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**Iowa Department of Education**

***Modified Allowable Growth for  
Dropout Prevention Annual Report***

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***Iowa Department of Education***

Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E 14<sup>th</sup> St  
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

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## **Iowa Code section 257.40 (2):**

### **Approval of programs for returning dropouts and dropout prevention – annual report**

Beginning January 15, 2007, the department shall submit an annual report to the chairpersons and ranking members of the senate and house education committees that includes the way school districts in the previous school year used modified allowable growth approved under subsection 1; identifies, by grade level, age, and district size, the students in the dropout and dropout prevention programs for which the department approves a request; describes school district progress toward increasing student achievement and attendance for the students in the programs; and describes how the school districts are using the revenues from the modified allowable growth to improve student achievement among minority subgroups.

### **What is Modified Allowable Growth for Returning Dropouts and Dropout Prevention Programs?**

Modified Allowable Growth for Dropout Prevention (MAG-DoP) is a funding mechanism to assist districts in providing targeted services and programs for students at a local level. The money that is levied and the 25 percent local match become categorical funding and shall be used specifically for the purpose of providing programming for students identified as returning and potential dropouts.

**"Categorical funding"** as defined by the 281 – IAC Chapter 281.98, means financial support from state and federal governments that is targeted for particular categories of students, special programs, or special purposes. This support is in addition to school district or area education agency general purpose revenue, is beyond the basic educational program, and most often has restrictions on its use. Where categorical funding requires a local match, that local match also is considered to be categorical funding. Categorical funding includes both grants in aid and budgetary allocations. Although grants in aid and budgetary allocations are both categorical funding, they are defined separately to distinguish unique characteristics of each type of categorical funding. Chapter 281.98 describes appropriate uses of grants in aid, budgetary allocations and tax levies and funds. In addition Chapter 281.98 also addresses indirect cost recovery, restriction on supplanting, mandatory carry forward, discontinued funding, expenditures, restriction on duplication, excess expenditures, commingling, and uses of levies and funds.

All districts shall follow the guidelines for financial management of budgetary allocations/categorical funding as set out in 281 – Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 98. These can be viewed at:

<http://search.legis.state.ia.us/nxt/gateway.dll/ar/iac?f=templates&fn=default.htm>

### **Purpose for using MAG-DoP**

Modified allowable growth for dropout prevention (MAG-DoP) is not funding that is generated to provide school wide programming to prevent students from becoming at-risk. It is intended to be used for serving students who left high school and have returned and to prevent those who are most at-risk from:

- leaving school,
- progressing in school, and
- completing school.

When districts consider using this funding for programming, the district is asking the local property taxpayers to invest in the district (as a community) so the students will stay in school and not become a burden to state and local resources at a later point in life.

Funding for these programs must focus on two types of students, returning dropouts and potential dropouts as defined in Iowa Code Section 257.39:

*"Returning dropouts"* are resident pupils who have been enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in any of grades **seven through twelve** who withdrew from school for a reason other than transfer to another school or school district and who subsequently enrolled in a public school in the district.

*"Potential dropouts"* are resident pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated by **two or more of the following**:

- a. High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness.
- b. Limited or no extracurricular participation or lack of identification with school, including but not limited to, expressed feelings of not belonging.
- c. Poor grades, including but not limited to, failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels.
- d. Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflects achievement at two years or more below grade level.
- e. Children in grades kindergarten through three who meet the definition of at-risk children adopted by the department of education.

Once districts have identified students as meeting the criteria for returning or potential dropouts, districts must provide supports for those students. Districts are required to provide "alternative options" in accordance with Iowa Code Section 280.19A. The alternative options offered by a district would be defined at a local level. Using modified allowable growth for dropout prevention is one way to provide those services. Students who are identified will need intensive, on-going, individual supports. Only the level and intensity of the supports might change over time. Students previously identified as a potential dropout who need minimal on-going supports should continue to be included and supported and staff should continue to dedicate time to serving the needs of the identified students.

### **Setting Priorities for Serving Identified Students**

Districts could target the services in various ways to include the provision of individualized supports, small group activities, alternative schools/programs or the use of anytime, anywhere learning such as online curriculum/virtual school models. All services should be targeted and explicit for the identified population for a specific identified need.

The first and foremost priority for using MAG-DoP funds is to make every effort to recover students who have dropped out and to provide the supports necessary for them to be successful upon re-engagement/return to the educational environment. The 3R's (recovery, re-entry and re-engagement) of effective recovery of dropouts should be used:

- 1) Recovery involves finding students who have dropped out of school and reconnecting with them to return to school. This can be accomplished by linking positive adult role models, advisors, advocates to place phone calls, conduct dropout walks, contact friends, relatives, etc.

- 2) Re-entry is supported by providing students the ability to complete their education at any time during the year and pick up where he or she left off or begin/finish coursework to earn credits to apply toward graduation. Re-entry support can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Some of these include, but are not limited to, online coursework, component recovery; credit recovery, work based or community based learning to focus on essential concepts and skills for graduation.
- 3) Re-engagement is getting students to become connected with their educational goals. This can be accomplished by focusing on the student's relationship with the school community: the people (adults and peers), the structures (rules, facilities, and schedules), the curriculum and content, the pedagogy, and the opportunities (curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular). The degree to which a student returns and is able to re-engage in school is dependent on the quality, depth and breadth of the student's relationship with the various aspects of the life and work of the school. (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006)

The second priority would be identifying and serving those students who would meet the criteria for *potential dropout*. Students who are in high school, who experience excessive absenteeism, exhibit behaviors or have circumstances that do not encourage a connection to school and those who are behind in credits are the most at risk of dropping out. Middle school students who experience the same barriers as those students in the high school would be the second population recognized as needing supports. If districts have funding remaining after serving returning dropouts and potential dropouts at the high school and middle school/junior high level, they would then target the funding at the upper elementary and then lower elementary students. Students who are already identified in specific subgroups [low socio-economic status (SES), English Language Learners (ELL), etc.] do not automatically qualify as a potential dropout. Students should be identified individually based on need to address the barriers each student faces.

### **Providing a Tiered System of Supports**

A tiered system of support is an educational model that delineates three or more levels of instructional/behavioral interventions based on gaps in student skills. A tier is a level in a response to intervention system that includes interventions and supports for a clearly defined group of students. Using a tiered system of support can address the needs of struggling learners by providing interventions at increasing levels of intensity (Stuart, 2009). The students most disaffected with school would be in the tertiary tier.

**Primary prevention** is programming for all students or has a broad scope in nature and reaches about 80-85 percent of students. The educational and behavioral supports that should be provided to ALL kids, to assist them in being successful in school (core academic program – Iowa Core, athletics, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports-core level, DARE, Character Counts...) is considered primary prevention and should not be funded with MAG-DoP funds. Any programming set up for students that is intended for ALL students, whether it is a good dropout prevention strategy or not, is considered general education programming. No district-wide or building-wide programming can be provided with the MAG-DoP funding. Examples of this could be the funding of positions such as guidance counselors, deans or administrators to perform the duties expected of them when working with all students and would be considered an inappropriate use of funds (IAC 281-98.1).

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Primary (ALL students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to general education “core” curriculum</li> <li>• Access to after school programming/clubs/organizations</li> <li>• Behavioral and instructional expectations defined</li> <li>• Behavioral and instructional expectations taught</li> <li>• System to acknowledge appropriate behavioral/academic successes</li> <li>• Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making</li> <li>• Universal Screening</li> </ul>

Adapted from (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2009)

**Secondary prevention** is considered supplemental programming that is in addition to the basic education provided for all students. Secondary prevention would be directed toward smaller groups of students, who are experiencing the same types of challenges or barriers. Instruction, interventions, supports and services could focus on academic or social skill development, specific reading programs and/or afterschool programs focused on students who have similar needs.

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Secondary (Some students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress monitoring for students at risk (locally defined)</li> <li>• System for increasing structure and predictability through supplemental supports</li> <li>• System for increasing contingent adult feedback through supplemental supports</li> <li>• System for linking academic and behavioral performance through supplemental supports</li> <li>• System for increasing explicit home/school communication</li> <li>• Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making</li> </ul>

Adapted from (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2009)

**Tertiary prevention** is for the top five to eight percent of kids who need individual assistance to focus on overcoming any of the issues/challenges/barriers that s/he may have in regards to progressing at the same rate as their peers. The majority of the students who are served with MAG-DoP funds are those in the tertiary level. Tertiary programming is defined as supports focused on meeting students’ individual needs based on their unique characteristics and specific circumstances (e.g., significance of academic needs in reading/math, differences in the severity of behavior, complexity of environment, barriers), and should be flexible, focused and personalized for each student. In establishing a framework to intervene effectively with individual students whose behavior interferes with school progress and interpersonal relationships, it is necessary to consider the importance of eliminating barriers for success and providing appropriate programming at an individual level and having multiple alternative options for students to chose from.

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Tertiary (few/individual students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team-based comprehensive assessment</li> <li>• Individualized intervention based on assessment information focusing on (a) prevention of problem contexts, (b) instruction on functionally equivalent skills, and instruction on desired performance skills, (c) strategies for placing problem behavior on extinction, (d) strategies for enhancing contingency reward of desired behavior, and (e) use of negative or safety consequences if needed.</li> <li>• Linking of academic and behavior supports on an individual level</li> <li>• Functional Behavioral Assessment</li> <li>• Individualized instructional interventions</li> <li>• Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making/continuous progress monitoring</li> </ul>

Adapted from (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2009)

Students who are identified as a returning/potential dropout will have barriers in school that are related to attendance, behaviors/engagement and course completion. Each program should focus on the following:

Staying in school – focus on increasing attendance, decreasing negative behaviors, and increasing engagement to keep students in school.

Progressing in school – focus on course completion, increasing engagement, and relevance of school in regard to the student’s current situation.

Completing school - focus on increasing the opportunities and options so students may graduate with peers.

Below is a sample table showing state criteria aligned to student needs that could be addressed at each level.

Grade	Staying in school	Progressing in school	Completing school
<b>Elem K-3</b>	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection Minimal Parent connection K-3 at-risk	Not proficient/Achievement Grade retention K-3 at-risk	
<b>Elem 4-6</b>	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection Negative Behavior/Suspensions Bullying/harassment	< 25 percentile Achievement Failing Grades Grade retention	
<b>MS 6-8</b>	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection/No participation Negative Behavior/Suspensions Bullying/harassment	< 25 percentile Achievement Failing Grades Grade retention	Grade retention
<b>HS 9-12</b>	Excessive absences/Attendance No Connection/No participation Negative Behavior Suspensions Bullying/harassment	< 30 percentile Achievement Failing Grades Grade retention Overaged/undercredited	Not graduating on time Unemployed/not college ready

In 2010, the Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis Services, conducted a study to predict the accuracy of identifying potential dropouts (including returning dropouts) using the data submitted by individual districts. Using the state criteria for returning/potential dropout, the results showed prediction accuracy for identifying students who are most likely to drop out at 11 percent (with a margin of error of +/- 3.85). Therefore, districts that identify between 7.15 percent and 14.85 percent of the student population as potential dropouts will have the greatest accuracy of identifying the students who are most likely to drop out.

The Department has been collecting data on students identified as *at risk* and those identified as *returning/potential* dropouts since the fall of 2008. The students who were identified as returning/potential dropouts in the spring of 2009 are being tracked as a matched cohort in order to determine if districts are identifying the students with the greatest need; to monitor if the identified students actually graduated; and review if attendance increased, negative behaviors decreased and course completion/achievement led to graduation.

*Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center.* (2009, March). Retrieved November 1, 2010, from Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: <http://www.pbis.org/research/default.aspx>

Stuart, S. R. (2009). A Collaborative Planning Framework for Teachers Implementing Tiered Instruction. *Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol 42, No 2* , pp. 52-57.

Yazzie-Mintz, E. (2006). *Voices of Students on Engagement: A Report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement.* Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.

## **MAG-DoP Service Summary Report FY 11 Statistics and Data (2010-2011 school year)**

### Districts that were approved:

336 school districts applied for modified allowable growth and were approved by the SBRC.

### Funding Amounts:

\$108,497,992 (75 percent levy request) was approved by the SBRC on May 14, 2010

\$ 36,165,997 (25 percent match) from the local districts

\$144,663,989 total generated statewide for serving returning/potential dropouts

*(Source: Iowa Department of Management, list of approved districts on 5-14-10)*

### Student Population (2010-2011 PK-12 Enrollment by District):

468,689 students were enrolled in public schools

64,210 students identified as returning/potential dropouts

13.7 percent of student population identified as a returning/potential dropout

*(Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information Services and Analysis, District PK-12 Enrollment by District)*

### Districts approved for modified allowable growth funding by size:

0 – 299	48 districts
300 – 599	100 districts
600 – 999	81 districts
1,000 – 2,499	76 districts
2,500 – 7,499	21 districts
7,500 and above	<u>10 districts</u>
	336 districts

### Grade Levels of Programming Provided:

Elementary	236 districts
Middle/Junior High	260 districts
High School	304 districts

*Programming Provided: 1,034 programs*

### Focus of Programming:

Staying in School	23% of the programs
Progressing in School	53% of the programs
Completing School	24% of the programs

### District Focus of Targeted Audience:

Returning Dropouts	41% of the programs
Potential Dropouts	95% of the programs

Program Types:\*

Alternative School/Program	227 programs
School-Within-a-School (12)	
Academic Supports	201 programs
Reading Programs (81)	
Credit Recovery	118 programs
Behavior Supports	100 programs
General Behavior Supports (85)	
Intensive Behavior Supports (13)	
Suspension/Expulsion Alternative (2)	
Community Supports	70 programs
Juvenile Court Liaison (39)	
Case Management (29)	
Mentoring (12)	
Before/After School Programs	52 programs
Intensive Guidance Supports	50 programs
Summer School	42 programs
Tutoring	32 programs

\*definitions in Appendix A

## APPENDIX A

### Program Type Definitions:

**Academic Supports** are represented by any activity implemented to improve the capacity for learning and the application of learning for core areas in education such as reading, math, language, science, social studies, etc. Examples of reading programs provided: *Reading Recovery, Second Chance Reading, and Fusion Reading.*

**Alternative Programs/Schools** should be designed to provide an alternative to students who have the highest risk of dropping out of school, with special attention to the student's individual social needs and the academic requirements for a high school diploma. Students who attend alternative programs need an accelerated way of earning credits, a flexible schedule and a variety of options available depending on individual needs.

**Before/After School/Summer School** can help to eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas. Such experiences are especially important for students identified as potential dropouts because they help to fill the afternoon gap with constructive and engaging activities.

**Behavior Supports** are for students who need significant support in interpersonal skills to resolve conflicts with peers/teachers and will receive individualized or small group social skills or coping strategies to prevent conflicts and/or reduce office referrals. Intensive Programs are often located off site and tend to be short term.

**Case Management** is a coordinated effort of staff assigned a specific caseload to oversee all parts of a student's success at home, in school and in the community. Examples are Juvenile Court Liaisons, community liaisons.

**Community Support/Collaboration** When all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, an infrastructure is created that provides a caring supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve. Collaborating with community agencies helps students stay in school and make right choices by connecting schools with needed community resources.

**Credit Recovery** is for students who need an accelerated way of earning credits so they can graduate on time with their peers (cohort). Credits may have been lost for multiple reasons: multiple moves, incarceration, previously dropping out, or repeating courses that were failed.

**Intensive Guidance** provides regularly scheduled individual/group sessions for specific skill development. The intensive guidance provided is exclusive to the population referred and is in addition to the guidance program already delivered/provided to these students through the state mandated core guidance program.

**Tutoring:** Tutoring is a one-to-one activity, focused on academics and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies and should focus on specific strategy instruction to assist students with the ability to be a better student overall.