



School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

May 2008

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Iowa Legislature Mandates the Iowa Core Curriculum for Iowa Students

On Friday, April 25, the Iowa legislature passed [SF2216](#), mandating the Iowa Core Curriculum for students in grades 9-12 by 2012 and grades K-8 by 2014. The bill is scheduled to be signed by the Governor today (May 1, 2008) in Independence

The Iowa Core Curriculum provides local school districts and nonpublic schools a guide to delivering instruction based on consistent, challenging, and meaningful content to students. The curriculum identifies the essential concepts and skill sets for literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. It also identifies 21st century learning skills, which include civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills.

The work to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum will soon begin for school districts and accredited nonpublic schools, and the Iowa Department of Education and the area education agencies will support their efforts with tools, assistance, and professional development activities. The department will soon be providing more details regarding the implementation process and timeline.

With the new mandate, the Iowa Department of Education will not simply hand over a textbook or curriculum guide. The establishment of curriculum has always been a local decision, and it will still continue to be because the Iowa Core Curriculum only covers what is considered to be the essential "core" skills and concepts needed to attain the state standards.

The first step in implementing the Iowa Core Curriculum will involve districts and nonpublic schools examining their local curriculum to ensure that the essential concepts and skills are incorporated, regardless of a student's career pathway. Each district may enter this work at a different place, depending on what they have done in the past. Because the Iowa Core Curriculum has been voluntary since 2006, there are a few districts that have begun the work, and there are some teachers across the state who are already trying out the voluntary units of study.

Professional development is key to the Iowa Core Curriculum. The guidance and the professional development that accompanies the implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum will give teachers more tools to enhance engaging classroom environments.

Funding will be available to school districts through professional development dollars to help with the implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum. In addition, the legislature approved funds for a statewide network of experts that will be available to assist districts in their efforts to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum.

The Iowa Core Curriculum initiative began in 2005 after members of the Iowa Department of Education and the State Board of Education visited a series of high schools in spring 2005 and discovered most districts sought a tool to help ensure that the most critical subject matter was being taught. In 2006, the Iowa legislature passed Senate File 245, which called for the establishment of a model core curriculum for high school math, science, and literacy. Teams of Iowans, including content experts, gathered to develop the curriculum. The teams reviewed hundreds of resources, including national and international standards.

In 2007, the passage of Senate File 588 directed the Iowa Department of Education to expand the Iowa Core Curriculum to include K-8 literacy, mathematics, and science; and K-12 social studies and 21st century skills.

There have been several articles in the *School Leader Update* about the Iowa Core Curriculum (please see the [January, February, and April editions](#)) that provide additional background. There is also information on our [website](#), which includes the identified skills and concepts, a short podcast, and much more

We know that this is an ambitious initiative to provide students with a world class curriculum, but it is work that Iowa educators will be proud of and all students deserve.

Judy Jeffrey

Summer Reading Essential for Student Learning

The Iowa Department of Education is encouraging school districts and nonpublic schools across the state to help stop summer reading loss.

Research shows that students experience a certain amount of learning loss during long breaks from school when they are not engaged in education activities. This is particularly true with reading skills.

Studies have also shown that encouraging voluntary reading during summer vacation may be one useful strategy for helping particularly struggling readers acquire the skills needed to be successful in school. Attached is an easy-to-use flyer that we are offering to promote summer reading. Please feel free to print, distribute, email, or include it in your last school/district newsletter.

In addition to the tips for parents included in the attached flyer, please note the following tips for schools.

Help protect your students against summer learning loss by:

1. Sending home recommended lists of books to read over the summer.
2. Helping students identify their own list of books to read over the summer before school is out.
3. Establishing a summer reading program. Several programs have been found to be effective – especially for those students who are at-risk.
4. Making the school library available during the summer.

Teacher of the Year Nominations Due

The nomination deadline for the 2009 Teacher of the Year is May 15.

Anyone, including school administrators, colleagues, students, parents, college faculty, and associations, may nominate teachers for the award. Winners are chosen by a committee that includes representatives of the Iowa Department of Education (DE), the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA), the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), the past Iowa Teacher of the Year, and representatives from higher education institutions.

The Iowa Teacher of the Year may serve as the Iowa Ambassador to Education, acting as an education liaison to primary and secondary schools in this state.

The Iowa Teacher of the Year Award was established in 1958 and is sponsored by the DE through an appropriation from the Iowa legislature. The award provides an opportunity to recognize an outstanding Iowa teacher.

Please visit <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/686/664/> to obtain a nomination form. For questions, please contact Deborah Humpal at (515) 281-3980 or deborah.humpal@iowa.gov.

State Board of Education to Meet May 14

The State Board of Education will hold its next meeting May 14 at the Grimes State Office Building in Des Moines.

The full agenda and materials for the meeting will be available on the Iowa Department of Education website at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/1004/1542/>.

Microsoft Settlement Web Pages to be Available

Web pages providing information about the Microsoft settlement will be active in mid-May.

One page will be located at <http://IowaSchoolMicrosoftSettlement.com>. This is the page operated by the claims administrator and will provide information on the roll-out of the Microsoft settlement program. The web page will contain the settlement agreement, FAQ page, how to redeem vouchers, balance sheets, eligible products (to be release at later date), and more.

The other web page will be located on the Iowa Department of Education (DE) website. The DE web page will contain a link to the claim's administrator's web page mentioned above. The DE web page will also provide preliminary information on eligible schools by Area Education Agency. Schools will be separated into two categories 1) high schools and 2) middle and elementary schools. This information will only be located on the DE website.

The DE website will also contain FAQ, assurance, budget, and draft application information. The application process will begin late in the fall of 2008. Regional information sessions will be held later in May, early June, August and September. Additional information will be available through your AEA.

Iowa Testing Program Releases New Online Registration System

This spring, Iowa Testing Programs will be releasing a new online registration system for its tests and ordering scoring services. The paper-based system that has been used in the past will no longer be available beginning with the 2008-2009 school year.

To help districts adjust to the new system, the Iowa Testing Program will offer several workshops at locations throughout the state. Anyone who completes Iowa Tests of Basic Skills/Iowa Tests of Educational Development registrations and/or completes orders for scoring services (OSS) should try to attend one of these workshops.

For workshop details and information on registering for the workshops, visit <http://www.education.uiowa.edu/itp/workshops.htm>.

Opportunity for Superintendents and Principals to Visit Taiwan in July

The Ministry of Education in Taiwan would like to extend an invitation to Iowa superintendents or principals who are interested in hiring a teacher from Taiwan the opportunity to better understand the country's culture, educational system, and benefits of its Chinese language programs.

Administrators are invited to travel to Taiwan to interview potential candidates at the Ministry, visit university language centers and elementary or high schools, and also sample Taiwan's culture.

Interested administrators should submit a proposal that outlines its plan to hire Chinese language teachers from Taiwan as related to items such as the number of superintendents/principals participating in the trip; how many teachers they are hoping to recruit; what qualifications they will be looking for; what salaries and benefits they would be willing to provide.

The tentative period for this trip is July 7-14th. The Ministry of Education welcomes a school district representative who has an interest in recruiting a Chinese teacher from Taiwan for next year, and will assume this representative's airfare and accommodation costs for the duration of the trip.

For more information, please contact Jody Crane at 515-281-3333 or jody.crane@iowa.gov.

QUALITY TEACHING

Iowa Mentoring and Induction Institute Offered

Beginning educators, mentors, administrators, mentoring and induction facilitators, two-year/four-year teacher preparation faculty, and other educational leaders are encouraged to attend the 5th Annual Iowa Mentoring and Induction Institute on June 18-20 at the Park Place Event Centre in Cedar Falls. This year's institute will explore the needs of diverse learners and the social/political context of schools.

Dr. Tyrone Howard, Associate Professor of Urban Schooling at UCLA, will present the opening keynote — "Diversity and Motivation: Implications for Teachers in Multicultural Schools." Dr. Marcia L. Tate, national consultant and author, will facilitate an all-day workshop — "Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites: 20 Instructional Strategies that Engage the Brain." Participants will learn research-supported instructional strategies to help students maximize memory and meet curriculum standards. Andrew Mogle, 2008 Iowa Teacher of the Year, will be the keynote speaker on June 20.

The institute will also showcase Iowa mentoring and induction initiatives and present the 2008 awards for outstanding mentor and mentor program leader. Registration and mentor/leader nomination forms are available online at www.vpaf.uni.edu/events/mentor.

For additional information, please contact Mary Beth Schroeder Fracek at marybeth.schroederfracek@iowa.gov or 515-281-3160.

Journey to Excellence Training to Be Offered

Training for trainers of Local Education Agencies and Area Education Agency mentors will be held July 21-25 at Stoney Creek Inn, Northwood's Conference Center, 5291 Stoney Creek Ct., Johnston, IA 50131

This event is based on Journey to Excellence, an Iowa mentoring and induction model program. It is designed to provide a focus for the instructional mentoring of beginning educators and provide the necessary flexibility to make the experiences meaningful for the beginning educator, mentor, and administrator. This is an Iowa-focused program that addresses the Iowa Teaching Standards specifically. Journey to Excellence uses a series of learning projects, each focused on one Iowa Teaching Standard.

Registration is \$300 per person and includes conference meals and materials. This training is supported by the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa State Education Association. Seating is limited to 100 people. Please visit <http://ia.nea.org/profdev/mentor.html> to register.

Lodging is available. Rooms are \$89.00 per night plus taxes at Stoney Creek Inn: (800) 659-2220. Deadline for the conference rate is July 7.

For more information, contact Mary Beth Schroeder Fracek at marybeth.schroederfracek@iowa.gov.

Revised Finance Education Standards Available

Revised standards and benchmarks for finance education are now available. Utilizing the standards and benchmarks made available by the nonprofit company MarkEd, representatives of the finance industry in Iowa met in March to identify critical standards for finance education in Iowa and validate the standards and benchmarks.

All career and technical education standards are available online at: <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/263/404/>. In-service education on the finance standards is available for those who are interested.

For questions, please contact Pat Thieben at 515-281-4707 or pat.thieben@iowa.gov.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Legislative Session Concludes

The 2008 legislative session concluded on Friday, April 25. The session was a success in many ways for Iowa education. In addition to the Iowa Core Curriculum summary in the Director's Message above, the Iowa Department of Education will issue a summary of all education-related legislation to school leaders within the next few weeks.

General information about the legislature can be found at www.legis.state.ia.us. For additional information or to provide comments or concerns, contact Jeff Berger at jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Volunteer for a Site Visit Team

Iowa educators are encouraged to volunteer to participate on one of the Iowa Department of Education school improvement site visits scheduled for the 2008-2009 school year.

Serving on a site team has many benefits. It helps participants understand accreditation expectations, the preparation process, and allows educators to obtain in-depth information and examples from other districts. The site visit schedule and participation information will be available at the following website www.state.ia.us/educate on or around May 15th.

For more information contact, elizabeth.calhoun@iowa.gov or 515-281-8170.

LEGAL LESSONS

The contact for all Legal Lessons items is Carol Greta, carol.greta@iowa.gov; 515-281-8661.

Guidance on Student Activity Funds

Personnel from the Iowa Department of Education (DE) and the Office of the State Auditor recently met to prepare a guidance document to school districts regarding usage of student activity funds, including fundraising by members of student activity groups. School districts and school auditors had questioned the proper use of funds raised by student members of groups such as FFA, FCCLA, DECA, etc. The guidance piece is available on the DE website at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/blogcategory/48/938/>.

Guidance on Athletic Eligibility Rule Change

The link to the new guidance document drafted with the assistance of the executive directors of the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union is <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/1157/1501/>. It also appears on the websites of those organizations, iahsaa.org and ighsau.org.

Dual Credit Courses and Charging Parents

There are two means by which secondary students may access courses for both secondary and postsecondary credit, Post Secondary Education Options (PSEO) and shared courses with a community college. For only the latter, districts receive supplementary weighting. For only the former, a district may seek reimbursement of \$250 from a student if the student does not pass the PSEO course. While a district may

charge a reasonable book rental fee (assuming the district owns the textbooks used for the course), in no event may a district charge tuition for a dual credit course.

Open Enrollment Appeal Decision

In January, this publication reported on the new criteria for analyzing late-filed open enrollment requests that allege repeated acts of harassment. As a reminder, the new criteria are as follows:

1. The harassment must have occurred after March 1 (or the student or parent is able to demonstrate that the extent of the harassment could not have been known until after March 1.)
2. The harassment must be specific electronic, written, verbal, or physical acts or conduct toward the student which created an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions.
 - a. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
 - b. Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
 - c. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
 - d. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
3. The evidence must show that the harassment is likely to continue despite the efforts of school officials to resolve the situation.
4. Changing the student's school district will alleviate the situation.

On April 3rd, the State Board of Education applied these new criteria to an appeal, upholding a local board's denial of an open enrollment request. In that case (on the Iowa Department of Education's website at: <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp?book=25&decision=47>), the alleged harassment occurred primarily before March 1 (2007), but the open enrollment application was not filed until the second day of school in August, 2007.

The State School Board expressed concern that the district delayed in getting the matter before the local board. The State Board specifically directed DE staff to issue this reminder to districts that Iowa Code section 282.18(5) and rule 281 – IAC 17.5(1) state that open enrollment applications that are filed after March 1 and that allege repeated acts of harassment or serious health condition that the resident district cannot adequately address, even if initially acted upon by the superintendent, **must go to the local board**. In fact, the rule states, "The board of the resident district shall act on the request within 30 days of its receipt."

Open Enrollment Reminder to Receiving Districts

Receiving districts that get an open enrollment application from a resident of one of the five districts that has a diversity plan (formerly known as a desegregation plan) are reminded *not* to act on such application. The resident district must examine the application to determine whether that enrollment or release of a pupil will adversely affect the district's implementation of its diversity plan, unless the transfer is requested by a pupil whose sibling is already participating in open enrollment. The five districts with a diversity plan are Davenport, Des Moines, Postville, Waterloo, and West Liberty.

Open Enrollment Reminder to all Districts

Preschool students that are not age-eligible (5 years old by September 15) do not qualify for open enrollment. There is an exception to this rule. Students that are supported by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) have the option to open enroll.

FERPA Ruling about Student Records

Federal law requires school districts to provide parents with an opportunity to review their children's educational records within 45 days of any request to do so. One district (not in Iowa) found out the hard way that the U.S. Department of Education means it. Upon receiving a complaint from a parent and finding that the district in question did indeed go beyond the 45 day requirement, the Family Policy Compliance Office (which enforces FERPA) ordered the offending district to provide an in-service for its staff regarding the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Olds Applications Due May 9

Districts that have not received Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children funds in the past may submit an application for funding by May 9th. The 2008-2009 revised application and the revised 2008-2009 Technical Assistance Guidance Manual are available on the Iowa Department of Education website at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/940/1016/>.

Awards will be based on the 2008 legislative appropriation. Additional application requirements may be included if legislatively mandated.

The 64 current districts who received grant funds for Year 1 (2007-2008), DO NOT have to re-apply for a grant.

For questions, please contact Lorri Cooper at lorri.cooper@iowa.gov.

Child Care Wrap Around Grants Rule Changes

The Department of Human Services has proposed rule changes to the Child Care Wrap Around Grants. These grants provide funding to extend the day to include child care, therefore decreasing the transitions a young child must make during the day.

The rules now include Shared Visions preschool programs as a core program and improves the grant process by decreasing the number of grants each program must submit. It is anticipated these will be very competitive grants. A conference call will be held May 28 from 3:30 to 4:30 to review the rules.

For additional information please contact Penny Milburn at penny.milburn@iowa.gov.

FUNDING AND GRANTS

Safe and Drug Free School Reimbursements

Administrators are reminded that third quarter Safe and Drug Free School claims are due May 15.

Administrators that have not yet submitted first and second quarter claims must do so before the third quarter claim can be processed. The fourth quarter claim is due on August 15th. Claims for each quarter must be submitted — even if there have been no expenses. Claims for all four quarters must be submitted before the budget for FY09 can be approved.

For questions about Safe and Drug Free Schools claims or reimbursements, contact Tana Mullen at tana.mullen@iowa.gov.

DE Developing Finance-Related “Tools for Schools”

The Iowa Department of Education is in the process of developing/updating “Tools for Schools” to assist district personnel in developing financial plans, budgets, and ongoing monitoring.

One such tool is the Unspent Balance Projection Calculator, which can be found at:

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/component/option=com_docman/task=doc_download/gid,4685/ and is updated with current information.

Sample board reports and a document explaining the relationship between the reports and the two rulers by which all districts’ finances are measured can be found at:

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=5092,

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=5093

Financial measurement spreadsheets to track over time the financial position of school districts have been placed on the website at:

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=5088.

If there are any questions on any of the documents, please contact Joyce Thomsen at 515-242-5612 or joyce.thomsen@iowa.gov. Please feel free to send along any suggestions for future updates to existing documents or new documents.

Perkins Grant Application Due June 2nd

The Perkins IV Five-Year State Plan was approved by the State Board of Education at its April meeting. Perkins basic and Tech Prep grant applications, instructions, checklists, and allocation tables are now available online at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/265/402/>. Performance indicator data will be mailed directly to each recipient. Applications are due on June 2, 2008. In-service sessions on Perkins basic grant applications will be conducted in each region of the state. Each recipient will be contacted by the Iowa Department of Education Perkins liaison for their region with the date, time, and location of the training.

DATA AND REPORTING

CSIP Updates for School Districts and Nonpublic Schools

School districts and nonpublic schools that received a school improvement site visit during the 2007-2008 school year are required to revise and recertify their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) by

September 15, 2008. CSIP revisions are also required for any or all of the following actions (in accordance with Chapter 12):

- Grade level changes (as in cases of reorganization-but does not include dissolution or Phase II)
- Funding stream changes

School districts and schools will be certifying their CSIP each year due to legislative changes that impact the assurances section of the plan each year. Districts will not need to port their information forward this year. This has been done for you. You need to update and certify the 2007-08 CSIP. The certify button will not be available until September 1st, 2008, although the CSIP is available for you to update at all times. Please certify your 2007-2008 CSIP by September 15, 2008. If you have questions or need assistance with the CSIP update and certification process please contact your assigned School Improvement Consultant from the Iowa Department of Education first. If you need further assistance, contact either Brandie Gean (brandie.gean@iowa.gov or 515-281-4726) or Holly Barnes (holly.barnes@iowa.gov or 515-242-6173).

Annual Progress Report Deadline

The deadline for submission of the Annual Progress Report (APR) is September 15, 2008. The secure website will be available July 2008 for updating. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills/Iowa Tests of Educational Development test data will be available in August 2008 for public school districts. Further information for nonpublic schools will be forthcoming. The completed electronic APR will be available to the public via the Iowa Department of Education's website to distribute to stakeholders who may not have Internet access. Technical assistance can be accessed at

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=368.

For additional information, contact Holly Barnes at holly.barnes@iowa.gov or 515-242-6173.

Project EASIER Plus CTE Reminder

Districts that have not updated their "courses in a program" through Project EASIER Plus CTE should do so and then review "students in a program" data. Schools should make sure to complete student occupational proficiency data before the end of the academic year. Financial information submitted to Project EASIER Plus CTE is due August 1st. For questions, please contact the Perkins liaison for your region

(http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4334).

CALENDAR

Deadlines and Dates to Remember

May 9	2008-2009 Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Olds Applications Deadline
May 14	State Board of Education Meeting
May 15	2009 Iowa Teacher of the Year Nomination Forms Due Third Quarter Safe and Drug Free School Claims Due
May 28	Conference call on the Department of Human Services proposed rule changes to the Child Care Wrap Around Grants (See article above).
June 2	Perkins Grant Application Due

To view a complete Iowa Department of Education calendar of events visit <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/calendar/calendar.html>.

SCHOOL LEADER UPDATE is produced monthly by the Iowa Department of Education for school leaders of Iowa. Comments and submissions should be sent to Elaine Watkins-Miller at elaine.watkins-miller@iowa.gov or 515/281-5295.

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX

(Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312/730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.

Reading *in* Summer



The Power of Summer Reading

Sunscreen: Blocks the sun's rays.

Bike helmet: Guards against injuries.

Summer Reading: Protects against summer learning loss.

Parent Power

Summer is the perfect time to help students hone their reading skills. In fact, research shows that encouraging reading during summer vacation may help struggling readers acquire the skills needed to succeed in school. Parents, it is time to enjoy the summer with your children and get them reading.

The Iowa Department of Education encourages parents to help their children with summer reading activities. "I want all students in Iowa to read books that are appropriate for their age and ability this summer," says Iowa Department of Education Director Judy Jeffrey.

Research shows that students experience some level of learning loss when they don't participate in summer education-related activities. This is particularly true with reading.

"...my parents had a great influence on my ability and desire to read. (They) encouraged literacy by having me read to them frequently before bedtime."

— Laura, an Iowa high school student.

Help protect your child(ren) against summer learning loss by:

1. Establishing a daily routine that includes reading. Read to your children or guide their reading by helping them with difficult words or providing positive feedback. Discuss and ask questions about what's been read.
2. Modeling reading in front of your children.
3. Making sure plenty of books are available for your children to read. (Tip: Use the five-finger rule to determine if the book matches the reader's ability. As your child reads, count the number of words he or she cannot read per page. If your child has trouble with five or more words, have the child try another book.)
4. Participating in the school's or local library's free summer reading program.

