



A MONTHLY JOURNAL
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

School Leader Update

November 2011

2011 NAEP results are a call to action

The nation's students took significant strides on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, while Iowa's results show a continued pattern of stagnation, according to results released Nov. 1.

"I had hoped that the results would show the tide is turning in Iowa – that the state had begun accelerating and improving on these key measures," Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass said. "Unfortunately, that's not the case."

NAEP, known as the nation's report card, is the only state-by-state comparison of student progress. Assessments are administered to a sampling of students periodically in mathematics, reading, science and other subjects.

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A special thanks to great teachers, leaders

You've heard a lot from me about the need to put in place a world-class school system in Iowa. And I've heard a lot of great feedback from educators and school leaders about what it will take to get us there.

While we continue to discuss the best way to elevate our schools from good to great, we also must recognize what we already do well. With that, two things come to mind: The annual awards for some of Iowa's top teachers and the Iowa State Board of Education's Breaking Barriers award.



Jason Glass, Director

The Department honored 13 educators at the Oct. 28 Iowa Recognition Luncheon for Outstanding Teachers. They are teachers like Brandon Schrauth, who designs developmentally-appropriate science instruction for his first-graders at Beaver Creek Elementary School in Johnston. A principal described Brandon this way: "He doesn't do what is easiest, but rather does what his students need." Congratulations to Brandon, who won the science category of the Iowa Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Check out a video featuring the winners on our website, www.educateiowa.gov. A full list of winners and finalists is on page 4 of this issue. Also on page 4, you'll see the school districts that will be honored this month with the annual Breaking Barriers award for efforts to narrow the academic achievement gap. This Thanksgiving season, a special thanks to all educators for your courage and commitment to students and to Iowa.

Educate yourself about competency-based education

Iowa school leaders who are interested in shifting to a system of competency-based education are encouraged to learn more at a state conference on Dec. 8 in Des Moines.

Iowa Department of Education leaders will host the Research to Action forum, which is sponsored by the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest.

Under a competency-based education system, students advance to the next level based on their mastery of content rather than their age or seat time.

The conference will feature practitioners and students who are implementing competency-based education in such states as Alaska, New Hampshire and Wisconsin. Participants will examine research and consider how to evaluate the impact of competency-based education reforms. This forum also can guide planning for local implementation.

Districts are encouraged to send teams of four. Team members might include the superintendent, curriculum director, principals, teachers, students or the district's Area Education Agency school improvement consultant.

The forum will run from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at the Ramada Tropics Resort, 5000 Merle Hay Road. A block of rooms has been reserved for the event. Room rates are \$55 a night. Call 515-278-0271 for reservations. Lunch will be provided at the event. Registration runs from November 3 through November 21 at <http://tiny.cc/ykyo6>, although availability is limited. There is no registration fee.

Newly developed state guidelines for k-12 competency-based pathways and waiver forms for the 2012-13 school year are available at http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=483&Itemid=2728.

Interpretation Workshops for Iowa Assessments

New forms of the Iowa Assessments have been introduced in the state this fall. Iowa Testing Programs and the Area Education Agencies have scheduled an Interpretation Workshop as a guide for use of the assessment results. The workshops will be appropriate for curriculum supervisors, associate superintendents, department heads, teachers and all educators who use the results of the assessments.

The sessions will be held on various dates in November, December and January in locations across the state. Each workshop will include three one-hour sessions:

Session 1 – Using the Iowa Assessments to Measure the Iowa Core

Session 2 – Using the Iowa Assessments to Monitor Growth

Session 3 – Using the Iowa Assessments to Track Student Readiness

Register at the following web site: <http://itp.education.uiowa.edu/interpretationworkshops.aspx>

Contact David Henkhaus at David-Henkhaus@uiowa.edu or Catherine Welch at catherine-welch@uiowa.edu with questions or concerns.

C-what?

An exciting project is under way at the Iowa Department of Education called the Consolidated Plan, or C-Plan. The purpose of this project is to streamline the collection of mandatory reports and progress for districts and schools whose leaders have clamored for a more convenient process. The C-Plan will be a living, ongoing planning and reporting document for schools and school districts. Five plans have been identified for inclusion:

- The Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP)
- Annual Progress Report (APR)
- Iowa Core Implementation Plan
- District Developed Service Delivery Plan (DDSDP)
- Schools/Districts In Need of Assistance (SINA/DINA) Plan

Additional plans will be considered for inclusion at a future date. Implementation of C-Plan will start next summer. Look for more details throughout the year.

Deadline looms for district boundary updates



School districts have until Dec. 2 to update their boundary information to the Iowa Department of Education. The updates, which are required by the U.S. Census Bureau, are used to determine school district populations and funding. The Department has contracted with the University of Iowa's geography department for this project, which is separate from the Director District project. District leaders can expect e-mails with detailed instructions to verify and update boundary information. For more information, contact Jay Pennington at jay.pennington@iowa.gov or 515-281-4837.

SpEd count down

In the first part of November, school districts will be contacted by their Area Education Agencies to review the listings of resident students to ensure accuracy of their special education enrollment count. This is important because the count generates the districts' special education budgets for the 2012-13 school year.

All districts need to be available for this review. District leaders need to be particularly attentive to students who fall into the "Child in Foster Care" and "Terminated Parental Rights" categories. While these two categories represent a very small portion of the special education population, they frequently end up surprising districts when tuition billings are issued.

Iowa Energy Bank offers 1 percent efficiency financing

Energy-efficient buildings use less energy, cost less to operate and save money.

A \$12.5 million revolving loan fund is now available through the Department of Administrative Services Iowa Energy Bank to ease the burden on your bottom line and free up funds for other educational goals. The Energy Bank offers Iowa's public facilities, schools, area education agencies, colleges and universities, hospitals and local governments a 1 percent financing option for the implementation of cost-effective energy projects. Eligible applicants need no upfront capital, and loans are repaid using the energy bill savings. An up-to-date energy study is required to ensure cost effectiveness of your project. Applications

are now being accepted. Loan agreements must be in place by March 30, 2012. The Energy Bank provides a team of qualified professionals to help you every step of the way. Contact Brenda Easter at 515-725-2239 for more information.



Iowa Recognition Luncheon honors 13 teachers



Some of the state's top teachers were honored for their work by the Iowa Department of Education on Oct. 28 in Des Moines. The Iowa Recognition Luncheon for Outstanding Teachers recognized 13 finalists and winners of the following education awards:

Iowa Teacher of the Year

Winner: Charity Campbell, physical education and health teacher, Norwalk Middle School, Norwalk

Finalists: Vickie Weber, English/language arts teacher, Springville High School, Springville; Deadra Stanton, language arts teacher, Mason City High School, Mason City; Brenda Becker, science teacher, Maquoketa Valley Middle School, Delhi; Amy Lockhart, fourth- and fifth-grade teacher, Northern University School/Malcolm Price Laboratory School, Cedar Falls

Iowa Preserve America History Teacher of the Year

Winner: Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra, language arts and history teacher, Jefferson Intermediate School, Pella

Finalists: Steve MacDonald, second-grade teacher, Holy Ghost School, Dubuque; Kim Walker, fifth-grade teacher, Lakeview Elementary School, Centerville



Iowa Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Math Winner: Barbara Leise, kindergarten/first-grade multi-age teacher, Downtown School, Des Moines

Math Finalists: Karla Digmann, math teacher, George Washington Middle School, Dubuque; Deidra Franzen-Baker, math teacher, Keota Junior/Senior High School, Keota

Science Winner: Brandon Schrauth, first-grade teacher, Beaver Creek Elementary School, Johnston

Science Finalist: Jody Stone, science teacher, Northern University High School/Malcolm Price Laboratory School, Cedar Falls

Ten districts to receive Breaking Barriers awards

Ten school districts will be honored this month by the Iowa State Board of Education for Breaking Barriers, a statewide initiative aimed at closing the achievement gap among subgroups of students. To receive the award, a school district must see improvement by 20 percent or more in math or reading proficiencies among one or more subgroups, without seeing achievement declines by 5 percent or more among any other segment of students. This year's honorees are:

Atlantic: reading, third and sixth grades (SES)*

Centerville: reading, fifth grade (SES)

Central Decatur: reading, fourth and eighth grade (SES)

Clinton: reading (IEP)**

Colfax-Mingo: math, eighth grade (SES)

Hampton-Dumont: math, eleventh grade (SES)

Lewis Central: math, fifth grade (SES)

MFL-MarMac: reading, seventh grade (SES)

Sergeant Bluff-Luton: math, eighth grade (SES)

Spencer: reading, third and fifth grades (SES)

*Lower Socio-economic status

**Special Education

Early Childhood Preschool Programs

One down, two to go for GOLD Online Assessment



The first of three required checkpoints for preschools and child-care centers participating in *GOLD* Online has been completed. The remaining checkpoints are Feb. 1 and May 30. Child data are entered for each of the objectives in the developmental areas of Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Mathematics. Data for objectives in the content areas of Science and Technology, Social Studies and the Arts will not be required for the 2011-12 school year.

For information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for 4-year-old children, please contact Judy Russell at 515-281-4705

or Judy.Russell@iowa.gov or Penny Milburn at 515-281-7844 or Penny.Milburn@iowa.gov.

Required lead testing begins in kindergarten, not preschool

Documentation for blood lead testing is not included in the required health records of preschool students. The law requiring blood lead testing (Iowa Code section 135.105D) does not affect children prior to their enrollment in kindergarten. Districts should not request blood lead test results from the parents of children in the preschool. Information on vision and/or hearing screenings typically are included in the documentation for this criterion. Preschools may want to remind parents to have their children tested for lead poisoning and to contact their local public health offices for more information.

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2011 NAEP results are a call to action

The 2011 NAEP results cover mathematics and reading for grades 4 and 8. The nation's results show substantial gains in those key measures from 2009 to 2011. The long-term trend for Iowa shows a troubling pattern of students falling to the middle of the pack across the board, from disadvantaged and minority students to white, relatively affluent students. White students, who make up about 80 percent of Iowa's student population, have fallen behind their white peers nationally. This problem persists across the assessed grade levels and content areas. Findings from the 2011 NAEP results include:

- Iowa's average score in fourth-grade reading (221) is lower than the state's score in 1992 (225) and is unchanged from the state's score in 2009 (221).
- Iowa has posted a two-point gain in eighth-grade mathematics since 1992, the smallest increase in the country. The largest gains have been made in North Carolina (28 points) and in Texas and Massachusetts (26 points).
- Iowa's white students rank in the bottom 10 percent of states and jurisdictions nationally in eighth-grade reading and in the bottom 25 percent in fourth-grade reading, fourth-grade math and eighth-grade math.
- The gap in achievement between students in Iowa with and without disabilities is among the worst in the nation.

The 2011 NAEP results represent a call to action. On Oct. 3, the Branstad-Reynolds administration and Director Glass introduced a set of bold reforms. The education blueprint focused on great teachers and leaders, high expectations for students with fair measures, and a spirit of innovation in schools. NAEP results can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/>



Cormack at the Capitol

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

From time to time, I will do my best to provide some insight in this column on what is taking place at your Iowa State Capitol when it comes to educational issues. Education is the largest item in the state budget. The impact of educational decisions matters for years to come for Iowans of all ages.

As a reader of this publication, I know you have a strong interest in the Iowa educational system and would like to learn more as a leader in this field. Hopefully, this column will be helpful to you in doing just that in coming months. It is humbling to join the Iowa Department of Education and to assist in this role.

As an introduction, I have had experience both in elected office and in the classroom. Seventeen years ago, as a recent college graduate, I ran for the Iowa House of Representatives in the Fort Dodge area. The people in Iowa House District 13 allowed me to serve my home county for four terms. At that point, I decided that it was time to move on from elected politics. It will always be an honor to me to have been a member of the Iowa House of Representatives. Since that time, I have been a social studies teacher, coach and middle school athletic director at CAM (Cumberland-Anita-Massena) Schools prior to joining the department this year. Working with quality parents, administrators, staff and students was another personal highlight. It is my hope that the lessons I've learned from my previous experiences will help as a policy liaison for the department.

As a legislator and as a teacher, I was surprised at how many Iowans have never visited their State Capitol. The lawmakers begin work in January and work until completion of the state budget. The Capitol is much like a school building on a school day during the session, with activity throughout the building. When the Iowa General Assembly finishes its work, the building is much quieter and reminds me of a school building during the summertime. Whatever season the Capitol is visited, I am sure you will enjoy it. It is amazing to me that in an era before modern construction techniques, such a building could ever be built.



I urge you to visit the Iowa Capitol if you haven't already done so and marvel at this building. Then, let us remember that if our state could build this so early into our statehood, that anything is truly possible if we put our minds to it.

We are fortunate to be stewards of this state and the educational system within it. If you do find yourself in the Capitol during the session, feel free to visit. Also, drop me an email if you have questions about the legislative process during the next session. Best wishes in all that you do for Iowa education.



Legal Lessons

Contact Carol Greta for all Legal Lessons items: carol.greta@iowa.gov or 515-281-8661.

Confidential access, administrative rules, and physical exams

School Visitation and the Iowa Department of Human Services

School administrators need the following information when a Department of Human Services (DHS) employee comes to school asking for confidential access to a student.

Child Abuse Investigations – Confidential Access to Child at School

If the DHS employee is a Child Protection Worker (CPW), which is also designated as SWIII, this employee is a social worker who does indeed get confidential access to the child. “Confidential access to a child” means that the CPW may interview, observe and/or examine a child with no prior notice to the child’s parents. (Section 232.73 grants immunity to school officials who cooperate with DHS.) Confidential access is used by DHS when the child’s safety or immediate needs warrant it.

When a CPW arrives at a school requesting confidential access, the CPW may provide school administrators with a letter that explains the nature of the visit. School administrators should request to see proper identification. Upon verification, school administrators should cooperate with the CPW and allow confidential access to the child for the purpose of interviewing the child, as well as providing confidential access to other children who may have information relevant to the child abuse investigation.

While it is not necessary for a witness to be present during the interview with the child, a witness is required if the CPW makes an “observation” of the child. It is the responsibility of the CPW to determine whether to request school personnel to participate in the assessment process as a witness during an observation of the child. *(For example, the Child Protective Worker may ask that a school nurse be present while observing bruising on a child.)* An “observation” is defined in Iowa Code section 232.68(3) (b) as:

“...direct physical viewing of a child under the age of four by the child protection worker where the viewing is limited to the child’s body other than the genitalia and pubes ...[or] ... direct physical viewing of a child aged four or older by the child protection worker without touching the child or removing an article of the child’s clothing, and doing so without the consent of the child’s parent, custodian, or guardian. A child protection worker is not precluded from recording evidence of abuse obtained as a result of a child’s voluntary removal of an article of clothing without inducement by the child protection worker. However, if prior consent of the child’s parent or guardian, or an ex parte court order, is obtained, “observation” may include viewing the child’s unclothed body other than the genitalia and pubes.”

Reasons Other Than Child Abuse Investigations

DHS is the legal custodian of a child placed in foster care. As such, a DHS case manager who has oversight for the child’s placement may visit a foster care child at school with or without prior parental notification or approval. Upon arriving, the case manager should provide identification. Then, as is the case when a parent comes to school seeking access to the parent’s child, the school administrator must determine whether the request is reasonable, making sure that the visit does not unduly interrupt the student’s education.

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Legal Lessons

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Just as a parent has no automatic right to have access to the parent's child at school, there is no automatic right of a non-CPW to have access to a student at school. Obviously, a court order must be obeyed if the DHS employee has a court order giving the employee access to a student. School administrators are urged to comply with reasonable requests, and if the school administrator determines that the visit needs to be rescheduled or relocated, the school should work with the DHS employee to accomplish that quickly and effectively.

DE Administrative Rules

The State Board of Education will meet on Nov.16 in Des Moines (State Board Room, Grimes State Office Building). As noted in prior SLUs, it is anticipated that the Board will adopt rule changes as summarized below. The rules calendar on the Iowa Department of Education's website includes links to the full wording of all specific changes. The rules calendar is at http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=4213.

21, Community Colleges

The changes all pertain to the Drinking Driver Courses that must be offered by community colleges.

22, Senior Year Plus Program

Item 1 expands the criteria by which a student under competent private instruction (home-schooling) may be deemed "proficient" under Iowa Code section 261E.3, subsection 1, paragraph e. The additional means were detailed in the September issue of School Leader Update.

Items 2 and 3 amend the definition of, and details regarding, regional academies. A regional academy may now include grades 7 and 8, as well as grades 9 through 12. The regional academy must still be established and hosted by a school district, but the list of possible partners is expanded to include other school districts, community colleges, other post-secondary institutions, and private businesses.

SEE NOTE on next page regarding transportation.

24, Community College Accreditation

These changes edit matters of accreditation of community colleges.

32, High School Equivalency Diploma (GED)

The scoring of the five tests was changed a few years ago by the General Educational Development Testing Service; the first rule edit conforms to that change. The other edits change the amount of fees charged for various functions because the fees, which have not been raised in over 20 years, have not been sufficient to cover the DE's costs.

102, Investigating Incidents of Abuse of Students by School Employees

The proposed amendment conforms to 2011 Iowa Acts, House File 645, section 95, requiring certain duties of the board of directors of a school district and the authorities in charge of a nonpublic school when an employee is under investigation for an allegation of abuse under these rules and when a finding is made that an employee's conduct constitutes a crime.

Also at its November 16 meeting, the State Board of Education will be asked to start the rule making process for these two chapters:

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Legal Lessons continued

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12, Accreditation Standards

These changes include the following:

- Schools no longer will be required to have proof of physical exams in each employee's personnel file [rescinding rule 12.4 (14)]
- Twenty-first century learning skills are added [12.5(17)]
- Terms of permitting non-high school students to take high school courses for high school credit are added [12.5(4)“1”]

99, Business Procedures and Deadlines (NEW Chapter of rules)

In this chapter of rules appear some annual deadlines of LEAs and AEAs for filing reports to the DE such as annual transportation report, CAR-COA, facilities, elections & SAVE report, certified budget, etc.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT proposed rule regarding transportation obligation for concurrent enrollment courses: The State Board of Education will be asked at its November meeting to terminate this rulemaking until the Department gets more clarification from the Legislature as to who must make available transportation to and from the community college for concurrent enrollment courses.

Speaking of Administrative Rules...

One great way for anyone to keep abreast of agency rule changes is to subscribe to the Legislature's listserv for agency rule changes. Simply go to this link:

<http://www.legis.iowa.gov/IowaLaw/AdminCode/adminLaw.aspx>. At the middle of the page is the caption, "Additional Information & Resources." About seven lines down from that caption is "Subscribe to Agency Rule Changes via E-mail." Click on that, select the agency rules about which you want to receive email (choices include Education Department, School Budget Review Committee, Board of Educational Examiners, among 110 choices), fill in your email address, and you will be the first on your block to know what is happening with administrative rules.

Require proof of fitness *after* the employment offer

School districts and accredited nonpublic schools are reminded that if they need proof of a new employee's fitness to perform the essential tasks assigned to the employee, such proof can only be required after an offer of employment is made or within six weeks of the beginning of service.

The Iowa Department of Education has received a complaint that schools are including this requirement as part of the *interviewing* process. To do so would be a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Make sure that the requirement to have a certification of fitness addresses the essential tasks assigned for the job in question and that it comes after the offer of employment is made.



Multimedia contest worth cash, national recognition for kids

Calling all creative students, ages 13 and up: The National Archives and Environmental Protection Agency have announced a “Document Your Environment” contest, which draws inspiration from environmental photos from the 1970s. Students create any type of graphic art, short video or poetry using a Documerica photo as a prompt. The winner receives \$500, while finalists qualify for exhibits with the National Archives and the EPA. Entries will be accepted through Jan. 6.

Read more at <http://documerica.challenge.gov/>.

Calendar

- November 1 • Innovative Calendar Waiver Application due
- November 1 • Special Education Student Weighting Calculated
- November 1 • Whole Grade Share, last day for public notice of Board intent
- November 1 • SINA / DINA Plans due
- November 1 • CSI: Addendums due for DINA 1 and 2
- December 1 • School Board Officers Report
- December 1 • Juvenile Home Requests for Educational Program Services
- December 5 • Dropout Verification Site opens

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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