



# School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

JULY 2006

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### **Volunteer for a Site Visit Team**

Iowa educators are encouraged to volunteer to participate on one of the Department of Education School Improvement site visits scheduled for the 2006-2007 school year. Serving on a site visit team has many benefits: It helps participants understand site visit expectations, the preparation process, and allows educators to obtain in-depth information and examples from other districts. The site visit schedule and participation information is available at the following website: [www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/csi/sv.html](http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/csi/sv.html). For more information, contact Annette Mathieu, 515/281-3170 or [annette.mathieu@iowa.gov](mailto:annette.mathieu@iowa.gov).

### **Student Plans Must Be Developed with 2006-07 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class**

Districts are reminded that they must work with 8<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents to develop a plan to guide each student to successfully complete high school coursework, including career options, and the coursework needed in grades 9-12 to support those career options. The 2006-07 8<sup>th</sup> graders are also the first class that must complete the new graduation requirements established by the Legislature in the 2006 session. Guidance on what must be included in the planning will be provided to districts later this summer. Contact Barb Guy at 515/281-5265 or [Barbara.guy@iowa.gov](mailto:Barbara.guy@iowa.gov) for more information.

### **Open Enrollment Appeal by Resident District**

Effective July 1, 2006, a resident district may appeal to the Department Director if it disagrees with a decision of a receiving district's board to approve a late-filed open enrollment request.

If the resident district believes that a receiving district has approved a late-filed OE request without good cause, the resident district may, within 15 days after the board action by the receiving district, submit an appeal to the director of the Department of Education. The director, or director's designee, shall attempt to mediate (telephonic) the dispute to reach approval by both parties. If needed, the director or designee shall conduct a hearing to hear testimony from both boards (or designees). Within 10 days of the hearing, the director will issue a decision.

### **What constitutes severe health need as good cause for open enrollment?**

An applicant may qualify under the severe health need provision if one of the following exists:

1. The serious health condition of the child is one that has been diagnosed by an appropriate healthcare provider, and the diagnosis has been provided to the district of residence.
2. The serious health condition is neither short-term nor temporary.
3. The district has been provided with the specifics of the child's health needs caused by the serious health condition and knows or should know what specific steps its staff must take to meet the child's needs.
4. School officials, upon notification of the serious health condition and the steps to be taken to meet the child's needs, must have failed to implement such steps or, despite the district's efforts, its implementation of the steps was unsuccessful.
5. A reasonable person could not have known before March 1 that the district could not or would not adequately address the child's health needs.
6. It can be reasonably anticipated that a change in the child's school district will improve the situation.

An official in the resident district determines if the applicant qualifies under the criteria of pervasive harassment.

Each case is to be decided on its own merits, keeping in mind that 282.18(5) is the one subsection of the Iowa Code in which the Legislature has specifically admonished districts and the State Board to act "in the best interest of the **affected child.**" **Where there is doubt, the benefit of that doubt is to be accorded to the child.**

## QUALITY TEACHING

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### Online Ethics Tools Available to Educators, Districts

Heartland AEA has developed several tools to assist teachers and administrators with professional ethics.

An *Ethics in Iowa Education* PowerPoint presentation was developed in 2005 by Heartland and is located on the DE website at <http://www.state.ia.us/boee>. Several teacher preparation programs and local school districts currently use the PowerPoint presentation and accompanying materials with their pre-service teachers or employees.

Heartland also has just completed work on "Ethics for Iowa Educators," a new online course for Iowa practitioners. The information contained in the course covers Chapters 25 and 26 of the Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) and other topics relevant to professionals working with PreK-12 students. Starting this fall, the online course will be available at no cost to licensed staff at Heartland and school districts within the Heartland area. Arrangements are being made to extend the opportunity to districts through AEAs across the state. Access information will be sent to district-designated contacts.

Contact George Maurer, 515/281-5849 or [george.maurer@iowa.gov](mailto:george.maurer@iowa.gov), for additional information.

### Guidance Issued for HF 2792: Teacher Quality and Student Achievement

On Thursday, June 1, 2006, Governor Vilsack signed House File (HF) 2792 that included funding for and changes to the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program. Those changes include updates to the mentoring and induction program, the day of professional development, compensation for time spent in professional development, the market factor allowed for teacher salaries, and reporting requirements.

The DE has sent guidance to all districts regarding these policy changes and updates; that guidance is posted on the DE website at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/fis/sft/alloc/index.html>.

Please contact Dianne Chadwick at [Dianne.Chadwick@iowa.gov](mailto:Dianne.Chadwick@iowa.gov) or 515/281-3718 for additional information.

## LEGAL LESSONS

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*The contact for all Legal Lessons items is Carol Greta, [carol.greta@iowa.gov](mailto:carol.greta@iowa.gov); 515/281-8661.*

### Notify Students of School Choice Options

All school districts that operate more than one attendance center per grade level are required to provide a notice to any student victim of violence at school that the student may transfer to another attendance center within the district. Roughly a month ago, a letter was sent from the DE to school districts regarding this obligation. Included in the letter was a sample notice for district use.

Again, this notification is required only of districts with multiple elementary or secondary buildings. If a district has, for example, one K-3 building, one 4-6 building, one 7-8 building, and one 9-12 building, that district is exempt from this requirement.

### Home-schooled Children and Truancy Laws

What responsibility does a school district have regarding resident children of compulsory attendance age (between the ages of 6 and 16 by September 15) who receive competent private instruction (CPI)? Although parents/guardians are legally responsible to see to it that their children of compulsory education age receive an appropriate education, all districts are responsible to ACCOUNT FOR all children of compulsory attendance age who reside within their boundaries. Iowa Code sections 299.10, 299.15, and 299.16 require that "the board of each school district" appoint a truancy officer or designate some other "suitable person to collect information on the numbers of children in the district who are truant." None of these sections of the law limit a

district's responsibility to children who are enrolled with the district. While it is the parent or guardian's responsibility under Chapters 299 and 299A of the Iowa Code to provide an education for children of compulsory attendance age, the resident district must account for those children.

But, what is "truancy" in the context of home schooling?

1. Failure to file Form A (the Report of CPI).
2. Failure to complete all mandatory questions on Form A.
3. Failure to renew Form A annually.
4. Failure to provide home schooling for at least 148 days each school year.

Any or all of the above examples may and should be reported to the county attorney for action under truancy laws in Iowa Code chapter 299.

## Speaking of Home-schooled Children . . .

Form A, the Report of Competent Private Instruction (CPI), is of course available on the DE website. It is also permissible for a district to post the Form on its own web site. Districts do not need DE permission to do so.

## Driver Education Instruction: Sharing the Road with Two-wheelers

SF 2267 adds a requirement to Iowa Code section 321.178 that driver education instructors provide instruction in awareness about sharing the road with bicycles and motorcycles and that instructional materials about such awareness be distributed during the course. The Iowa DOT is currently working with ABATE of Iowa (motorcycle advocates) and the Iowa Bicycle Coalition to develop the materials. The DOT hopes to distribute these materials to schools in the late summer.

Questions about this requirement should be directed to Steve Tudor of the DOT at 515/237-3180 or [steven.tudor@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:steven.tudor@dot.iowa.gov).

## Determining Eligibility for Fee Waivers

Registration time is fast approaching. Many issues regarding fees and fee waivers are covered in the FAQ on the DE website, <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/fags.asp?f=tf00000>. Many districts use the free/reduced price lunch application to cover eligibility for all school fees. This is fine, but a district must also have an alternative means permitting families to apply for fee waivers other than via F/R meal applications. For instance, chapter 18 of the DE administrative rules provides for the following alternatives:

- a. Participation in FIP (Family Investment Program)
- b. Eligible for transportation assistance
- c. The student is a foster child (this is an absolute entitlement to waiver of all fees)

## Gift Law Reminder

**Scenario #1:** A clothing company contacts an activities director and coaching staff with a deal for their school. To get the AD and coaches to recommend the company to the superintendent and school board members, the company wants to give clothing to the AD and coaches.

**Scenario #2:** A curriculum publisher contacts the math department of a district and offers free DVD players to the teachers if they can get their building principal to recommend the company to the superintendent and school board members.

**The Reality:** Iowa's gift law (Iowa Code chapter 68B) prohibits the above conduct.

The gift law applies to all public employees, which includes administrators, teachers, and coaches at school districts. The gift law prohibits a public employee or that person's immediate family member from accepting or receiving, directly or indirectly, any gift or series of gifts from a "restricted donor."

A restricted donor is defined in the law as a person or company who is or is seeking to be a party to a sale, purchase, lease or other type of contract with the employer of the public employee. Thus, in the above scenario the clothing company, the publisher, and all of their representatives are restricted donors. They want a contract with the school district. They want to sell goods to the district.

There are some exceptions to the prohibitions in the gift law. The ones that would most commonly occur regarding school employees are as follows:

- Non-monetary items with a value of three dollars or less that are received from any one donor during one calendar day.
- Informational material relevant to a public employee's official functions, such as books, pamphlets, reports, documents, periodicals, or other information that is recorded in a written, audio, or visual format.
- Anything available or distributed free of charge to members of the general public without regard to the official status of the recipient.

The consequences for violating the gift law are severe. A person who knowingly and intentionally violates the gift law may be punished in ALL of the following three ways:

- Both donor and recipient are guilty of a serious misdemeanor. Serious misdemeanors are punishable by up to one-year incarceration and a fine between \$250 and \$1,500, plus a 30% surcharge and court costs.
- The gift law specifically gives the public employer permission to fire the employee who takes a gift in violation of this law.
- Finally, violation of the gift law is a violation of the Board of Educational Examiner's Code of Ethics. Therefore, the public employee who is also licensed by the BoEE could lose his or her license.

## DATA MANAGEMENT

### Electronic Annual Progress Report (APR) for 2005-06

An electronic version of the 2005-06 APR has been launched, and all districts are encouraged to participate.

DE staff are working to pre-populate most of the data reporting requirements from the Project EASIER data system (non-public schools that do not use Project Easier will be able to report student achievement data manually on this system later in the summer). Districts/schools are being asked to input the information for the portions of the APR that cannot be pre-populated. This process will be much like the process used to complete the Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIPs) using text boxes (though districts will be required to fill out much less information for the APR than the CSIP).

ICN sessions explaining this process took place at various times throughout June. Administrators unable to attend one of the sessions may request a videotape of the ICN session from their AEA office.

Districts/schools will retain the option of completing paper copies of the APR for distribution to the public, but they are encouraged to use the electronic version.

The deadline for submission of the APR is September 15, 2006. The completed electronic APR reports will be available to the public via the DE website, and districts/schools may print a summary from the APR website to distribute to stakeholders who may not have Internet access.

Districts and schools that choose not to participate in the electronic system may download a copy of the APR checklist from the DE's website or contact Debbie Boring at 515/281-3198 or [debbie.boring@iowa.gov](mailto:debbie.boring@iowa.gov).

### Project EASIER Curriculum Reporting

Student level curriculum data will **not** be included in the 2006 fall reporting requirements. Rather, a mid-year collection is planned that will accommodate a more accurate reflection of courses offered and taught for the entire school year. However for accreditation purposes districts will still need to certify in the fall what courses they are offering and teaching in 2006-07. Districts will be provided a web-based curriculum summary report based on courses offered and taught in 2005-2006. This summary report will need to be reviewed, updated if necessary, and certified.

### Project EASIER Fall/Mid-year Timeline

Note: The official count day for student enrollment has been changed from the third Friday in September to October 1. This year, October 1 falls on a Sunday, so the count day will be October 2.

October 2	Count Day Fall Production Site Opens for File Submissions
November 3	Fall Deadline for Files to be Certified

Production Site Closes

January 2 Mid-Year Production Site Opens for File Submissions

February 1 Mid-Year Production Site Closes

## SCHOOL FUNDING AND GRANTS

### Iowa Learning Technology Commission

The 2006 Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to the Iowa Learning Technology Commission for innovative technology grants to school districts. Applications for this additional round of grants will occur in two parts. Part I will ask interested school districts to submit a Concept Paper that explains the focus of the project, how the project is innovative, and how student learning will be impacted by the effort. This concept paper is due September 15, 2006 and will be submitted electronically by the superintendent through the Edinfo website (after July 24, 2006). Using established criteria, the ILTC will invite a number of district proposals to move to Part II of the application process, at which point those invited districts will be given the option to submit a full grant application by November 10, 2006. Final determination of ILTC grant award recipients is scheduled on or around December 15, 2006.

Interested school districts can access information about Part I of the application process through the ILTC website at <http://homepage.mac.com/albodespanish/iltc/iltc.html> or the department's website at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/grants.html>. For additional questions, please contact Jeff Berger at 515/281-3399 or [jeff.berger@iowa.gov](mailto:jeff.berger@iowa.gov).

### New Federal Grants Help Pay for College

The USDE has announced two new federal programs that provide additional financial aid to students who have taken challenging high school coursework and want to go to college.

The new programs, the Academic Competitiveness (AC) Grant and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant, will provide \$790 million in college aid this fall to eligible students nationwide, and a total of \$4.5 billion over the next five years. The AC grants provide eligible college students who have completed a rigorous course of study in high school with financial aid up to \$750 during their freshman year and up to \$1,300 during their sophomore year. College juniors and seniors who are eligible for SMART grants will automatically receive up to \$4,000 in additional aid the next year. To receive a SMART Grant, third- and fourth-year students must meet the eligibility requirements, major in science, technology, math or critical foreign languages, and maintain a 3.0 GPA.

In addition to high school and college course-taking requirements, the AC and SMART grants also require students to demonstrate financial need and qualify for the federal Pell Grant program. Students can receive additional eligibility and application information for both of these grant programs online at: [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov) or by calling 1- 800- 4FEDAID (or 1-800-433-3243). For a fact sheet on the Academic Competitiveness and SMART Grants, click [here. <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0606ACSMART.PDF>](http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0606ACSMART.PDF)

## CALENDAR

- Jul July 17-20** [Annual School Transportation Conference](#), Des Moines
- July 18-20** Governor's [Homeland Security Conference](#), Des Moines
- July 24** [New Administrator Institute](#), West Des Moines
- August 2** New [School Nurse Orientation](#) Workshop, Johnston
- August 8-10** [SAI Annual Conference](#), Des Moines
- August 16** Iowa [Grant Symposium](#) (how to find and complete proposals), Des Moines

*SCHOOL LEADER UPDATE is produced monthly by the Iowa Department of Education for school leaders of Iowa. Comments and submissions should be sent to Kathi Slaughter, 515/281-5651, [kathi.slaughter@iowa.gov](mailto:kathi.slaughter@iowa.gov).*