



# School Leader Update

A MONTHLY JOURNAL  
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

April 2016

## Public input sought on education delivery in high-need schools

The Iowa Department of Education is seeking input from Iowans on alternative ways to provide support to students in high-need schools under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, which will replace the No Child Left Behind Act.

Starting in the 2016-17 school year, Iowa school districts will no longer be required to offer parents the option of choosing a different school (school choice) or taking advantage of free tutoring (supplemental education services) if their child attends a school that has been identified as “in need of assistance” based on performance.

However, the state still needs to craft an alternative plan for providing support to students in schools that need improvement. The Department will gather public feedback in late March and early April. Read more to find the [locations](#).



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## Great things going on around Iowa

Simply stated, my job rocks! Not only am I surrounded by dedicated professional at the Department of Education, each week I’m privileged to visit schools across Iowa.

One emerging theme is that Iowa educators are increasingly making important connections for their students beyond the classroom walls. They are breaking down traditional barriers between the “real world” and school.

Educators making these connections and preparing their students for the future take a similar approach.

First, **they tap both student and teacher interests and skills**. The Newell-Fonda Community School District begins the second semester with a two-week Winter Explorium, or “WE-Term,” which allows students to pursue their passions and develop important skills. Most seniors participate in internships while other students engage in project-based learning. A teacher transformed one of the classrooms I visited into an elaborate Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) unit complete with mannequin victims. Students then used scientific knowledge and theory to track down the perpetrator.

Second, **they build connections with the community, including higher education and employers**. I participated in the Elementary STEM Festival in the IKM-Manning Community School District in which students engaged in multiple, hands-on lessons prepared by dozens of local businesses. The district sees this as an opportunity to help students develop key employability skills early in life, which will ultimately meet the needs of



Director Ryan Wise

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# Iowa's new school improvement, support system

To prepare school districts for the statewide implementation of Differentiated Accountability – Iowa's new model of school improvement and support – there will be several online meetings over the next couple months.

During the 2015-16 school year, the Iowa Department of Education, Area Education Agency system, and local school districts joined through Collaborating for Iowa's Kids to pilot Differentiated Accountability. As part of this process, a Statewide School Improvement Team was created to complete a pilot of 12 Differentiated Accountability Intensive on-site school visits.

The team received a significant amount of positive feedback and several process enhancements were made. Now that the pilot process has been nearly completed, Differentiated Accountability is ready for a statewide roll out during the 2016-17 school year.

The accountability system replaces the comprehensive five-year site visits that districts used to receive, as well as many other improvement processes, such as Schools/Districts In Need of Assistance, and corrective action plans for particular areas such as special education or English Language Learners.

Differentiated Accountability is an effort to unite all of those processes into one. Differentiated Accountability is also being aligned with Iowa's accountability plan under the newly authorized Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

To prepare districts for statewide implementation of Differentiated Accountability, Heartland Area Education Agency's Mark Crady and Iowa Department of Education's Amy Williamson will do a series of Zoom meetings in the next several months. The Zoom meetings are opportunities to learn and ask questions about the new process.

Below are the dates, times, and Zoom links. These links will also be posted on the [Department's Differentiated Accountability website](#), along with recordings of the webinars and all of the latest information on Differentiated Accountability.

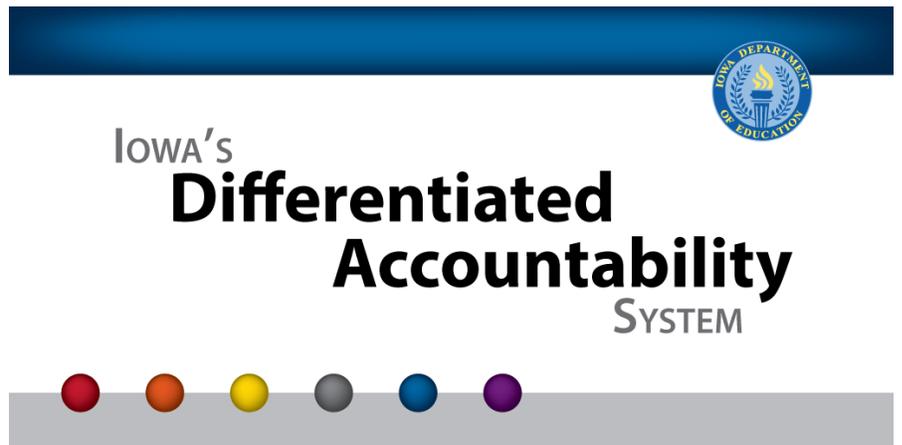
[April 8 - \(1-2:30 p.m.\)](#) - Extensive explanation of what is happening next year with detailed schedule

[April 22 - \(1-2:30 p.m.\)](#) - Healthy Indicators and support you might get

[April 29 - \(9-10:30 a.m.\)](#) - Desk audits - what and when and how to prepare

[May 20 - \(1-2:30 p.m.\)](#) - Site visits - what and when and how to prepare

Join Mark and Amy for the webinars, watch the recorded webinars, view the information on the website, and/or email them with questions at [mcrady@heartlandaea.org](mailto:mcrady@heartlandaea.org) or [amy.williamson@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.williamson@iowa.gov).



## Early childhood highlighted at learning supports conference

The 2016 Learning Supports Spring Conference is being held April 26-27 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines.

It's important to note that the second day of the conference, April 27, will have a strand that will be particularly useful to pre-school teaching staff, who will participate in professional learning specific to early childhood.

Kate Werling with *Teaching Strategies Inc.* will be presenting on using GOLD assessment data to intentionally plan for student needs. Additionally, there will be sessions in the area of Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. More information related to conference content can be found on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) within the Links section.

There is no registration fee and lunch will be provided. To guarantee your space, [register](#) by April 19 and select the Early Childhood Programs strand. Attendance will be limited to 100 participants.

For more information, contact Amanda Winslow, [amanda.winslow@iowa.gov](mailto:amanda.winslow@iowa.gov) or 515-242-5104, or Amy Stegeman, [amy.stegeman@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.stegeman@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2273.



## Iowa science standards summer institutes: Supporting classroom transitions

To launch the second year of a four-year Iowa science standards implementation process, the Iowa Department of Education is sponsoring grade-alike science institutes in June.

With national and state science education leaders, participants will engage in three-dimensional science learning experiences and will explore various resources and instructional practices that support the standards.

The institutes will be held June 15-17 at Valley High School in West Des Moines. Each day will be focused on content and issues related to specific grade bands (June 15 elementary focus, June 16 middle school focus, and June 17 high school focus).

Participation in this event assumes knowledge of the structure, foundations, and conceptual shifts of the standards; districts needing this overview of the standards should contact their Area Education Agency science consultants.

There is no registration fee but registration is required for planning purposes. On-line registration is now open: [Registration June 15 elementary focus](#), [Registration June 16 middle school](#), [Registration June 17 high school](#)

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their community.

Finally, **they design rigorous learning experiences**. In Wilton, middle and high school students choose a “skinny” period, which runs for 40 minutes at the end of each day. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bean, who designed a food science course where students learn the science and math behind candy making. The students not only produce candy – which is delicious – they also develop marketing materials and sell their product. They’re tackling challenging academic concepts while simultaneously developing a business.

Schools making these connections don’t all fit the same mold. They are urban, rural and suburban; they are elementary, middle and high schools; and they serve students from low-, middle- and high-income backgrounds. They develop a clear vision of what engaging, high-quality and relevant learning looks like and they make it happen.

And at the same time, most Iowans will also acknowledge we still have work to do to ensure this is happening each day, in all schools, and in every classroom. That’s why I’m excited about the [Governor’s 2016 Future Ready Iowa Summit](#). The summit, which will take place on April 19 at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines, will focus on strengthening Iowa’s talent pipeline for the careers of today and tomorrow.

The summit is designed to elevate the conversation about how to ensure students and workers have the career opportunities they deserve and business and industry can hire the skilled workers they need to grow. I’m looking forward to hearing from state, national and international experts as well as students and teachers about their perspectives on this critical issue.

I hope you’ll join me in attending the Governor’s 2016 Future Ready Iowa Summit. I also hope you’ll continue to share and invite me to participate in learning opportunities that prepare our students for a successful future.

*Ryan M. Wise*

## Initial-to-standard teaching license

Teachers who hold the initial license need two full years of successful experience in an Iowa public school (including mentoring and induction) or three years in an accredited private or out-of-state school before they may convert to a standard license.

Candidates may not apply to convert until after the last day of school.

If they are meeting the standards but their initial license expires before the end of the school year, they may apply for an [extension](#). If they are not meeting the standards, they will need a [special extension](#). If they are leaving your district at the end of the year and do not have enough experience to convert (or have not met the standards), the district needs to submit a [status report](#). For more information, contact Joanne Tubbs at [joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov](mailto:joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov).



## Districts invited to participate in financial-wellness challenge

Thanks to funding from the Iowa Insurance Division, an award-winning, unbiased financial education program is available to all Iowa education employees at no cost.



The Iowa Financial Fitness Challenge is an easy-to-implement online financial education program. Using online interactive learning, this proven program helps employees improve financial behaviors — thereby relieving financial stress and resulting in more productive and healthier employees and an improved workplace.

Employees' financial stress is shown to have negative impacts on employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. The Financial Fitness Challenge is a proven way to drive up to 70 percent improvement in employee financial knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

Over 200 Iowa organizations and nearly 10,000 Iowans have already participated in the Financial Fitness Challenge with great success.

To find out how your school or district can participate in the challenge at no cost, register today for a 30-minute [informational webinar](#).

## Districts urged to register for youth survey

Registration for the 2016 Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) is now open. To register your district to participate or to opt out of the survey, visit the [registration site](#) by April 29. The superintendent must first enter the system and can then appoint someone else to complete the process.

The registration site includes information necessary for participation, including the "Agreement to Participate" and "AEA Data Release" forms. These forms may only be signed electronically and are available to be saved or printed directly from the system.

All districts should complete the "Agreement to Participate" form whether your district intends to participate or not in the 2016 Iowa Youth Survey. If this form is not completed, you will receive follow-up messages. You can avoid receiving follow-up messages by thoroughly completing the registration process.



Detailed instructions on the registration process may be found on the "[Help Page](#)" of the registration website. Direct questions about registration to DeShauna Jones at [deshauna-jones@uiowa.edu](mailto:deshauna-jones@uiowa.edu) and general IYS questions to [iowayouthsurvey@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:iowayouthsurvey@idph.iowa.gov).

## Career, technical training available to teachers

The Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Association of Career & Technical Education (IACTE) are offering free webinars to Iowa career-and-technical teachers. These webinars provide timely professional development that can enhance student learning.

**Instructional Strategies.** (Two presentations; second is a repeat of the first.)

Dates: March 30, 3:30 to 5 p.m. and April 14 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Presenter: Teresa Pinkston, instructional coordinator, Tulsa Technology Center



### Grading for Learning in CTE, Standards-Based Grading

**101.** (Two presentations; first is an introduction; the second is more practical based for implementation and includes a CTE educator.)

Dates: April 12, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and April 28, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Presenter: Matt Townsley, director of Instruction & Technology, Solon Community School District



Click here to register for all webinars: [IACTE Webinar Registration](#). For more information, contact Lisa Stange at 515-242-5032 or [lisa.stange@iowa.gov](mailto:lisa.stange@iowa.gov)

## Opportunity for student leaders

The Iowa Communications Network (ICN) is sponsoring another opportunity for students with powerful voices to share their perspectives on technology and broadband. Applications are now being accepted for the Statewide Youth Broadband Advisory Council (SYBAC) for the 2016-17 school year. The SYBAC will be made up of 11 young leaders from across Iowa.



Students will identify effective strategies to improve broadband connectivity and community environments. This year SYBAC

students have discussed a range of topics including free public Wi-Fi, the new Amazon ECHO product, driverless cars and lack of strong reliable broadband in some Iowa schools.

Students enrolled in 10th - 12th grades in Iowa during the 2016-17 school year may apply for membership. Meetings will take place monthly, beginning in September 2016 through May 2017, via video conference, teleconference, and/or in-person. Council members also will communicate via e-mail. Applications are being accepted through April 11. Students should visit ICN's [website](#) or the Broadband Matters' [website](#).

## Try Iowa Learning Online at no cost this summer

Enrollment is open now for the [summer 2016 semester](#), which begins May 16 and ends July

29. Enrollment closes on May 23 at 4 p.m. Tuition is waived for the summer term.

Iowa Learning Online (ILO) has been a free support service to schools since its initial launch in 2004. As a result of our 2014 curriculum expansion, we have experienced unprecedented growth. With the end of our scale-up appropriation approaching, we have been asked to work toward self-sufficiency.

The Department of Education will begin charging for participating in ILO courses in the fall of 2016. We will provide an announcement on our [ILO website](#) as soon as a fee has been determined by the Department administration. We expect that to be sometime in April.

If you would like to provide input on this topic, may contact ILO Director Gwen Nagel at [gwen.nagel@iowa.gov](mailto:gwen.nagel@iowa.gov) or Department of Education Director Ryan Wise at [ryan.wise@iowa.gov](mailto:ryan.wise@iowa.gov).

**IOWA** Learning Online

## Iowa Teacher of the Year nominations due April 25

Thousands of talented Iowa educators lead and inspire their students, but only one is chosen annually as the state's top teacher. The deadline to nominate the 2017 Iowa Teacher of the Year is April 25.

The award is an opportunity to recognize an exceptional Iowa teacher who is helping to redefine education. Nominations will be accepted from anyone, including students, parents, school administrators, colleagues, college faculty members and associations. Nomination forms can be found on the Iowa Department of Education's [website](#).

The Iowa Teacher of the Year award was established in 1958. The annual program is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education through an appropriation from the Iowa Legislature. The Teacher of the Year serves as an ambassador to education and as a liaison to primary and secondary schools, higher education and organizations across the state.

Scott Slechta, an English-language arts teacher at Fairfield High School, was named the 2016 Teacher of the Year. The 2017 Teacher of the Year will be announced this fall.



Lots of Teachers of the Year – past, present and future – at the recent Outstanding Teachers Recognition Luncheon in Des Moines. From left, Director of Education Ryan Wise, 2013's Tania Johnson, 2014's Jane Schmidt, 2016's Scott Slechta, Gov. Branstad, 2015's Clemencia Spizzirri and 2010's Sarah Brown-Wessling.



## Impacting Literacy Leadership for administrators

Register today for a June 20 conference in Des Moines designed to leverage your Teacher Leadership resources to impact your school improvement efforts while focusing on the Collaborative Inquiry Questions and Tools .

Participants will receive an overview of the components of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support while connecting this learning to Early Literacy Implementation, and Differentiated Accountability.

Members from the Iowa Department of Education and state Area Education Agencies will provide collaborative learning around the continuous improvement tools that have been developed through the Collaborating for Iowa's Kids (C4K) and the Teacher Leadership Structure. Action planning for implementation will also be integrated throughout the day.

The conference will be held at Iowa Events Center. There is a registration fee of \$25; deadline to [register](#) is June 15.

## Join the conversation: Iowa standards

Maquoketa educator Jane Schmidt has her latest blog out on the Iowa Core.

This month, Jane writes about unpacking mathematics as they relate to the Iowa standards.

Your teachers will want to join the conversation at [iowacore.gov](http://iowacore.gov).



*Jane Schmidt's blog*



## Title 1 updates

Here are some updates for Title I applications for both the current school year as well as the next.

2015-16 school year:

- We received a new allocation in February which will be reflected in your Title I [application](#) by April 1. All allocations either stayed the same or increased by as little as \$1.
- All Schools in Need of Assistance (INA) money must be spent by June 30. Districts cannot carry SINA money into the next school year.

2016-17 school year:

- Major Change: Title I applications for the 2016-17 school year will be due June 15, 2016. The application should be open the first week in May. We will be using preliminary allocations. As we have experienced in the last four years, allocations are expected to change several times. More details will be sent out to the Title I coordinators in the near future.

## 38 school districts added to Iowa's teacher leadership system

Another 38 school districts have been added to the state's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System.

Iowa's teacher leadership system, which taps into the expertise of top teachers to improve classroom instruction and raise student achievement, is the centerpiece of the state's landmark education reform package passed by the Legislature in 2013. It is the nation's most comprehensive teacher leadership system. About 25 percent of Iowa teachers will be in leadership roles when the system is fully phased in.

The system paves the way for more support and greater collaboration for all teachers to learn from each other instead of operating largely in isolation within their classrooms.

A recent report on the first year of Iowa's teacher leadership system found progress has been made toward each of the system's five goals, including attracting new teachers, retaining effective teachers, promoting collaboration, rewarding professional growth and effective teaching, and improving student achievement. In addition, students in the first 39 participating school districts saw a jump in proficiency rates on state math and reading tests.

The teacher leadership system cost nearly \$50 million in fiscal year 2015. That amount is expected to grow to about \$150 million annually by fiscal year 2017, which would enable all districts to participate.

## Data and Reporting

### TLC survey of teachers and administrators begins April 11

Starting April 11, all public school teachers and administrators in Iowa will have the chance to provide feedback on opportunities for collaboration, professional development, career advancement, and perceived quality and effectiveness of Teacher Leadership and Compensation (where applicable). Survey links will be emailed directly to superintendents and principals for distribution.

The findings from the survey will allow the Iowa Department of Education to determine if TLC is making progress toward achieving its intended goals. Participation in the survey is voluntary, but highly encouraged. Weekly prize drawings will be held and districts that reach a 50 percent participation rate will receive a district-level report.

This study is being conducted by the [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#), an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit research organization. This survey is anonymous with no way to track the responses back to individuals who complete the survey. More information can be found [here](#).

### Want to start Individual Growth and Development Indicators?

Is your school interested in beginning administration of Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) this coming fall? IGDIs data is used in consideration of Healthy Indicators as part of Differentiated Accountability. If your school is interested in learning how to administer IGDIs, there will be three IGDIs trainings available in this spring. The training sessions are one day, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and will contain content on assessment literacy, IGDIs assessments, and navigating Iowa TIER for both administering and reviewing data from the assessment. Lunch will be provided.

Participants will need to bring a laptop to access materials during the day. Some IGDIs kits will be available for reference at the sessions; participants are invited to bring their own kits, if preferred.

Use the links below to select a date and location to register. Details for training are provided within registration links.

[April 8 - Johnston IGDI's Training Registration Link](#)

[April 19 - Cedar Falls IGDI's Training Registration Link](#)

[May 18 - Sioux City IGDI's Training Registration Link](#)

For more information on the IGDIs trainings, contact Kimberly Villotti at [kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov](mailto:kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov) or 515-281-4709.

## Early Childhood Preschool Programs

### GOLD Assessment System update

The Iowa Department of Education will renew the state license for GOLD beginning July 1. Any public school district, non-public accredited school, registered or licensed child care/preschool, registered child development homes, Head Start agency or Area Education Agency in Iowa is eligible to participate in the Iowa administrative umbrella agreement with Teaching Strategies for GOLD Online.

The three required checkpoint dates for the 2016-17 school year will be Nov. 18, 2016, Feb. 24, 2017, and May 26, 2017. Programs under the state license follow these checkpoint dates. Programs enter child data for each of the objectives in each of the developmental areas. In addition guidance and procedures regarding GOLD may be found on the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program web page](#) under the subheading Assessment. Programs receiving state funds to provide preschool services must follow these procedures.

For more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, contact Jennifer Adkins at [jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov](mailto:jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2219 or Amy Stegeman at [amy.stegeman@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.stegeman@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2273.



### When changing preschool program standards...

As a reminder, if a Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) site intends to switch program standards being implemented, the district must notify the Iowa Department of Education prior to implementation at the beginning of the school year.

Provide notice to the Department if classrooms will follow Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) during 2016-17 when Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) were previously implemented, or if SWVPP programming will be expanded to include sites following IQPPS.

The district must contact Jennifer Adkins at [jen-nifer.adkins@iowa.gov](mailto:jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov) no later than June 2016 to provide notification of changes in implementation of program standards to include IQPPS. This is only necessary if the district has not received an IQPPS verification visit since its SWVPP application. The district will also need to update Early Childhood reporting to reflect the change in program standard implementation.

For more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, contact Jennifer Adkins at [jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov](mailto:jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov) at 515-725-2219 or Amy Stegeman at [amy.stegeman@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.stegeman@iowa.gov) at 515-725-2273.



## Early Childhood Preschool Programs continued

### New to preschool program?

For school districts implementing the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) through a new partnership, if the location is off the school premises, you will need to list the location as a new site during the 2016-17 school year as part of the spring 2016 Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS) Address Review.

Use the [Spring BEDS Reference Manual](#) for guidance on how to add or close buildings based on any changes anticipated for fall 2016. Changes may be made using the Address Review button prior to the close of spring BEDS June 15; after that, changes must be made under Address Information.



Districts are encouraged to use BEDS Address Review to add or close new buildings or new partners in order to expedite transfer of new building information to other reporting systems, e.g., Early Childhood Reporting.

For more information on BEDS reporting, contact [marlene.dorenkamp@iowa.gov](mailto:marlene.dorenkamp@iowa.gov) at 515-281-5507. For more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, contact [jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov](mailto:jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov) at 515-725-2219, or Amy Stegeman at [amy.stegeman@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.stegeman@iowa.gov) at 515-725-2273.



## Legislative Update

Contact Shan Seivert for all legislative items at [shanlyn.seivert@iowa.gov](mailto:shanlyn.seivert@iowa.gov) or 281-3399.

### Could it be that the end is near???

Rumor has it, the end is near...the end of session that is. Both funnels have come and gone and now the focus is on funding. In my last legislative update, I shared that SF 174 and SF 175, which approved an increase of supplemental state aid and categorical aid for the 2016-17 school year, had been assigned to a conference committee and that there had been no movement. Last week, the Legislature approved the conference committee reports and set the rate for supplemental state aid and categorical aid at 2.25 percent. The House passed the two bills on a party line 55-41 vote and the Senate passed with a 44-6 vote.

The bill that set the stage for supplemental state aid and categorical aid by helping to establish the overall state budget was [HF 2433](#). This is a compromise bill on tax coupling and exempt consumables used in manufacturing. The coupling is temporary, applies only to tax year 2015, and is retroactive. In addition, the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) met in mid-March and increased its estimate for revenues for FY 2017 over the December estimate by approximately \$30 million. The spending limit is tied to the December estimate, but had the March forecast come in lower, the spending limit would have been reduced. Although those items do not directly affect the amount of supplemental state aid, the bill set the stage for number crunching.

The Senate put forth legislation, [SF 2092](#) and [SF 2093](#), to address the school aid bill for the 2017-18 school year, identifying a 4 percent increase. Leadership in the House has stated they will not take up these two bills this session.

[HF 2264](#), which allows a student who open enrolls to immediately participate in varsity athletics if the district of residence determines that the student was bullied and there is a founded incident of harassment or bullying, is now on its way to the Governor!

A Representative in the House Education Committee put forth [HF 2413](#) (Reading Proficiency/Intensive Summer Reading Program). The bill does three things: clarifies that a 60-second snapshot or the FAST assessment is not the only assessment that will be used to determine proficiency and ultimately 3<sup>rd</sup> grade retention, replaces the language “substantial deficiency in reading” to “persistently at risk in reading,” and requires regular updates to parents regarding the student’s progress toward reaching or exceeding the targeted level of reading proficiency. The bill passed unanimously in the House and was sent to the Senate, where it has been placed on the Senate Unfinished Business Calendar. This means it is safe from the funnel, but may or may not move forward this session.

An update on the Department’s bills:

[HF 2324](#) - Computer Science Advisory Council – Last month I shared that this bill had become vulnerable due to House Democrats citing it was an unfunded mandate and the requirements were putting the “cart before the horse.” It passed in the House Education Committee on a party line vote. Once on the floor, the bill did pass on a 97-2 vote; however, that was with an amendment that negated the offer and teach requirement. This means the bill only requires that the Director of the Department

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## Legislative Update continued

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of Education convene a computer science advisory council that will make recommendations on the requirements to the Governor and General Assembly by October 1, 2016. The bill passed in the Senate Education Committee with some language changes and was eligible for debate on the Senate floor; however, it has now been placed on the Senate Unfinished Business Calendar.

[HF 2392](#) – Career and Technical Education (CTE) including Career and Academic Planning – The Department’s bill included one of the task force recommendations which refocused the planning to ensure that the success plan included the student being both college and career ready. The House Education Committee put forth a bill that included all of the task force recommendations outlined in the [report](#). The bill passed unanimously on the House floor and was sent to the Senate. The bill passed in the Senate Education Committee and has been placed on the calendar for debate on the Senate floor.

[SF 2196](#) - Literacy Requirements in Teacher Preparation – The bill modifies the reading and literacy requirements for teacher preparation programs approved by the State Board. The bill requires preparation in reading theory, knowledge, strategies, and approaches as well as addresses all students, including those with disabilities, students at risk of academic failure, gifted and talented students, limited English proficient students, and students with dyslexia. The bill is now on its way to the Governor!

[SF 2200](#) - Online Learning Options – This bill was created to assist local school districts who do not have a licensed teacher to teach a specified offer and teach course. It allows them to offer a course outside of the Iowa Communications Network, if the course is not available through Iowa Learning Online. The bill has been signed by the Governor!

As I mentioned last month, there has been an increase in athletic related bills this session. Below is a bill status update:

[HF 2421](#) – Coaching Endorsements and Authorizations - Requires that holders or applicants for a coaching endorsement for schools must have a certificate of a course in basic cardiac life support and gives current holders until July 2017. The bill was amended and passed the House on a 95-1 vote. It passed the Senate Education Committee on a 9-4 vote with an amendment that contains some language from [SF 2225](#), which deals with assessing and reporting on concussions. It was eligible to be debated on the Senate floor; however, was placed on the Senate Unfinished Business Calendar.

[HF 228](#) – Transitional Coaching Authorizations - The bill requires the Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) to issue a non-renewable, one-year transitional coaching authorization to a person who is at least 21, has a verified offer of a coaching job, but who has not yet completed the required course work. The intent is to increase coaching applicants. It gives priority to teachers and persons with coaching authorization first. The bill had amendments, and requires the supervision for the first two weeks. The bill passed in the Senate 49-0 and in the House 95-0 and has been sent to the Governor.

[SF 2225](#) – Concussion Reporting - The bill requires that the home team in a high school sport that involves collisions (football, soccer, and wrestling,) have an athletic trainer available. The bill passed in the Senate 35-15; however, was not brought up in the House Education Committee. Since the House did not move the bill, an amendment with language from the bill was added by the Senate to HF 2421, Coaching Endorsements and Authorizations.

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**SF 2205** – Open Enrollment Eligibility - Currently, a student who is open enrolled is ineligible to participate in varsity contests and competitions for the first 90 days of their enrollment. This bill states that a student is ineligible for the first 90 days or 540 instructional hours of enrollment. The bill passed unanimously on the Senate floor and was sent to the House. It was placed on the House Unfinished Business Calendar, leading some to believe it was done for the session. However, an amendment was added to the bill that makes a student in a school district for the purpose of participating in a regionally, state, or nationally recognized athletic league a “resident” of that district; such a resident student would not have to pay tuition and the district would be able to count the student in its official enrollment.

There were several bills debated on the House and Senate floors and last week and many bills on the way to the Governor. There is still much discussion and compromise that needs to occur prior to the end of session, especially around funding; however, most believe this year’s session will end on time, which is April 19. Just a reminder...last year’s session ended in the first week of June...

Until next time...





## Legal Lessons

Contact Nicole Proesch for all Legal Lessons items: [nicole.proesch@iowa.gov](mailto:nicole.proesch@iowa.gov) or 515-281-8661

### Springing forward

It's official: Spring is here. One thing I could have done without is springing forward with Daylight Saving Time. While I appreciate getting home at night when it's still light out, the time adjustment is rough on me and my kids. We spent all of spring break sleeping in and staying up late (well not really – it was the time adjustment) and it was like trying to wake hibernating bears each morning to get them on a new schedule.

We are however enjoying the early spring and the ability to occasionally play outside in the evening because the sun is still out. For that I am thankful. I truly appreciate the change in seasons because I feel so refreshed.

Hopefully, your students will come back from spring break refreshed and ready to finish out the 2015-16 school year. I know mine are already ready for an early summer.

In this April edition of Legal Lessons, I bring you Prom, Head Lice – A Nuisance but not a Hazard, Senior Year Plus and Dual Enrolled Students, and Physical Education Excusals and Less than Year Long PE.

## PROM

### The Four “Ds” of Prom Protocol: Dates, Dress, Decorum, Drug (Testing)

It's that time of year again to revisit the four “Ds” of Prom. I realize we revisit this every year, but these are important so here we go again.

**Dates.** Iowa's civil rights law extends protection to students on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the classroom as well as in all activities offered by a school, both public and nonpublic. This includes prom (and all school dances). Therefore, same-sex couples may attend prom as a couple if they are otherwise eligible to attend prom. However, a school may limit prom attendees to current students of the school or recent graduates of the school. Here are a few examples for illustration:

1. Sheldon and Leonard are students at Pasadena High School. Neither is known to be gay; both have reputations as class clowns. They announce that they plan to attend prom as a couple. Because the protection afforded to gay, lesbian, and bisexual students applies to perceived sexual orientation, school officials cannot ask Sheldon and Leonard if they are gay or bisexual. They get to attend prom as a couple.
2. Pasadena High School has a policy that only students currently enrolled in Pasadena, as well as Pasadena graduates (if they are the guest of a current student) may attend prom. Penny is a current student of Pasadena. She may bring as her date any of her classmates or any graduate of Pasadena High School. But if Penny has a relationship with a girl or boy at Warner Brothers High School, Penny must decide whether to forego her prom, attend stag,

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<sup>1</sup> However, a bona fide religious school may impose “qualifications based on religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose.” Iowa Code § 216.9.

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or ask another Pasadena student to go with her.

3. One of Penny's classmates at Pasadena High School is Bernadette. Bernadette is class president, star athlete, 4.0 student, and top blood donor. Bernadette dates Howard, who is a student at Warner Brothers, and is the top scholar and athlete and all-around best person in the world at his school. The Pasadena administrators decide to overlook the Pasadena policy (only Pasadena students may attend Pasadena's prom) and allow Bernadette to bring Howard. Having made an exception for Bernadette and Howard, the Pasadena administrators must make an exception for Penny and all other Pasadena students.

**Dress.** While a school cannot insist that students wear traditionally female or male attire (i.e., girls do not have to wear dresses and boys do not have to wear tuxedos), schools may lawfully have a dress code if enforced even-handedly. The types of rules that will be allowable include such rules as "no exposed navels, no exposed nipples, no exposed um...derrieres, no clothes with obscenities printed on them." In other words, the usual regulations are acceptable. But a boy may wear a dress to prom if the dress would be acceptable on a girl, and a girl may wear acceptable "male" prom-wear. What a kid wears does not have to be related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Decorum.** The key here is evenhandedness. Whatever reasonable rules of conduct and decorum a school has must be enforced evenly and consistently. If PDAs (public displays of affection) are not tolerated, then make sure that staff breaks up the kissing between straight couples as well as same-sex couples.

**Drug testing.** Drug testing is regulated by the Iowa Student Search and Seizure Law, Iowa Code [chapter 808A](#). If a student shows up to prom and has obvious signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs, then school officials may breathalyze or drug test a student. Absent obvious signs and absent suspicion you cannot conduct random, suspicion-less (without an articulable reason) drug testing as a condition of admission to prom. School officials who violate that will not be protected in a lawsuit.

### **HEAD LICE: A nuisance but not a medical or health hazard**

The Department has recently received several complaints regarding head lice policies in schools.

Common issues:

- "No Nit" policies and sending students home if a nit is found even after treatment.
- Requiring prescription treatment before returning to school.
- Requiring multiple treatments before returning to school that are not consistent with treatment directions.
- Lack of confidentiality of the students.
- Comments that some students are "repeat offenders."

In response to these complaints we want to remind schools that head lice should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Head lice are not known to spread disease. While we all understand that head lice in schools is a nuisance,

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there are appropriate ways to handle the issue without excluding kids from school or making students feel excluded. In fact the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) recommends that children should not be excluded from school due to head lice and should remain in school the rest of the day if they are detected. They also recommend that schools discontinue routine school-based screening and the use of “no nit” policies.

The Iowa Department of Education supports these recommendations. In addition, we would like school administrators to remind their staff of the importance of confidentiality of their students and of their ethical obligations to their students. Students should not be ostracized, targeted, or labeled because of an incident involving head lice. Schools should strive to find out-of-the-box solutions for these delicate situations that don't have a negative impact on the student. Also, remember to educate parents and staff about head lice prevention, detection, and treatment. Below are the recommendations from IDPH and a Head Lice informational brochure that may be given to school officials, teachers, and parents.

[Iowa Recommendations on Head Lice Prevention and Control for Schools](#)  
[Head Lice Brochure](#)

For questions regarding Head Lice in schools, contact Melissa Walker, school nurse consultant, at 515-281-5327 or [melissa.walker@iowa.gov](mailto:melissa.walker@iowa.gov).

### **Senior Year Plus and dual-enrolled students**

The Iowa Department of Education has received concerns from the private instruction community about difficulties dual-enrolled students have had in accessing Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs. Senior Year Plus serves as an umbrella for a variety of programs designed to provide high school students access to courses that have the potential to generate college credit, and include Advanced Placement courses, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, Concurrent Enrollment, and Career Academies. While the Department further explores those fact-specific situations involved in those concerns, the Department offers the following general information as a reminder.

1. Students who are dual-enrolled to access Senior Year Plus programs must be offered an equal opportunity to participate in the district's Senior Year Plus programs. A district may not set different standards for dual-enrolled students to access Senior Year Plus programs, and any standards set must comply with the Senior Year Plus law. While the rules require a district's board to approve Senior Year Plus requests for students, including those students who are dual-enrolled, the board must act reasonably and must not frustrate the statutory right of dual-enrolled students to access Senior Year Plus programming. Iowa Code § 299A.8(1) (2015) (“shall be permitted to participate in any academic activities in the district”).

Example: A school board has a policy of refusing all requests for Senior Year Plus programming made by dual-enrolled students. This is impermissible.

Example: A school board has a policy of fulfilling all Senior Year Plus requests for fully enrolled students before acting on requests made by dual-enrolled students. This is impermissible.

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Example: A school district refuses to allow a dual-enrolled student to enroll in a Postsecondary Education Options [as noted above, one variety of Senior Year Plus] course. The requested course is comparable to one available in the public school, and no student is approved to enroll in that course, consistent with Postsecondary Education Options rules. This is a required outcome.

Example: A school district refuses to pay for Postsecondary Education Options courses offered on evenings and weekends. A dually enrolled child requests permission to take Advanced Statistics from a local college during the evening. The request is denied. This is impermissible. Although this policy is applied to all students, not just dually enrolled students, the policy is not authorized by the Postsecondary Education Options rules.

2. Students who are dual-enrolled must be permitted to demonstrate academic eligibility to participate in Senior Year Plus programs by Iowa Assessment scores or by any of six alternative means. Iowa Code § 261E.3(1)(e); see also Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—22.2(2). A district must allow a dual-enrolled student to demonstrate proficiency through any of these six alternative means. A district does not have the discretion to refuse to consider any of the alternative means of demonstrating proficiency.

Example: A school district refuses to acknowledge a written recommendation from the licensed practitioner who is supervising the child's private instruction as evidence of the child's proficiency. This is impermissible.

Example: A school district refuses to consider assessment results presented by the family. The assessment instrument is on the Iowa Department of Education's list of acceptable assessments for compliance with Iowa Code section 299A.4. The district rejects the assessment because it is "not the Iowa Assessment." This is impermissible.

Example: A school district declares a dually enrolled student ineligible to access Senior Year Plus programs because the student's score on the ACT college readiness exam was 19. The proficiency cut-off in the Senior Year Plus rules is 21. This is a required outcome.

Districts are to give timely information to all students and their parents, including dual-enrolled students and their parents, regarding Senior Year Plus programs, including responding to information requests. All students and parents, including dual-enrolled students and their parents, must receive information about Senior Year Plus programs in an effective manner. Withholding information from parents is improper.

Example: A parent of a dually enrolled student requests information about Senior Year Plus programs, including registration deadlines. The school does not respond. When the parent follows up, the school informs the parent that she missed the registration deadline. This is improper.

3. Districts are to give timely information to all students and their parents, including dual-enrolled students and their parents, regarding Senior Year Plus programs, including responding to information requests. All students and parents, including dual-enrolled students and their parents, must receive information about Senior Year Plus programs in an effective manner. Withholding information from parents is improper.

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Example: A parent of a dually enrolled student requests information about Senior Year Plus programs, including registration deadlines. The school does not respond. When the parent follows up, the school informs the parent that she missed the registration deadline. This is improper.

Example: A parent of a dually enrolled student requests information about Senior Year Plus programs, including registration deadlines. The school informs her that the deadlines are in the student handbook and on the district's web page. The parent misses the deadline and then complains. The district's actions were allowable.

For more information, contact Eric St. Clair (515-725-0127 or [eric.stclair@iowa.gov](mailto:eric.stclair@iowa.gov)) or Elizabeth Calhoun (515-281-8170 or [elizabeth.calhoun@iowa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.calhoun@iowa.gov)).

### **Physical education excusals and less-than-year-long PE**

Some Iowa school districts have a general accreditation standards waiver from the Iowa Department of Education that allow them to provide physical education to their students for less than a full school year. Under one such waiver, students take physical education daily for one trimester each year (the time spent in physical education daily during the trimester of enrollment meets the legal requirement for being equivalent to one-eighth unit.). For the remaining two trimesters, students do not have physical education.

In this district, some students who participate in organized and supervised athletic programs of the district have asked to be excused from physical education during their trimester of enrollment. This presents an interpretive problem because the physical education excusals for organized and supervised athletic programs are premised on physical education being a year-long course offering. Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—12.5(5)<sup>4f</sup>. For ninth grade through eleventh grade students in this district, a physical education excusal for the trimester in which they are enrolled excuses them from a year's worth of physical education instruction. These are the guidelines schools must follow:

- I. For twelfth grade students, students may be excused from physical education because of participation in an organized and supervised athletic program or programs that requires as much weekly participation as one-eighth unit of physical education, with a yearly total of 1,800 minutes of participation. Note that if a student does not meet the grounds for this excusal (e.g., the student drops out of the athletic program), the student would be required to enroll in physical education.
- II. For ninth-through-eleventh grade students who would qualify for this excusal ground, those students may be either:
  - A. Not excused from physical education at all based on this excusal ground, or
  - B. Only excused for one-half of the physical education course, based on this excusal ground, with the requirement that the student participates in a total of 900 minutes of the athletic program.

For questions regarding physical education waivers, contact Thomas Mayes at 515-242-5614 or [thomas.mayes@iowa.gov](mailto:thomas.mayes@iowa.gov).

### **Students with Disabilities**

For questions regarding students with disabilities please contact Thomas Mayes at 515-242-5614 or [thomas.mayes@iowa.gov](mailto:thomas.mayes@iowa.gov).

# Calendar

April 18 • Spring Student Reporting in Iowa test site opens



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