



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2014 Legislative Session – Statute Changes Affecting Schools

UPDATED July 15, 2014

Overview

The Iowa Department of Education is pleased to provide a summary of the statute changes resulting from the 2014 legislative session that impact education policy in Iowa. While this session did not have the broad, sweeping changes of last year, it helped support and solidify Iowa's efforts to strengthen teaching and learning in every classroom.

This summary is brief in comparison to previous years. I hope you will take the time to not only read the document, but also to reflect on how this year's legislation can make meaningful, measurable differences in the quality of instruction in your school. While policy changes can present challenges, they also bring opportunities. This year, those opportunities are abundant. From building a teacher leadership support system to increasing opportunities for English Language Learners to supporting our focus on early childhood literacy, we have much to celebrate. And even more to do!

As I enter my second year as the director of the Department, I remain committed to the effective implementation of a robust approach to meeting the learning needs of all Iowa students. I know that all of us at the Iowa Department of Education share this goal and are committed to providing all education stakeholders the support they need to be successful.

We look forward to working with you to implement these new changes and to continuing our shared work to ensure that every door of opportunity is open for all students in Iowa.

With Appreciation,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brad Buck".

Brad Buck, Ph.D.
Director
Iowa Department of Education

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2014 Policy Changes

SF 2347 Education Appropriations

Each year, the Department of Education and other state-funded educational agencies or programs are funded in a budget bill. In addition to those annual appropriations, this legislation also includes several policy and programmatic changes and additions, which are described below.

Early Warning Assessment System: Division I, Sec. 4, 1b

Appropriates \$2 million to the Department's general administration "to administer and distribute to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools, without cost to the school districts and accredited nonpublic schools, an early warning assessment system that allows teachers to screen and monitor student literacy skills from prekindergarten through grade six." If a school district or an accredited nonpublic school chooses to utilize valid and reliable assessments other than the early warning assessment system that is made available by the Department, the Department will not assume the costs of those assessments.

Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program: Division I, Sec. 4, 15

Includes \$50 million in new funding to launch the Teacher Leadership and Compensation system. This legislation also includes funding for all districts for the beginning teacher mentoring and induction program, National Board Certification, and the Teacher Development Academies.

Attendance Center Performance Report: Division I, Sec. 4, 17A

Appropriates \$500,000 for the "development of criteria and administration of a process for school districts to establish specific performance goals and to evaluate the performance of each attendance center operated by the district in order to arrive at an overall school performance grade and report card for each attendance center." This process was begun in last year's education reform bill (House File 215).

Administrator Coaching and Support: Division I, Sec. 4, 17B; Sec. 10, b; Sec. 28, 1

Appropriates \$1 million to the Department to develop and implement, in collaboration with education stakeholders, a coaching and support system aligned with the beginning administrator mentoring and induction program and focused on administrators in districts implementing a Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) plan. Beginning on July 1, 2017, all districts will have access to a coaching and support system for administrators whether or not the district has adopted a local TLC plan.

In addition, the legislation amends Iowa Code section 284A.2, subsection 1, to remove the provision excluding assistant principals and assistant superintendents in the definition of "administrator" for the purposes of the Administrator Quality Program established in Chapter 284A.

English Language Learners (ELL): Division I, Sec. 4, 17C; Sec. 7; Sec. 11; Sec. 24

English Language Literacy Grant Program

Appropriates \$500,000 to the Department to establish an English Language Literacy Grant Program. The grant program will be available to all school districts, but priority in issuing grants will be given to districts with:

- The highest percentage of students identified as limited English proficient;
- Large numbers of students determined to be limited English proficient; or
- An exceptional diversity of languages of origin spoken by students determined to be limited English proficient.

The Department will provide additional guidance on this grant program.

State Board of Education to Establish ELL Standards

Directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to establish standards for the identification, selection, and use of research-based educational and instructional models for students identified as limited English proficient and standards for the professional development of instructional staff responsible for implementing the models.

Limited English Proficiency – Weighting

Amends Iowa Code section 280.4, subsection 3, paragraph b, to clarify that the additional weighting for students identified as limited English proficient “shall be included in the weighted enrollment of the school district of residence for a cumulative period of time not exceeding five years beginning with the budget year for which the student was first determined to be limited English proficient.” The legislation also clarifies that “the five years of eligibility for the additional weighting need not be consecutive and a student’s eligibility for the additional weighting is transferable to another district of residence.”

Online State Job Posting System: Division I, Section 17D

Online State Job Posting System

Appropriates \$250,000 to the Department of Education for the administration of the Teach Iowa online job posting system, which was launched in August of 2013. All public school districts, charter schools, and area education agencies are required to post **all** job openings on the system. Accredited nonpublic schools may participate. The system is accessible via www.teachiowa.gov.

AEA Support for Teacher Leadership and Compensation: Division I, Sec. 4, 17F

Appropriates \$1 million to the Department for the development of a system by which the Area Education Agencies support school districts implementing a local Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) plan.

Successful Progression of Early Readers: Division I, Sec. 4, 18

Appropriates \$8 million to the Department for distribution to school districts for the implementation of Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 62, “State Standards for Progression in Reading,” as mandated by Iowa Code section 279.68. This is the same amount of funding as distributed during Fiscal Year 2014.

The Department will provide additional guidance on this funding.

Iowa Reading Research Center: Division I, Sec. 4, 19

Appropriates \$1 million to the Department for the purposes of the Iowa Reading Research Center and directs the Center to collaborate with Area Education Agencies in carrying out its work.

Competency-Based Education: Division I, Sec. 4, 20

Appropriates \$425,000 to the Department for implementation, in collaboration with the Area Education Agencies, of the recommendations of the Competency-Based Education Task Force. The funding is to be used

to: provide grants under the competency-based education grant program; write model competencies, plans, and templates; develop the assessment validation rubric and model assessments; and design professional development in accordance with the recommendations of the task force.

Open Enrollment and TLC: Division I, Sec. 27

Clarifies that the district of residence will pay to the receiving district any TLC funding if both districts have an approved TLC plan.

Additional Education Legislation

The sections below cover additional legislation impacting PK-12 education. Legislation related to community colleges will be addressed in a separate letter in the coming weeks.

HF 2271 Operational Sharing

Modifies the current shared operational functions supplementary weighting provision. The Department issued guidance on this legislation on April 4, 2014 (available [here](#)).

HF 2170 Instructional Hours and Start Date Waiver

Amends the instructional time and start date waiver legislation passed during the 2013 legislative session. The Department issued guidance on this legislation on April 1, 2014 (available [here](#)).

SF 2056 Whole Grade Sharing Incentives

Amends Iowa Code so that the sunset of the incentives for whole grade sharing and reorganization is extended from 2014 to 2019. The incentives themselves remain unchanged.

SF 366 Radon Notification and Testing

Requires the Department to notify each district and accredited nonpublic school of the risks associated with radon gas in school facilities. The Department has completed this action.

Each district and accredited nonpublic school is required to notify the Department by December 1, 2014, whether it has a radon testing and mitigation plan or any expectations to implement such a plan. The Department will include questions on the fall BEDS report. The Department is then required to report to the General Assembly by January 1, 2015, the information collected regarding radon testing and mitigation.

HF 2389 Board of Educational Examiners Code of Professional Conduct

Requires the Board of Educational Examiners (BoEE) to adopt rules stating it is a violation of the BoEE's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for any licensee to have a sexual or romantic relationship within ninety days with any individual who the licensee taught or supervised in any school activity when the individual was a student. The BoEE already had such a rule pending which became effective upon adjournment of the 2014 session of the General Assembly.

[HF 2474](#) Sexual Exploitation by a School Employee

Clarifies that any person holding a coaching authorization from the Board of Educational Examiners (BoEE) is considered to be a school employee for the purposes of Iowa Code Section 709.15 dealing with the sexual exploitation of a student by a school employee. It is both criminal behavior and a violation of the BoEE's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for any person holding a coaching authorization to have a romantic or sexual relationship with any student, even if such student is above the "age of consent" under Iowa statute.

[SF 220](#) Early Retirement Incentives

Eliminates the age cap for the use of the management levy for early retirement incentives. SF 220 was effective upon the Governor's signature and retroactively applicable to employees participating in a retirement incentive program on or after July 1, 2013. School boards will be able to use the management levy to fund early retirement programs for employees age 55 and older, and they will be able to do so for the FY 15 budget. The legislative intent was to allow school districts to move any individual 55 or older and currently on an existing retirement incentive program onto the management fund retroactive to July 1, 2013. The use of management funds is an issue for potential review during your local audit.

[SF 2230](#) Department Technical Corrections

Three aspects of SF 2230 should be of interest to districts and accredited nonpublic schools:

1. Authorizes a district or an accredited nonpublic school to award to a student in grades 7 and 8 high school credit for the successful completion of a high school level course that is part of the high school graduation requirements. This is intended to further the enactment of competency-based education programming in Iowa. The Department has already submitted to the Administrative Rules Review Committee (ARRC) a notice of intended action to amend Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) Chapter 12 to achieve this policy.
2. Allows school districts to hold a vote on the revenue purpose statement for school infrastructure funds to occur at the same time as a reorganization vote.
3. Reduces the publication requirement for school districts from two to one for the disposal of property that has a resale value of less than \$5,000.

[HF 2388](#) Foster Care Education Continuity

Encourages Area Education Agencies to employ a child welfare liaison to work with districts to ensure appropriate education and continuity in that education for children in foster care and requires school districts to work with a foster student's previous school to determine appropriate academic credits and placement.

SF2319 Improving Student Literacy Skills, Including Addressing Dyslexia, and Providing Teacher Assistance

Includes three substantive changes to existing Iowa Code:

- 1) Amends Iowa Code Section 279.68, Successful Progression of Early Readers, to define dyslexia as “a specific and significant impairment in the development of reading, including but not limited to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension that is not solely accounted for by intellectual disability, sensory disability or impairment, or lack of appropriate instruction.”
- 2) Amends the existing statutory requirement to assist students exhibiting a substantial deficiency in reading to “include but not be limited to strategies that formally address dyslexia, when appropriate.”
- 3) Requires the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC), in collaboration with the Area Education Agencies and the Department of Education, to develop and offer to school districts at no cost professional development services for elementary teachers “in the use of evidence-based strategies to improve the literacy skills of all students.” This requirement was subject to an appropriation, which did not occur during the 2014 legislative session.

The Department will provide additional guidance on this legislation in the coming weeks.