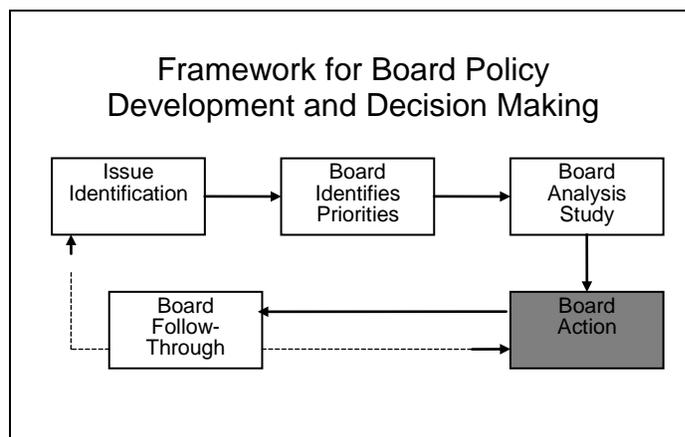


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 20, 2013



Agenda Item: Mt. Mercy University Paraeducator Preparation Programs Approval

Iowa Goal: Goal 1: All children will enter school ready to learn.
Goal 2: All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Administrative Code section 281—80 grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and procedures for the approval of programs for individuals who seek a paraeducator certification issued by the Board of Educational Examiners.

Presenter: Marietta Rives, Consultant
Bureau of Educator Quality

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the paraeducator preparation programs submitted by Mt. Mercy University for one year. The next review will be during the 2014-15 school year.

Background: Legislation originally passed in 1998 and revised in 2000 created a voluntary paraeducator certification. The legislation was prompted by the need to have well-trained paraeducators providing assistance to students and teachers. Licensure rules were established by the Board of Educational Examiners. The State Board of Education approves the voluntary preparation programs according to standards and procedures contained in Chapter 80 of the Iowa Administrative Code.

Programs Recommended for Conditional Approval November 20, 2013

Mt. Mercy University Paraeducator Preparation Programs to include:

- Generalist Level I
- Early Childhood—prekindergarten through grade 3
- Special needs—prekindergarten through grade 12
- Generalist Advanced - prekindergarten through grade 12

Iowa's voluntary paraeducator certification program is one way for paraeducators to meet the requirements set forth in No Child Left Behind. An additional benefit of this program is that certification will establish realistic opportunities for upward mobility through a career ladder pathway for paraeducators.

The institution named above has submitted a request for approval of programs to certify paraeducators in each of the listed content areas. Although the paraeducator certification program is voluntary, there are several benefits to having paraeducators certified.

1. All learners will be better served and the quality of education and related services will improve with the availability of a better-prepared paraeducator workforce.
2. Paraeducators have mastered skills that are required to support and supplement teacher/provider programs.

Strengths of the programs:

- Face-to-face courses are taught by experts in the field and meet rigorous expectations for content knowledge and performance.
- This institution has a great vision for the articulation of the paraeducator programs into their four-year degree programs.
- A sophisticated data management program and a wide-ranging advisory committee are already in place.

Areas for improvement:

- Curriculum exhibits are not fully developed and will need to be completed within the next calendar year.

Recommendation:

Based upon the review of programs submitted for consideration, a one-year, conditional approval for the Generalist Level I, Early Childhood—prekindergarten through grade 3, Special Needs—prekindergarten through grade 12, and Generalist Advanced - prekindergarten through grade 12 paraeducator certification programs are recommended.