

# **Great Prairie Area Education Agency**

## **Reorganization Plan**

**Required by  
Iowa Code Chapter 275**

**July, 2012**

# Great Prairie AEA

2814 N. Court Street  
Ottumwa, Iowa 52501

3601 West Avenue  
Burlington, Iowa 52601

## Board of Directors

### Members:

*Marge Wilhelm, Director District 1*—Central Lee, Harmony, Keokuk and Van Buren

*Melissa Ballard, Director District 2*—Albia, Chariton, Eddyville-Blakesburg, Moravia and Wayne

*Joy Prothero, Director District 3*—Keota, North Mahaska, Oskaloosa, Sigourney and Tri-County

*Matt Greiner, Director District 4*—Cardinal, Centerville, Davis County, Moulton-Udell, Seymour, and that portion of Green Twp. Pct. & Adams Twp. Pct contained in the Ottumwa School District

*Peg Campbell, Director District 5*—That portion of Dahlonga Twp. Pct., Agency Twp. Pct., Keokuk Twp. Pct., and Ottumwa Pcts. 1-10 contained in the Ottumwa School District

*John Adam, Director District 6*—Fairfield, Fremont, Pekin, WACO, Winfield-Mt. Union, and that portion of Highland Twp. Pct., Richland Twp. Pct., & Center Twp. Pct. Contained in the Ottumwa School District

*Lonny Morrow, Director District 7*—Mediapolis, Morning Sun, Mount Pleasant, New London and Wapello

*Joyce Wauters, Director District 8*—That portion of Burlington 1 & Tama Pct. And Burlington Pcts. 2-12, contained in the Burlington School District

*Vicki Stephenson, Director District 9*—Danville, Fort Madison, West Burlington, that portion of West Burlington Twp. Pct., Union Concordia Pct. & Flint River Middletown Pct. Contained in the Burlington School District.

### Secretary to the Board:

Nancy D. Brown

### Administrator:

Dr. Jon Sheldahl

# Preface

**Iowa Code section 275.1, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003**, states that, “. . . The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory.” The purposes of this publication are to comply with those mandates relative to reorganization planning, to provide assistance to the officials and citizens of school districts contemplating school district reorganization, and to assist the area education agency Board of Directors in the event it is presented a reorganization petition.

The Plan is intended to provide general guidance to the AEA Board of Directors as it acts upon reorganization petitions. The AEA Plan contemplates that it may be augmented from time to time through the addition of studies and surveys conducted by the AEA or through the assistance of the Department of Education or other educational consultants. The plan will be altered by subsequent reorganization activity. Further, factors relevant to the statutory standards including matters outside the scope of this plan may serve as a basis for AEA Board decision-making on a proposed reorganization. The provisions of this Plan are just one consideration and not the exclusive consideration(s) for the Board in acting upon prospectively filed reorganization petitions. The Board reserves the right to base its future actions upon conditions as they develop and upon new information as it becomes available.

<b>Public hearing on adoption of Plan</b>	Fairfield, Iowa	July 17, 2012
<b>Plan adopted by GPAEA Board</b>		July 17, 2012
<b>Plan transmitted to director of Dept. of Educ.</b>		July 30, 2012

Refer to Chapter 2 for dates of further surveys, hearings, elections, etc.

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# Chapter One

## Code Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to assist those who read and use this publication by summarizing the provisions of Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa that relate to the mandated area education agency (AEA) reorganization plans. However, it is not intended for reading of this narrative to take the place of direct examination of the Code or consultation with an attorney. The first part of the chapter offers general background about the contents of Code Chapter 275, and the next three sections summarize portions of Code Chapter 275 that most specifically relate to the AEA reorganization plans. The fifth part lists the titles of the sections of Code Chapter 275 that most directly address the reorganization plan.

### **General Background.**

Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa, along with a few minor references in other chapters of the Code, address the topic of school district reorganization. The terms reorganization, consolidation, and merger seem to be used interchangeably; although reorganization is in the Code chapter title and it is the most common. The word reorganization is used in this publication.

On July 1, 1975, the 15 area education agencies replaced the county boards of education, and they inherited the school district reorganization governance role. The AEA responsibilities can be placed into two broad categories. The first includes the area reorganization plan, and the second is the governance of the petition process. It is important to note that the AEAs have no responsibilities or capacities for initiating the reorganization process, or in any way causing a reorganization. The decision to start a reorganization effort through a petition is a decision of the local district residents. The eventual reorganization election decision is also within the realm of local district voters. The AEA's role in the reorganization process is to govern the activities that take place from the submission of the reorganization petition through the reorganization election. The AEA has some post-reorganization responsibilities, but they are more "housekeeping" in nature.

The Code contains three general methods for school districts to change their boundary lines. The first, and predominant method, is the petition process in Code Chapter 275. The others are the dissolution method embodied in Code Sections 275.51 through 275.56, and the concurrent action method of changing boundaries as cited in Section 274.37. The

AEA has no authority for dissolution, but concurrent action by two local school boards to change their boundaries may be disapproved by the respective AEA board or boards of directors.

Code Chapter 275 can be categorized into two broad areas, plus numerous lesser topics. The first is the AEA reorganization planning component, and the second is the reorganization petition process. Among the other topics in the chapter are the school dissolution process, school redistricting following decennial census, and changes in director district boundaries and numbers. This publication is limited to the AEA reorganization planning.

Three general concepts come together as the AEAs develop and use their reorganization plans:

- Code Chapter 275 begins with the mandate that area education agencies develop reorganization plans. Such plans must be developed whether or not any school districts expect to reorganize, or could potentially reorganize.
- School districts initiate the reorganization effort through the petition process. The petitions may be based upon the AEA reorganization plans, or they may be different than the plans. If they are different, the petitions must request the AEA to change its plans.
- When the AEA receives petitions, it must compare the petitions to the plans. If the petitions do not comply with the plans, the AEA board shall conduct further surveys.

The terms plans, surveys, and studies are used throughout Code Chapter 275. There seems to be little distinction among them. This publication uses the terms that are associated with the concepts being described.

### **Summary of Plan Development.**

1. The AEA shall develop detailed studies and surveys.
2. The surveys and studies shall be of the school districts within the AEA and all adjacent territory.
3. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganization which may have taken place.
4. The scope of the studies and surveys shall include:
  - a) the adequacy of the education program.
  - b) pupil enrollment
  - c) property valuation.
  - d) existing buildings and equipment.
  - e) natural community areas.
  - f) road conditions.
  - g) transportation.
  - h) economic factors.
  - i) individual attention given to the needs of students.
  - j) opportunity of students to participate in a wide variety of activities.
  - k) other matters that may bear on educational programs meeting minimum standards require by law.

5. The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in Section 275.3. Section 275.3 lists 300 students as the minimum size for the formation of a new district. That 300 enrollment is incorporated into this planning provision, and it requires the AEA boards to suggest alternate plans for those districts under the 300 level.
6. The plan may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs as an alternative to school reorganization.
7. In developing studies and surveys the AEA board:
  - a) shall consult with school officials and other citizens.
  - b) from time to time hold public hearings.
  - c) may employ research and other assistance to properly carry on its survey.
  - d) shall consult with the director of the Department of Education.
  - e) may request assistance from the director of the Department of Education.
  - f) shall adopt and transmit completed plans to the director of the Department of Education.

#### **Summary of Petition Conforming to Plans.**

1. A reorganization petition shall contain a description of the area included in the proposed district.
2. The description shall conform to the AEA reorganization plan, or the petition shall request the plan to be changed.
3. It is also required that the provisions relating to studies, surveys, hearings and adoption of plans shall constitute a mandatory prerequisite to the effectuation of any proposal for district boundary change. It shall be the mandatory duty of the area education agency board to dismiss the petition if the above provisions are not complied with fully.

#### **Summary of Changing Plans.**

1. Following the receipt of a petition, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plan.
2. If the plan does not comply with the petition, the board shall conduct further surveys.
3. If the petitions are being considered at a hearing conducted by a joint board of more than one area education agency, the joint board shall determine if the petition conforms to plans.
4. If the petition requests a change of plans, the board shall determine whether a change should be made in any or all of the plans of the AEAs affected by the petition.

**References in this area education agency plan are to the 2003 version of the Code of Iowa.** The accepted practice of Code citation is to format it as, "Iowa Code section 274.37, 2003." For purposes of brevity and readability, some Code references in this plan may specify the chapter and section numbers, without identification of the year or reference to "Iowa Code."

The following table is a list of sections of the Code that are totally or partially quoted in the plan:

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section</b>
274	37
275	1
275	2
275	3
275	4
275	5
275	8
275	9
275	12
275	15
275	16
275	17
275	18
275	20
275	22
275	24
275	27
275	51
275	53
275	55

## **Chapter Two**

# **Records of Great Prairie Area Education Agency Reorganization Plans and Activities**

As noted in the preceding chapter, the development of area education agency reorganization plans, the revision of the plans, and the use of the plans during the reorganization petition process, all require certain actions to be taken by the AEAs and their boards of directors. The purpose of this chapter is to maintain a set of records that chronicles such actions by Great Prairie AEA<sup>1</sup>.

The records are in the form of a set of loose-leaf inserts, which may be revised as actions are taken and conditions change. Following is a list of inserts:

Insert 01	Adoption of Plans and Revisions of Plans.
Insert 02	Approval of Changes.
Insert 03	Transmittal of Plans to the Director of the Department of Education.
Insert 04	Further Surveys.
Insert 05	Assistance from the Director of the Department of Education.
Insert 06	Public Hearings.
Insert 07	Passed Reorganization Elections.
Insert 08	Dismissed Reorganization Petitions and Failed Reorganization Elections.
Insert 09	Certification of Dissolution Commissions.
Insert 10	Boundary Lines Changed by Concurrent Action.
Insert 11	Joint Board Actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Records of the original AEAs 15 and 16 are listed where appropriate. Such references may be deleted as deemed appropriate when revisions to the Great Prairie AEA plan are approved.

# Insert 2-01

## Record of Adoption of Plans and Revisions of Plans Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code Reference:

**Section 275.1, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003:** “. . . The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory.”

### Record of Adoption: Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Notes
July 17, 2012	Original plan <sup>2</sup>

### Record of Adoption: AEA 15

Dates	Notes
September 1980	Original Plan
July 8, 1986	First revision
December 8, 1992	Second revision
October 12, 1999	Third revision
March 2006	Fourth revision

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<sup>2</sup> Changes made to the plan in the future are to be labeled as “Revisions of Plan.”

# Insert 2-01

## Record of Adoption: AEA 16

Dates	Notes
1980	Original Plan
August 21, 1985	First revision
November 17, 1998	Second revision
March 2006	Third revision

# Insert 2-02

## Record of Approval of Changes Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code Reference:

**Section 275.12 (1), 2003:** “A petition describing the boundaries, or accurately describing the area included therein by legal descriptions, of the proposed district, which boundaries or area described shall conform to plans developed or the petition shall request change of the plan, shall be filed with the area education agency administrator of the area education agency in which the greatest number of registered voters reside. . . .”

### Record of Changes: Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Notes
July 1, 2011	Wayne Lineville-Clio New District – Wayne CSD
July 1, 2012	Eddyville-Blakesburg Fremont New District – Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD

### Record of Changes: AEA 15

Dates	Notes
July 1, 1994	Blakesburg Eddyville New District – Eddyville-Blakesburg CSD
July 1, 2004	Van Buren Fox Valley New District – Van Buren CSD

### Record of Changes: AEA 16

Dates	Notes
None	

# Insert 2-03

## Record of Transmittal of Plans to the Director of the Department of Education Since July 1, 2003

**Iowa Code Reference:**

**Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 3, 2003:** “Completed plans shall be transmitted by the area education agency board to the director of the department of education.”

**Record of Transmittal: Great Prairie AEA**

Dates	Notes
July 30, 2012	Original plan

**Record of Transmittal: AEA 15**

Dates	Notes
September 1980	Original plan
July 28, 1986	First revision
December 11, 1992	Second revision
October 18, 1999	Third revision
March 2006	Fourth revision

**Record of Transmittal: AEA 16**

Dates	Notes
1980	Original plan
August 22, 1985	First revision
November 23, 1998	Second revision
March 2006	Third revision

# Insert 2-04

## Record of Further Surveys Since July 1, 2003

**Iowa Code Reference:**

**Section 275.5, 2003:** “. . . Following receipt of a petition pursuant to section 275.12, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plans which had been adopted by the board. If the petition does not comply with the plans which had been adopted by the board, the board shall conduct further surveys pursuant to section 275.4 prior to the date set for the hearing upon the petition. If further surveys have been conducted by the board, the board shall present the results of the further surveys at the hearing upon the petition.”

**Section 275.9, 2003:** “When any school district is enlarged, reorganized, or changes its boundaries pursuant to the plans hereinabove provided for, such enlargement, reorganization, or boundary change shall be accomplished by the method hereinafter provided.

The provisions of sections 275.1 to 275.5, relating to studies, surveys, hearings and adoption of plans shall constitute a mandatory prerequisite to the effectuation of any proposal for district boundary change. It shall be the mandatory duty of the area education agency board to dismiss the petition if the above provisions are not complied with fully.”

**Record of Further Surveys: Great Prairie AEA**

Dates	Districts Included in Surveys	Surveys Conducted by

## Insert 2-04

### Record of Further Surveys: AEA 15

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Districts Included in Surveys</b>	<b>Surveys Conducted by</b>
1996	Russell (Consultation)	Department of Education

### Record of Further Surveys: AEA 16

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Districts Included in Surveys</b>	<b>Surveys Conducted by</b>
1988	WACO Winfield-Mount Union	Department of Education
1989	Mediapolis Morning Sun Wapello Winfield-Mount Union	Department of Education
1994	Mount Pleasant New London Winfield-Mount Union	Department of Education
2003	WACO, Winfield-Mount Union, New London Morning Sun	Guy Ghan Consulting
2005	New London, Morning Sun, Winfield-Mount Union	Guy Ghan Consulting

## Insert 2-05

# Record of Assistance from the Director of the Department of Education Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code Reference:

**Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003:** “In addition, the area education agency board shall consult with the director of the department of education in the development of surveys and plans. The director of the department of education shall provide assistance to the area education agency boards as requested and shall advise the area education agency boards concerning plans of contiguous area education agencies and the reorganization policies adopted by the state board of education.”

### Record of Assistance and Consultation: Great Prairie AEA

Dates of Consultations	Notes
May 19, 2006, plus other assistance	Consultation regarding Reorganization Plan

### Record of Assistance and Consultation: AEA 15

Dates of Consultations	Notes
August 18, 1999	Consultation regarding revision
March 2006	Consultation regarding revision

### Record of Assistance and Consultation: AEA 16

Dates of Consultations	Notes
May 4 – June 24, 1998	Consultation regarding second revision
January 2006	Consultation regarding third revision

# Insert 2-06

## Record of Public Hearings Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code References:

**Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “In developing studies and surveys the area education agency board shall consult with the officials of school districts in the area and other citizens, and shall from time to time hold public hearings, and may employ such research and other assistance as it may determine reasonably necessary in order to properly carry on its survey and prepare definite plans of reorganization.”

**Section 275.5, 2003:** “. . . Following receipt of a petition pursuant to section 275.12, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plans which had been adopted by the board. If the petition does not comply with the plans which had been adopted by the board, the board shall conduct further surveys pursuant to section 275.4 prior to the date set for the hearing upon the petition. If further surveys have been conducted by the board, the board shall present the results of the further surveys at the hearing upon the petition.”

### Record of Hearings (275.4--Plan): Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Locations	Notes
insert after hearing	insert after hearing	Approval of Great Prairie AEA reorganization plan.

### Record of Hearings (275.5--Petition): Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Locations	Notes
October 16, 2007	Winfield, Iowa	Reorganization Hearing of Winfield-Mt. Union and Morning Sun
September 28, 2010	Corydon, Iowa	Reorganization Hearing of Wayne and Lineville-Clio
June 28, 2011	Eddyville, Iowa	Reorganization Hearing of Eddyville-Blakesburg And Fremont

## Insert 2-06

### Record of Hearings (275.4—Plan): AEA 15

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
October 12, 1999	Ottumwa, Iowa	Revision of AEA 15 reorganization plan
March 2006	Ottumwa, Iowa	Revision of AEA 15 reorganization plan

### Record of Hearings (275.5—Petition): AEA 15

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Notes</b>

### Record of Hearings (275.4—Plan): AEA 16

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
November 17, 1998	Burlington, Iowa	Revision of AEA 16 reorganization plan
March 2006	Burlington, Iowa	Revision of AEA 16 reorganization plan

### Record of Hearings (275.5—Petition): AEA 16

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Notes</b>

# Insert 2-07

## Record of Passed Reorganization Elections Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code References:

**Section 275.18, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “When the boundaries of the territory to be included in a proposed school corporation and the number and method of the election of the school directors of the proposed school corporation have been determined as provided in this chapter, the area education agency administrator with whom the petition is filed shall give written notice of the proposed date of the election to the county commissioner of elections of the county in the proposed school corporation which has the greatest taxable base. The proposed date shall be as soon as possible pursuant to section 39.2, subsections 1 and 2, and section 47.6, subsections 1 and 2, but not later than November 30 of the calendar year prior to the calendar year in which the reorganization will take effect.”

**Section 275.20, 2003:** “The voters shall vote separately in each existing school district affected and voters residing in the entire existing district are eligible to vote upon the proposition to create a new school corporation and the proposition to levy the voter-approved physical plant and equipment levy under section 298.2, if the petition included a provision for a vote to authorize the levy. If a proposition receives a majority of the votes cast in each of at least seventy-five percent of the districts, and also a majority of the total number of votes cast in all of the districts, the proposition is carried”

**Section 275.24,2003:** “When a school district is enlarged, reorganized, or changes its boundary pursuant to sections 275.12 to 275.22, the change shall take effect on July 1 following the date of the reorganization election held pursuant to section 275.18 if the election was held by the prior November 30. Otherwise the change shall take effect on July 1 one year later.”

**Section 275.27,2003:** “School districts created or enlarged under this chapter are community school districts and are part of the area education agency in which the greatest number of qualified electors of the district reside at the time of the special election . . . .”

### Record of Passed Elections: Great Prairie AEA

Effective Date	Original Districts & AEA Nos.	New District & AEA No.
July 1, 2011	Wayne (GPAEA) Lineville-Clio (GPAEA)	Wayne CSD (GPAEA)
July 1, 2012	Eddyville-Blakesburg (GPAEA) Fremont (GPAEA)	Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD



# Insert 2-08

## Record of Dismissed Reorganization Petitions and Failed Reorganization Elections Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code References:

**Section 275.15, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “At the hearing, which shall be held within ten days of the final date set for filing objections, interested parties, both petitioners and objectors, may present evidence and arguments, and the area education agency board shall review the matter on its merits and within ten days after the conclusion of any hearing, shall rule on the objections and shall enter an order fixing the boundaries for the proposed school corporation as will in its judgment be for the best interests of all parties concerned, having due regard for the welfare of adjoining districts, or dismiss the petition.”

**Section 275.17, 2003:** “If an area education agency board does not approve the change in boundaries of school districts in accordance with a petition, a petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for a period of six months following the date of the hearing or the vote of the board, whichever is later.”

**Section 275.22, 2003:** “. . . If the majority of the votes cast by the qualified electors is in favor of the proposition, as provided in section 275.20, a new school corporation shall be organized. If the majority of votes cast is opposed to the proposition, a new petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for at least six months from the date of the election. . . .”

### Record of Dismissed Petitions: Great Prairie AEA

Hearing Dates	Original Districts	AEA Numbers
None		

# Insert 2-08

**Record of Failed Elections: Great Prairie AEA**

Election Dates	Original Districts	AEA Numbers
October 16, 2007	Winfield-Mt. Union Morning Sun	GPAEA

**Record of Dismissed Petitions: AEA 15**

Hearing Dates	Original Districts	AEA Numbers
None		

**Record of Failed Elections: AEA 15**

Election Dates	Original Districts	AEA Numbers
February 28, 1989	Hedrick and Pekin	15
March 23, 1993	Blakesburg and Eddyville	15

**Record of Dismissed Petitions: AEA 16**

Hearing Dates	Original Districts and AEA Nos.	Actions
July 28, 1988	WACO and Winfield Mt. Union (16)	

**Record of Failed Elections: AEA 16**

Election Dates	Original Districts	AEA Numbers

# Insert 2-09

## Record of Certification of Dissolution Commissions Since July 1, 2003

### Iowa Code References:

**Section 275.51, unnumbered paragraph 4, 2003:** “The board of the school district shall certify to the area education agency board that a commission has been formed, the names and addresses of commission members, and that the commission members represent the various geographic areas and socioeconomic factors present in the district.”

**Section 275.53, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “The commission shall send a copy of its dissolution proposal or shall inform the board that it cannot agree upon a dissolution proposal not later than one year following the date of the organizational meeting of the commission. . . .”

**Section 275.55, unnumbered paragraph 3, 2003:** “The proposition shall be adopted if a majority of the electors voting on the proposition approve its adoption.”

### Certification of Commission: Great Prairie AEA

Date	District/AEA
June 30, 2008	Russell Accreditation Revoked by Department of Education

### Failure of Commission to Agree: Great Prairie AEA

Date	District

# Insert 2-09

**Approval by Electors: Great Prairie AEA**

Date	Original District	Districts Receiving Territory

**Failure of Electors to Approve: Great Prairie AEA**

Date	District

**Certification of Commission: AEA 15 & 16**

Date	District/AEA
February 11, 1982	WACO

**Failure of Commission to Agree: AEA 15 & 16**

Date	District
February 11, 1983	WACO

**Approval by Electors: AEA 15 & 16**

Date	Original District	Districts Receiving Territory
None		

**Failure of Electors to Approve: AEA 15 & 16**

Date	District
None	

# Insert 2-10

## Record of Boundary Line Changes by Concurrent Action Since July 1, 2003

**Iowa Code References:**

**Section 274.37, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “The boundary lines of contiguous school corporations may be changed by the concurrent action of the respective boards of directors at their regular meetings in July, or at special meetings called for that purpose. Such concurrent action shall be subject to the approval of the area education agency board but such concurrent action shall stand approved if the said board does not disapprove such concurrent action within thirty days following receipt of notice thereof. The corporation from which territory is detached shall, after the change, contain not less than four government sections of land.”

**Section 275.22, 2003:** “. . . If territory is excluded from the reorganized district, action pursuant to section 274.37 shall be taken prior to the effective date of reorganization. . . .”

**Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: Great Prairie AEA**

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
June 28, 2011	Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont	Oskaloosa
September 28, 2010	Wayne	Central Decatur Morman Trail

# Insert 2-10

## Other Concurrent Action: Great Prairie AEA

Effective Dates	Districts	Districts

## Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: AEA 15

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
July 1, 1994	Eddyville-Blakesburg	Ottumwa

## Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: AEA 16

Effective Date	Reorganizing Districts	Territory Attached to

## Other Concurrent Action: AEA 15 & 16

Effective Dates	Districts	Districts
None		

# Insert 2-11

## Record of Joint Board Actions Since July 1, 2003

### **Iowa Code References:**

**Section 275.8, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “Planning of joint districts shall be conducted in the same manner as planning for single districts, except as provided in this section. Studies and surveys relating to the planning of joint districts shall be filed with the area education agency in which one of the districts is located which has the greatest taxable property base. In the case of controversy over the planning of joint districts, the matter shall be submitted to the director of the department of education. Judicial review of the director's decision may be sought in accordance with the terms of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, chapter 17A. Notwithstanding the terms of that Act, petitions for judicial review must be filed within thirty days after the decision of the director. *“Joint districts”* means districts that lie in two or more adjacent area education agencies.”

**Section 275.16, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** “If the territory described in the petition for the proposed corporation lies in more than one area education agency, the agency administrator with whom the petition is filed shall fix the time and place for a hearing and call a joint meeting of the members of all the agency boards in which territory of the proposed school corporation lies, to act as a single board for the hearing of the objections, and a majority of members of each of the agency boards of the different agencies in which any part of the proposed corporation lies, constitutes a quorum. The president of the board of directors of the area education agency in which the petition has been filed, or a member of the board designated by the president, shall preside at the joint meeting. The joint boards acting as a single board shall determine whether the petition conforms to plans or, if the petition requests a change in plans, whether a change should be made, and may change the plans of any or all the area education agency boards affected by the petition. The joint board shall determine and fix boundaries for the proposed corporation as provided in section 275.15 or dismiss the petition. The joint board may continue the hearing as provided in section 275.15.”

# Insert 2-11

**Actions of Joint Boards: Great Prairie AEA**

Effective Dates or Action Dates	AEA Nos.	Districts	Joint Board Actions
June 30, 2008	GPAEA	Russell was dissolved and assigned to Chariton	Action taken by the State Board of Education

**Actions of Joint Boards: AEA 15**

Hearing Dates	Other AEA's	Districts	Joint Board Actions
July 1, 1991		Hedrick was dissolved and assigned to Pekin, Fremont, and Ottumwa	Action taken by the State Board of Education

**Actions of Joint Boards: AEA 16**

Effective Dates or Action Dates	AEA Nos.	Districts	Joint Board Actions

# Chapter Three

## Suggested Alternate Plans

### **Iowa Code References:**

**Section 275.2, 2003:** “. . . The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in section 275.3 and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under section 28E.9, 256.13, 280.15, 282.7, or 282.10 as an alternative to school reorganization.”

**Section 275.3, 2003:** “No new school district shall be planned by an area education agency board nor shall any proposal for creation or enlargement of any school district be approved by an area education agency board or submitted to electors unless there reside within the proposed limits of such district at least three hundred persons of school age who were enrolled in public schools in the preceding school year. Provided, however, that the director of the department of education shall have authority to grant permission to an area education agency board to approve the formation or enlargement of a school district containing a lower school enrollment than required in this section on the written request of such area education agency board if such request is accompanied by evidence tending to show that sparsity of population, natural barriers or other good reason makes it impracticable to meet the school enrollment requirement.”

Insert 01	List of Districts in Great Prairie AEA
Insert 02	List of Alternate Whole-Grade Sharing Plans
Insert 03	Overview of Plans
Insert 04	Projected Enrollments—Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment
Insert 05	Open Enrollment Out—Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment

# Insert 3-01--Size

## List of Districts in Great Prairie Area Education Agency September 2011

#	AEA #	Co #	Dist #	District Name	Certified Enrollment	Statewide Rank from Smallest	Operates High School
280	GPAEA	62	2367	Fremont	197.8	335	No
285	GPAEA	4	4518	Moulton-Udell	206.0	332	Yes
302	GPAEA	58	4509	Morning Sun	214.0	329	No
291	GPAEA	93	5895	Seymour	237.9	319	Yes
293	GPAEA	54	6462	Tri-County	268.0	311	Yes
282	GPAEA	54	3330	Keota	325.7	293	Yes
284	GPAEA	4	4491	Moravia	350.8	284	Yes
281	GPAEA	89	2834	Harmony	361.0	281	Yes
308	GPAEA	44	7047	Winfield-Mt. Union	362.1	280	Yes
307	GPAEA	29	6937	West Burlington Independent	458.4	252	Yes
298	GPAEA	29	1602	Danville	478.8	238	Yes
304	GPAEA	44	4689	New London	509.9	228	Yes
305	GPAEA	44	6700	WACO	514.7	226	Yes
286	GPAEA	62	4776	North Mahaska	523.0	223	Yes
295	GPAEA	93	6854	Wayne	552.8	211	Yes
292	GPAEA	54	6012	Sigourney	556.1	210	Yes
273	GPAEA	90	977	Cardinal	613.6	188	Yes
289	GPAEA	54	5163	Pekin	642.8	176	Yes
294	GPAEA	89	6592	Van Buren	658.4	169	Yes
277	GPAEA	90	657	Eddyville-Blakesburg	671.2	159	Yes
306	GPAEA	58	6759	Wapello	723.6	148	Yes
297	GPAEA	56	1079	Central Lee	812.6	135	Yes
301	GPAEA	29	4203	Mediapolis	820.5	132	Yes
276	GPAEA	26	1619	Davis County	1193.2	96	Yes
272	GPAEA	68	81	Albia	1194.8	95	Yes
275	GPAEA	59	1107	Chariton	1380.4	76	Yes
274	GPAEA	4	1071	Centerville	1393.0	72	Yes
278	GPAEA	51	2169	Fairfield	1711.7	54	Yes
300	GPAEA	56	3312	Keokuk	1972.8	44	Yes
303	GPAEA	44	4536	Mount Pleasant	2044.3	40	Yes
299	GPAEA	56	2322	Fort Madison	2248.2	35	Yes
287	GPAEA	62	5013	Oskaloosa	2395.9	33	Yes
288	GPAEA	90	5049	Ottumwa	4485.9	20	Yes
296	GPAEA	29	882	Burlington	4552.7	18	Yes

# Insert 3-01--Alpha

## List of Districts in Great Prairie Area Education Agency September 2011

#	AEA #	Co #	Dist #	District Name	Certified Enrollment	Statewide Rank from Smallest	Operates High School
272	GPAEA	68	81	Albia	1194.8	95	Yes
296	GPAEA	29	882	Burlington	4552.7	18	Yes
273	GPAEA	90	977	Cardinal	613.6	188	Yes
274	GPAEA	4	1071	Centerville	1393.0	72	Yes
297	GPAEA	56	1079	Central Lee	812.6	135	Yes
275	GPAEA	59	1107	Chariton	1380.4	76	Yes
298	GPAEA	29	1602	Danville	478.8	238	Yes
276	GPAEA	26	1619	Davis County	1193.2	96	Yes
277	GPAEA	90	657	Eddyville-Blakesburg	671.2	159	Yes
278	GPAEA	51	2169	Fairfield	1711.7	54	Yes
299	GPAEA	56	2322	Fort Madison	2248.2	35	Yes
280	GPAEA	62	2367	Fremont	197.8	335	No
281	GPAEA	89	2834	Harmony	361.0	281	Yes
300	GPAEA	56	3312	Keokuk	1972.8	44	Yes
282	GPAEA	54	3330	Keota	325.7	293	Yes
301	GPAEA	29	4203	Mediapolis	820.5	132	Yes
284	GPAEA	4	4491	Moravia	350.8	284	Yes
302	GPAEA	58	4509	Morning Sun	214.0	329	No
285	GPAEA	4	4518	Moulton-Udell	206.0	332	Yes
303	GPAEA	44	4536	Mount Pleasant	2044.3	40	Yes
304	GPAEA	44	4689	New London	509.9	228	Yes
286	GPAEA	62	4776	North Mahaska	523.0	223	Yes
287	GPAEA	62	5013	Oskaloosa	2395.9	33	Yes
288	GPAEA	90	5049	Ottumwa	4485.9	20	Yes
289	GPAEA	54	5163	Pekin	642.8	176	Yes
291	GPAEA	93	5895	Seymour	237.9	319	Yes
292	GPAEA	54	6012	Sigourney	556.1	210	Yes
293	GPAEA	54	6462	Tri-County	268.0	311	Yes
294	GPAEA	89	6592	Van Buren	658.4	169	Yes
305	GPAEA	44	6700	WACO	514.7	226	Yes
306	GPAEA	58	6759	Wapello	723.6	148	Yes
295	GPAEA	93	6854	Wayne	552.8	211	Yes
307	GPAEA	29	6937	West Burlington Independent	458.4	252	Yes
308	GPAEA	44	7047	Winfield-Mt. Union	362.1	280	Yes



# Insert 3-03

## Overview of Plans

**Iowa Code section 275.2, 2003**, in part, requires that, “The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in section 275.3 and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under section 28E.9, 256.13, 280.15, 282.7, or 282.10 as an alternative to school reorganization.” The minimum number listed in Section 275.3 is 300. Great Prairie AEA currently has four districts below an enrollment of 300, as noted in Table 3-01:

**Table 3-01**  
**Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment**  
**GPAEA**

#	District Name	2011* Certified Enrollment	Statewide Rank from Smallest**
	Moulton-Udell CSD	206.0	332
	Morning Sun CSD	214.0	329
	Seymour CSD	237.9	319
	Tri-County CSD	268.0	311
	*** <i>Fremont</i>	<i>197.8</i>	<i>335</i>

\* Most current enrollment as of date plan is being written

\*\* There are 351 districts in 2011-2012

\*\*\* *Eddyville-Blakesburg and Fremont will merge effective July 1, 2012.*

The purposes of the overview section of this plan are to comply with the mandate relative to enrollment size as stated in Iowa Code section 275.2, 2003, to provide assistance to the officials and citizens of school districts contemplating school district reorganization, and to assist the area education agency board of directors in the event it is presented a reorganization petition. Alternate reorganization proposals have been prepared for the districts that have less than 300 students.

This section of the plan lists principles that the AEA board of directors will consider as it acts upon reorganization petitions presented to it and as it enters the order “fixing boundary lines.” These principles will apply to petitions presented by districts with less than 300 students, and they will apply to districts with more than 300 students that may be included in a reorganization petition.

## **A. *Overriding reorganization principles***

As the Great Prairie Area Education Agency board of directors works with the reorganization process it embraces three overriding principles:

1. School district reorganization is a local issue. The decision to begin the process by circulating a petition is the sole responsibility of the district's citizens and elected officials. The ultimate decision to vote for or against a reorganization proposal is within the realm of the registered voters of the districts involved.
2. The Code of Iowa, specifically Chapter 275, requires the area education agency and its board of directors to assume stated responsibilities and authorities. In general terms, those mandates relate to the development of the area education agency reorganization plan; relate to the governance of the petition process from the time the administrator is presented with such petition, to the AEA board of directors' order to approve or disapprove an election; and relate to several other narrower responsibilities, such as the acceptance of a certification that a dissolution commission has been formed. The area education agency and its board of directors will be limited to those actions required by the Code, and to assistance that is specifically requested by the local districts which will not be in potential conflict with the mandates of the petition process.
3. The board of directors views the merger of school districts as the union of public business entities. The AEA encourages the local residents and boards of directors to determine if reorganization will result in improved services and programs, an enhancement in the efficiency and economical operations of the district or districts, and an increase in the value of the district or districts as assets to the residents of the communities and territories they serve. As required by Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa, Great Prairie Area Education Agency "shall, insofar as possible, authorize submission of proposals to the electors as they are developed and approved."

## **B. *Petition and boundary line principles.***

When acting upon reorganization petitions that may be presented to it, the area education agency board shall consider the following principles. These tenets are not stated in order of importance, and other factors may be considered.

1. The GPAEA board encourages the local boards of directors to:
  - thoroughly study the reorganization conditions before submitting a proposal to the AEA;
  - involve the community in the study and decision making process through the formation of citizens committees, open forums for the purpose of disseminating information, and group and personal contacts for obtaining citizen input; and
  - explore all options connected with the possible reorganization.

2. Reorganization studies and surveys shall be comprehensive, and they shall help determine whether the proposed district:
  - will have reasonable long-term stability;
  - will be able to comfortably meet the minimum educational standards required by the State of Iowa;
  - will be able to operate in an economical and efficient manner;
  - will have adequate facilities for the combined student body or have a plan for the development of adequate facilities;
  - will form a reasonable geographic entity considering the outline of the territory, and the locations of the students, the municipalities, and the school structures;
  - has demonstrated the compatibility of the existing individual units through sharing agreements and other forms of cooperation; and
  - will satisfy the “matters” expressed in Iowa Code section 275.2, 2003.
3. When acting upon objections that request property to be removed from a proposed reorganization, the area education agency board will adhere to the mandates of Iowa Code section 275.15, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003. As it rules upon the exclusion of territory, the decisions of the board, “shall represent a balance between the rights of the objectors and the welfare of the reorganized district.”

The GPAEA board of directors recognizes that each reorganization petition situation is unique. At the deliberation upon the petition, the board will first examine the petition according to the principles established in this plan. However, the board reserves the right to add to those principles or detract from them as is warranted by each circumstance.

### ***C. Statewide and AEA conditions***

This section briefly summarizes a few conditions about the districts within GPAEA and within Iowa. These conditions form the context in which school districts consider, plan, and implement reorganizations.

As noted in Table 03-02 the total enrollments for AEA 15 and 16 have declined dramatically since the inception of the AEA, and the GPAEA percent of decline is considerably more than the statewide enrollment drop.

**Table 3-02  
Enrollment History  
GPAEA**

<b>Year</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total/GPAEA</b>	<b>State</b>
1975	31,011	23,038	54,049	610,850.0
2011			36,689.8	473,504.2
Amount Change			(17,359.2)	(137,345.8))
Percent Change			-32.12%	-22.49%

Table 03-03, which traces the number of districts since 1975 points out that AEAs 15 and 16 combined, declined at a rate close to the state average.

**Table 3-03  
Number School Districts  
GPAEA**

<b>Year</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total/GPAEA</b>	<b>State</b>
1975-76	26	13	39	450
2011-2012			34	351
Amount Change			(5)	(99)
Percent Change			-12.82%	-22.00%

Historical enrollment information and enrollment predictions calculated by the Department of Education are detailed in Insert 3-04 for the GPAEA districts with less than 300 certified enrollment. Most of the projections for the four districts note continued enrollment loss.

Iowa experienced a major era of school reorganization between 1985 and 1995. During that time approximately 170 districts joined through whole-grade sharing, and more than three-fourths of them have since reorganized. That 10-year period was the third period of statewide school consolidation since 1900.

The continuing statewide enrollment decline, particularly in rural areas; the state's poor economic conditions; and the increased expectations of schools are all characteristics that are similar to those of the early 1980s—the underlying causes for the large number of mergers between 1985 and 1995. Individuals who have extensively worked with school district reorganization on a statewide basis are of the opinion that Iowans should expect another approximate 10-year epoch of school merger. They point toward more of the simple pairing of two districts, as has been the case across the state and in GPAEA. However, geographic and other factors indicate that many districts may not have single suitable partners for the pairing process. The opinion is that this may give rise to new partnership ideas—such as regional high schools. However there is some thought that these ventures may be very difficult to form. The consensus seems to be that dissolution may be the only solution for some districts.

## **D. *Suggestions for AEA districts***

The Board of Directors of Great Prairie AEA offers the following suggestions to local boards of directors as they consider merger possibilities:

Take the time to thoroughly study any type of consolidation plan. Engage the services of the Department of Education or other consultants to conduct reorganization feasibility studies. Form and work with local citizen committees.

When selecting partner districts look for eventual long-term stability. If practicable, enter into whole-grade sharing before taking the more drastic actions of reorganization or dissolution. With rare exception, the districts that joined between 1985 and 1995 engaged in whole-grade sharing before reorganizing.

Meet with groups of neighboring districts to examine regional possibilities. Also, include the districts that we in GPAEA consider being our large districts.

When geographical patterns and open enrollment configurations indicate that there is no single partner that meets the needs of a broad base of resident students, the local board is encouraged to study the dissolution possibility.

## **E. *Suggested alternate plans***

As of the date of the approval of this plan there are four districts in Great Prairie AEA that have certified enrollments less than 300. The suggested alternate plans are listed below. The districts under 300 enrollment are presented in alphabetical order. The alternate options are not listed in any priority.

### **1. Morning Sun (September, 2011—Certified Enrollment-214)**

If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it:

Reorganize with the Mediapolis, Wapello, or Winfield-Mt.Union District.

### **2. Moulton-Udell (September, 2011—Certified Enrollment-206.0)**

If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it:

Reorganize with the Centerville, Davis County, or Moravia District.

### **3. Seymour (September, 2011—Certified Enrollment-237.9)**

If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it:

Reorganize with the Wayne or Centerville District.

### **4. Tri-County (September, 2011 – Certified Enrollment – 268.0)**

If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it:

Reorganize with the Sigourney, North Mahaska, or Oskaloosa District.

Petitions filed by any of the above-listed districts, by other districts in GPAEA, or by a district in GPAEA jointly with a district in a contiguous area education agency, shall be presented and written in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Iowa. If necessary, such petition shall request a change in the AEA's reorganization plan, and the request will be considered at the hearing on the petition.

# Insert 3-04

## Projected Enrollments

The following table inserts display the 10-year historical and five-year projected enrollments for the 4 districts with less than 300 certified enrollments for September 2011. The data were copied and pasted from the Department of Education web site.

The tables include the BEDS enrollments, which count the number of students actually attending the districts, whether or not they reside in the districts. The certified enrollments, which are also listed, count the resident students, even if they attend other districts through sharing contracts or open enrollment. The certified enrollment is the amount cited in the Code in Section 275.3.

The tables are from September 2011 data made public by the DE and display the September 2011 certified enrollments since those amounts are already official.

**Table 03-04**  
**Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment**  
**GPAEA**

#	District Name	2011 Certified Enrollment
1	Moulton-Udell CSD	206.0
2	Morning Sun CSD	214.0
3	Seymour CSD	237.9
4	Tri-County CSD	268.0
5		
6		
7		

*\*Eddyville-Blakesburg and Fremont will merge July 1, 2012 as Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD and are not reflected in above table.*

The DE combines the enrollments of whole-grade sharing districts for the purpose of developing these historical and projection tables. The tables in the insert are in alphabetical order by the district under 300. However, the following sharing conditions need to be considered:

**Table 03-05**  
**Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment**  
**Sharing Arrangements Considered in DE Enrollment Tables**

#	District Name	Notes
1	Morning Sun	Sends 7-12 Students to Mediapolis and Winfield-Mt. Union
2	Moulton-Udell	Shares a Superintendent with Centerville
3	Tri-County	Shares a Superintendent with Sigourney
4		
5		
6		
7		

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*\*Note: Eddyville-Blakesburg and Fremont will merge July 1, 2012 as Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont and are not reflected in above table.*

## Insert 3-05

### Open Enrollment Out

The following table inserts list the number of students open enrolling out of the four districts that have less than 300 certified enrollments. The receiving districts are also noted. The tables were printed from the DE web site using the September 2011 data.

Table 03-06 lists the total open enrollments in and out for the 4 districts. This table uses the 2011 data.

**Table 03-06  
Open Enrollment  
September 2011**

		<b>Open</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Open</b>
	<b>Certified</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
<b>NAME</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Out</b>	<b>In</b>	<b>Net</b>
Morning Sun	214.0	16	18	+2.0
Moulton-Udell	206.0	29	26	-3.0
Seymour	237.9	21.9	12.0	-9.9
Tri-County	268.0	27	7	-20.0

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*\*Note: Eddyville-Blakesburg and Fremont will merge July 1, 2012 as Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont and are not reflected in above table.*