



School Leader Update

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Summer reading programs show inconsistencies

A survey shows that most optional summer reading programs in Iowa lack specific goals, and there is wide variability in instruction and in the quality of evidence used to demonstrate effectiveness of the programs.

The survey, commissioned by the Iowa Reading Research Center and conducted by Iowa's regent universities, also shows a lack of consistency in reading programs for children offered by school districts and community organizations.

The findings underscore a need for uniform standards for summer reading programs as all schools work to put them in place for struggling third-grade students as part of a legislative requirement that takes effect in 2017.

[Read more about the survey.](#)



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New director focuses on empowerment

A love of history inspired Ryan Wise to become an educator. But it was his first class of students who convinced him he'd made the right career move.

Wise was a young history teacher from the Midwest heading up a classroom of 11th graders in one of the most high-poverty, low-performing high schools in Mississippi. Together, they built a relationship based on high expectations and mutual respect.

"They defied every expectation that I think people would assume of them, given that they were in a low-performing school in a low-performing state," said Wise of Des

Moines. "This was an anchor experience that set it for me, that truly all kids can achieve at high levels and all kids deserve to get an excellent education."

That philosophy shaped Wise's teaching and education leadership roles at the state, national and international levels. And, he said, it will guide his leadership as the new director of the Iowa Department of Education. Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds named Wise, 39, to the post on June 30.

Wise taught in rural and urban schools in Mississippi and Nebraska before moving to his home state of South Dakota to launch and lead Teach for America on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations. Wise also worked to eliminate educational inequity around the world as one of



Director Ryan Wise

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the pioneering staff members of Teach for All, a global network of entrepreneurs.

Wise came to Iowa in 2012 to facilitate a state task force whose work laid the foundation for the Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, which was adopted by the Iowa Legislature in 2013. That work formed the basis for his doctoral capstone, as well as his role with the Iowa Department of Education.

As deputy director, Wise has managed the development and delivery of the teacher leadership system, known throughout the education system by its acronym, "TLC." It is the most ambitious teacher leadership system in the nation.

Wise also oversaw policy, communications and a statewide expansion of Iowa Learning Online, a state-run program that provides high-quality classes taught by Iowa-licensed teachers. He built important relationships statewide as the primary liaison to the State Board of Education and as a member of several state boards and commissions, including the Iowa High School Athletic Association.

Wise views good leadership as creating conditions under which others can do their best work. TLC furthered this belief because the system empowers local schools to set a vision and teacher leaders to motivate and mentor their counterparts. The fact that a quarter of teachers in TLC school buildings are elevated into coaching or mentor roles "should not diminish the work of teachers walking into the classroom each day and lifting up every child," he said. "I've never lost the view that teaching itself is an act of leadership."

Wise said Iowa is well-positioned to build on its foundation of educational excellence. The state has the highest graduation rate in the country, dedicated teachers and administrators, invested communities, and a slate of bold education initiatives, including TLC, early literacy, and an ongoing review of Iowa's state standards.

Iowa also has its share of educational challenges. One in four third-grade students is not proficient in reading, according to state test results. The state faces gaps in performance at each grade level, particularly among students from low-income backgrounds and students whose first language is not English.

"There are a number of bright spots that we as a state should be very proud of, and we are blazing a new and bold path that will be a model for other states," Wise said. "At the same time, we need to continue to work as a state on how we best address our challenges to ensure all kids have a bright future ahead of them."

Wise credits his work with children in the South, tribal leaders in South Dakota, an international network of entrepreneurs, and his Iowa TLC work with preparing him to implement systemic work in a way that respects a community's local context and diversity.

Being a father of two elementary-age sons in the Des Moines Public Schools is a daily reminder of the big job that Iowa teachers and schools have, Wise said.

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“Kids come in from all different places, and for me, it’s really about helping to build and sustain an education system in Iowa that meets the needs of all learners, whether they moved here from Somalia, like one of my son’s classmates, or whether they’re from Iowa and have college-educated parents,” he said.

“Whatever their needs are and whatever their backgrounds, it’s about ensuring that teachers and schools are prepared to help them.”

Excerpts from Governor’s Office release

Gov. Terry E. Branstad named Iowa Department of Education Deputy Director Ryan Wise the new director of the department. Wise, 39, will take the position on July 1, as current director Brad Buck transitions to a new position as superintendent of the Cedar Rapids Community School District.

“World-class education begins in the classrooms across Iowa, but having a leader as the state department’s director is critically important as we work to again make Iowa the leader in education,” said Branstad. “Ryan Wise has displayed exceptional leadership in the implementation of Iowa’s innovative, new Teacher Leadership and Compensation System and I am confident that he will continue leading the Iowa Department of Education in the right direction as we work to provide a globally competitive education for every child in Iowa.”

Wise has served as deputy director at the Iowa Department of Education since September 2013. He has led the implementation of Iowa’s Teacher Leadership and Compensation System (TLC), including designing and executing the application and selection process, facilitating multiple statewide coordination teams, creating a principal support system and leading Iowa’s Commission on Educator Leadership and Compensation. In addition, Wise has served as the liaison between the Department and the Iowa State Board of Education, and has been the representative on the Iowa High School Athletic Association board of control and on the Governor’s Council for National Service. He is also the administrator for the Department’s Division of Policy and Communications.

“Though times have changed significantly since the one-room schoolhouses dotted Iowa’s landscape, our state’s commitment to providing every child a high-quality education has remained constant,” said Iowa Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds. “Dr. Wise understands that modern education means looking at innovative teaching methods and preparing children for the careers of tomorrow. He has shown his commitment to rewarding exceptional Iowa teachers through the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System and will be a great asset as the next director of the Iowa Department of Education.”

Wise earned his undergraduate degree from Creighton University. He earned a Master of Public Administration from University Nebraska Omaha in 2008. He earned a doctorate of education leadership from Harvard University in 2013.

Trouble finding teachers?

Spanish? French? Other courses?

Relax, the Iowa Department of Education's [Iowa Learning Online](#) (ILO) has got you covered. ILO has full offer-and-teach capacity. If you can't find an educator to teach a subject you need or want, your students can take it online. ILO offers 45 rigorous courses each semester, all taught by Iowa certified teachers.



And there is no cost for the courses to you or your district. Sign up today by contacting Cale Roe at cale.roe@iow.gov. Your students deserve choices within your curriculum. And you deserve to take one worry off your to-do list.

Want a greater course selection?



With more than [70 semester courses](#) available now at no cost to your district, Iowa Learning Online is designed to provide your students with opportunities to experience high-quality learning in a collaborative and interactive online environment.

Since the initial expansion of courses last fall, more than 130 Iowa schools have enrolled at least one student in a class. [Learn](#) more about Iowa Learning Online and [sign up](#) your school today.

Important dates to remember:

Fall semester: Aug. 24-Dec. 18 (enrollment closes Aug. 31)

Spring (2016) semester: Jan. 4-May 5 (enrollment closes Jan. 11)

Jane Schmidt: Educator, life learner, road warrior

If you live in Iowa, Jane Schmidt has an entry in her journal about a visit to your county. That's because the outgoing 2014 Teacher of the Year has visited all 99 counties during her reign, racking up 15,000 in miles. She has traveled to Arizona, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and twice to Washington, D.C. And she has stories to tell. Chances are good if your school was along her route, she dropped in for an impromptu visit.

"When I would see a school, I loved to just drop in and see what they were doing," said Schmidt of Maquoketa. And what she saw she invariably loved.

Read [more](#) about her year on the road.



Jane Schmidt reflects on her 15,000-mile sojourn through all of Iowa's 99 counties as the 2014 Teacher of the Year.

Want a foreign exchange student?

Would you like to have a cross-cultural experience in your community while contributing to improved relations between the United States and other countries?



Consider hosting an exchange student sponsored by the U.S. Department of State in your home or school. Each year, almost 2,000 high school students representing over 50 countries are awarded highly competitive merit-based State Department scholarships to study in the United States for an academic year. These promising young leaders live with American host families across the country, attend high school, and participate in extracurricular and community service activities. When they return to their home countries, they engage in alumni activities to share what they learned, put their new skills in practice, and maintain their links to the United States as they become leaders in their communities.

The benefits of hosting Department of State-sponsored exchange student go beyond simply welcoming someone new into your family or school and sharing American culture, values, and traditions: When you host an exchange student you welcome a new culture and language, and all the richness that comes with it into your community. You also help a young person learn and grow, and create long-lasting relationships and memories. Learn more and fill out an interest form at hosting.state.gov or email us at youthprograms@state.gov.



Culture2Culture | Country2Country | Community2Community

Ensuring new hires are licensed

Iowa requires passing test scores on two Praxis II exams or edTPA before candidates are eligible for licensure. This is applicable with all graduates after Jan. 1, 2013.

Candidates must pass a pedagogy exam and a content exam. No temporary or provisional licensure will be issued without passing test scores. The candidates must pass the assessments specifically chosen by Iowa. The timelines for scheduling tests and receiving scores can be lengthy, so candidates need to allow four to six weeks to receive their test scores.

If candidates already have an Iowa teaching license, you can be assured that they have met the testing requirements. You may search for a candidate's license by using the [search function](#) on the Board of Educational Examiners' website. Districts should use this function for all new hires to verify licensure, endorsements, and that no disciplinary action is currently in force against a license.



For more information, contact Joanne Tubbs at joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov.

Register for early childhood care and education institute

The Iowa Department of Education will be co-sponsoring the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children Early Care and Education Fall Institute Sept. 18-19 at the Prairie Meadows Conference Center in Altoona.

Titled “Our Journey to One Goal: The Successful Child,” the institute is open to all professionals who work with infants and children, from birth to 8 years old, including staff and consultants from Early ACCESS, Area Education Agencies, Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs, Early Childhood Special Education programs, and Shared Visions programs. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Susan B. Neuman, a national expert and professor of early childhood and literacy education at New York University.

School administrators, elementary teachers, and other early care educators and providers should consider attending. The institute offers an opportunity for professionals from across the state to become familiar with new early childhood research and initiatives, take advantage of the resources of supporting agencies, and learn from national experts and each other.

For more information, visit the [Iowa AEYC website](#) or contact Betsy Lin at betsy.lin@iowa.gov.

Holocaust survivor makes social studies institute personal

David Wolnerman was a child in a small town in Poland when the Nazis invaded. It wasn't long before he was separated from family, and ordered at age 12 to a work camp where other Jews were sent. A year later, he was sent to the infamous Dachau concentration camp. Though he barely survived the horrors, he later learned most of his family did not.

Wolnerman came to America in 1950 with his wife, Jennie, and have two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He now resides in Des Moines.

He recounts his story for the sake of historical accuracy. He participated in the Iowa Department of Education's Best Practices in Social Studies Institute, a conference aimed at making social studies relevant and interesting in the 21st century. Here are some excerpts of a question-and-answer interview he did.

What was your life like prior to Hitler coming to power/the beginning of the Holocaust? Living in a small town made it difficult to hear news quickly. It was a nice life, in a very poor family, yet I had huge admiration for my family with great respect for elders.

Did you personally experience anti-Semitism before emcampment? Yes, the town where I lived had Jews and non-Jews. Plenty of the non-Jews were anti-Semitic and regularly cajoled, spat and made fun of us as children. There is a saying, translated from Polish, “when there is no other friends to play, may as well play with the Jew.”

[Read the eye-opening interview in its entirety.](#)

Register for family engagement symposium

The Iowa Department of Education is hosting a Family Engagement Symposium Sept. 9-10 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines. The event is open to all Iowa high schools.

There is no registration fee, and lunch will be served both days. The symposium is made available through the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools grant.

Featured speakers include Karen Mapp of Harvard, Joe Mazza of the University of Pennsylvania, Michelle Brooks, with the Boston public schools, and Carrie Rose, who is with the Parent-Teacher Home Visiting Project.

Participants will leave with information and practical strategies for engaging and partnering with families to improve educational outcomes.

Schools are encouraged to bring teams (such as an administrator, teachers, counselor or family engagement liaison, and other school staff).



Register by Aug. 1 by clicking [here](#). Direct questions to Molly Hammer at molly.hammer@iowa.gov.

Nutrition and Health Services

Wellness workshops available throughout state

The Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Program is partnering with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation to hold *Healthy Schools – It's a Team Effort!* workshops next fall led by registered dietitian nutritionists.

The two-hour workshops held at schools across the state will provide training for elementary teachers and staff to support a school wellness environment through nutrition education and physical activity. To learn more, [click here](#).



Early Childhood Preschool Programs

Grantees of Shared Visions awards announced

A list of the awarded grantees for fiscal year 2016 Shared Visions Parent Support Programs is available on the [Shared Visions Parent Program webpage](#) in the Awarded Locations section.

The competitive grant application process resulted in a total of six applications being awarded funding out of the 14 total received. Final award amounts are contingent on the finalization of the state appropriation. FY16 grants are awarded with a renewal option of up to five years provided grantees meet program requirements. The next competitive grant process for Shared Visions Parent Support Programs will be for fiscal year 2021.

Contact Amy Stegeman at 515-725-2273 or amy.stegeman@iowa.gov with any questions.

Preschool verification visits are slated for coming year

The Iowa Department of Education is scheduling the 2015-16 Verification Visits for the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) for school districts that began implementation of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program in 2014-15.

A department staff member will contact each district scheduled to receive a visit in order to collect necessary information and finalize the visit dates. In order to assist districts in preparing for the visit, the department has posted the IQPPS Verification Visit Checklists on the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program](#) web page. Districts will find the materials under the section titled [IQPPS Verification](#).

The IQPPS Verification Team will conduct a family interview, classroom observations, facility tour of preschool environments and review of documentation about the program, classrooms, staff and children.

Districts with an approved application for beginning participation in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program in 2015-16 will not receive an IQPPS Verification Visit until the following year.



For more information, go to the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program](#) web page or contact Penny Milburn at penny.milburn@iowa.gov or 515-281-7844, Jennifer Adkins at jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov or 515-725-2219, or Amy Stegeman at amy.stegeman@iowa.gov or 515-725-2273.



Legal Lessons

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

Movies under the stars

Summer is officially in full swing, and for many, it will be a longer summer with the new school start date in place. It's time to sit back and enjoy the sights and sounds of summer. One of my favorite things to do in the summer months is take the kids to see movies under the stars at a local park. We grab our blankets, chairs, popcorn, and a refreshing beverage and camp out on the lawn in front of the big screen. While the kids enjoy the movie, I enjoy the beautiful summer nights and the stars in the night sky. It's so relaxing and fun! Last year the kids fell asleep and we had to carry them back to the car when the movie was over. It was an enjoyable memory for all.

In this July edition of Legal Lessons, I bring you the effect the Aug. 23 start date has on co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as a brief follow up on social media.

School start date: co-curricular vs. extra-curricular activities

The Legislature has finally set a school start date of Aug. 23. Now that this is finalized we have had a few questions about what this start date means for school activities.

The starting dates for sports are set by the athletic associations. For other school-sponsored activities, the question boils down to whether the activity is co-curricular or extra-curricular. If the activity is co-curricular and required, then the school should not be scheduling the activity prior to Aug. 23. The rationale is simple – you cannot require a student to participate in a co-curricular activity that is part of her grade prior to the first day of school. However, if the activity is an extracurricular activity and not required, scheduling the activity before Aug. 23 is a local decision by the district's administration, or any relevant governing body.

Follow up to social media: Teacher's license suspended for a year

In last month's School Leader Update, we reviewed Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and social media. One of the top seven inappropriate posts was about a teacher who mocked her student's name on Facebook. As an update to this case, the teacher's license was recently suspended for a year for her Facebook post. Clearly the teacher's free speech rights were not implicated here and provided her no protections. Here is a link to the Board of Education Examiners decision in New Jersey: [License Suspension](#).

Locate summer meals for children

During the school year, many students rely on their schools for nutritious meals. When school is out, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program helps low-income children get the nourishment they need.

The USDA has made it easy to track down a meal site by creating a map that, with a few prompts, will give you several options for the closest meal sites. It also will give you pertinent information, such as times breakfast and lunch are served.

[Locate a summer meal program near you.](#)

Calendar

- July 1 • Joint Employment Whole Grade Share Applications Due
- July 1 • Last day to bill for second semester special education tuition

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312-730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, e-mail: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov



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