

**Iowa's  
Educational Excellence  
Program:**

# **Phase III**

**1996-97 AEA  
Application Packet**

3-1647

**State of Iowa  
Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146**

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# 1996-97 AEA Phase III Application Packet

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**NOTE:** The 1996-97 AEA Phase III Application Packet is **substantially different** from previous years. Please read all materials before submitting the application. Questions should be directed to Edie Eckles, 515-281-5332, [eekles@max.state.ia.us](mailto:eekles@max.state.ia.us) or the School Improvement Specialist assigned to your area (see p. 3).

# 1996-97 AEA Phase III Application Packet

## 1996-97 Application Changes

To enable AEAs to focus on using Phase III funds to help redesign the educational system to better meet student needs, a one page application for 1996-97 Phase III funds has been provided.

The 1996-97 Phase III application will be a continuation of the agency's approved 1995-96 Phase III application to develop the agency's internal capacity to support local school district improvement and/or to directly support local school district plans for school improvement to fulfill Iowa Code sections 280.12 & 280.18.

A sample "Principles of a School Improvement Plan" is included in this packet. It is intended to guide your work in school improvement.

To provide direction regarding Phase III expenditures, see the enclosed "Guidelines for AEA Phase III Fund Expenditures." These guidelines are taken directly from the laws and the rules which govern Phase III.

## Application Approval

All 1996-97 Phase III applications received in a timely fashion (see Due Date below) and which have been fully completed will automatically be approved. Notice of funding will be provided as described below (see Funding).

## Specific Directions

1. On the blank line on the front, type the agency name.
2. At item #3 on the front, check which of the generic school improvement plan components will be the focus of the 1996-97 Phase III funded activities.
3. On the Budget, use the Sept. 1995 certified enrollment served at line A.1.
4. Multiply and write at line A.3 the estimated per pupil allocation of \$2.30 times the number on line A.1.
5. Add any carryover from the 1995-96 plan on line A.4.
6. Add any funds received from districts on line A.5 (# of students received times \$2.30 for open enrollment, special ed., sharing, etc.).
7. Subtract any funds sent to districts on line A.6 (# of students sent times \$49.02 for open enrollment, special education, sharing, etc.).
8. Complete the arithmetic and write the total funds available on line A.7.
9. In Section B of the Budget, write the amounts to be spent in the various categories on the appropriate lines, B.1 - B.5. *Note:* Use the 1996-97 restricted indirect cost rate. Multiply it against the amount on line A.3 to determine the total amount available for indirect costs.

10. Line B.6 may not exceed line A.7.

11. If funds are allocated for purchased services, please specify those purchases at Section C. Identify the specific services with their corresponding amounts.

12. In Section D, provide the program budget, either in total dollars or in percent, according to the School Improvement categories listed.

*Note:* The categories listed in Section D correspond with the categories listed in #3 on the front of the application and are taken from "Principles of a School Improvement Plan." Program expenditures should correspond with the categories checked at item #3 on the front of the application. Program budgets not corresponding will be returned for correction.

13. All parties must sign and date the application. Original signatures only, please; no signature stamps.

MAIL the original one-page application postmarked by June 15, 1996 to:  
Educational Excellence Program  
School Administration & Accreditation  
Department of Education  
Grimes Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146  
(no faxes accepted)

### **Application Due Date & Procedures**

AEA applications must be postmarked no later than June 15, 1996. Applications may be submitted by the Board of a local AEA, either individually or jointly with other AEAs. An AEA may submit no more than one application.

### **Program Requirements**

The minimum requirements are defined in Iowa Code sections 294A.12-20 and Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 91. A copy of these laws and rules may found in "School Laws of Iowa" and "School Rules of Iowa." See also the Internet at <http://www.legis.state.ia.us>  
Internet directions: Click on **The New Iowa General Assembly Legislation Information Service**. Click on **Codes**. Enter the chapter and section number for the Code.

### **Funding**

The payments for an approved AEA plan are equal to the product of an AEA's budget enrollment served (1995-96) and \$2.30 (estimate). The exact per pupil amount is dependent upon the amount of funding available. The exact amount of funding is determined after the Governor has signed the education appropriations bill. The specific funding amounts are usually ready to announce the week of July 1.

### **Budgets**

Phase III budgets shall not exceed the allocation and the 1995-96 carryover. Up to 50% of the 1995-96 allocation may be retained in order to continue a 1996-97 approved plan.

### **Payments**

Payment for the Educational Excellence Program is made on a monthly basis beginning October 15 and ending June 15 each fiscal year.

## Final Report

Each AEA receiving Phase III funds shall file a final report with the Department of Education by August 15, 1996. The report shall describe the plan: its objectives, results, the implementation, the expenditures made under the plan including the salary increases paid to each eligible employee, and the extent to which its objectives were attained.

## Support for School Improvement

With the School Improvement Team, the Department of Education is developing a support system for focusing on student achievement and continuous improvement. Should you have any questions about Phase III or school improvement issues, please contact the DE School Improvement specialist for your area, or Edie Eckles.

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# Principles of a School Improvement Plan

## **Needs:**

Locally and collaboratively developed statements of student learning needs should be the driving force in the development of the district's School Improvement Plan.

## **Expectations:**

Identified and validated learning needs should be translated into clear statements of expectations for student learning.

## **Goal-Oriented Plan:**

A plan should be developed which uses resources efficiently to fulfill learning expectations as expressed in goals.

## **Implementation:**

Action plans should be used to achieve the goals developed in the plan.

## **Evaluation:**

The results should be analyzed in order to decide what more needs to be done to meet the goals or to set new goals.

## **Reporting:**

The various publics shall be periodically informed of the district's progress toward meeting student needs.

# Guidelines for AEA Phase III Fund Expenditures

Each AEA Phase III funded activity . . .

1. is driven by board-adopted goals for supporting school improvement.
2. has for its foundation the agency's strategic plan for supporting local district school improvement efforts.
3. is selected on the basis of identified and documented educational system change research.
4. is evaluated to determine the impact of the activity on bringing about systemic change to improve student achievement.
5. if used for staff development, includes theory, demonstration, practice with mentoring, and continuing followup and feedback.

The Phase III Final Report submitted to the Department of Education reflects that the agency staff has analyzed the Phase III activities and expenditures . . .

1. to determine the success of the agency's efforts by being able to document with systemic evidence the impact of school improvement initiatives, and
2. to provide for informed future decision making.

## **Phase III funds may only be used**

- to provide salary increases to teachers for their participation in Phase III activities
- to pay costs associated with providing Phase III-sponsored training to teachers
- to pay the employer's share of FICA and IPERS on the Phase III salaries
- to pay the agency indirect costs for administering the Phase III activities



## **A Conversation About Aligning AEA Phase III Funded Activities with School Improvement Plans**

**1. Why aren't we required to write a Phase III plan anymore? What's the rationale for changing from a written plan to a single page application?**

We want to shift the notion of Phase III as a separate program that is disconnected from other initiatives in the agency, to that of a resource to pay staff for their work in supporting local school improvement. It's too easy to get caught up in the mechanics of the paperwork, which is what has happened with Phase III over time. What the DE really hopes to do is put the focus back on systemic change with the local school's blueprint for change in the form of a school improvement plan. The AEA's part of the process is their involvement in supporting the local school district improvement effort. Phase III funds can then be fit into the AEA plan, as "venture capital" for supporting the improvement of schools. It appeared to us that the details of writing and approving Phase III applications were getting in the way of the vision of what Phase III is all about.

**2. We have a Phase III plan we like. Do we have to scrap it and write a new plan?**

No, you may continue your agency's approved 1995-96 Phase III plan. The Department's idea is that a plan for supporting local school improvement can substitute for a Phase III plan. Since a plan for supporting local district school improvement would likely tie many aspects of AEA operations together, the system change aspect that Phase III would pay for would be a part of that plan. Phase III funded system change activities would thus be shown to fit in their proper place as a tool for supporting school improvement rather than as an end in itself, as the formerly isolated Phase III application process made it appear to be.

**3. Where is the accountability?**

Our assumption is that an area education agency which has invested all the effort required to determine the support needed to assist local school districts to implement school improvement efforts will spend their Phase III money to bring about the school improvement they've planned for. AEA's will still submit an annual report on their Phase III expenditures and will still be audited on those expenditures.

**4. We don't have a plan for supporting local school district improvement right now. We've heard we can only use Phase III money to pay for the staff development needed to *create* a plan for supporting school district improvement. Does this mean that our former Phase III plan will have to be scrapped?**

An AEA that doesn't have a plan for supporting local school district improvement can, and probably should, use Phase III funds to pay staff for their role in developing that plan, and the currently approved Phase III plan will continue in force until the new plan for supporting local school improvement is in place. Thus, activities authorized under your current Phase III plan are still fundable. You can, however, include expenditures under Phase III to support developing the improvement plan.

5. **What about the staff involvement that our present Phase III plan represents? Staff feel some ownership in it since they were involved in developing it. Won't the shift to a school improvement plan lock out their involvement?**

No. The mandatory subjects of bargaining still have to be agreed to.

6. **What kinds of support are OK to fund with Phase III?**

The same kinds that are now fundable under Phase III. There are of course a number of steps to developing a plan to support school improvement (such as the material costs of conducting needs assessments or printing the report to the community) that aren't and have never been Phase III fundable. But for those which are, Phase III can step up and offset the costs of those activities.

7. **I notice you're using lower case whenever you mention the school improvement plan. Why?**

Thanks for noticing. We didn't use an acronym either. We did that on purpose, to underscore that we're not talking about a "brand name" conception of what that plan would contain or be like. We do have some ideas about the steps involved in creating a plan, but they're rather generic and are based on the requirements of 280.12 and 280.18, Code of Iowa. Schools have had obligations under those Code sections for years. Our belief is that a school improvement plan at the local level can not only tie in Phase III, but the requirements of these Code sections *and* eventually a number of other funding sources as well. The AEA role and its plan should be one to support the local school district's school improvement plan.

8. **We already have a plan for supporting local school district improvement. Are we set?**

If your plan addresses all the Principles of A School Improvement Plan, you probably are.

9. **In the phrase "school improvement plan," does "school" mean a school district or can it mean a building within a district?**

It means a district plan, but districts may well want to differentiate within their plans to account for differences among their schools.

10. **What might "a plan for supporting school improvement" be like?**

It might address the process skills and the content knowledge necessary for staff to both develop an agency-wide plan for supporting school improvement as well as to work directly with local school districts to develop and implement a plan for school improvement. Regardless of the the actual format, its ultimate purpose is to help schools be successful in meeting the learning needs of their students.

11. **What about other school improvement activities going on, such as NISDC's work? Are they consistent with the DE's school improvement plan idea?**

We believe all valid school improvement work is consistent. Parts played by other agencies which lead to comprehensive school improvement should fit with the concept. A wheel already under development shouldn't need reinventing.

## 1996-97 AEA Phase III Application

The \_\_\_\_\_ assures that in accordance with Iowa Code sections 294A.12 - 20  
(area education agency name)  
and Iowa Administrative Code 281--91.1 - 7, in applying for 1996-97 Phase III funds, that:

1. the 1996-97 Phase III funds received by the agency will be used to continue the agency's approved 1995-96 Phase III plan which develops the agency's internal capacity to support local school district improvement and/or which directly supports local school districts' plans for school improvement;
2. each AEA Phase III funded activity
  - a. is driven by the agency's board-adopted goals for supporting school improvement,
  - b. has for its foundation the agency's strategic plan for supporting local district school improvement efforts,
  - c. is selected on the basis of identified and documented educational system change research,
  - d. is evaluated to determine the impact of the activity on bringing about systemic change to improve student achievement, and
  - e. if used for staff development, includes theory, demonstration, practice with mentoring, and continuing followup and feedback.
3. the 1996-97 Phase III funds will be used specifically to support the involvement of teachers in the following components: (check all that apply; see accompanying "Principles of a School Improvement Plan")
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Developing internal capacity to support local district school improvement
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Supporting local school districts' school improvement plans by assisting in:
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Identifying student learning needs
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Establishing expectations for student learning
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Developing a plan to fulfill learning expectations
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Implementing action plans to achieve the school improvement plan goals
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Evaluating results
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Reporting results to the public
    - \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Assisting with the development of a district plan for school improvement
4. Phase III expenditures will adhere to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and shall be reported to the community through the annual audit process;
5. all supporting documentation of the status and results of Phase III activities will be maintained in a central location for a period of at least five years;
6. an annual report of the 1996-97 activities will be attested to by the collective bargaining representative (where applicable), the chief administrator, and the board president and will be filed with the Department of Education by August 15, 1997;
7. Phase III funds will not be used to supplant existing expenditures for programs operated on a paid or a voluntary basis;
8. all federal and state laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, race, national origin, disability, age, and religion in educational programs will be adhered to; multicultural, nonsexist approaches will be used in implementing Phase III activities; and
9. if the agency is organized for collective bargaining purposes under Iowa Code chapter 20, those portions of the planned expenditures that are within the scope of negotiations specified in section 20.9 have been mutually agreed to by both the board of directors and the certified bargaining representative for certified employees.



1996-97 Phase III BUDGET

A. Revenue:

1. Third Friday in September 1995 enrollment served		
2. Per pupil allocation	x	\$2.30
3. Total allocation	=	\$
4. Funds carried over from 1995-96 plan	+	
5. Funds received from other districts (open enrollment, special education, sharing, etc)	+	
6. Funds sent to other districts	-	
7. TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	=	\$

B. Expenditures:

1. Teacher salaries		
2. Substitute teacher salaries		
3. Employee benefits (IPERS & FICA)		
4. Purchased services (specify below)		
5. Indirect costs (use 96-97 rate)		
6. TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$
7. Balance remaining		\$

C. Purchased Services specified:

D. Specify the Program Budget by percent or total dollars.

NOTE: The program budget must be consistent with item 3 on the reverse.

1. Developing internal capacity to support local school district improvement:
2. Supporting local school districts' school improvement plans:
  - a) Identifying needs:
  - b) Establishing learning expectations:
  - c) Developing a plan:
  - d) Implementing action plans:
  - e) Evaluating results:
  - f) Reporting results to the public:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certified Bargaining Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Chief Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of AEA Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed