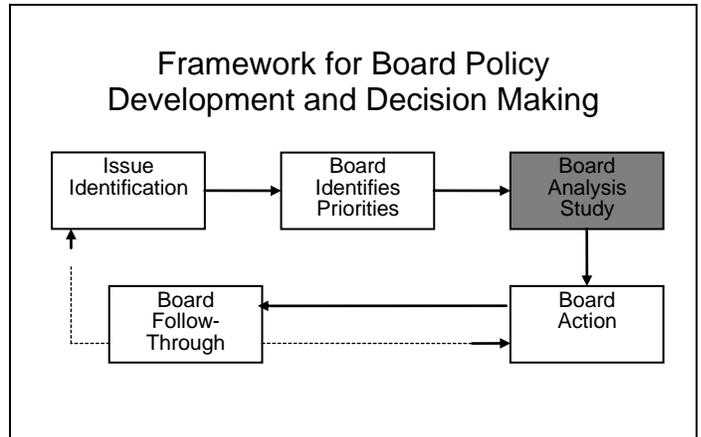


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 16, 2011



Agenda Item: Discussion of Specially Accredited School Status

Iowa Goals: All K-12 students will achieve at a high level.

Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success.

Equity Impact Statement:

The intent of the State Board is that students enrolled in “specially accredited” schools have the same quality education with the same protections as students at fully accredited schools.

Presenter: Carol Greta, Attorney
Office of the Director

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board receive, discuss, and analyze the information presented.

Background: Members of the State Board have asked for information about this status.

Specially Accredited College Preparatory Schools

State Board members have asked for more information about schools that are recognized as specially accredited college prep schools. The authorizing statute, enacted in 1967, is Iowa Code section 256.11(13), which states as follows:

13. Notwithstanding subsections 1 through 12 and as an exception to their requirements, a private high school or private combined junior-senior high school operated for the express purpose of teaching a program designed to qualify its graduates for matriculation at accredited four-year or equivalent liberal arts, scientific, or technological colleges or universities shall be placed on a special accredited list of college preparatory schools, which list shall signify accreditation of the school for that express purpose only, if:

a. The school complies with minimum standards established by the Code other than this section, and rules adopted under the Code, applicable to:

- (1) Courses comprising the limited program.
- (2) Health requirements for personnel.
- (3) Plant facilities.
- (4) Other environmental factors affecting the programs.

b. At least eighty percent of those graduating from the school within the four most recent calendar years, other than those graduating who are aliens, graduates entering military or alternative civilian service, or graduates deceased or incapacitated before college acceptance, have been accepted by accredited four-year or equivalent liberal arts, scientific, or technological colleges or universities.

c. A school claiming to be a private college preparatory school which fails to comply with the requirement of paragraph “b” of this subsection shall be placed on the special accredited list of college preparatory schools probationally if the school complies with the requirements of paragraph “a” of this subsection, but a probational accreditation shall not continue for more than four successive years.

Absent from the statute is a requirement that instructional staff be licensed by the Board of Educational Examiners. When this category of school was created, the legislative history states that the intent at that time was to exempt teachers hired by such schools (there were only two such schools at that time - Scattergood and what is now Rivermont) from state licensure. No requirement for licensure also means none of the following are present:

1. Criminal background check
2. Ability to file a complaint with the BoEE
3. Mandatory reporter of child abuse

Curricular requirements

Section 256.11(13) refers to offering "courses comprising the limited program." The DE interprets this to mean meeting the "offer and teach" requirements in accreditation rules, with the exception of vocational and technical courses.

Outcomes standard

The statutory standard is that 80% of the school's graduates "have been accepted by accredited four-year or equivalent liberal arts, scientific, or technological colleges or universities." This statute was passed in 1967, and while the wording in the statute has not been altered, external factors have certainly changed since then. We now expect all students to be ready and to seek postsecondary education.