

School Business Alert

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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DIVISION OF SCHOOL FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

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The August School Leader Update can be found at:

www.educateiowa.gov

Whole Grade Sharing Joint Employment

Several districts have expressed interest in qualifying for joint employment whole grade sharing (WGS) supplementary weighting. This supplementary weighting is available in years in which the legislature allows WGS supplementary weighting. The current opportunity is available through FY14. The lowa legislature has provided this opportunity periodically to school districts to incent reorganization. Joint employment allows the receiving district to count its resident general education students in whole grade sharing classes in which students are sent from its WGS partner district. Guidance has been posted on the Department's website to help guide interested districts through the criteria required to qualify for WGS joint employment supplementary weighting. http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1628&Itemid=2987.

Submit evidence of joint employment to Su McCurdy, administrative consultant, no later than July 1 of the fiscal year in which the district/s intend to request joint employment whole grade sharing supplementary weighting on October 1.

- Identify whether each piece of evidence is joint for both/all districts or is separate, but identical for each district.
- Include board minutes from each district showing action to adopt the plans, approve joint committees, etc., for each item submitted as evidence.
- Highlight pertinent information.
- Include a cover letter with a checklist of evidence included in the packet, a copy of the whole
 grade sharing agreement, a copy of the board resolution from each district to jointly study
 reorganization to occur on or before July 1, 2014.
- Include a copy of ballot language for any reorganization or dissolution election that has been scheduled.

If your district is interested in establishing joint employment for October 1, 2012, but was not already working with Su on eligibility requirements, notify Su immediately to establish a timeline to provide your evidence.

Contact: Su McCurdy, <u>su.mccurdy@iowa.gov</u> or 515.281.4738.

Reorganizing or Sharing Your District Soon?

Is your district planning to reorganize in the next few years? Or has your district entered into a new whole-grade sharing arrangement, terminated a whole-grade sharing arrangement, or changed the shared grades in your existing whole-grade sharing arrangement? If so, please contact Joyce Thomsen with that information, and keep her informed periodically of your progress. Joyce can be reached at joyce.thomsen@iowa.gov or 515.242.5612.

Inside This Issue

- Whole Grade Sharing Joint Employment
- Reorganizing or Sharing Your District Soon?
- Tuition-In Billing Application, Including Special Education Claims
- Data Collections Opening August 15
- Questions and Answers on Insurance Fees
- ♦ Regional Academy Application and Funding Agreements
- Medicaid: Invoices, Rates, and Training
- ♦ TSS Options for the CAR-COA
- ♦ FY 12 Hold Open and Submission of FY 12 Claims
- ♦ Ed Jobs Funds
- Nonprogram Food Revenues and Expenses
- ♦ Preschool Coding
- School Board Officers Application
- ♦ Tom Horn Memorial Award
- Green Ribbon Schools Award Program

Tuition-In Billing Application, Including Special Education Claims

Districts and area education agencies (AEAs) have been diligently working to finalize their bills and claims. All bills need to be received by the other district by August 15, 2012. State claims within the Tuition-In Billing application (Foster Care, termination of rights, nonpublic, and high cost) were all due August 1, 2012. The DE will begin processing these claims after August 1, and districts will be reimbursed by the end of August. As we process the high-cost claims, we will compare the current year claims to prior year claims, to help ensure that all applicable claims have been submitted. Only those students with costs above the reimbursement minimum of \$40,425 show on this claim, and the Medicaid eligible costs are also deducted. Districts with claims should be coding an accounts receivable (Account 141, appropriate project number, program number) and a revenue to the appropriate source, project and program number. Source/Project numbers are High cost-4525, Foster Care-3121, Nonpublic-3122, Terminated Rights-3123. Districts anticipating these claims should already have the students entered on Screen 3. If the student is not on Screen 3 and needs to be added, contact tib@iowa.gov.

Charlie Taylor, Special Education Finance Consultant, left the Department so the other members of the Bureau of Finance, Facilities, Operation, and Transportation Services will be answering questions and reviewing the claims. Any questions related to the Tuition-In-Billing (TIB) application should be sent to IB@iowa.gov, and Special Education Supplement questions should be sent to SES@iowa.gov. We've been busy answering questions regarding the TIB application, including the claims, and noted the following items.

- Object code 56x is used only for tuition. Coding of all special programs should be to object code 320, Professional-educational services. These costs (object 320) will be pulled into Screen 1 and any individualized costs should be subtracted on Screen 1 and included on Screen 2. The types of special programs available for purposes of billings are the day program, residential program, preschool program, adult prisons, previous year billing, and special SPED program. A day program is an educational program that the students only attend during the day and return home in the evening. To be classified as a day program, the educational component must be provided by a private entity. A residential program is an educational program offered where the students live and are educated in a facility. To be classified as a residential program, the educational component must be provided by a private entity. A preschool program is an educational program offered by the district to students before they enter kindergarten. An adult prison is an educational program offered in an adult correctional facility. A special SPED program is a segregated special education program in a separate facility with the educational program offered by the school district. Before you use the special SPED program type, contact the Department (tib@iowa.gov) to make sure it is appropriate.
- Screen 1 was modified in FY12 to exclude IDEA and Medicaid expenditures from the various objects and excludes the
 rows that deducted these costs. If previous year screen 1 is viewed, these amounts are still included, so be sure to
 deduct them when comparing FY12 to FY11. Also, the amounts that represent levels and objects can be clicked on to
 see the detail amounts.
- We received numerous questions that the print, email, or certify buttons are not available on screen 9. Make sure
 Screen 8 is certified. Then go into Screen 9 and make any changes needed in Previously Billed column. Be sure to
 click on ENTER on the keyboard after each entry. Then certify Screen 9. This will make the PRINT/EMAIL buttons
 available. If the district has not received an anticipated bill, please follow-up with the district that educated the resident
 students.
- Districts anticipating high cost claims, but have students served by another district and haven't received the bill to
 know the final costs, should complete what it can by August 1 and send an email to tib@iowa.gov notifying us that the
 district's claim is not complete and will be finalized as soon as the tuition bill is received, no later than August 15. As
 soon as these costs become available, the data on Screen 3 should be edited for that student to finalize the billing.
- Districts will reclassify special education expenditures for the 2012 high-cost claim from a special education project to project 4525, with the appropriate program. Districts that received a reimbursement for the FY11 High Cost Claim will not code FY12 expenditures to high cost. If the district did not properly code the receivable and deferred revenues on the FY11 CAR, contact the DE for an adjustment so you can get through the project reconciliation edit on the CAR.
- The SES is not available to districts until August 15. However, the home page is available to all districts, and it contains a link for a report of all district resident students tuitioned out (Screen 1 of the SES).

If you have further questions, please contact Janice Evans at janice.evans@iowa.gov or 515.281.4740; Denise Ragias at denise.ragias@iowa.gov or 515-281-4741; or Joyce Thomsen at joyce.thomsen@iowa.gov or 515-242-5612.

Data Collections Opening August 15

Certified Annual Report - due Monday, September 17

Although the CAR - 2012 COA Test Records remains available for use, it is recommended that the CAR - 2012 Upload and Reports be used for a full file upload. Once a district/AEA reaches Stage 3 and has successful records, those records upload into the reports. This feature may help in resolving errors. Please note that there is only one non-fiscal report to be completed, Nonprofit School Organizations. Instructions for the CAR are at http://educateiowa.gov/index.php? option=com_content&task=view&id=1621&Itemid=2408, which define the criteria for the Nonprofit School Organizations report. If the criteria do not apply to a district, the district must still hit the update button within the report.

Extensions are available for good cause such as illness or death of the staff member responsible for the filing, acts of God, or unforeseeable circumstances. Please refer to the CAR instructions for more information about extension requests and the CAR deadline.

Questions regarding the upload and/or account coding may be directed to: denise.ragias@iowa.gov, 515.281.4741 for help with the uploads, reports, and extensions janice.evans@iowa.gov, 515.281.4740 for help with account codes and journal entries

Special Education Supplement – due Monday, September 17

The Special Education Supplement main page is the only screen available until August 15. There is a link on this screen to obtain the Screen 1 information, tuition out students in a district. Charlie Taylor, Special Education Finance Consultant, left the Department so the other members of the Bureau of Finance, Facilities, Operation and Transportation Services will be answering questions and reviewing the claims. Any questions related to the Special Education Supplement should be sent to SES@iowa.gov.

<u>Transportation Annual Report – due Monday, September 17</u>

When completing the annual school transportation report, the collection process for the data has been simplified in a number of ways by pulling financial information into the report from a number of other data sources. The two things that the district must still fill in manually are the number of miles and the student count. A word of caution, however, when filling out the information for the student count. We still incorporate the process of using aggregate weeks in determining the average number of students riding the school buses. The number put into the "aggregate weeks" column will be the total number of weeks for each individual rider in the group – not the total number of weeks for the riders as a group. As an example, if buses ran for 36 weeks and 10 students rode the buses; out of those ten students, eight of them rode at least once during each of the 36 weeks while one of them only rode once each of 18 weeks and one only rode once during one week all year. You would have eight students multiplied by 36 weeks, one student multiplied by 18 weeks, and one student multiplied by one week, for a total of 307 aggregate weeks. After entering 307 into the "aggregate weeks" column, the report will then determine the average number of riders. For more information, contact Max Christensen at max.christensen@jowa.gov or 515.281.4749.

Facilities, Elections and Sales Tax – due Monday, October 1

This data collection is available immediately. Instructions for this data collection are at: http://educateiowa.gov/index.php? option=com content&view=article&id=1742%3Adata-collection&catid=66%3Aschool-facilities&Itemid=2302. Any questions regarding this report should be directed to: gary.schwartz@iowa.gov, 515.281.4743.

School Level Expenditures (Civil Rights Reporting)

This application will be available to school districts to determine needed information for the Civil Rights Report, which will be reported by the district directly to the federal government. Use of this program will provide information consistent with the CAR and is highly recommended in completing the Civil Rights Report. Helpful information for determining how the total is computed can be found at: http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1621&Itemid=2408. Any questions regarding this report should be directed to: Denise.Ragias@iowa.gov, 515.281.4741.

School Association Reporting – due November 15

Districts must complete this FY12 report after their CAR is certified. Instructions for this report are at http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1621&Itemid=2408. Any questions regarding this report should be directed to: denise.ragias@iowa.gov, 515.281.4741.

Questions and Answers on Insurance Fees

Question: Can a district charge an insurance fee for computers assigned to students? If it is an allowable fee, does the fee waiver apply?

Answer: There really is no such thing as an "insurance fee." So the simple answer is that no such fee can be charged to students. Information in the legal lesson in the July 2012 School Leader Update discussed fees: There is no such thing as a "registration fee," so avoid using that term. The chart of allowable fees is at https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp? book=25&decision=62.

Fee waivers, full and partial, are governed by chapter 18 administrative rules, at http://www.legis.state.ia.us/aspx/ACODocs/DOCS/7-13-2011.281.18.pdf. A full waiver of all fees shall be granted if the student or the student's family meets the financial eligibility criteria for free meals, for the Family Investment Program (FIP), for transportation assistance under open enrollment, or if the student is in foster care. A partial waiver is appropriate if the student or student's family meets the financial eligibility criteria for reduced-price meals, and is based on "a sliding scale related to an ability to pay." One simple way to justify the amount of a partial waiver is to make sure that it corresponds to the percentage of the reduced-price meal from full-price meal. Finally, each school district has discretion to grant a temporary waiver of one or more fees in the event of a temporary financial difficulty in the student's immediate family. This temporary waiver may be granted at any time during a school year; the maximum length of a temporary waiver shall be one year.

Fees allowed by Code are limited to seven categories:

- Textbooks (lowa Code 301.1)
- School supplies that are not essential items to instruction (lowa Code 301.1, OAG #79-12-22)
- Eye protective devices (lowa Code 280.10)
- Ear protective devices (lowa Code 298.11)
- Summer school courses (lowa Code 282.6)
- Driver education courses (Iowa Code 282.6)
- Discretionary transportation (Iowa Code 285.1(1))

All fees charged must fit within these seven categories. The declaratory order issued in August of 2008 provides more information on distinguishing fees and tuition from fines and sales.

The declaratory order regarding the 1-to-1 computers and technology in PPEL issued in April of 2011 did not expand on the allowable fees that a district could charge related to technology. All fees related to technology falls under the definition of textbooks, and any technology on which a fee would be charged would be precluded from being purchased from either PPEL or SAVE. The FAQ that is published with that declaratory order discusses fee and deposit options available to districts related to technology.

Question: May a district charge a technology fee to students? Are there limits on fees? Are waivers required? What about deposits? Do deposits have to be returned?

Answer: A technology fee is allowable as a textbook rental fee and would follow the same requirements. Fees must be based on actual costs. If a technology fee is charged to students, the district is saying that the technology is a textbook substitute; in which case the technology can <u>only</u> be purchased from the General Fund and not from PPEL. If a technology fee is charged, the waiver provisions must be honored.

If a deposit is charged to students, it must be a reasonable amount. The district should deposit the check, but hold the deposits in liability account 491, Deposits payable and not use the deposits to pay any expenditure, such as repair or maintenance. The amount of the deposit would be returned to the student when the computer/technology is returned to the district; however, the district may reduce the amount of the deposit that it returns to the student by the actual costs of damage inflicted by the student while the computer/technology was in his/her possession (or should have been in his/her possession). Refundable deposits are not subject to the free/reduced waiver provisions.

If the computer/technology is actually stolen and the theft reported, it is a theft of school property and is handled in the same way the district handles a theft from its computer lab.

The district should have a policy approved by its board on appropriate use, responsibilities, deposits, fees/fines, damage, and theft.

Contact: Su McCurdy, su.mccurdy@iowa.gov or 515.281.4738.

Regional Academy Application and Funding Agreements

The 2011 Legislature requires that beginning with July 1, 2012, school districts participating in a regional academy (all sending districts and the host district) shall enter into an agreement on how the funding generated by the supplementary weighting received shall be used and shall submit the agreement to the Department of Education for approval. Other partners may be included in the regional academy; however, only lowa public school districts may generate supplementary weighting.

Forms (Regional Academy Application and Regional Academy Funding Agreement) are posted on the Department's website for districts to summarize the terms of the funding sharing agreement. http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com content&view=article&id=1628&Itemid=2987.

In addition, the Legislature requires that districts apply to the Department to establish a regional academy. The application must be approved by the Department prior to the host district requesting supplementary weighting on October 1. The approval is required of those regional academies that existed prior to July 1, 2012, as well as those established on or after July 1. The application form, posted on the Department's website above, has four levels of eligibility:

Level 1 establishes that the host district has met the basic requirements to request supplementary weighting, but not to receive additional amount to reach the minimum.

Level 2 establishes that the host district has met the basic requirements to receive an upward adjustment to the minimum level of supplementary weighting.

Level 3 establishes what additional educational opportunities, beyond the basic requirements, will be available to students that are enrolled in the regional academy classes.

Level 4 establishes the criteria under which a district may request a waiver from program requirements if it is necessary to allow innovation and flexibility to build a culture of innovation for students and community, to diversify educational and economic opportunities by engaging in learning experiences that involved students in complex, real-world projects, and to develop regional or global innovation networks.

Send the application and the funding sharing agreement form to Su McCurdy, administrative consultant, no later than September 1 of the fiscal year in which the district/s intend to request supplementary weighting on October 1 for either sending students to the regional academy or for hosting the regional academy. Attach a copy of the funding sharing agreement and a copy of each participating district's board minutes showing approval of the agreement. Please send the entire packet of participating and host district materials in the same mailing.

Contact: Su McCurdy, su.mccurdy@iowa.gov or 515.281.4738.

Medicaid: Invoices, Rates, and Training

The <u>Invoice</u> of the state share to be paid to the Department of Human Services (DHS) is called the Medicaid Billing Remittance (MBR) and recently DHS discontinued mailing hard copies of the Remittance. Beginning with the July 2012, month-end reports, MBR information will only be available through DHS' secure lowa Medicaid Portal Access (IMPA) website at: https://secureapp.dhs.state.ia.us/impa/. The reports posted on IMPA are an exact replica of the current paper MBRs and are imaged, indexed, and available on IMPA. **To sign up** for online access to the MBR statements, please complete an MBR access request form, https://www.tfaforms.com/248112, and follow the online instructions.

2012-13 <u>Rates</u> are posted on the Iowa DE website Medicaid page, http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=717&Itemid=3082

The first <u>Training</u> session for the 2012-2013 school year is scheduled for Wednesday, August 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. You do not need to register. To join the meeting go to: http://iowa.adobeconnect.com/medicaidpt1/. Adobe Connect Medicaid trainings are also scheduled for August 15, September 12, October 10, and November 14. These are for LEA and AEA staff that provide services in or manage their agency's Medicaid program and each will cover updates as well as a general overview of the program. Questions can be submitted before the session to Jim Donoghue or during the session through the webinar, and will be answered in or after the session.

If you have further questions, please contact Jim Donoghue at jim.donoghue@iowa.gov or 515.281.8505.

Teacher Salary Supplement Options for the CAR-COA

In April 2012, a declaratory order was released in response to a petition from the lowa Association of School Boards (IASB), School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), and the Iowa Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) related to teacher salary supplement (TSS) and the across-the-board cut that occurred in 2009-2010. Although it was not possible to grant the relief the petitioners requested, the declaratory order provided options as a courtesy to districts that acted in good faith. The options are made available for TSS only, for this one time only, and any adjusting of balances selected must be first implemented on the FY12 CAR. This declaratory order has the same status and binding effect as a final order issued in a contested case proceeding.

One option available to a school district that did not pay the full amount of TSS to teachers in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, has not done so since that date, and has not increased the ratio of fund balance to unspent balance to the extent that it has funded the budget authority for the TSS, is to continue reporting the full amount of TSS not paid to teachers as a restricted fund balance on the CAR. This option means that the district does nothing different than the normal procedure in the past on the CAR upload.

Another option available to a school district that did not pay the full amount of TSS to teachers in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, has not done so since that date, and has not increased the ratio of fund balance to unspent balance to the extent that it has funded the budget authority for the TSS, is that at any time a district wants to permanently remove the obligation to account for the remaining unpaid TSS, the district may approach the School Budget Review Committee (SBRC) to request negative modified allowable growth. This Declaratory Order in no way obligates the SBRC to hear or approve such a request.

Another option is to adjust fund balances. The general journal entry to accomplish this option was the simplest of several considered and is the one suggested by IASBO. This option has the following parameters:

- •The accounts will exist for five years only, beginning with FY 2009-2010 and ending with FY 2013-2014. At the end of FY15, any remaining balance of unpaid TSS will return to restricted fund balance when reported on the CAR.
- •For the five-year-period, this will be, in effect, creating a false underreporting of restricted TSS to the extent of the 10 percent equivalent, adjusted by changes in fund balances since that date.
- •This is a voluntary option available only to a district that did not pay the full amount of TSS to teachers in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, has not done so since that date, and has not increased the ratio of fund balance to unspent balance to the extent that it has funded the budget authority for the TSS.
- •The amounts of fund balance and unspent balance are not known and verifiable until several months after the CAR-COA is filed. Therefore, the amounts will be separately reported by districts, as directed by the Department, and will be verified by the Department and the CAR-COA balance sheet account codes will be adjusted accordingly.
- •Because of the potential impact on federal reporting, funding, and policy or research, this optional reporting will be at the state level only on the CAR.

A simple general journal entry will allow a district to move an amount from the TSS restricted fund balance to unassigned fund balance. The general journal entry will use the TSS project code, but the project code with the unassigned fund balance is used for CAR tracking purposes only. The amount may be any amount up to, but not exceeding, the maximum determined by the Department after considering the original cut and increases in the ratio of fund balance to unspent balance since FY09. The maximum is posted on the CAR webpage under User Information: http://educateiowa.gov/index.php? option=com content&view=article&id=1621&Itemid=2970, but it is the maximum for the end of FY11. The maximum for the end of FY12 cannot be verified by the Department until the CAR-COA is filed showing TSS expenditures by the district and when the FY12 ending fund balance and unspent balance are known. Therefore, the district will enter its own amount that it believes is left unpaid, but not exceeding the amount left unpaid at the end of FY11 as determined by the Department. After all FY12 amounts are known, the Department will adjust any amounts reported by the district that are greater than the Department's calculation for

the state project reconciliation edit (4-11) does not look at amounts in account 759, contact Denise Ragias (denise.ragias@iowa.gov or 515.281.4741) or Janice Evans (janice.evans@iowa.gov or 515.281.4740) for a DE adjustment for the amount reported in account 759 so that your district can pass the edit.

the end of FY12. Districts choosing this option will debit the restricted fund balance (Fund 10, Project 3204, Account 729) and credit the unassigned fund balance (Fund 10, Project 3204, Account 759) for the amount the district believes is yet unpaid. Since

If any district does not implement this option for fiscal year 2011-2012, it is assumed that the district has paid the full amount of TSS to teachers *or* has selected to continue reporting on the CAR as required in past years.

If you have further questions, contact Su McCurdy at su.mccurdy@iowa.gov or 515.281.4738.

FY12 Hold Open and Submission of FY12 Claims

It is that time of year! Please submit any payment claims for FY12 activities promptly. Any claims for FY12 must be disbursed to you from us by the end of August. After that, we must send the claims to the State Appeal Board for approval of the payment. This is true even if the funds are federal and still within the approved grant period. The Department is working hard to ensure timely disbursement of funds – our goal is always zero Appeal Board Claims. Several federal funds are notorious for late payments and this is primarily due to delays in claims submissions from local districts. These funds include Title IIA, Title I, IDEA Part B, and Perkins. Anything you can do to get claims for these funds submitted in a timely way would be appreciated. The Department has experienced some significant turn-over in staff managing some of these funds and will continue to work at ensuring that you receive your payments promptly. If there are any specific concerns, please contact Jeff Berger at jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515.281.3968.

Ed Jobs Funds

Many of you have already expended your entire allocation of Ed Jobs funds and marked your quarterly reporting as "final." Thanks for your attention to this. A good number of districts have some remaining Ed Jobs funds left. This is just a reminder that all Ed Jobs funds must be expended by September 30, 2012. Additionally, any quarterly reporting for Ed Jobs must be submitted as 100 percent expended and final in this next reporting cycle. If there are any specific concerns, please contact Jeff Berger at jeff.berger@jowa.gov or 515.281.3968.

Nonprogram Food Revenues and Expenses

The Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services sent a memo dated May 10, 2012, to district food service personnel, which indicated that "Section 206 of Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 requires school food authorities (SFAs) to annually compare food costs and revenue generated, specifically food costs and revenues of nonprogram items as a percent of the total food costs and revenue. If the SFA is not separately gathering information on nonprogram foods to complete the calculation, estimates may be used for school year 2011-2012; however, additional methods need to be put in place to gather the necessary data for school year 2012-2013."

Department nutrition staff and districts have asked how districts should segregate revenues and expenses for the nonprogram food to help segregate these revenues and expenses. Districts are already segregating the revenues when following Uniform Financial Accounting and using sources 162X, Daily Sales – Non-reimbursable programs and 163X, Special Food Functions and Institution Income. Expenses should be tracked by using projects 162X and 163X to account for the food costs related to these revenues.

For further questions, please contact Janice Evans at janice.evans@iowa.gov or 515.281.4740.

Preschool Coding

The first year of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program was handled through a grant, coded to Source/Project 3317. The second and subsequent years have been a categorical payment included in State Aid, coded to Source/Project 3117 (different number than the grant). According to Chapter 98 of the lowa Administrative Rules, districts must use the balance of discontinued funding for the purpose intended, within 24 months after the termination of the program. Districts that ended FY11 with a restricted fund balance in the Project 3317 grant funds should code their applicable expenditures to this code number first to use up the balance in FY12 and then code remaining applicable expenditures to Project 3117. Districts should not combine the funding or change the Project 3317 funds to Project 3117. They are two separate streams of funding.

Contact: Denise Ragias, denise.ragias@iowa.gov or 515.281.4741.

School Board Officers Application

The School Board Officers Application (https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us) has been updated to include the newly required School Business Official position. Please check the application to make sure all the information is correct. The email lists the Department of Education uses to contact districts include data that are pulled from this application, especially the board president and business office people. Making sure this application is updated on a timely basis will ensure the appropriate people receive the information they need.

Contact: Joyce M. Thomsen, joyce.thomsen@iowa.gov or 515.242.5621.

Tom Horn Memorial Award Presented to Owen Freese and Verlan Vos

lowa Department of Education school bus inspectors Owen Freese and Verlan Vos were awarded the "Tom Horn Memorial Award" at the recent lowa School Transportation Conference held in Des Moines on July 16-19. The conference is sponsored by the lowa Pupil Transportation Association (IPTA), the lowa Department of Education (IDE), and the lowa Association of School Boards (IASB). This annual award is presented to the person, or in this case persons, who have shown extreme dedication and purpose in their work over the past year. It's the most prestigious award given to members of the school transportation industry in lowa. Named for the late founder of the IPTA, it's given out each year at the annual conference. Owen and Verlan touch every school district in the state of lowa at least twice every school year, and have been doing so since both were hired by the Department in 1999. Because of their diligence, determination, perseverance, dedication, and sometimes just plain old stubbornness, the state of lowa has a much improved and much safer school bus fleet for our students than when they first started inspecting buses 13 years ago. In that time, as school bus inspectors, they've seen some very good fleets, some very poor fleets, and a little bit of everything in between. They've had compliments, complaints and even a few tools hurled their way - yet everyday they place the safety of the children riding the school buses as their top priority! Much like the U.S. mail, Verlan and Owen make their daily rounds through mud, rain, sleet, snow, ice, fog, boiling heat, and freezing cold in their dedication to keeping the kids on our buses safe!

Green Ribbon Schools Award Program

The Iowa Department of Education (IDE) will be participating in the Green Ribbon Schools (GRS) Awards Program during the 2012-13 school year and will release information to public and accredited nonpublic schools about the GRS application process this fall. The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) award recognizes public and accredited nonpublic elementary, middle, and high schools from participating states that demonstrate the highest combined achievement toward the goals of the program's three "Pillars": 1) the school has a "net-zero" environmental impact, 2) the school has a positive impact on the health of staff and students, and 3) 100 percent of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate. Each of these three Pillars in turn has multiple "Elements" and associated objectives that inform schools of the necessary achievements to demonstrate progress towards becoming a Green Ribbon School.

GRS is a voluntary awards program for K-12 schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs; improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education, which incorporates STEM, civic skills and green career pathways. The GRS award program will celebrate schools that have adopted best practices in recycling; transportation; dining services; energy, water and indoor air quality management; and facilities and grounds maintenance in addition to incorporating outdoor and nature education into their academic programming.

Visit the ED-GRS website to learn about the GRS program: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html. For more information about the application process, contact Gary Schwartz, Facilities Consultant, 515.281.4743 or gary.schwartz@iowa.gov.

Kudos

Kudos to Janice Evans and Su McCurdy for each receiving two awards in July 2012 from the National Center for Education Statistics, United States Department of Education for recognition of outstanding performance in timely and complete reporting of the Common Core of Data National Public Education Finance Survey for FY2011 and for the Common Core of Data F-33 Survey for FY2010. Janice and Su state this would not be possible without the efforts of the School Finance Team and the quality and timeliness of data submitted by every one of the school districts and AEAs in Iowa. Congratulations to all!

Upcoming Deadlines	
Special Education District Court Placed Claim	8-1-12
Special Education Foster Care Claim Due	8-1-12
Progress Report Toward Reorganization Due	8-1-12
Special Education Provided to Nonpublic Schools Claim Due	8-1-12
Juvenile Home Claim	8-1-12
Special Education High Cost Fund Claim Due	8-15-12
Exhibits for the October School Budget Review Committee Meeting Due and Final Date to Request a Hearing	9-8-12
Date by Which Student Must be School Age for Certified Enrollment	9-15-12