

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2010

The following categories were developed to guide use of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children (SWVPP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document:

- I. Collaborating with Community Partners
- II. Budget/Finance
- III. Enrollment/Eligibility
- IV. Assurances and Requirements
- V. Transportation
- VI. Other

Each main category has subcategories listed in the left column to expedite locating content areas for questions. Questions under each subcategory are numbered and will be dated for subsequent postings.

I. Collaborating with Community Partners

District Consortiums

Q1: May a school district combine with a neighboring district (form a consortium) to provide the SWVPP?

A: Yes, school districts may form a consortium when initially applying for the SWVPP grant with one of the districts acting as the fiscal agent. The district identified as the fiscal agent on the application is accountable for ensuring that all of the SWVPP requirements and assurances are met, including collecting and reporting data to the Department. It would be advisable for the consortium to develop a written agreement for oversight and partner responsibilities.

Faith-Based Partners

Q1: Can a district contract with a faith-based agency to provide the SWVPP?

A: Yes, school districts may partner with faith-based religious preschools for the provision of SWVPP as long as the faith-based agency meets the requirements of Chapter 16 and as long as the SWVPP funding supports instruction that is "secular, neutral, and non-ideological."

- All faith-based partners must ensure that, from the time instruction supported by Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program funds starts until the time such instruction ends, no religious instruction takes place. There is to be no interruption (no "sprinkling") of such instructional time for any faith-based purpose. An arrangement with a faith-based entity or organization to provide statewide voluntary preschool programming shall not violate the following:
 - First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause (i.e., a child is not compelled to participate in any religious instruction or activity);
 - First Amendment's Establishment Clause (i.e., public funds are not used to support religious instruction).

Pursuant to Article I, Section 3 of the Iowa Constitution, religious instruction is restricted during the time that is funded through state dollars: "The general assembly

shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; nor shall any person be compelled to attend any place of worship, pay tithes, taxes, or other rates for building or repairing places of worship, or the maintenance of any minister, or ministry.

Q2: Is the faith-based preschool program required to remove non-secular icons (such as crosses or statues) from the classroom?

A: Non-secular icons may remain in the preschool classroom; however, these items may not be included in or alluded to during conversation or instruction during the ten hours of SWVPP.

Community Partners

Q1: May a school district change the collaborative partners identified in their application?

A: If a school district is awarded the SWVPP grant and a community partner chooses not to participate after the application was awarded, the district may develop an agreement with another community partner. All programs funded through the SWVPP must meet the assurances and requirements in the application.

Q2: Does a community partner need to be located within the district boundaries in order to collaborate to provide the SWVPP?

A: Yes, a community partner (private preschool/child care center, faith-based preschool or accredited nonpublic school) must be located within the district boundaries in order to participate with the district in the provision of the SWVPP.

Q3: When additional preschool programs (community or district-based) are added as part of the district's SWVPP, what are the time frames for meeting program requirements?

A: Districts are encouraged to expand their community partnerships to increase access to quality preschool programs and to meet the needs of the community. As community partnerships increase, additional preschool programs will be receiving funds or have their children counted as part of the Certified Enrollment for SWVPP funds. Preschool programs partnering with districts are expected to meet the same assurances, requirements and standards as the programs included in the district's original application.

For example, if a district adds a preschool program in their second year, the program should meet program standards, have a certified teacher, and meet all of the requirements and assurances if the district plans to count the children in this program on the Certified Enrollment count due October 1 for formula generated funding. This would be the same as a district adding a section of first grade, they would meet the district requirements for a certified teacher and other requirements expected of an accredited school district.

Purchase of Equipment and Supplies for Partners

Q1: Are the supplies and equipment purchased for partnering preschools using SWVPP funds the property of the school district?

A: Yes. Equipment and materials purchased with SWVPP funds are the property of

the district. It is recommended that the purchase of equipment and supplies be addressed as part of the contract/agreement developed between the district and the private preschools. If the partner withdraws from the agreement, procedures need to be described to return purchased equipment and supplies to the district. Please refer to the Technical Assistance Guidance Manual, pages 34-35 for guidance on developing shared agreements, and pages 36-38 for a sample contract. This would not apply to materials or supplies that are consumable.

II. Budget/Finance

Intent of Legislation (HF 877)

Q1: What is the intent of the SWVPP law and can funds be used for children also enrolled in other programs?

A: The intent of Chapter 16, Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs for Four-Year-Old Children, is to create high-quality early learning environments for four-year-old children whose families choose to access such programs. The purpose of the SWVPP is to provide an opportunity for all young children in the state to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to quality preschool curricula for all children (281-16.1, 82GA, HF877). To this purpose, state funds are made available to assist local school districts in the implementation of the SWVPP.

Only those applicants that certify the following assurances (ARC16.9(5)) shall be considered for funding:

- Appropriately licensed teacher
- Sufficient numbers of staff
- Program standard adopted and implemented
- Instruction delivered in accordance with the applicant's curriculum and the Iowa Early Learning Standards

State funding received under this program shall be used to supplement, not supplant, other public funding received by the applicant district as the result of the participation of any eligible children if the program is funded from another state or federal sources. A school district shall certify to the department of education that preschool foundation aid funding received by the school district was used to supplement, not supplant, moneys otherwise received and used by the school district for preschool programming (HF 877, ARC16.11(3,4)).

Based on this guidance from the 2007 Iowa Acts, House File 877 and the Administrative Rules Chapter 16, the school district must be the applicant and as such is held accountable for financial management. The intent of the legislation is that the funding would support a preschool program of high quality while increasing access to that program to all four-year-olds. The funding would then support the program through meeting the assurances and program requirements.

Recipient of Funds

Q1: Who is the recipient of funding through the SWVPP?

A: The funding is awarded to public school districts only. Funds are provided to school districts but they may contract with nonpublic preschools or child care centers

to coordinate community partnerships and preschool classrooms. All district and partnering preschool programs must comply with the requirements of IAC 281 chapter 16.

Use of Funds

Q1: May a district use the SWVPP program funds for other purposes within the school?

A: No, the funds are considered categorical and must be used for preschool program expenditures only.

Q2: May SWVPP funds be used to provide construction for a local facility?

A: No. Funds cannot be used for facility construction. However, the USDA offers grant opportunities for construction. Additional information can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

Q3: May SWVPP funds be used to remodel a local facility?

A: Funds shall not be used for the costs of constructing or remodeling a facility in connection with the preschool program. Funds may be allocated to support the implementation of the SWVPP. This would include: instructional supplies and materials, staff salaries, travel, professional development, necessary equipment and supplies specific to the preschool program, transportation, contracted services, etc.

Q4: What should the district's focus be when allocating funds for the SWVPP?

A: The focus should be on supporting the implementation of the SWVPP. Allocating funds to ensure that districts meet the assurances and program requirements, such as an appropriately licensed teacher, staff to child ratio, and meeting program standards will increase access and opportunity for four-year-olds to attend quality preschool programs. Children who attend high-quality preschool programs demonstrate increased student achievement. Funds allocated to support the implementation of quality preschool programs will successfully address the purpose of the legislation.

Q5. May the SWVPP funds be used to purchase a vehicle if that is necessary to address the transportation barrier for families?

A: Funds shall not be used for the costs of purchasing a vehicle. Funds may be allocated to support the implementation of the SWVPP. This would include: instructional supplies and materials, staff salaries, travel, professional development, necessary equipment and supplies specific to the preschool program, transportation, contracted services, etc.

Q6: Are the supplies and equipment purchased for partnering preschools using SWVPP funds the property of the school district?

A: Equipment and materials purchased with SWVPP funds by the district are the property of the district. It is recommended that the purchase of equipment and supplies be addressed as part of the contract/agreement developed between the district and the partnering private preschools. If the partner withdraws from the agreement, procedures will need to be described to return purchased materials to the district. Please refer to the Technical Assistance Guidance Manual, pages 34-35 for guidance on developing shared agreements, and pages 36-38 for a sample contract. This would not apply to materials or supplies that are consumable.

Q7: Can the allocation for the SWVPP fund a preschool coordinator position?

A: SWVPP funds are to be used to support the instructional program, supply necessary instructional materials and provide staff support. Most districts currently have administrative staff (principals, curriculum coordinators) that oversee instructional programs and provide teacher supervision, therefore, use of the SWVPP funds for those administrator's salaries would be considered supplanting. Administrative costs are those costs which the agency incurs as a result of operating this program. Costs must represent an actual additional direct cost to the district in order to justify administrative costs.

Q8: If the school or community site currently pays for the operating and maintenance of the room to be used for the preschool program (e.g., clerical support, custodial, heating and cooling expenses, utilities, etc.), can the SWVPP fund those expenses?

A: Operating expenses to maintain the facility (either community or school-based) as mentioned previously are not the intent of the law. The focus of the SWVPP funds are to support increased opportunity and access to high quality early childhood programs for children, thus resulting in children entering school ready to learn and demonstrating increased achievement in school. The maintenance and operating expenses are considered in-kind contributions. The utilities, maintenance and cleaning of a facility existed prior to the preschool program and, therefore, are not expenditures specific to supporting the SWVPP.

Q9: May a district provide transportation for the SWVPP?

A: A district may, but is not required to, provide transportation as part of the comprehensive services for children in the SWVPP.

Tuition/Fees

Q1: Are there fees for services that school districts may charge for children receiving preschool through the SWVPP?

A: Charging supplemental fees are local decisions. Districts may charge a fee similar to the fees charged for K-12 students, if the fee is authorized by Iowa Code. Districts are encouraged to refer to the August 2010 School Leader Update "Legal Lessons" for additional information and a link to the Allowable Fees chart. Planning for the preschool program should occur within the parameters of the local community needs and with the community stakeholders. Parent advisory groups, including community stakeholders and the local school board, can also provide guidance and recommendations regarding the appropriateness of fees and associated costs that may be expected of families.

Q2: May a district charge tuition for the 10 hours of instruction required for the SWVPP?

A: No, districts participating in the SWVPP may not charge tuition during the 10 hours of instruction required in IAC 281 chapter 16.

2010-2011 Districts - Districts awarded for 2010-2011 receive on-time funds on a prorated basis. These districts may charge tuition for children for whom no Preschool Grant Award is provided. Tuition may be charged to cover the cost of serving the

unfunded children in the program.

For example: If a 2010-2011 district receives SWVPP funds for 15 children but serves 20 eligible children in the preschool program, the district may charge tuition for those five unfunded eligible children to cover the cost of their preschool programming.

Q3: May a district charge for programming over and above the 10 hours of instruction required for the SWVPP?

A: If the district's program is providing more than 10 hours of instruction and/or extending the day by providing childcare services, tuition fees may be charged to cover only the costs for the remaining portion of the day.

Q4: May a district charge a fee for the SWVPP?

A: Districts may charge a fee similar to the fees charged for K-12 students, if the fee is authorized by Iowa Code. Districts are encouraged to refer to the August 2010 School Leader Update "Legal Lessons" for additional information and a link to the Allowable Fees chart.

Snack and/or Meal

Q1: May a district charge fees for milk, snacks, and/or lunch?

A: Districts that provide full-day child care may assess a lunch fee using the same policies that govern K-12 lunch fees. Reviewing K-12 policies and determining the appropriateness for the preschool program provides an appropriate context for developing guidelines. Preschool programs located in a public school building may participate in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and/or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

The SBP and NSLP provide reimbursement to schools for serving meals that meet meal pattern requirements based on the numbers of meals served and the level of eligibility (free, reduced-price or paid).

- Families have the option to complete the Iowa Eligibility Application to help determine the reimbursement the school will receive.
- Schools may not claim meals during the summer unless they operate an academic summer school program.

Information about the National School Lunch Program is located at:

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1235&Itemid=2120

Talk with the local school officials or the food service director to determine if the school is participating in the School Breakfast Program. Information about the School Breakfast Program is located at:

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1235&Itemid=2120

If the preschool program will be located in another building, please call the Bureau of Nutrition, Health, and Transportation Services for additional information (515-281-4754).

Many districts have policies regarding homemade snacks versus individually wrapped, store bought snacks, or the provision of “healthy” snacks. A milk and/or snack fee often supports children receiving snacks of similar quantity and quality which meet nutritional guidelines, and promote healthy eating habits. Districts should refer to the program standards (NAEYC, Head Start, IQPPS) for further guidance.

Funding Sources

Q1: May a district include preschoolers funded by other sources in the SWVPP?

A: Yes. A district is encouraged to include Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, Community Empowerment, Title I and Shared Visions funded preschool programs as long as there is no supplanting of funds. Supplanting of funds means that the same child is counted for two different funding sources for the same time, during the same time of day.

Q2: May the district seek other sources of public or private funding to support a SWVPP, such as low income funding or church scholarships?

A: Yes. It would be a part of the collaborative conversations and meetings the school district would conduct with stakeholders to develop a plan to support implementation and use of various needed funds to support the program. The district may not supplant public funding.

Child Count and Funding

Q1: Do all districts use 60% of the \$5,883 (state average per pupil cost for FY ‘11) for calculating budgets instead of their own specific districts per pupil cost?

A: Yes.

Q2: If a school district does not serve a child in the SWVPP this year, is the district able to count the child 1.0 when s/he attends kindergarten?

A: Yes. Children who are attending kindergarten are counted as 1.0 even if they did not participate in the SWVPP.

Q3: Can younger or older children participate in the SWVPP?

A: Yes, however the child may not be counted for the SWVPP funding. If space and other sources of funding are available, a school district may enroll a child who is younger or older than four years of age in the preschool program. Including older or younger children is a local preschool program decision. Programs receiving Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children funding must meet the assurances and program requirements regardless of the ages of the children in the program. The district’s preschool advisory council/group may also decide to charge tuition for three or five-year-olds, if they are included. Please see the questions regarding tuition and fees for guidance.

Q4: If a child is 5 by September 15th, what are the choices, other than kindergarten, in the certified enrollment count for regular education funds for prekindergarten?

A: A 5 year-old child may be counted for regular education funds (1.0) if enrollment is in a designated, on-site public school district pre-kindergarten or alternative

kindergarten that meets the following requirements:

- District and family agree pre-kindergarten is appropriate for child;
- Child is a resident of the district or open enrolled;
- An appropriately licensed teacher provides instruction with an established curriculum;
- Childcare is not provided during this time; and
- The amount of time the child attends the program is equal to Kindergarten ½ - full time; as defined by board policy [IAC 281-12.1(11)].

A child who is 5 years of age by September 15th may not be counted for Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program funding.

Q5: A child has attended the SWVPP during the current year as a four-year-old; the parents do not feel that the child is ready for kindergarten. Can this child attend the preschool program for another year?

A: Question 3 above addresses the inclusion of children younger and older in the SWVPP. If parents have concerns about their child’s development and learning, best practice would recommend that the teacher, in partnership with the parents, address the concerns and develop plans to meet the child’s needs. A teacher may want to consult with the Area Education Agency if additional resources are needed to address the concerns.

Q6: Is the funding for the SWVPP a permanent funding source?

A: Yes. Districts do not reapply once the application is approved and funding is awarded. Subsequent year funding is based on the district’s SWVPP Certified Enrollment count as of October 1 of the previous year. For example, “ABC” Community School District was a successful applicant and awarded full funding based on 40 four-year-old children. Their preschool program starts September 1, 2010, and 40 four-year-old children are enrolled. On October 1, 2010, 40 four-year-old children were enrolled in the program. The next school year, 2011-2012, “ABC” CSD will receive funding for 40 children through the preschool foundation aid formula.

**Supplementing
verses
Supplanting**

Q1: Would it be considered supplanting if a district that currently charges tuition for a preschool program is awarded a grant and does not charge tuition?

A: No. The district may not charge tuition for the 10 hours of SWVPP instruction in order to access state dollars, this would not be considered supplanting existing federal or state dollars.

Q2: May a district combine Early Childhood Iowa (ECI), formerly Empowerment, scholarships with the funds from the SWVPP?

A: Empowerment funds may not be used to pay for the same 10 hours of preschool instruction funded through the SWVPP. It is allowable for ECI funds to expand the preschool day and then it would be considered supplementing not supplanting. Supplanting funds occurs when funds are used for the same child, at the same time to

provide the same service.

Q3: May districts receive state or federal funds (Empowerment/ECI, Head Start, Shared Visions, Title I, etc.) and the SWVPP for the same child during the same time period?

A: No. If a preschooler in the preschool program is supported through other state or federal funds, the child may not be counted for SWVPP funding purposes. A child may not be supported by two funding sources during the same portion of the day.

Q4: The school district has previously operated a preschool program without the use of state or federal funds. Is there a risk of supplanting?

A: No. Supplanting addresses existing state and federal funds. If the district has not used state or federal funds to support their preschool, then they would not be replacing or supplanting state or federal funds.

III. Enrollment/Eligibility

Eligible Child Q1: Who may participate in SWVPP?

A: A child may participate in the preschool program if s/he:

- Is a resident of Iowa; and
- Is four years of age on or before September 15 of the current school year.

Note: Children on an instructional service IEP may be included as part of a SWVPP but may not be counted as eligible children for funding purposes.

Q2: Does the preschool program need to be available for children with special needs?

A: Yes. Federal guidelines (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act or IDEA-2004) require the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to be considered for every child eligible for special education services. The child may attend the preschool program, and would be included in the staff to child ratio and maximum class size, but would not be funded through the SWVPP (supporting funds would be provided through IDEA).

Q3: Are children on a support only IEP considered to be eligible children?

A: Yes. Children on a support only IEP are considered to be eligible children for the SWVPP. Support only services would include speech, occupational or physical therapy etc.

Children on an instructional service IEP are not considered to be eligible children for the SWVPP since they are already funded through state and federal funds. They may be included as part of a SWVPP but may not be counted as eligible children for funding purposes. Children on an IEP would count in determining maximum class size not to exceed 20 children.

Q4: What should a district do if there are more families of four-year-old

children wanting SWVPP and the district does not have room? Is the district obligated to start an additional preschool program?

A: No. The district is not obligated to begin an additional preschool program. Developing guidelines for registration and enrollment of four-year-olds for the preschool program would be a decision of the district with the advisement of the local advisory group.

**Resident
District**

Q1: Does the child have to reside in the district which provides the preschool program?

A: No. An eligible child may attend preschool in any district providing SWVPP.

Q2: Does open enrollment apply to the SWVPP?

A: No. Open enrollment applies to K-12 students only.

Q3: If a district does not have the space available to serve all children, may a district give priority to children who reside in the district (vs. children who reside in other districts)?

A: This is a local district decision. It is recommended that eligibility and selection criteria for registration and enrollment be reviewed by the school board and the advisory committee. This policy should be available to families interested in the program.

Iowa's administrative rules define an eligible child as a resident of Iowa and who is four-years-old on or by September 15 of the current school year. The SWVPP funding follows the child, regardless of the home district.

Q4: Is the SWVPP voluntary for districts and families?

A: Yes, the SWVPP is voluntary for school districts and families. A district does not have to develop a preschool program. A family does not have to enroll their child in preschool. Preschool attendance is not required by state law.

**Attendance
Center**

Q1: If a school district has multiple sites (community and/or school-based) does the district or the parent determine where the child attends?

A: A district develops a policy to address the "assignment" of children to SWVPP sites. An advisory group with community and parent representation may assist in developing and reviewing this policy. Considerations may be neighborhood school, availability of extended care, parent's work place and preference. Additionally, the school district will need to consider maintaining staff to child ratio and maximum class size as well as other requirements of Chapter 16. The policy and procedures regarding student assignment should be available for public review.

IV. Assurances and Requirements

**Program
Standards**

Q1: May a district combine its SWVPP and prekindergarten program?

A: Yes. If the district chooses to combine the pre-kindergarten and SWVPP, the

program must meet the requirements of the SWVPP. This would include providing confirmation or verification of program standards and all other requirements of Chapter 16. (See Section II. Budget/Finance, Child Count and Funding, Q4.)

Q2: What are the appropriate program standards for the SWVPP?

A: Three options for program standards include: Head Start Program Performance Standards, Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) and/or the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards and Criteria. The district selects one of the three options.

Q3: Is a private provider contracting with the school district required to adopt the same program standards as the school district?

A: This is a collaborative decision made at the local level. One of the three (3) program standards options must be in place and met within one year of the grant award to be considered for the SWVPP.

Adult to Child Ratio

Q1: What are the adult to child ratios?

A: There must be at least one appropriately licensed teacher present for every 10 children in a classroom during the instructional time described in subrule 16.3(4). A minimum of one staff member and one teacher shall be present when 11 to 20 children are present. Staff members shall have reasonable line-of-sight supervision of all children.

**Calendar/
Instructional
Time**

Q1: What is acceptable instructional time?

A: A minimum of 10 hours per week of instructional time is required in the SWVPP. As indicated in subrule 16.3(4) instructional time must be directly related to the program's curriculum and the Early Learning Standards. Instructional time should relate to intentional, planned teaching and learning experiences that would be reflected in the teacher's planning and lessons. Districts are encouraged to contact the AEA Early Childhood Consultant for support regarding instruction.

Q2: When a district has been awarded grant funding, what is the start date for the preschool program? Is it the same date as the district's first day of school for K-12?

A: Districts are encouraged to start their SWVPP within a reasonable time frame comparable to their existing school calendar to allow children to benefit from the preschool program and learning experiences. During the first year of funding, the district may choose to begin the SWVPP after the school year begins; however, funding for the following year is based on child enrollment count as of September 14, 2010.

Q3: How many hours per day and days per year, does the preschool have to provide instruction?

A: The district must provide a minimum of 10 hours of instruction per week not including recess. The district may choose to provide more hours. The number of days per year must be within the parameter of the school calendar days in session.

Snack and/or

Q1: If the school district's SWVPP is in session half day or full day, what

Meal

nutrition programs could the children participate in?

A: Participation in a nutrition program may be determined by the location of the preschool program and if it is licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services. The Bureau of Nutrition Programs and School Transportation (BNPST) in the Iowa Department of Education monitor the nutrition programs. Additional information about the National School Lunch Program is located at:

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1235&Itemid=2120

Q2: The SWVPP schedule is from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00p.m. Is there any requirement that a meal would need to be provided?

A: According to both the National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Standards and criteria, and the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, a meal or snack must be served. Standard 5.21 (IQPPS) states that the program serves meals and snacks at regularly established times. Meals and snacks are at least two hours apart, but not more than three hours apart.

Teacher Requirements (licensure)

Q1: Who employs the teacher?

A: The teacher may be employed by the district or contracted by the school district with another agency to provide instruction to children in a variety of settings. No matter whether the district employs the teacher or contracts with another agency for the services of a qualified preschool teacher, the district has the responsibility to meet the requirements of 2007 Iowa Acts, House File 877 and Chapter 16, Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Administrative Rules.

Q2: What qualifications does the SWVPP teacher need to have?

A: Preschool teachers must hold a valid practitioner's license issued by the Board of Educational Examiners under Iowa Code chapter 272 and hold endorsement from the Board of Educational Examiners that includes prekindergarten. There is no requirement that the teacher be an employee of the district; the teacher may be employed by a private provider or other public agency with whom the district has entered into an agreement or contract under Iowa Code chapter 28E. Contact the Board of Educational Examiners for specific teacher information at the following Website: <http://www.boee.iowa.gov/>

Appropriate teaching endorsements are:

- Teacher Endorsement #100 -- Prekindergarten through grade three, including special education;
- Teacher Endorsement #103 – Prekindergarten through kindergarten; and
- Teacher Endorsement #106 – Prekindergarten through grade three.

A Class B conditional license is also an appropriate license if it is for PK-3 including special education or PK-K. If teachers do not hold one of these endorsements they should apply to BOEE for a conditional license now!

Note: A teacher who has an Early Childhood Teacher – Special Education 15.2 (19) endorsement (also known as #223) is not appropriately licensed to teach in the SWVPP because the endorsement does not include preschool general education. The

teacher may apply to the Board of Educational Examiners for a Class B conditional license in one of the acceptable teaching endorsement areas.

School districts can post job vacancies and search applicant's resumes on the Teach Iowa Website at: <http://www.iowaeducationjobs.com/>

Q3: If a district contracts with another agency to provide the SWVPP, does the district evaluate the teacher? Does Chapter 284 apply?

A: If a district contracts or develops an agreement with another agency to provide the preschool teacher, that agency is responsible for the supervision of the teacher. In such case, Chapter 284 does not apply.

Q4: If the teacher is an employee of the school district, who evaluates the teacher?

A: The district administrator with an Evaluator Endorsement evaluates the teacher, regardless of where instruction is provided.

Q5: What are the requirements for a preschool teacher teaching in a non-accredited nonpublic school to convert the initial license to a standard license?

A: The administrator of the educational setting will need to verify three years of successful teaching experience on the application to convert the initial to a standard license form. The teacher does not need to be mentored or verify that the eight teaching standards have been met. For additional information, please contact the Board of Educational Examiners at <http://www.boee.iowa.gov/>.

Q6: If a teacher teaches in an educational setting that is not a public or private school setting (e.g., a community based preschool or childcare setting). What are the requirements to convert the initial license to a standard license?

A: The administrator/director of the educational setting will need to send a description of the education setting to the Board of Educational Examiners. This letter will need to include the following:

- a) number of students served;
- b) the number of hours taught per week;
- c) the number of days taught per week;
- d) a description of the curriculum taught;
- e) if there is a requirement for a teaching license;
- f) that the educational setting has a contract with a public school; and
- g) verification of three years of successful teaching experience.

Upon receipt of this information, the Board of Educational Examiners then determines if this teaching experience can be utilized to convert an initial license to a standard one. For more information, please contact the Board of Educational Examiners at <http://www.boee.iowa.gov/>.

Q7: What collaboration responsibilities does the teacher have?

A: The teacher must

- **collaborate** with other partners as necessary. Partners may include family support/parent education staff, community child care, Community

Empowerment, Head Start, Shared Visions, and others as necessary to adequately meet the needs of the child and family.

- **develop** and maintain a relationship with the child’s family in order to increase the potential of the child and family including collaboration with necessary family service/education providers.
- **assist** families to identify and access available resources to meet the needs of the child.

Curriculum

Q1: What are the curriculum requirements for the SWVPP?

A: A district must use a curriculum that is a research or evidence based written framework that is comprehensive, addresses the needs of the whole child, and provides a guide for decision making about content, instructional methods, and assessment. There are several curricula that meet these requirements. Examples include, but are not limited to Creative Curriculum and High Scope.

Q2: What does research or evidence-based mean?

A: Research-based means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.

Evidence-based means research that can be classified as “promising” under certain conditions. First, if a research design is weak but findings have been consistent across multiple replications, the treatment under study can be said to have promise. Second, if single strategies that have been studied under true experimental conditions are combined with multiple strategies, practices, and routines and the composite then studied with a weaker design with positive results, the findings can be classified as promising.

Q3: Are all SWVPP classrooms in the district required to use the same curriculum?

A: No, all SWVPP classrooms are not required to use the same curriculum. However, it is recommended that a district seek their advisory group’s input for selection of one curriculum to be implemented across community partners. Advantages of one curriculum supports consistency of implementation and alignment of professional development training for reporting of program results.

The curriculum must meet the identified program standards (National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Standards, Iowa’s Quality Preschool Program Standards, or Head Start Program Performance Standards), must be research or evidence-based and must align with Iowa’s Early Learning Standards.

Assessment

Q1: What are the assessment requirements?

A: The district must employ a systematic ongoing procedure for obtaining information from observations, interview, portfolios, and tests that can be used to make judgments about the strengths and needs of individual children and plan appropriate instruction. There are many methods of addressing these criteria. Several published assessment tools include, but are not limited to the High Scope Child Observation Record, Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum and/or Work

Sampling system. Best practice would suggest using an assessment that is aligned with your curriculum, and the Iowa Early Learning Standards.

Families

Q1: Do families need to be involved in SWVPP programming?

A: Yes, family participation is vital to their child's preschool success. The SWVPP must include families in at least one home visit, one family night and a minimum of two family-teacher conferences annually. Family involvement is encouraged for classroom volunteers, orientation to the preschool program, parent education, general communication and other activities (ARC 16.3(12)).

Q2: What are the requirements for Family Night?

A: This is a local decision that should be made with the input from the Preschool Advisory Team, including parents if possible. Some ideas may include events such as Family Literacy Night, Family Math Game night, Family Art Project Night, cookie decorating night, a literacy tea party, a family picnic, etc. Ideas should be generated based on what the input from advisory group specific to the needs of the local communities. There are no specific guidelines provided by the Department regarding content of family nights other than at least one per school year is required.

Q3: Does the home visit need to take place in the home? Can the home visit take place in the school?

A: It is preferable to have the home visit in the home. The home visit provides an opportunity for the teacher to become acquainted with and learn from family about their family structure; their preferred child-rearing practices; and information families wish to share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The visit provides an opportunity for staff to learn about the family's priorities and hopes for their child. It also provides an opportunity to learn about the child within the family context.

At times, conditions may not be supportive of a home visit and other settings need to be considered for a family visit. With the prior reviewed purposes in mind, the school setting may not be the preferred setting for conversation and learning about the family. The home visit should occur in a setting in which the family is comfortable or a neutral location may be considered such as a library coffee house, or even a park. School districts also need to ensure the safety of their staff in determining the location and timing of the home visit.

Q4: The rules require that a teacher make a home visit at least once a year – can this be combined with a conference at the school?

A: No, conferences are a time for the teacher to share information about the preschool program and the child's learning and progress. The purpose of the home visit is to help the teacher learn about the child and the family. The location should be where the family is comfortable; this could be the home, the public library, a coffee shop; but preferably not the school setting. The focus of the home visit is to share information, and allow the teacher to understand the child within the context of their family. See question 3 above.

Q5: Is a district required to develop a parent handbook for SWVPP?

A: A parent handbook is helpful in clarifying roles and responsibilities for families and the district. Districts may consider how their current parent handbook may be edited to include the necessary elements to address the SWVPP.

V. Transportation

Q1: Are school districts required to provide transportation for children in the SWVPP?

A: No, transportation is not required but districts may choose to provide transportation as one of the comprehensive services defined in the Administrative Rules. Transportation may be identified as a barrier to access and/or in the implementation of high quality preschool and the district may provide transportation to and from preschool. As a district, you would not have to provide transportation for preschoolers from an adjoining district to attend your preschool program. Districts may not however cross district boundaries without the permission of the neighboring district.

Q2: Do school buses need to have safety restraints for four-year-olds?

A: The DE provides guidance regarding the safe transportation of children. If the school district has chosen to implement the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards or the National Association of Education for Young Children Program Standards and criteria, Standard 10, Leadership and Management address transportation. See the following website for further information on transportation http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1259&Itemid=2147.