 281-8661).

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

The Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee convened on February 25 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 [2021-2022 audit plan](#), which requires all community colleges continue to demonstrate that state standards are met through NACEP accreditation.

A legislative update was provided to the committee regarding eligibility requirements through the Senior Year Plus program. This legislation (House File 308) has since passed during the 2021 legislative session on March 8, 2021, which 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 Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee is charged with annually auditing postsecondary courses offered to high school students in accordance with Senior Year Plus s.

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
- Shari Blake, Curriculum Director, Maple Valley-Anthon Oto CSD
- Liang Chee Wee, President, Northeast Iowa Community College
- Daniel Marvin, Dean of Concurrent Enrollment/CTE, Eastern Iowa Community Colleges
- 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

Contact Jen Rathje, Education Program Consultant, Bureau of Career and Technical Education (jennifer.rathje@iowa.gov or (515) 326-5389) with comments or questions.

[Indian Hills Community College develops new regional center for southern Iowa students](#)



Indian Hills Community College has won a grant through the Career Academy Incentive fund that will result in expanded opportunities for southern Iowa students in seven counties to access career and technical education programs. Using the \$1 million grant award, Indian Hills plans to break ground on a new regional center at their Centerville campus.

“The development of the new Hills West Regional Center is the result of a great partnership with the districts at Albia, Centerville, Davis County, Moravia, Moulton-Udell, Seymour and Wayne schools as well as the local business community,” said Dr. Matthew Thompson, president at Indian Hills Community College. “Together, we can

connect students with valuable CTE programs that provide training and education to better prepare them for today’s jobs that are in high demand.”

The Career Academy Incentive Fund was established by a 2019 law that extends a statewide penny sales tax for school infrastructure, called Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE), through January 2051. At least \$1 million will be awarded annually to support career academy partnerships among community colleges, school districts, business and industry, Regional Planning Partnerships, Area Education Agencies and others to increase student access to college programs, state-of-the-art equipment and career paths in Iowa’s in-demand fields.

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[Eastern Iowa will expand hands-on learning opportunities through new regional center](#)

Comprised of the three community colleges — Clinton, Muscatine and Scott — Eastern Iowa Community Colleges provide



programs to high school and adult students in four counties and parts of four others. CTE programs offer high school students valuable industry experience and hands-on learning in [six different service areas](#), and now through the Career Academy Incentive Fund, the colleges will be able to offer even more opportunities at a new stand-alone regional center in DeWitt.

“Combined with a portion of the recently passed \$40 million bond levy, we plan to use the \$1 million grant from the Career Academy Incentive Fund to build a new regional center in DeWitt,” said Don Doucette, chancellor for Eastern Iowa Community Colleges. “The facility will be

affiliated with Clinton Community College and will help us reach more high school students and community members in Clinton and Jackson counties.”

The Career Academy Incentive Fund was established by a 2019 law that extends a statewide penny sales tax for school infrastructure, called Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE), through January 2051. At least \$1 million will be awarded annually to support career academy partnerships among community colleges, school districts, business and industry, Regional Planning Partnerships, Area Education Agencies and others to increase student access to college programs, state-of-the-art equipment and career paths in Iowa’s in-demand fields.



[Applications now open for the Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program Expansion Grant](#)



Iowa Workforce Development announced applications are now open for the Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Program Expansion grant, a funding opportunity that will support the expansion of Quality Pre-Apprenticeship programs. A Quality Pre-Apprenticeship is a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program. Applications must be submitted on www.iowaGrants.gov by April 9, 2021.

“Quality Pre-Apprenticeship programs prepare future apprentices by building skills that are essential to succeed in their entry-level Registered Apprenticeship,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce

Development. “Completing a Registered Apprenticeship not only results in a nationally recognized credential, but it opens up a pathway to a rewarding, life-changing career in a high-demand field.”

The maximum award amount is \$20,400. Funds may be used for supportive services, staff time associated with the programs and the creation of a curriculum for the Quality Pre-Apprenticeship program. Priority will be given to programs that focus on participants in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, industries affected by COVID-19 and underrepresented populations.

More information about the funding opportunity can be found on www.iowaGrants.gov.

[CompTIA names Jeff Fletcher to National Career and Technical Education Advisory Council](#)

Last month, the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) announced the formation of the National Career and Technical Education Advisory Council to lead a national dialog focused on accelerating career pathways in technology. As part of this effort, Jeff Fletcher, education program consultant with the Department of Education, was named to the council to represent Iowa.

The [CompTIA National Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Advisory Council](#) will include representatives from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

“We strongly believe that CTE will play a critical role in our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has devastated household finances and changed educational plans for many families,” said Angel L. Piñeiro Jr., vice president, strategic



academic relationships, at CompTIA. “With the help of an elite group of educators and other leaders we intend to raise national awareness of CTE as a creator of opportunities for careers that will provide a better way of life for multiple generations to come and to do so in a way that addresses digital inequity head-on.”

In January U.S. employers advertised more than 232,000 job openings for core IT positions. These openings occurred in virtually every industry sector and included positions in software and application development, IT support, systems engineering and architecture and IT project management.

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