

869C-550C

III Education Standards
State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Paul F. Johnston, Superintendent
Des Moines 50319

1969 Curriculum Circular No. 1

MINIMUM CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL
OF IOWA ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

September, 1969

3-472

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Des Moines

STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

LESTER D. MENKE. Calumet (President)
JOHN D. WARIN. Maloy (Vice President)
MRS. RICHARD COLE. Decorah
RICHARD H. DELANEY Burlington
DR. JACK D. FICKEL Red Oak
NOLDEN GENTRY. Des Moines
MRS. VIRGIL E. SHEPARD Allison
MRS. EARL G. SIEVERS Avoca
DR. JAMES M. WALTER. Ames

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Administration

PAUL F. JOHNSTON Superintendent of Public Instruction and
Executive Officer of State Board of Public
Instruction
DAVID H. BECHTEL Administrative Assistant
W. T. EDGREN Assistant Superintendent-Administration
L. N. JENSEN Assistant Superintendent-Instruction
WILLIAM M. BAILEY Assistant Superintendent-Area Schools

Curriculum and Instruction Branch

William J. Edgar, Director, Division of Curriculum

FOREWORD

The Iowa State Department of Public Instruction receives frequent requests for information about the minimum curriculum that the law requires for approval of Iowa's schools. This circular has been developed to give such information in handy form. While official publications containing the school laws also contain this information, they are available in such limited quantities that (aside from the chief administrator to whom they are supplied) members of school staffs such as principals, curriculum committees, and individual teachers and citizens in general do not always have immediate access to them.

This circular is entitled "Minimum Curriculum Requirements for Approval of Iowa Elementary and Secondary Schools." Those who wish to study the "original sources" upon which the contents of this informal circular are based are directed to them by the footnotes and other citations included herein.

PART ONE

REVIEW OF MINIMUM CURRICULUM MANDATED BY LAW AND RELATED PROVISIONS

I. Introduction

It is commonly understood that education is a state function. This means that the state constitution and the laws made by the legislature are supreme in matters relating to public education. Reference and practice of long standing adhere to the principle that it is wise to delegate primary responsibility and control of schools to local school districts and their elected boards of education. Every state has retained certain powers over its schools. Among these powers is that of mandating the minimum curriculum to be offered, and specifying those parts of it which pupils are required to follow.

Iowa has provided greater central control of the curriculum within the past few years. This broadened control of the curriculum was instituted in 1965 by the 61st General Assembly and continued with minor changes by subsequent sessions in 1967 and 1969. Prior to 1967 there had existed certain minimum curriculum requirements of the type common to most states: required offerings in the so-called "common branches" and required courses in areas such as health and physical education, citizenship, U. S. history, and American government.

This circular reviews the mandated requirements that approved schools from nursery school through high school must meet.

II. Curriculum Requirements for a School Level

Nursery School

The law does not require that public nursery schools shall be operated; in fact, aside from some reference to children under five years of age requiring

special education (SLI, p. 126, 281.2)*, the law is silent on the matter. Nevertheless, in possible anticipation of further legal authorization in the future, the law does state that "they shall be designed to help children use and manage their bodies, extend their interests and understanding of the world about them, work and play with others, and to express themselves." (SSLI, p. 34, 257.25, par. 2)**

Kindergarten

Legal provision exists for the establishment of kindergartens. (SLI, p. 119, 280.16) "Kindergarten programs shall include experiences designed to develop emotional and social living, protection and development of physical being, growth in expression, and language arts and communication readiness." (SSLI, p. 34, 257.25, par. 2)

Special education services. In May 1969, the Iowa General Assembly added the following subsection to section 257.25: "Provision for special education services and programs, which may be shared by public schools, shall be made for children requiring special education, who are or would otherwise be enrolled in kindergarten through grade eight of such schools."

Elementary School--Grades One Through Six

When the term "elementary school" is used in Iowa, it may refer to either of two grade arrangements, each including kindergarten, if operated:

*This reference should be read School Laws of Iowa (1966), page 126, section 281.2. The shortened citation is used throughout this circular.

**This reference should be read Supplement to School Laws of Iowa (1967), page 34, section 257.25, paragraph 2. The shortened method of citation is used throughout this circular.

grades one through eight, or grades one through six when grades seven and eight are included in a secondary school. (See SSLI, APPENDIX, I-3, standard 3.2(3), for a definition of the elementary school.) In either arrangement, the law (SSLI, p. 35, 257.25, par. 3) clearly lists those areas which shall be taught within grades one through six. They appear below in alphabetical order for quick identification:

- Art
- Health and physical education, including the effects of alcohol, narcotics, and poisons on the human body
- Language arts, including:
 - English, oral and written
 - Handwriting
 - Literature
 - Reading
 - Spelling
- Mathematics
- Music
- Science, including conservation of natural resources
- Social studies, including:
 - American citizenship, including the elementary study of national, state, and local government in the United States
 - Cultures of other peoples and nations
 - Geography
 - History of the United States and Iowa
- Special education services (See page 2.)

Sections of law enacted prior to the one already cited in the preceding paragraph with reference to the elementary school (SLI, p. 118-119, sections 280.3, 280.6, 280.10, 280.12, and 280.13) specify what shall be taught in both elementary and secondary schools. These legal requirements (which are still in effect, but not in essential conflict with those adopted in 1965 and since) are listed below in alphabetical order:

American citizenship
American government, principles of
Arithmetic
Geography
Grammar
History of Iowa
Music
Physical education
Physiology and hygiene, "which study in every division of
the subject shall include the effects upon the human
system of alcoholic stimulants, narcotics, and poisonous
substances."
NOTE: The law, section 280.10, in addition to the
stipulation just quoted specifies that the board of
education "shall require all teachers to give and all
scholars to receive instruction in" this area. It be-
comes still more specific as follows: "The instruction
in this branch shall of its kind be as direct and spe-
cific as that given in other essential branches, and
each scholar shall be required to complete the part of
such study in his class or grade before being advanced
to the next higher, and before being credited with hav-
ing completed the study of the subject."
Reading
Spelling
United States history
Writing

Certain elements of flexibility are left to the curriculum makers
even when faced with this rather formidable list of specific requirements.
For example, no mention of specific grades within the six-grade span is made,
and no strict time allotments are set out.

Grades Seven and Eight

The list (SSLI, p. 35, 257.25, par. 4; and SLI, p. 118, 280.7;
p. 119, 280.10) of what shall be taught in grades seven and eight as a minimum
program (except for the fact that instruction in the constitution of the United
States and the constitution of the State of Iowa shall begin not later than
the opening of the eighth grade. . .) follows:

Art
Constitution of the United States and constitution
of the State of Iowa
Language arts, which may include:
Composition, oral and written
Grammar
Other communication subjects
Spelling
Mathematics
Music
Physical education
Physiology and hygiene (see details on page 3 under
the heading "Elementary School--Grades One Through
Six")
Reading
Science
Social studies
Special education (See page 2.)

Here, again, curriculum makers will see that fairly broad opportunities for "decision making" at the local level exist within the framework of these legally-prescribed minimums.

Junior High School

The law lists no subjects under the title, junior high school. But it does state that when grades seven and eight are contained in an organized and administered junior high school, the same minimum program legally specified for these two grades must be included. In fact, the minimum program specified to be taught in grades seven and eight applies to these grades "regardless of the organizational structure of the school district." (SSLI, p. 35, 257.25, par. 5)

Certain school systems in the state have organized their schools in such a manner as to include grades six, seven, eight, and nine. Nationally, schools can be found with each of the following grade combinations: 4 through 8, 5 through 8, 6 through 8, 6 through 9, and even 6 through 10. The term commonly used to designate this type of school organization is the "middle

school." In such a school the legal curriculum offerings mandated for each grade level included (grades one through six, and grades nine through twelve--where applicable) must be adhered to.

High School--Grades Nine Through Twelve

Units or courses that must be taught annually. With the exception of physics and chemistry, which may be taught in alternate years, the minimum program mandated for a high school grades nine through twelve, must be taught annually. The law defines a unit as consisting "of one academic year instruction in the subject" (SSLI, pp. 34-35, 257.25, par. 6h). As indicated below, not all subjects must be taught as full units. Furthermore, courses in fine arts which clearly must be offered are not designated in the law as units.

The following list of required offerings has been arranged in alphabetical order:

- Driver education
- English, including language arts (four units)
- Fine arts, courses in, including as options, but with the units or fractions thereof not specified:
 - Art
 - Dramatics
 - Music
- Foreign language (two units)
- Mathematics (five units)
 - General mathematics (one unit)
 - Sequential mathematics (four units)
- Physical education (one unit with one-eighth unit each semester required of each pupil)
- Practical arts (five units), which may include these subjects:
 - Agriculture
 - Business education (including commercial typewriting)
 - Distributive education
 - Health occupations
 - Homemaking
 - Industrial arts
- Science (four units)
 - Chemistry
 - Physics

NOTE: The units of physics and chemistry may be taught in alternate years. However, four units in science must be available to pupils annually.

Social studies (four units)

American government

American history

Economics

NOTE: The law permits a considerable degree of flexibility in social studies offerings. It states, "Instruction in American history, American government, and economics shall be included in said units but need not be required as full units." (SSLI, p. 35, 257.25, par. 6b)

However, this requirement must be read in connection with section 280.8 (School Laws of Iowa) which requires all high schools to offer and all students to take, "a minimum of instruction in American history and civics of the state and nation to the extent of two semesters, and schools . . . shall offer in addition one semester in social problems and economics." Social problems may be a part of or combined with economics. Note that American history and American government must be taken by all students as a requirement for graduation. Economics (and social problems) must be offered for at least one semester but may be elective.

Special education services

III. Schools That Are Exempted from Curriculum Requirements of Section 257.25 of the School Laws

Schools on special approved list of private college preparatory schools. There are legal provisions (SSLI, p. 39, 257.25, par. 13) under which a private high school or a private combined junior-senior high school operated for the express purpose of preparing its graduates for entrance to accredited colleges or universities are exempted from teaching the minimum program specified in section 257.25, paragraphs 6 and 7 of the school laws. Private schools meeting these specified legal provisions "shall be placed on a special approved list of college preparatory schools...."

Exception for Amish. A section of the law (SSLI, pp. 67-68, 299.24) provides that, under certain specified conditions, members of the local congregation of a recognized church or religious denomination may be exempted from standards set forth in section 257.25 of the school law.

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

... of the ...

