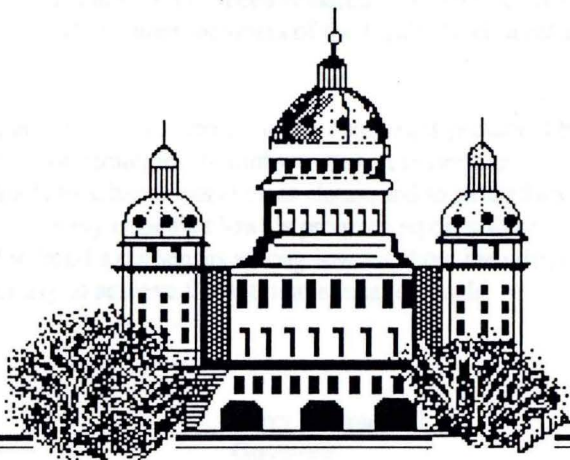


Highlights of
*Iowa's Progress
Toward the
National Education Goals*

State of Iowa
Office of the Governor
October 1991



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A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

October 1991

To the People of Iowa,

Two years ago, President George Bush and the nation's governors convened in Charlottesville, Virginia, for the first Education Summit. As a result of the Summit, the President and the National Governors Association endorsed six national education goals to be achieved by the year 2000. I am pleased to release to the citizens of Iowa this report, *Iowa's Progress toward the National Education Goals*, which describes Iowa's standing in relation to the national goals.

The report shows that our education system compares favorably to other states. It also shows that, for some of the goals, we do not have adequate information to compare ourselves to the rest of the nation or to the world. More importantly, we can conclude from the information in this report that our education system must improve if our students are to be prepared to compete in a global economy.

Iowa's report is being released in conjunction with the first national progress report prepared by the National Education Goals Panel, which has been working since the historic Summit to develop a meaningful, accurate way to measure progress toward the goals. The national and state reports provide a benchmark that will help us gauge our progress during the next nine years. As a member of the Goals Panel, I have been honored to join Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander and the other members of the Goals Panel in releasing the national report.

The State of Iowa's response to the challenges presented by these reports must focus on strategies to improve student performance, expand the capacity of schools to achieve world-class status, and to strengthen the State's leadership role. It is my hope that Iowa's progress report will help to stimulate discussion and to build a consensus among Iowans about the critical next steps which are necessary to achieve the national education goals.

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

October 1991

To the People of Iowa,

The president and the nation's governors have challenged our country to meet ambitious national education goals by the year 2000. These goals, coupled with complementary state and local goals, set a clear vision of the issues facing education. I believe that most people in the education system—the teachers, administrators, school board members and students themselves—stand ready to meet the challenge. They are prepared to make dramatic changes in order to ensure that every student achieves at a high level, that each is prepared for further education or the workplace, that each student's individual needs are met.

But our Iowa educators and school board members cannot do it alone. Achieving these national goals will require the help of every Iowan. Every Iowa community must support its public schools with the resources, both human and financial, needed to get the job done. Health and human service agencies and schools must continue to develop new working relationships to meet the needs of children and families. Parents must make sure that school is the unmistakable priority of every child. Employers must look closely at the number of hours young people are working. In short, it is imperative for our children's future that every Iowan take an active role in meeting these national goals. Together, I am confident that Iowa can set a standard of educational excellence unrivaled in the world.

William L. Lepley, Ed.D.
Director, Iowa Department of Education

INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the important role of education in maintaining the economic strength, security and international competitiveness of the United States, the nation's President and Governors agreed to establish and monitor progress toward national education goals at the historic Education Summit in 1989. In 1990, the National Governors Association adopted six goals presented by the President in his 1990 State of the Union message, and created the National Education Goals Panel to evaluate and report on progress toward meeting the goals. Once the Goals Panel identified indicators that would provide an accurate measure of progress toward each of the goals, preparation of the first progress report was initiated. As many of the recommendations of the resource groups called for the development of new measures, the initial report summarized the best information that was currently available at the national level. The Goals Panel encouraged each state to take a similar approach in the development of their individual reports. *Iowa's Progress Toward the National Education Goals* is a compilation of the best available data designed to describe the status of Iowa education relative to the National Goals. In addition, it includes brief descriptions of programs and other initiatives currently being implemented across the state that are likely to affect this status.

GOALS

Goal 1: School Readiness

There is not yet an adequate measure of school readiness at the national or state level. Assessing school readiness is complicated by the lack of universal agreement on the concept of "readiness" as well as appropriate programs for preschool children. However, the importance of such programs is evident in increased emphasis on prekindergarten/early childhood programs:

- * Enrollment in Iowa public school prekindergarten programs has increased 186.76 percent from 1985-86 to 1990-91.
- * Preschool programs are offered to meet the needs of young students with special needs through Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, special education, and at-risk programs funded through the Iowa legislature. In 1990-91, 51 of 74 grants provided through at-risk legislation, and one-half of the \$7.6 million available, supported early childhood prekindergarten programs.

Goal 2: High School Completion

At present, there are no comparable data to accurately measure high school completion and dropout rates across the country. However, the National Center for Education Statistics, with cooperation from the Council of Chief State School Officers, has been working with states to develop such measures.

Iowa data suggest that the graduation rate ranged from approximately 86 to 88 percent between 1985-86 and 1987-88. The dropout rate has remained at or below 2.5 percent since 1985-86.

In recent years, Iowa legislation provided financial incentives to school districts for implementing dropout prevention programs. As a result, the number of programs increased from 10 in 1985-86 to 84 in 1991-92.

Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship

There are limited direct measures of student achievement in English, social studies, foreign language, vocational education, and citizenship. One indicator recommended by the National Goals Panel is the results of Advanced Placement tests. Iowa students generally scored higher than the national average on Advanced

Placement exams in economics, English, language and composition, English literature and composition, European history, and U.S. government and politics. However, the number of students who participated in the Advance Placement Program is quite small.

Beginning in 1991, increased access and involvement in the program for Iowa students is occurring through a program offered by the University of Iowa. The Iowa Project is a cooperative venture of the University of Iowa and the College Board, manager of the Advanced Placement Program. It is unique in that it is the only such experiment in the United States, and may serve as a model for other states. The project is designed to show the effectiveness of an alternative to high school administration of the Advanced Placement exams and may improve the opportunities for students whose schools cannot afford to provide Advanced Placement courses.

State level data indicate that scores on the Social Studies subtest of the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) generally increased at grades 9, 10, and 11 between 1985-86 and 1988-89. The results of the language skills subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills show increases in grades 3 through 8 from 1985-86 to 1989-90.

Goal 4: Science and Mathematics

Data are available through national assessment projects to describe student achievement in science and mathematics. Results of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Trial State Assessment in mathematics (Educational Testing Service interpretation) indicate that 100 percent of Iowa 8th graders achieved level 200, simple additive reasoning and problem and solving with whole numbers (97 percent nationally). Eighty-four percent achieved level 250, simple multiplicative reasoning and two-step problem solving (64 percent nationally). Twenty-one percent achieved level 300, reasoning and problem solving involving fractions, decimals, percents, elementary geometry, and simple algebra (12 percent nationally). And .2 percent achieved level 350, reasoning and problem solving involving geometry, algebra, and beginning statistics and probability (.2 percent nationally).

The results of Advanced Placement exams in biology, chemistry, physics, computer science and calculus indicate that scores of Iowa test-takers were above the national average in all but chemistry and advanced calculus, where scores were slightly lower than the national average. Again, however, very few of the students who were eligible participated in the Advanced Placement Program.

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In addition, the Iowa Testing Program provides information on student achievement in mathematics and science. Total mathematics skills scores on the ITBS for grades 3 through 8 indicate generally steady improvement between 1985 and 1990. Average scores for students in grades 9, 10, and 11 on the quantitative thinking and natural science subtests of the ITED reflect general improvement between 1988 and 1990.

Goal 5: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

The National Education Goals Panel highlighted two major complications associated with measuring progress toward this goal. First, there is no common definition or single measure of "literacy" generally accepted by the educational community. Second, continuing educational opportunities are offered through multiple private and public sources and at multiple levels. Because of these complicating factors, the Goals Panel recommended using a wide variety of measures; however, the measures were not available for the first report. Some state level data were reported.

Results of a follow-up study of high school graduates one year after graduation demonstrate a steady increase in the percentage of respondents enrolled in college and an overall increase in those enrolled in other educational or training opportunities. Decreases in the percentages of graduates entering the job market or identifying some other alternative and a consistent percentage of students entering the military suggest that more graduates are seeking some form of formal postsecondary education.

Historical trends in enrollment at postsecondary educational institutions indicate that significant increases occurred among undergraduate enrollment between 1975 and 1980 (11.52 percent) and between 1980 and 1982 (5.93 percent). Less remarkable but steady increases occurred between 1984 and 1989. Graduate enrollment also experienced steady increases. As a result, the 1989 enrollment represents an increase of 31.52 percent over the enrollment for 1975.

Increases in enrollment were also evident in Adult Basic Education programs between 1989 and 1990. The percentage of Iowans who attempted and passed the General Educational Development tests increased through the beginning of the 1980s, peaked in 1984, and decreased markedly in subsequent years. The greatest percentage of persons receiving GED certificates were 21 to 30 years of age.

Iowa will participate in the National Adult Literacy Study sponsored by the federal government. The study is an attempt to establish baseline data on various dimensions of literacy among adults ages 16-64. The sampling design ensures that the people who participate will represent the nation as a whole. However, Iowa is among the states who have agreed to "oversample" to obtain data representative specifically of this state. The Department of Education is coordinating the study and will be collecting data between February and June 1992. Final reports should be available the following year.

Goal 6: Safe, Disciplined, and Drug Free Schools

States and the National Goals Panel must rely on limited data to assess student use of illicit drugs and discipline problems. Results of a national survey are reported in the national goals report. Iowa data are based primarily on the *1987-88 Iowa Study of Alcohol and Drug Behavior and Attitudes Among Youth* (1989).

Regular use of alcohol increased from 2.8 percent in grade 6 to 38.3 percent in grade 12 and was higher for each successively higher grade level. The percentage of nonuse increased from 1984 to 1987 and generally all use of alcohol was lower in 1987 than in 1984. The percentage of students reporting regular use of tobacco was 2.1 percent for the total sample, up from 1.5 percent in 1984. A greater percentage of 10th and 12th grade students considered themselves to be heavy users of tobacco than either casual or regular users in 1987 compared to 1984. In general, tobacco use in 1987 appeared to be higher than in 1984. Overall, nonuse and regular use of marijuana was down from 1984, while casual and heavy use increased slightly from 1984 to 1987. In general, use of other drugs (depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens) among students decreased between 1984 and 1987.

In terms of the total sample, parents and school counselors were considered the most important source of information about substances, with 15 percent of the students choosing each. While peer group approval to use illicit substances appeared to increase with increases in grade level, 46 percent of students indicated they could also get help for a substance abuse problem from a close friend. Only at grade 6 did students indicate parents or guardians, to the same degree as close friends, as a source of help for substance problems. At grade 8, more than four times as many 10th graders and more than five times as many 12th graders reported they would seek help from a close friend as opposed to parents or guardians for substance problems.

Data suggest that school programs had the greatest degree of impact on

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student decisions not to use marijuana and other drugs, with 41 percent and 44 percent respectively indicating they had decided not to use these substances due to school programs. Relatively few students (5-8 percent), indicated that their schools did not provide an opportunity to talk about the various substances. The two program areas rated either excellent or good by the highest percentage of districts were school policies/rules on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and substance education curriculum with combined ratings of 69.2 percent and 48.6 percent respectively. Program areas that rated poor or very poor by the largest percentage of school districts included parent participation (57.5 percent), community participation (54.7 percent) and staff intervention (48.1 percent).

During the 1990-91 school year, 420 of Iowa's 430 school districts were involved in the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. This federal funding was instrumental in the local adoption of:

- Student Assistance Programs in 224 school districts;
- Peer Helping/Counseling Programs in 220 school districts;
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) programs in 100 school districts;
- Quest Skills for Growing programs in 151 districts;
- Quest Skills for Adolescence programs in 300 districts;
- In-school support groups for children of substance abusing families in 74 districts;
- At-Risk student programs in 237 districts; and
- Gang prevention/intervention programs in 27 school districts.

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