



School Leader Update

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

May 2020

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Forging ahead

To say that this spring has brought some unexpected challenges is definitely an understatement. Instead of getting to know my colleagues at the Iowa Department of Education in person, I spent my first day on the job at the State Emergency Operations Center. Rather than welcoming students back from spring break, our schools were faced with developing and implementing continuous learning solutions during a global pandemic unlike we have ever experienced.

You often hear people say that you learn what people are made of when facing a crisis. That certainly holds true in Iowa. I have learned that no challenge is too great for our teachers, administrators, staff, families and students. I have seen communities supporting their schools, administrators and teachers working together to implement continuous learning plans in a short turnaround and parents juggling work and helping to engage their children in learning at home.



[Read more](#)

Career Academy Incentive Fund deadline extended to June 12



The deadline to submit applications for the Career Academy Incentive Fund will be extended to Friday, June 12. All required application materials must be submitted by that date. To access the application materials, as well as other resources, for the incentive fund, visit the Iowa Department of Education [Career Academy Incentive Fund web page](#).

The Career Academy Incentive Fund will provide competitive grants to Iowa school districts and community colleges that team up to start or expand career academies that meet the needs of local business and industry, communities and schools. The incentive fund was established as part of a 2019 law that extends a statewide penny sales tax for school infrastructure called Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) through January 2051. Grants will range from \$250,000 to \$1 million to be spent over a three-year period.

For questions, contact Eric St Clair at (515) 326-0274 or eric.stclair@iowa.gov.

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Providing meals during unanticipated school closures

The Iowa Department of Education is working collaboratively with public school districts, private schools and nonprofit community



organizations to provide United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) meals to children 18 and under. Approximately 1,000 SFSP meal sites including Grab n' Go options are available across the state.

For additional information, visit the Department's [Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage. To locate an open SFSP meal site near you, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids> or 1-866-3-HUNGRY, or text "FOOD" or "COMIDA" to 877-877.

A very special thank you to the school nutrition professionals, community organizations and volunteers across Iowa working to provide these meals to children in their communities during this very challenging time. Below are success stories highlighting their outstanding efforts.

Marshalltown Community School District

"We are currently serving 35 percent of the meals we would typically serve during a normal school day. With 6 out of 10 students eligible for free and reduced price meals, implementing the Summer Food Service Program during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped Marshalltown Schools bridge the gap for children in our community who otherwise may not have had access to nutritious meals while school is closed," said Lynn Large, Food Service Director.

Fairfield Community School District

"With almost 50 percent free/reduced students in our district, being able to serve these children through the SFSP was our only answer to provide healthy food to them. So many families are struggling during this time. The SFSP is not only providing food, but we are also providing emotional stability for these children. I have been told over and over again the joy that they get when they receive the food from the school. The food is familiar, it is what once was "normal" for them," said Stephanie Hawkins, Food Service Director.

Schools that operate a childcare center may be interested in USDA waivers to support access to nutritious meals through the [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) (CACFP).

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Crunch into Cucumbers Campaign

This statewide effort promotes summer meal sites by celebrating local cucumbers as the coolest vegetable of the summer. With a collective focus on this refreshing veggie, we hope to increase participation at Iowa summer meal sites and support local producers. Summer Meal Sites and community partners are invited to participate, by purchasing food from local producers and promoting local food education.

To apply for funding (\$200 mini-grants to purchase local foods), technical assistance, and promotional materials, complete the [on-line application](#) by May 20.

For questions, contact Chelsea Krist with ISU Extension and Outreach – Farm, Food and Enterprise Development, at cekrist@iastate.edu.

This project is a partnership of ISU Extension, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Education, and FoodCorps Iowa.

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Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant applications for 2020-21

The Iowa Department of Education will soon be accepting applications from elementary schools for the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program for school year 2020-21.

This is a grant opportunity for schools to provide children with free fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day. The goal is to create healthier school environments by expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables consumed, and by making a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health.

Elementary schools having 50 percent or more of their enrolled students eligible for free or reduced-price meals are selected based on an annual application with priority given to schools with the highest free and reduced-price populations.

The grant applications will open in the IowaCNP in mid-June. A letter and invitation to apply will be sent to all eligible elementary schools once the opportunity becomes available. Check out the [FFVP website](#) for more information or contact Stephanie Dross at 515-281-4760 or stephanie.dross@iowa.gov.

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[Iowa Learning Academy 2020 postponed](#)



The Iowa Department of Education is postponing the Iowa Learning Academy 2020 until the fall. This decision was not made lightly. The Department is committed to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and is following all recommendations from Governor Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

The Department is working diligently to provide guidance and support to assist stakeholders during this uncertain time. Our emphasis will be on caution and prevention for those we serve and ourselves, while maintaining our sense of community.

Visit the Department's existing guidance and webinar recordings available on our [COVID-19 Guidance and Information](#) page. We will continue to keep you informed during this rapidly changing time.

For questions regarding the Iowa Learning Academy, please contact your [school improvement consultant](#). If they are unable to assist you, they will connect you with the appropriate person.

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[Accessibility in digital materials](#)



Remote learning has recently taken on new meaning. Was your district prepared to keep learning available to your students? Was curricular content digital and accessible to all learners? Where were the gaps in district technology and curriculum resources?

This winter, [IDEA language was reinterpreted](#) for digital materials that have no print version. Publishers must put digital textbooks into the [NIMAC](#) (National Instruction Materials Accessibility Center). This adds extensive new content to a repository where entities such as [Bookshare](#) and the [Iowa Department for the Blind](#), acquire curriculum for registered users.

Beyond this, during the school closure, much was made available virtually- from zoo and museum field trips , audiobooks, video content, Google, etc. The [AEM Center](#) provided guidance on making remote learning materials accessible.

Whether or not supplemental resources continue to be free of charge, the potential of these strategies opens avenues for districts to expand accessibility and learning options for students.

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[A district plunges head first into uncharted waters](#)

"We are all dealing with this really foreign territory. It requires patience and it requires grace."

That's how Jane Lindaman, the superintendent of the Waterloo Community District, sums up the challenges her district faces during the pandemic.

But after a quick conversation, it's clear that Lindaman also requires tenacity, determination, creativity and, oh, yes, data. Lots of data.

As an urban district – it has nearly 11,000 students – conventional wisdom suggests it cannot turn on a dime. But don't bother Lindaman with conventional wisdom. In the last two weeks, she and her team got classes up and running, requiring students to participate. That, even though the district is officially incorporating voluntary continuous learning. [Read more.](#)



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[Preschool Desk Audit – Session ID Information](#)

To prepare for the [Preschool Desk Audit - Session ID Information](#) submission period between Aug. 1 – Sept. 15, certify preschool location information in the [School Information Update \(SIU\)](#). Access the SIU, found in the [Education Portal](#) under EdInfo, no later than June 30, to correct information for the upcoming school year or to certify that the information remains unchanged. Districts must ensure that the PK (Preschool) grade level checkbox is checked for existing buildings and Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) partners. Also, add new buildings or SWVPP partners in the SIU before June 30. For questions about the SIU, contact Margaret Hanson at (515) 281-3214 or margaret.hanson@iowa.gov.



For questions about the SWVPP, contact Jennifer Adkins at (515) 954-5652 or jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov, or Mary Breyfogle at (515) 326-1030 or mary.breyfogle@iowa.gov.

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[Spring State Student Reporting time is here](#)

It is again time for spring state student reporting.

Important dates:

May 8 - Spring SRI test site closes

May 14 - Spring SRI production site opens

June 22 - Spring SRI 2020 certification deadline (public and SRI nonpublic)

As a reminder, Spring SRI is focused primarily on 1) Graduates; 2) Attendance; 3) Non-fall Supplementary Weighting for courses; and 4) Discipline Removals. Spring SRI data are also used for Regular Education Foster Care Claim.

As always, feel free to contact an SRI Consultant if you have any questions.

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