



A MONTHLY JOURNAL
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

School Leader Update

May 2014

Is *your* district ready for the Iowa Core?

A review of current Iowa Core Plans in the Consolidated Plan (C-Plan) has revealed that there is substantial variation in both the intensity and focus of work toward full implementation. School leaders are reminded that Iowa Core work should be a priority at this time.

Schools across Iowa should be fully involved at this point. High schools were required to have implementation plans in place by July 1, 2010, with full implementation occurring by July 1, 2012. Kindergarten-through-eighth-grade plans were required by July 1, 2012, with full implementation by 2014-2015.

Full implementation is accomplished when the district or school is able to provide evidence that an ongoing

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As school winds down, education winds up

The school year is beginning to wind down, and graduation season is upon us. While I've witnessed many high school graduations as a teacher and school administrator, I'm about to experience my first one as a father.

A lot of energy goes into celebrating this milestone and planning for the future, both in homes and high schools across Iowa. At our house, we're making memory boards and open house announcements that include photographs of my daughter, Brielle, throughout her school years. At the same time, we're wading through financial aid forms, college registration materials, and more.

As my first school year at the Iowa Department of Education draws to a close, I feel a similar impulse to look back and look ahead all at once. Over the last several months, a lot of significant progress has been made in education. If we decided to create a memory board of the recent work to improve our state's schools, it would reflect a very important intersection between the teacher, the student, and the content in the presence of meaningful learning activities.

The teacher piece is represented by our Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, which was the centerpiece of education reform legislation in 2013. This system rewards effective teachers with leadership opportunities and higher pay, attracts promising new teachers with competitive starting salaries, and fosters greater collaboration for all teachers to learn from each other. There is significant work under way in the 39 school districts that were approved to participate in year one of this effort. And on our end, we're working with the AEA system and partners like ISEA and SAI to develop training and ongoing support



**Brad Buck, director,
Iowa Department
of Education**

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process is in place to ensure that each and every student is learning the standards of the Iowa Core in all required content areas – English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st Century Skills.



The Iowa Department of Education's expectation is that each school has developed collaborative teams who are reviewing the standards and determining how well the standards are being implemented. A school that has fully implemented the Iowa Core is engaged in a continuous improvement process of data gathering and analysis, decision making, identifying actions, and assessing impact around alignment and professional development focused on content, instruction, and assessment.

All secondary schools are reminded that they must systemically identify the specific standards that need to be taught in specific courses. School personnel are also responsible for working with each secondary student to create a plan of study (ex. [I Have a Plan Iowa](#)) that incorporates coursework that covers all of the standards and essential concepts and skills for grades 6-12. Every student in Iowa is to graduate having learned the standards and essential concepts and skills of the Iowa Core.

The Iowa Core Teacher Quality funds will continue to be available to support the implementation of the Iowa Core. The use and distribution of these funds must be approved by the Teacher Quality Committee in each district. These funds must be used to support professional development – either training or work to implement the Iowa Core. Some appropriate uses include the following:

- Iowa Core professional development, such as *Investigating the Iowa Core*, *Deeper Investigations*, *Assessment for Learning*, or *Exploring the Iowa Core through Collaborative Teams*.
- Time beyond the contracted school day for teachers to engage in Iowa Core training and local district planning that incorporates components of the Iowa Core.
- Costs for substitutes while teachers attend professional development.
- Professional development designed to enhance instruction, such as *Authentic Intellectual Work*, *Gradual Release of Responsibility*, or *Cognitively Guided Instruction*.

Inappropriate uses might include the following:

- Paying administrators to engage in Iowa Core work.
- Paying teachers to engage in routine textbook adoption cycles.
- Paying teachers to conduct lesson planning during the contracted school day.
- Buying textbooks, instructional materials, technology, or equipment.

Districts and Department-accredited nonpublic schools are required to report their progress in implementing the Iowa Core as part of the C-Plan reporting, which is due Sept. 15, 2014. The Iowa Core Network, which comprises consultants from each of the Area Education Agencies in the state, is developing a plan for support for districts and schools in completing the Iowa Core section of the C-Plan.

For more information on the Iowa Core, click [here](#).

New State Board members begin this month

The State Board of Education will welcome five new members this month at its May 15 meeting in Des Moines:

Brooke Axiotis of Des Moines is a Civil Rights Specialist with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. She is a member of the Iowa Bar. Her community activities include the Salisbury House Young Professional Board, Friends of Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, and Links, Inc. She earned her law degree from Drake University.

Michael Bearden of Gladbrook is a professional engineer and is the executive vice president of Clapsaddle-Garber Associates, Inc. He served on his local school board for many years. He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Iowa State University.

Angela English of Dyersville has served on her local Catholic school board for seven years and has volunteered at St. Francis Xavier Catholic School for eight years. She earned a degree in business finance from Loras College.

Mary Ellen Miller of Mason City and Corydon currently serves as executive director of 50-50 in 2020, a bipartisan group that actively recruits women to public office. She has served on many boards and civic organizations including North Iowa Area Community College and League of Women Voters of Iowa. She earned a business degree from Buena Vista University.

The State Board's new student member will be Hannah Rens of Sioux City. She will be a junior at East High School in Sioux City where she participates in student council, quiz bowl, speech, debate, and golf.

Continued from page 1 for newly minted teacher leaders in the state, as well as building principals who will be working with them. This support will build future capacity for the system as it expands statewide over the next few years.

The student piece is reflected in efforts to help all students reach proficiency in reading by the end of third grade. This is supported through legislation that requires an early warning system consisting of assessments and data to identify and intervene with struggling readers. The education system is working together to scale up this system in schools statewide through a practice called Multi-Tiered System of Supports, or MTSS. An early warning system was piloted in 15 percent of Iowa school districts this year. It was so successful that more than 300 districts have expressed interest in using it next year. Implementation training will begin in the next few months.

Finally, the content piece is the Iowa Core standards. Iowa law called for these standards to be put into practice in high schools by 2012, and in grades K-8 by this fall. The Iowa Core raised the bar on what we expect from students. It also allows schools the flexibility to determine how they help students meet those standards. I deeply support the work of the Iowa Core, and I have ever since I was a school administrator. I ask that educators remain ambassadors for our standards.

I've also enjoyed watching the energy put into improving other areas of education, including science, technology, engineering and math, competency-based education, state assessments and the evaluation system for teachers and principals. As we look ahead, our focus as a Department is on ensuring every door is open for every student upon high school graduation, whether it's a college degree, the military, or the world of work. So, now that graduation season is upon us, be encouraged. Finish well. There is so much excellent work under way in Iowa. Let's celebrate today, but let's also plan for tomorrow. Thanks for all you do for your schools and students every day.



Conference set for Career Development in the 21st Century

The Iowa Department of Education and Iowa College Aid are partnering to offer the fourth annual Career Development in the 21st Century Conference June 19 and 20 in Des Moines.

The goal of the conference is to provide participants with the knowledge needed to apply career development strategies in a learning setting; recognize a career development process that is relevant and equitable to all learners; and determine how non-academic factors of environment, community, family and self can affect college-, career- and citizen-ready success.



License renewal credit will be offered through Heartland Area Education Agency. Registration will be available soon. For more information, see the conference website at: <http://bit.ly/1iVP8JZ>, or contact the Department's Nancy Ankeny Hunt at 515-725-0436 or nancy.ankeny-hunt@iowa.gov.

Licensure requirements for teacher leadership positions

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has received questions regarding the new positions created through the teacher leadership and compensation grants.

For these new instructional coaches, mentors, and master educators, candidates should hold a valid Iowa teaching license, but there is no specific endorsement required. For example, a secondary candidate may serve at the elementary level and vice versa. Although these candidates may occasionally demonstrate a model lesson in a class, they are not delivering primary instruction, and the bulk of their work will be with adults. Those who also teach part-time will need the appropriate endorsement for the teaching portion of their position. Further questions may be directed to Joanne Tubbs at joanne.tubbs@iowa.gov.



Annual progress reports available

The Iowa Department of Education is required to issue an annual report on the statewide progress of the following: student achievement scores in mathematics and reading at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels on a district-by-district basis, evaluator training program, and changes and improvements in the evaluation of teachers under the Iowa Teaching Standards. [Click](#) to view the report. For more information, contact the Department's David Tilly at david.tilly@iowa.gov or 515-281-3333.

Early Childhood Preschool Programs

End-of-year procedures for voluntary preschool program

Go to the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program website using the link below to access a resource addressing end-of-year procedures for Teaching Strategies GOLD online. The document includes steps to close out the program or school year. The end-of-year procedures are appropriate for any school district, program, child care center or home child care using GOLD.



For more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, go to:

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/statewide-voluntary-preschool-program-and-four-year-old-children> or contact Penny Milburn at penny.mlburn@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.

Information on Potential English Language Learners

Districts serving preschool students who are Potential English Language Learners (PELL) need to report these students prior to kindergarten entry in their student information systems. PELL status will be required for all preschool students reported in Student Reporting in Iowa, fall 2014. The goal of reporting PELL students in preschool is to ensure that districts have information regarding English Language Learner (ELL) status for children entering kindergarten as well as assisting the state in better understanding the changing demographics.

The following steps will assist districts in reporting this information:

- Use the Iowa Home Language Survey on TransAct website or the GOLD online Home Language Survey, whichever your program currently uses;
- No further preschool assessments or specialized services are required;
- The year count with Limited English Proficiency or ELL will not begin with preschool identification; therefore districts will not forfeit a year of ELL funding; and
- No additional funding is provided beyond the .5 for Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.

Districts can use more informal means to determine programming that preschoolers who are PELLs may need. There is no requirement for specific services based upon the Potential English Language Learners reporting process. However, districts need to provide a quality research-based strategies addressing the development of oral language and literacy as well as content skills appropriate for this age group.

For additional information, contact the Department's Jobi Lawrence at 515-281-3805 or jobi.lawrence@iowa.gov.



Nutrition and Health Services

Deadline approaches for health surveys

Health surveys that have been sent to 355 schools statewide are due May 30.

The randomly selected schools are part of an ongoing study by the Iowa Department of Education, in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The information gathered helps improve school health policies and practices.

Surveys are completed by principals and lead health teachers to assess the status of health policies and practices at the middle and high school levels.

For more information, contact the Department's Angela Mitchell at angela.mitchell@iowa.gov.



New information system for CNP2000

School meal programs will have a new information-entry system beginning in the next school year. Instead of the current Child Nutrition Program web-based system, also known as CNP2000 system, schools will be using IowaCNP. The new system will allow greater automation of processes, and enable schools to generate School Food Authorities, or SFA-level, reports. Look for additional information on the implementation process over the next few months. Contact Patti Harding at patti.harding@iowa.gov if you have questions.





Legislative Update

Contact Mike Cormack for all legislative items: mike.cormack@iowa.gov or 515-281-3399.

Cormack at the Capitol

Thank you, and a fond farewell

Time passes quickly. When I was a teenager, a great inventive comedian came on television that created a style that I loved and probably shaped whatever sense of humor I am able to share today. From Top Ten lists, dropping watermelons off of tall buildings, stupid pet tricks, viewer mail and countless other innovations, I was hooked as a fan. Nobody was funnier, in my view, than the great David Letterman.

Recently, David Letterman announced his impending retirement from The Late Show and it marked the end of an era. I must admit that I watched Dave less in recent years and the truly imaginative pieces of comedy seemed to occur much less often, as well. Still, I was sad to hear that announcement and will always be grateful for the laughter he created so many times for me.

I haven't been at the Department of Education for the 30 years that David Letterman was on television. In fact, I have been at the Department for three legislative sessions since I left the classroom and coaching ranks just a few years ago. But, there is always sadness to me in an end. As you read this, I have started work on May 1 as the new chairman of the Iowa Public Employment Relations Board, or PERB. While I am humbled and honored to have been appointed by Governor Branstad and confirmed by the Iowa Senate, it is with mixed emotions that I leave this position. In my tenure at the Department, I met so many good people in the world of education and look back with pride on the many legislative accomplishments that I had the good fortune to be a small part of. It has been an exciting time to work on legislative policy concerning education.

In departing, there are many positive thoughts I wish to share. With one exception, I will avoid thanking individuals because truly there is a list I could write that would be longer than the entire School Leader Update. I do want to note the three directors that I worked for in this time period at the Department. I have been exceptionally fortunate to have great bosses throughout my lifetime. In the classroom, I had great colleagues, terrific parents and administrators I genuinely liked. At this Department, I had three great bosses to work for in Jason Glass, Duane Magee in an interim basis and the current director, Brad Buck. Each is extremely talented, full of good humor and, as I witnessed, served the state well with professionalism. I hope to take elements of each, as well as past superintendents and principals I worked with, to help guide me in my new leadership role. I have been blessed to work with such good people.

When I was a legislator and when I was a teacher, I thought I knew what the Department of Education was. I have shared with groups I have spoken to, and believe strongly, that I wish that everyone in education could spend some time here. Now, I know what the Department of Education is, a sincere group of lowans who work hard for this state. In my role, I often put in long hours during the legislative session as well as during specific projects. During those late nights and weekends, I wasn't alone at the Department of Education. There are good people working harder than I ever thought in the agency and doing good work for lowans. Many myths I had about the "bureaucracy" were dispelled after seeing the agency in action. I am proud to have worked here.

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Legislative Update continued

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Another misconception is about the Legislature. Having served eight years as a member and three years in this position, I freely admit I've met some lousy people in the Legislature. But this is important: They are much fewer and farther between than what I think the general public believes. Of course, there are such people in just about any profession. The overwhelming majority who serve in the Legislature want a better Iowa, are not highly partisan and sacrifice for the public good. They are assisted by many unsung heroes who work as legislative staff who support their work. As in any job category, those who do wrong get the most attention. The untold story is how many good people, in both political parties, serve honorably.

When I joined this Department, I had no inkling that I would someday serve in the role as the non-voting member to the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. The executive directors, boards and staff of those groups always treated me well. There is truly not a person I met in either group who I didn't like; all had the best interests of student athletes at heart. I will miss serving in that capacity and truly respect the work of each person.

From this role, it has appeared to me that there is more consensus on education policy than what is perceived. It was exciting and historic to be a small part of the education reform act work last year. At any point, education and business groups could have torpedoed the legislation. Neither did so and worked together on that legislation. Governor Branstad introduced that bill and the Legislature refined, but supported it, in overwhelming bipartisan fashion. Without the strong support of both the Governor and the Iowa General Assembly, that would not have passed. It could have been derailed at several points. Instead, there is a long-term commitment in Iowa code to this proposal. So many perspectives came together to do what they hoped was right for Iowa students. That was historic and shows the collective good can win out over self interest. It happens more often than what is thought.

Life has exceptionally blessed me with opportunities that I know are unique. The ability to have been either a substitute or full-time teacher and coach at Manson-Northwest Webster, Southeast Webster, and CAM and to work with young people was tremendously special. To help have a role on public policy as a state representative, a mayor and as a Department policy liaison has been terrific. Moving into my new role at PERB, some paths will overlap in the future. My goal in that new role is to simply be fair, transparent and ethical. My parents taught me growing up of the value of public service and I hope I can continue to help this state. One chapter closes while another one begins....



Finally, I want to conclude by thanking the many readers of this column. I hope I have communicated a slice of what is going on in the public policy arena concerning education. I have had so many kind comments and emails from readers. Somehow, I have linked topics such as Kenny Chesney, Weird Al Yankovic, professional wrestling, baseball, ostrich racing, movies, The Price is Right and other pop culture references to education. Hopefully, I've made you smile while reading important, but sometimes dry, concepts.

I will be sad next year to see the David Letterman era end. In leaving this role, simply thanks from me to you for all that you do on a daily basis for the children of our state. My top 10 great Department of Education memories list would need to be much longer than just 10. Let me throw a pencil through an imaginary window and elicit a great sound in honor of Dave. From the home office at the Jessie Parker Building, home of PERB, I send a friendly goodbye and good luck in all that you do.



Legal Lessons

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

With May flowers comes graduation (and court rulings)

Happy May Day!

Graduation is yet again just around the corner. Thinking about high school graduation has me reminiscing of my high school days and wondering why I was so excited to get out of school. I fondly remember hanging out during study halls playing cards (although I am not sure this was acceptable), going to football and basketball games (and never really watching the game), participating in choir and drama, and going to high school dances. But I also remember the excitement to graduate and move on to college. What a short journey it was from freshman year to graduation. I am not sure I really appreciated it while it was occurring. This is an exciting time of year for so many students who are looking ahead to their futures. Congratulations to your 2014 graduates! Congratulations to all of you for all the hard work and planning that went into educating them!

In this edition of Legal Lessons, I bring you the top five graduation don'ts, an Iowa Supreme Court Decision regarding sexual exploitation, a U.S. Supreme Court decision on breast cancer awareness bracelets and a U.S. Department of Education report on the findings of the Civil Rights Data Collection.

Graduation no-no's

It's that time of year again to revisit the Top Five graduation don'ts.

1. ***Don't allow sponsored prayer at commencement.*** School districts cannot sponsor prayer at graduation regardless of the form of delivery. This includes the school choir singing a hymn that includes religious references. This does not mean that the school is going to get in trouble if a student speaker spontaneously begins to pray during the middle of his or her commencement speech. As long as school officials do not have prior knowledge of the student's intent to pray it is not considered school sponsored. The district should take affirmative steps to inform all speakers that prayer at a public school graduation is not legal. If, given the district's prior knowledge of the speaker, it is not unreasonable to assume that the speaker may offer a prayer; the district has an affirmative obligation to pre-screen the content of the planned speech.
2. ***Don't charge fees.***
Diplomas. Schools **cannot** charge a fee for a diploma if earned. The district must provide a diploma and there is no authorization to charge a fee.
School districts **can** charge a fee for a graduation cap, gown, tassel, and a diploma cover – as long as the purchase is voluntary; state law does not regulate this.
Senior Trip. If a school district still schedules a senior trip as part of the 175 instructional days, the presumption is that the trip is curricular in nature, and thus, the district cannot charge a fee. See Declaratory Order (upheld by district court) at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp?book=25&decision=62>.
3. ***Don't withhold diplomas for failure to pay.*** School boards cannot withhold diplomas for failure to pay fines, fees, etc. A student who has met graduation requirements has an undisputed right to receive his/her diploma. To withhold a diploma for non-academic reasons is tantamount to academic fraud. Having said that, the student does not have an undisputed right to receive the diploma at a commencement ceremony. If the student has shown

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some egregious misbehavior, the student may be properly banned from taking part in graduation exercises and the diploma can be mailed then to the student. Again, do not charge a fee for the diploma.

- 4. Don't use a breathalyzer or search students without reasonable suspicion.** Iowa law prohibits searches of students without reasonable suspicion. So, in order for a school district to search a student, including use of a breathalyzer, the employee administering it must have a reasonable suspicion that the specific student has violated school rules. The suspicion has to be individualized to a student. There is no broad authority to search a group of students unless there is reasonable suspicion that they have all violated school rules.
- 5. Don't sponsor a Baccalaureate.** A school district cannot sponsor a Baccalaureate; this is an event that must be left to the local churches or similar organizations. Students cannot be required to participate in a Baccalaureate ceremony nor punished for failure to do so. Prayers and religious songs are unrestricted at a properly sponsored Baccalaureate.

Iowa Supreme Court reverses coach's sexual exploitation conviction

The Iowa Supreme Court recently reversed the sexual exploitation conviction of a part-time assistant high school basketball coach because the court found that the coach, who only held a coaching authorization, was not a "practitioner" as defined in Iowa Code section 272.1(7). The court noted, however, that a coach who holds a teaching license or other professional license is clearly subject to prosecution under Iowa Code section 709.15(3) for sexual exploitation, but a coach who holds a coaching authorization alone is not. There was a strong dissenting opinion in this case by Justices Thomas Waterman and Edward Mansfield, who wrote that the majority ruling in the case was an absurd result. The case was remanded to district court with instructions to dismiss the charges.

Since the ruling was released, there has been a strong response from education stakeholders to fix this legal loophole. On April 14, Governor Branstad issued a press release calling for legislative action to fix the loophole left by this ruling.

The full opinion by the court can be found here.

http://www.iowacourts.gov/About_the_Courts/Supreme_Court/Supreme_Court_Opinions/Recent_Opinions/20140411/12-1862.pdf

U.S. Supreme Court declines to review First Amendment decision

The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review a decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit's striking down a ban on "I ♥ Boobies" bracelets. In *B.H. v. Easton Area School District (EASD)*, middle school students challenged the school district's decision to ban breast cancer awareness bracelets that said "I ♥ Boobies (KEEP A BREAST)," arguing that the ban was a violation of their first amendment rights to free speech. The Third Circuit ruled that the school district's ban on students wearing "I ♥ Boobies" bracelets was unconstitutional and found that the bracelets represent a form of protected free speech.

USDE Office of Civil Rights reports on troubling racial disparities in student discipline

On March 21, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued a comprehensive report on findings from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). The report details troubling racial disparities in school discipline practices and procedures. There were five key issues that were noted by the report which include:

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Legal Lessons continued

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1. Access to preschool is not available in 40 percent of school districts and limited in others;
2. Suspension of preschool children was racially disproportionate;
3. Access to advanced courses for students was racially disproportionate;
4. Access to college counselors is limited; and
5. Retention of ELL students is disproportionate.

The press release is [here](#).

The topic brief on discipline is [here](#).

State, district, and school-level data may be viewed at the CRDC website at crdc.ed.gov. Districts should take the time to review their data and determine if disparities exist. For questions regarding equity issues contact Margaret Jensen Connet at 515-281-3769 or margaret.jensenconnet@iowa.gov.

School safety corner

The Iowa School Safety Coalition now has all safety bulletins posted on their website. Refer to <http://www.iowaschoolsafety.org/> for more information on what you can do to protect your students.

Students with disabilities

For questions regarding students with disabilities, contact Thomas Mayes at 515-242-5614 or <mailto:thomas.mayes@iowa.gov>.



Calendar

Register for competency-based education conference

The Iowa Competency-Based Education collaborative, the Iowa Department of Education, and Iowa-ASCD are partnering to provide workshops and two-day tracts designed for districts, Area Education Agencies, and institutes of higher education for educators to transform Iowa education to a system focused on personalized learning for all students.

The conference is June 23-24.

Click to register:

<http://iowaascd.org/index.php/events/>.

- May 1 • Nonpublic transportation reimbursement parental claim form due
- May 15 • AEA Budget Proposal resubmit unapproved budget

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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