



STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

DATE: October 9, 2009

TO: Public School District Superintendents
Area Education Agency Administrators

FROM: Kevin Fangman, Administrator
Division of PK-12 Education

Roger Utman, Administrator
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

SUBJECT: The 8th Grade Plan and Iowa Code 279.61

=====

In 2008-2009, more than 23,838 8th grade students developed career and educational plans electronically on Iowa Choices. Congratulations to the students and to the educational staff that provided assistance to the students. The report is available on the Department of Education's website at www.iowa.gov/educate under Career Planning - 8th Grade Plan. Although this is a good beginning at an electronic career planning process, there are data gaps on schools or groups of students who did not begin or finish their student portfolio. The following information will provide some guidance on the 8th grade plan and the 2008 legislative requirements.

Iowa Code 279.61 requires Iowa schools to work with students enrolled in 8th grade to create a plan which shall include career options and shall identify coursework needed in grades 9-12 to support the student's postsecondary education and career options. The state-designated system for career and educational information is now called **ihaveaplaniowa** (www.ihaveaplaniowa.gov), which is an enhanced version of the Iowa Choices system used previously. The Iowa Code also requires the student to have a timeline to complete all the state components of the system before the student graduates from high school, and to have completed the state graduation and Iowa Core Curriculum requirements.

Iowa students using **ihaveaplaniowa** create an electronic individual student portfolio attached to their school district or school building. Beginning in the 8th grade year, the student will complete the state components for each grade which are contained within

the Guideway section of **ihaveaplaniowa**. Guideways are a specific section for Iowa students and contain the developmentally appropriate career activities that are needed for that grade level. A student will continue to add activities, review, and revise their career and educational plan throughout their school years to complete the timeline.

Each Iowa student in the 8th and 9th grade is expected to complete the grade level Guideway to provide the school data on the career planning process of the 8th grade plan. The school or district aggregate student data are provided to Iowa's partner agencies – the Department of Education and the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. No additional data collection process is needed. If a district does not use the state designated system, the district must provide the information required to be aggregated at the state level and must provide the components at each high school grade level. A spreadsheet file is available at http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1657&Itemid=2467 for districts that choose not to use **ihaveaplaniowa**.

Implementation of the Guideways and state components is on a yearly basis. The current group of 8th and 9th graders will complete the Guideways for their grade level for the school year 2009-10. In 2010-11, 8th, 9th, and 10th graders will complete their Guideway to continue the career planning process and timeline, and so on until their high school graduation. After graduation, the individual student portfolio, established in the 8th grade, will have the capacity to be accessed by the student in a postsecondary institution or college, or in the workforce.

To provide more guidance and resources to assist the schools and their staff, a cross-divisional team of educational consultants at the Department of Education has been created for the 8th grade plan process. This team includes:

Primary Contact:

Sandra Dop Sandra.Dop@iowa.gov or 515-281-0127

Resource Contacts for Career Planning:

Janice Kuhl Janice.Kuhl@iowa.gov or 515-281-3552

Rita Martens Rita.Martens@iowa.gov or 515-281-3145

Linda Berg Linda.Berg@iowa.gov or 515-242-5032

If you need assistance or would like some individual help on the 8th grade plan requirements, please contact the above team members for information. Thank you.