



# School Leader Update

A MONTHLY JOURNAL  
FOR IOWA EDUCATORS

April 2017

## New online licensing system for renewal applications

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BoEE) is transitioning to a new online licensing system.

Most applications, including renewals, are now being processed in this new system.

Paper renewal applications received after April 1 will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant. Pass this information on to all licensed staff members in your building.

Now is a great time to recycle any paper renewal applications that may be in storage since they are out-of-date and no longer accepted. Paper applications that are viewable on the [BoEE website](#) in either a Word or PDF format will still be accepted.



## In This Issue

- Statewide TLC survey..Pg. 3
  - Gifted education..Pg. 4
- Iowa Core resources ..Pg.5

## Ever-changing world: Let's pause for thought

Being late usually carries negative consequences. However, in *Thank You For Being Late*, Thomas Friedman turns tardiness into opportunity. He uses an instance in which a friend was running behind to reflect upon a rapidly changing world.

Friedman highlights several trends impacting education and the workforce in this "age of accelerations:"

- In 2015, the majority of students in K-12 public schools were from minority backgrounds.
- Students on free and reduced-price lunch programs are at an all-time high.
- By 2020, according to a report by the Georgetown University Center of Education and the Workforce, 65 percent of all jobs will require some postsecondary education and training.



**Director Ryan Wise**

His conclusion? "Everyone is going to have to raise their game in the classroom and for their whole lifetime. What those numbers tell you is that we truly cannot afford to leave any child behind anymore... What those numbers also tell you is that leadership matters more than ever." Instead of being overwhelmed by the pace of change, he calls readers to pause, reflect and reimagine.

This advice excites me. Each day I see lowans raising their game while also pausing to ask the question, how do we create an education system that prepares all students to be successful in an ever-changing world?

One example of this reflection is the Future Ready Iowa Alliance.

*Continued on page 2*

# More students on track for reading proficiency

A statewide effort by Iowa schools to catch and correct reading problems in students early on is showing progress, according to a [policy brief](#) released by the Iowa Department of Education. Nearly 9,000 students in kindergarten through third grade who had fallen short of benchmarks in reading in the fall of 2015 met or surpassed benchmarks by the spring of 2016, an increase of 4.2 percentage points. Increases in the highest-growth school districts ranged from 19.5 to 32.2 percentage points.

While the ability to read is important at all levels, research shows third grade is an important gateway grade, when children transition from “learning to read” and begin “reading to learn.” [Read more.](#)

## ***Continued from page 1***

The Alliance, led by Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds and Principal Financial Group CEO Dan Houston, is developing recommendations to ensure 70 percent of Iowans in the workforce have education or training beyond high school. They are considering recommendations that would expand high-quality work-based learning experiences, build relationships to support student success through the effective use of counselors and mentoring, and ensure effective academic and career development.

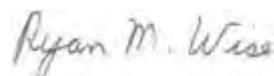
Iowa’s State Board of Education is also committed to ensuring our education system prepares all students for future success. At its March meeting, the State Board engaged in a conversation with the student-led Community for Racial Equity (CORE) team from Des Moines Public Schools, whose mission is to overcome educational obstacles by educating, encouraging, and empowering students of color to strive for excellence. The Board also discussed the recently released [Closing the Achievement Gap Report](#) from the Iowa Department of Education as part of its ongoing work to close opportunity and achievement gaps for all students.

While reaching the Future Ready goal and achieving equitable outcomes for all will not be easy, we are not starting from scratch. The State’s significant investments in early literacy; teacher leadership; high quality science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) experiences; and a revitalized approach to career and technical education (CTE) have set us on the right path.

*Thank You For Being Late* reinforces why these efforts are critical in an era of globalization and rapid technological change. Friedman emphasizes that current and future middle class jobs “require more knowledge and education to perform successfully. To compete for such jobs you need more of the three Rs – reading, writing, and arithmetic – and more of the four Cs – creativity, collaboration, communication, and coding.” He also explains that “the highest paying jobs in the future will be *stempathy* jobs – jobs that combine strong science and technology skills with the ability to empathize with another human being.”

Iowa is at the front end of retooling our education system in alignment with this advice. Our college and career readiness definition emphasizes not only the content knowledge that students need for success, but also the skills to navigate transitions through and beyond school as learners and leaders. And each week, I visit schools and classrooms with a clear vision for preparing students to be future ready.

While I don’t typically encourage lateness, I do hope each of us finds time to pause and reflect as we enter the final months of this academic year. I wish you all a strong finish as we look ahead to a rapidly changing future full of possibility!



## Game-changer: Successfully ramping up

Tynne Sulser strived to be a good teacher. She worked hard. She loved her students. And a majority of her kids were proficient in reading.

But then the third grade teacher and her colleagues at Lakeview Elementary in Centerville learned the jaw-dropping news: If less than 80 percent of the students in a classroom are proficient in reading, there is a problem in the delivery of core instruction. Perhaps it is what is being taught. Perhaps it's how it is taught. Perhaps it is both.

That was in the 2013-14 school year, when the school became a pilot for work done through Collaborating for Iowa's Kids, or C4K, which is a statewide partnership among the Iowa Department of Education, Area Education Agencies and school districts. [Read more.](#)



Tynne Sulser

## Statewide TLC survey is under way

All Iowa public school teachers and administrators are encouraged to provide feedback on a [Teacher Leadership and Compensation \(TLC\) survey](#). The survey closes April 7.

The findings from the survey will allow the Iowa Department of Education to determine if TLC is making progress toward achieving its intended goals. In addition, feedback will be used by the Commission on Educator Leadership and Compensation and the Statewide TLC Support Group to determine support for districts and to make recommendations on the system as a whole.



Finally, the results of the survey, along with the results of the Department's other TLC evaluation efforts, will be shared with stakeholders throughout the state to communicate the impact of TLC.

The study is being conducted by the [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#), an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit research organization. The survey is anonymous with no way to track the responses back to individuals who complete the survey. More information can be found [here](#).

## Iowa Learning Online survey, enrollment

Iowa Learning Online (ILO) is conducting a survey for the summer 2017 term to better meet the needs of schools and students. If you are a school administrator or counselor, please complete the [summer survey](#).

ILO is currently accepting enrollments for the summer semester. All schools may pass on the costs of ILO courses to parents/guardians (during the summer term only). Each summer course enrollment includes a four-week trial/grace period. Local schools will be responsible for collecting the \$250 per course enrollment fee from parents/guardians for students remaining in courses after the drop date. After the grace period ends, the local school will be billed \$250 per enrollment.

View the [course descriptions](#), [log in](#) or [sign up](#) to enroll students. For registration questions, contact [registrar@iowalearningonline.org](mailto:registrar@iowalearningonline.org) or view our [waiting list procedures](#).

## Professional development available for gifted education

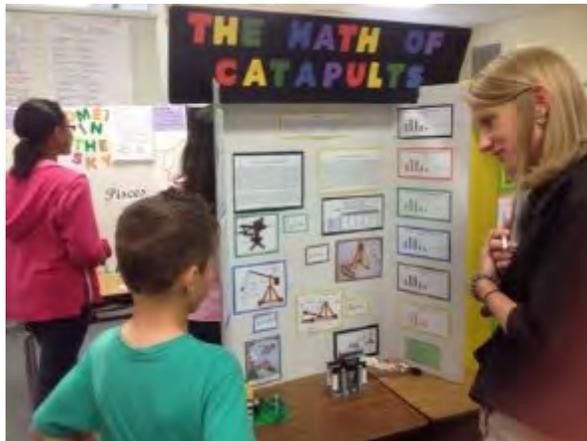
Classroom teachers, language arts teachers, mathematics teachers, teachers of gifted programming and curriculum directors are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities pertaining to gifted learners. Registration is at no cost to participants. Online registration begins April 12 for the following opportunities:

### **Differentiating Mathematics Standards for Gifted Learners**

Differentiation for Mathematics Standards for Gifted and Advanced Learners will be offered on May 22, and May 23 at a Des Moines-area location. Nationally recognized researcher and author Dr. Linda Sheffield is the presenter for each day. This professional development day is designed to add rigor, depth, complexity, creativity, and enjoyment to the Iowa Core Mathematics content and practice standards through engaging, practical, and differentiated support for gifted and advanced learners.

To register for May 22, click [here](#).

To register for May 23, click [here](#)



For questions, contact Rosanne Malek at 515-281-3199 or [rosanne.malek@iowa.gov](mailto:rosanne.malek@iowa.gov).

### **Differentiating Writing Standards for Gifted Learners**

Differentiating Writing Standards for Gifted Learners will be offered May 24, and May 25, at a Des Moines-area location. Nationally recognized researcher and author Dr. Elizabeth Shaunessy-Dedrick is the presenter for each day. This professional development will detail the developmental stages and challenges inherent to instructing writing to gifted and advanced learners.

To register for May 24, click [here](#).

To register for May 25, click [here](#).

For questions, contact Rosanne Malek at 515-281-3199 or [rosanne.malek@iowa.gov](mailto:rosanne.malek@iowa.gov).



# New: Iowa Core Literacy Resources subject pages launched

Visit the new Iowa Core Literacy Resources subject pages on [IowaCore.gov](http://IowaCore.gov) under the [Educator Resources](#) tab. The Statewide Literacy Leadership Team, made up of members from area education agencies, school districts, and institutes of higher education, collaborated to select the content of these pages with resources in the areas of English language arts / literacy instruction, assessment, and professional development that support all students in meeting Iowa's academic expectations. Included in the new subject pages are:

**Instruction** - Resources to help educators understand and implement the Iowa Core Literacy Standards, as well as build knowledge of how to select instructional materials aligned to the standards.

- ◇ [Literacy Content and Anchor Standards](#)
- ◇ [Instructional Practice](#)
- ◇ [Instructional Resources](#)

**Assessment** - Tools for educators to participate in assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

- ◇ [Best Practices in Assessment](#)
- ◇ [Standardized Assessments](#)

**Professional Development** - A variety of professional learning opportunities to engage all educators in improving literacy instruction.

- ◇ [Professional Learning Resources](#)
- ◇ [Self-Paced Professional Learning](#)
- ◇ [Professional Events](#)

For questions, contact Destiny Eldridge at 515-281-6235 or [destiny.eldridge@iowa.gov](mailto:destiny.eldridge@iowa.gov).

The screenshot displays the Iowa Core Literacy Resources website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Adult, Career, and Community College, PK-12, Data & Reporting, Resources, and Education Jobs. Below the navigation is the Iowa CORE logo and a search bar. A yellow banner with the text "Literacy Resources" is prominently displayed. The main content area features a photograph of diverse children reading books together. To the right of the photograph is a text box with the heading "STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTS MINIMAL REVISIONS TO IOWA CORE LITERACY STANDARDS" and a button that says "See the revised Literacy standards".

## Learning supports conference scheduled for May 9

The Iowa Department of Education's 2017 Learning Supports Conference is scheduled for May 9 and 10. The Department consultants for Early Childhood (EC) PBIS, Shared Visions, School-wide PBIS, and Challenging Behaviors extend this opportunity to Iowa's preschool through 12th grade educational community.



This event will be held at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines. There are no registration fees for this event but there is a cash-only parking fee of \$8 per car. Event details and [registration](#) can be found on the Department website. Registration deadline is May 2.

For questions, contact Amanda Winslow at 515-242-5104 or [amanda.winslow@iowa.gov](mailto:amanda.winslow@iowa.gov).

## Annual report on statewide progress available for viewing

The Iowa Department of Education is required to issue an annual report on 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 David Tilly at [david.tilly@iowa.gov](mailto:david.tilly@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3333.



## Register now for high school course coding workshops

There is still time to [register](#) for the High School Course Coding Workshops being provided by the Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) team. Participation is strongly encouraged for any staff member who works with high school course coding. Non-participating districts will likely have numerous frustrations with Fall SRI reporting since many current course codes will no longer be valid for the 2017-18 school year.

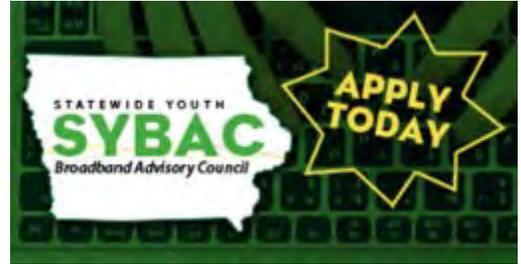
**Spring SRI:** The test sites for Spring SRI and Assessment Accountability (aka AYP) will open the week of April 10. It is always a good idea to use the test sites to clean up as many errors as possible prior to crunch time in late May and June. Contact a member of the SRI team if you have any questions.

High School Course Coding Workshops	
April 4	Storm Lake
April 6	Council Bluffs
April 10	Des Moines
April 11	Cedar Rapids
April 12	Cedar Falls
April 13	Clear Lake

## ICN broadband student ambassadors needed

Iowa Communications Network (ICN) is accepting student applications for its Statewide Youth Broadband Advisory Council (SYBAC) for the 2017-18 school year. The application deadline is April 14.

SYBAC engages high school students on a variety of broadband-related topics to identify trends and strategies to improve broadband connectivity. This year's SYBAC students have discussed a range of topics including: the Internet of Things (IoT), expanding broadband availability in rural areas, wireless access, infrastructure, and cybersecurity.



Students entering 10th - 12th grades during the 2017-18 school year may apply for membership. Students selected will be notified by ICN in May. Meetings will take place monthly, from September 2017 through May 2018, via video conference, teleconference, and/or in-person. Council members also will communicate via email. Students interested in participating should visit

## ICN's premier managed firewall service, AramidFW

AramidFW, a dynamic firewall service, integrates Iowa Communication Network's (ICN) intelligent network fabric for 24/7 protection, and is a front line defense that is designed to prevent unauthorized virtual access. With AramidFW, education users gain a secure service that delivers an advanced and highly intelligent solution to defend against cybersecurity attacks.

By adopting the AramidFW solution, Iowa Communication Network's (ICN) Internet customers will also receive added security value including: firewall migration, hardware assurance plan protection, and access to a proactive threat library that pushes real-time updates. AramidFW is an advanced-feature firewall service that integrates Unified Threat Management into the service offering.

- Firewall
- Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- Intrusion Prevention Service (IPS)
- Web Filtering
- Anti-Malware
- Wi-Fi Controller
- Advanced Threat Protection



### Added Security Value

- Firewall Migration
- Hardware Assurance Plan Protection
- Proactive Threat Library Access

For more information, visit <https://icn.iowa.gov/services/aramidfw> or contact ICN's account consultants at [ICN.CSS@iowa.gov](mailto:ICN.CSS@iowa.gov).

# ProStart competition advances student winners to nationals

The Iowa Restaurant Association Education Foundation hosted 11 culinary teams and four restaurant management teams at this year's State ProStart Invitational. Nearly 40 industry professional judges critiqued each team and provided feedback to encourage students in their future culinary and management endeavors.

Waterloo West and Sergeant Bluff-Luton will advance to compete in the National ProStart Invitational April 28-30 in Charleston, S.C. For more information on the contest, click [here](#).

ProStart is a two-year educational program supported by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. This career-building program blends classroom learning with mentored work experience to teach high school students the management and culinary skills needed for a career in the restaurant and food-service industry.



2017 Iowa ProStart Invitational Culinary Champions from Waterloo West High School: ProStart Educator Tracey Hulme, Cailey Hall, Taylor Larson, Emily Reinertson, Bryn Shippy, Rayven Smith, and culinary mentor Blake Landau.



Students who meet academic standards, complete a checklist of competencies, and work at least 400 hours in the industry are awarded the ProStart National Certificate of Achievement that signifies they are well qualified to enter the industry workforce. Click [here](#) for more information.

2017 Iowa ProStart Invitational Restaurant Management Champions from Sergeant Bluff-Luton High School: ProStart Educator Andrea Kuhl, Bradee Bouman, Alijah Ridley, Heather Collins, Cierra Ellington, and Jakob Dunlap.

## 2017 Iowa ProStart Educator of Excellence

Waterloo West's Tracey Hulme has been named Iowa's nominee for the 2017 National ProStart Educator of Excellence Award. Tracey has worked hard to build the program and consistently produces winning culinary teams at the Iowa Invitational.

In an effort to combine classroom learning with real-life, industry experiences, Tracey has successfully implemented mentoring into her lesson plans. She has forged relationships with several award-winning chefs in the Waterloo area and continues to lead the pack among Iowa ProStart schools in engaging mentors. Tracey makes every effort to help open doors for her students to connect with hospitality industry professionals through mentorship, regular field trips, and guest speakers and demonstrations.

Tracey participates in professional development opportunities annually to continue her education and implement best practices into her classroom. She is a strong advocate for the [ProStart program](#) across Iowa.

[Read more](#) and view photos of the culinary competition.



Tracey Hulme

## Students encouraged to enter Juneteenth essay contest

Iowa students in grade 9-11 are invited to celebrate 152 years of Juneteenth by entering an essay contest. Juneteenth is an international observance marking the end of slavery in the United States on June 19, 1865. The purpose of the contest is to help young people appreciate scholarship, cultural diversity, and community relations, according to the Iowa Juneteenth Observance, which organized the contest. This year's essay theme is: "How do you work together with others when there are conflicting ideologies and moral standards?"

The deadline for entries is April 25. Winners will be honored with trophies and gift cards at the Iowa Juneteenth Observance awards ceremony in Des Moines. Contest requirements and entry forms can be found [here](#). For more information, contact Dwana Bradley at the Iowa Juneteenth Observance at [dwanaabradley77@gmail.com](mailto:dwanaabradley77@gmail.com).

## C4K leadership webinar offered April 20, 1:30-3 p.m.

C4K Leadership Webinars are offered monthly allowing for ongoing professional learning and support for state administrators related to the tools and resources for Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the early literacy initiative. In addition to tools and resources, the webinars intentionally link to the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL), put the learning into actual leadership practice, and make connections and staying ahead of potentially new initiatives, laws and expectations through Differentiated Accountability. These webinars are being developed by a team representing schools, Area Education Agencies, and the Iowa Department of Education who serve in various leadership roles. The team is designing the webinars based on the feedback and the needs of administrators and leaders in the field. Each webinar is focused on helping administrators navigate and align the demands of their time and provide a relentless effort in supporting instructional practices and improving student learning.

**Webinar topic: Linking Data to Instruction through Highly Effective Teams (PLC)**

**April 20, 2017 1:30 - 3 p.m.**

**Zoom link: <https://heartlandaea.zoom.us/j/3729173072>**

[Link to past and future webinars](#)



## Small-school science program makes a dent in N. America



A small rural school in south central Iowa was one of 18 district winners throughout the U.S. and Canada that were honored for its innovative science education despite lacking resources. Twin Cedars Junior and Senior High in Bussey received the honor for its application and [video](#) to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). Science Teacher Mauree Haage had to prove in her application that, despite outdated facilities, she had found innovative ways to deliver quality lab experiences. [Read more.](#)

## Bringing World War I into the Iowa classroom

When the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917, Iowans by and large supported it. Though the war had been ranging on in Europe for about three years, U.S. officials could no longer ignore the unrestricted sinking of unarmed merchant ships at the hands of German U-boats. Worse, they learned through an intercepted telegram that Germany was trying to woo Mexico, in which that government was promised U.S. land in exchange for joining forces with Germany. [Read more.](#)



## Public comment sought for Volkswagen settlement

The state of Iowa is seeking public input until April 28 on how to spend approximately \$21 million obtained from the recently announced Volkswagen (VW) Settlement. Replacement of older diesel-powered school buses would be an eligible project. Iowa has developed a new [VW Settlement website](#) to provide information about the settlement and to collect input on how the state should plan for using the funds.



The Volkswagen Settlement resolves allegations that Volkswagen violated the Clean Air Act by selling approximately 590,000 model year 2009 to 2016 diesel motor vehicles equipped with “defeat devices” in the United States. These devices, in the form of computer software, were designed to cheat on federal emissions tests. As a result, the state of Iowa is expected to receive approximately \$21 million in environmental mitigation trust funds over the next 10 years set aside specifically for projects that reduce emission of nitrogen oxides (NOx).

The public comment period will be open until April 28. Once all public comments have been collected, a working group comprised of officials from several state agencies and coordinated by the Iowa Department of Transportation will develop a mitigation plan that will be submitted to the VW settlement trustee.

The Iowa website also provides a [subscription service](#) for those who would like to receive updates on the progress of the mitigation plan and the overall settlement.

## Perchance to dream...Students virtually land good-paying jobs

Two schools are teaching students to dream. And those dreams served up at Forest City and Charles City high schools in northern Iowa are virtually at the students' fingertips.

Thanks to an initiative through the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), the schools enable students with special needs the ability to virtually learn about good-paying jobs they never knew existed. Through the use of software, the schools have created a virtual learning environment, offering students a front seat in interacting with simulated objects, from a car engine to the human heart.

The hands-on exploration supplements classroom instruction, and opens the doors for the students to a work world they never knew existed. It gives them, firsthand, a chance to try on different career options.

[Read more.](#)



Ryan Eastvold and student Joey Paulson work together in a virtual learning environment.

# Early Childhood Preschool Programs

## GOLD® platform upgrade supports

In partnership with Teaching Strategies, all programs that are part of the Department's Umbrella Agreement will soon be receiving access to *MyTeachingStrategies*™ - an upgrade to their GOLD® account with new features and enhancements. Users will soon receive information from Teaching Strategies that will provide access to a preview of *MyTeachingStrategies*™ within their current GOLD® account allowing users to explore the new interface before the actual upgrade in August.

Register in advance to attend a [webinar](#) scheduled for April 14 from 1-2 p.m. The webinar will include an overview of the new user interface and some of the new features that will be available. The webinar will be recorded and posted to the [Teaching Strategies support page for Iowa](#).

Teaching Strategies has also developed [MyTeachingStrategies™ Administrator FAQs](#) and [MyTeachingStrategies™ Teacher FAQs](#) that will address many questions administrators and teachers may have about *MyTeachingStrategies*™.

The Department looks forward to sharing these exciting new features and opportunities with users in the near future.

For more information on the transition, contact Kimberly Villotti at 515-281-4709 or at [kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov](mailto:kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov).



## Renewal of Teaching Strategies GOLD®

Legislation in 2013 required the use of the GOLD® online system to assess every resident prekindergarten student or 4-year-old student enrolled in a district sponsored program, implying that all preschool children enrolled in a district - sponsored program would be assessed. Based on these requirements, districts and community partners should prepare to renew their existing agreements.

The existing GOLD® online contracts for programs utilizing the Iowa Department of Education's Umbrella Agreement will expire July 31. Iowa subscribers should have completed the renewal process prior to Aug. 1. This is necessary to avoid interruption in service. Administrators should watch for communication from Teaching Strategies regarding renewal in early May. Once the agreement is received by the district electronically, the agreement should be returned with signature and payment.

For programs for which a subscription agreement does not exist for the current year, the program will need to complete the form [Iowa Department of Education GOLD® Online Application](#) to sign up.

For information about GOLD® renewal, contact Kimberly Villotti at 515-281-4709 or [kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov](mailto:kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov), or [renewals@teachingstrategies.com](mailto:renewals@teachingstrategies.com), or go to the following link: <https://teachingstrategies.com/renewal/>.

# Nutrition and Health Services

## Healthy Schools — Healthy Students Project

Healthy Schools - Healthy Students Project is an initiative of the Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Program that aims to empower elementary students through school-based nutrition education, healthy school environments, promotion of school meals, and engagement of school staff, parents, and the community.

Schools that are selected will receive a \$1,000 sub-grant to support wellness activities. Additional funds will be available for each school to contract with a nutrition educator to deliver six lessons and taste-testing opportunities in fourth grade classrooms.

This project will begin next school year (2017-18).

Elementary schools that are interested in the opportunity are invited to complete an Application of Interest. Click to access the [Project Overview and Application](#). Applications are due April 21.

Stay Connected! Facebook: [@healthyschoolsIA](#) Twitter: [@IAhealthyschool](#)

For more information, contact Carrie Scheidel at 515-281-4758 or [carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov](mailto:carrie.scheidel@iowa.gov).



## When children don't look forward to the summer break...

Stephanie Hawkins had a big dream.

"I just wanted to feed hungry kids," Hawkins said. And she would not rest until that dream became reality. Failure was not an option.

She knew it was a problem when she drove a school bus for the Davis County Community School District in southern Iowa. She knew it when she became a support services secretary. And when she became the district's food service manager, she acted.

[Read more.](#)



Staff and volunteers converted an old school bus to accommodate summer lunch service for children at seven locations throughout the Davis County Community School District.

## Nutrition and Health Services cont.

### Mobile gardens—a “growing” opportunity in Keokuk

Each year gardening projects at Hawthorne Elementary in the Keokuk Community School District involve more than just a few students and staff: It’s a collaborative effort with the entire district and community.

Consider:

- In early spring elementary students will start seeds in their classrooms using the seed starting center that includes forfeited grow lights provided by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force.
- The produce from the garden is utilized in Keokuk’s Summer Food Service Program and additional produce is brought for families to take home. Approximately 200 pounds of produce is given away to local families each summer.
- The garden’s raised beds were built by their Art & Industrial Tech club at the middle school.
- The beds were designed to be made into hoop houses by placing netting over them to keep out deer and rabbits; a local business donated the supplies.
- The local grocery donated gardening soil for the raised beds.
- Large recycled tin cans from the kitchen are used to protect transplanted seedlings.
- Kindergarteners painted wooden signs for the raised beds and butterfly garden.

This spring the school is adding an addition to its garden program, thanks to Chris Lindner, a local farmer and parent in the district, who has built 12 mobile garden carts for students. The carts will be used to grow produce in classrooms throughout the district.

The school district saw the benefits from wagons in a smaller project last year.

“The wagons provided the opportunity to grow produce all year long, even during Iowa’s winter months,” said Sarah Wetzel, food service director for the district. “There are so many applications for in the classroom, especially with science units. In addition, the special education teachers plan to utilize the carts as they provide sensory learning opportunities. With previous garden projects we have seen that kids learn better when they are actively engaged with hands-on activities and having a little fun along the way.”

The community partnerships have been essential to their success.

“We are very proud of our growing program in Keokuk,” Wetzel said. “Our partnerships have made the program sustainable and has provided the opportunity for expansion each year.”



### Department consultant receives service award

Melissa Walker, a nurse-consultant at the Iowa Department of Education, received the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa.

Walker received the honor, in part, for her work in providing technical assistance to school nurses throughout the state for post-concussion management care. She also has served in many other capacities in bringing knowledge and action to the management of concussions. [Read more.](#)



Melissa Walker



## Legal Lessons

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

### A little spring in your step

I know many of my colleagues were not excited for one last snow storm in March, but I have to say it made my day! My wish came true... in like a lamb and out like a lion. It was the first day of spring break for my kids. I let them sleep in a little, but of course my daughter was up early nonetheless. A little while later my son woke up. He was barely awake yet when I broke the news. "Look, it snowed last night." The minute I told him he sprung to the window to inspect the beautiful snowfall himself. Before I could finish my coffee he was begging to go outside and had his snow boots and snow pants on. He was ready to play! Off he went without so much as a word from me. Eating the fresh fallen snow, trudging through it, making snow balls, snow angels, and sledding down the hill. He spent the first hour outside rolling around in the snow with his best buddy, our dog, Odie. It was fun to watch him enjoy something so simple... white, fluffy snow. It definitely put a little spring in his step – but not the warm kind. When the weather warms up we will be able to start planting our garden, working on the landscape, and celebrating Earth Day 2017.



In this April edition of Legal Lessons I bring you Earth Day 2017 – Top 10 ways to go green, reminders on school days and graduation, the 4 D's of prom, and new administrative rules.

#### **Earth Day 2017 – Top 10 ways to go green!**

Saturday April 22 is Earth Day. Earth Day is a wonderful annual event celebrated worldwide to increase awareness for our environment. School districts and nonpublic schools can incorporate Earth Day into their curriculum in a number of ways. One way a school can incorporate this into its curriculum is by scheduling a day of community service. A day of community service can be considered a day of school under our administrative rules as long as the community service is aligned to the curriculum and students are under the guidance and supervision of instructional professional staff. Scheduling a community service day may also be a unique way to incorporate career education into the curriculum. Not only is this good for the students, it's good for the environment and the community too. Here are the top 10 ways to go green:

- 1) Schedule a community services day.
- 2) Schedule a school-wide cleanup day.
- 3) Schedule a school-wide bike/walk to school day.
- 4) Schedule a school-wide day to UNPLUG and read.
- 5) Plant some trees on school property.
- 6) Create a school-wide Earth Day campaign.
- 7) Plant a school garden the kids help to maintain.
- 8) Start a school-wide compost program for wasted food (you can use this in your garden).
- 9) Make bird feeders to feed the birds (be careful where you hang them).
- 10) Incorporate Earth Day into your lesson plans.

Have fun and save our planet while doing it!

*Continued on page 15*

# Legal Lessons continued

*Continued from page 14*

## **Reminders on school days and graduation**

With graduations fast approaching we have had quite a few phone calls regarding when schools can let out their seniors for the school year under the days/hours rules. So here is a quick reminder of the rules for seniors.

- 1) Can we still let seniors out a week early? Yes. Seniors may be released for up to 30 hours toward the 1,080 hours or five days toward the 180 days.
- 2) What if we have extended our regular school calendar to make-up for inclement weather? You may excuse a graduating senior who has met district or school requirements for graduation from attendance during the extended school calendar.

For other questions on school calendar please see our [guidance](#).

## **Prom—The four “Ds” of prom protocol: Dates, Dress, Decorum, Drug (Testing)**

It's that time of year again to revisit the four “Ds” of Prom. I realize we revisit this every year but these are important so here we go again.

**Dates.** Iowa's civil rights law extends protection to students on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the classroom as well as in all activities offered by a school, both public and nonpublic. This includes prom (and all school dances). Therefore, same sex couples may attend prom as a couple if they are otherwise eligible to attend prom. However, a school may limit prom attendees to current students of the school or recent graduates of the school. Here are a few examples for illustration:

1. Sheldon and Leonard are students at Pasadena High School. Neither is known to be gay; both have reputations as class clowns. They announce that they plan to attend prom as a couple. Because the protection afforded to gay, lesbian, and bisexual students applies to perceived sexual orientation, school officials cannot ask Sheldon and Leonard if they are gay or bisexual. They get to attend prom as a couple.
2. Pasadena High School has a policy that only students currently enrolled in Pasadena, as well as Pasadena graduates (if they are the guest of a current student) may attend prom. Penny is a current student of Pasadena. She may bring as her date any of her classmates or any graduate of Pasadena High School. But if Penny has a relationship with a girl or boy at Warner Brothers High School, Penny must decide whether to forego her prom, attend stag, or ask another Pasadena student to go with her.
3. One of Penny's classmates at Pasadena High School is Bernadette. Bernadette is class president, star athlete, 4.0 student, and top blood donor. Bernadette dates Howard, who is a student at Warner Brothers, and is the top scholar and athlete and all-around best person in the world at his school. The Pasadena administrators decide to overlook the Pasadena policy (only Pasadena students may attend Pasadena's prom) and allow Bernadette to bring Howard. Having made an exception for Bernadette and Howard, the Pasadena administrators must make an exception for Penny and all other Pasadena students.

---

<sup>1</sup> However, a bona fide religious school may impose “qualifications based on religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose.” Iowa Code § 216.9.

*Continued on page 16*

# Legal Lessons continued

*Continued from page 15*

**Dress:** While a school cannot insist that students wear traditionally female or male attire (i.e., girls do not have to wear dresses and boys do not have to wear tuxedos), schools may lawfully have a dress code if enforced even-handedly. The types of rules that will be allowable include such rules as “no exposed navels, no exposed nipples, no exposed um... derrieres, no clothes with obscenities printed on them.” In other words, the usual regulations are acceptable. But a boy may wear a dress to prom if the dress would be acceptable on a girl, and a girl may wear acceptable “male” prom-wear. What a kid wears does not have to be related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Decorum:** The key here is evenhandedness. Whatever reasonable rules of conduct and decorum a school has must be enforced evenly and consistently. If PDAs (public displays of affection) are not tolerated, then make sure that staff breaks up the kissing between straight couples as well as same sex couples.

**Drug testing:** Drug testing is regulated by the Iowa Student Search and Seizure Law, Iowa Code chapter 808A – see below. If a student shows up to prom and has obvious signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs then school officials may breathalyze or drug test a student. Absent obvious signs and absent suspicion you cannot conduct random, suspicionless (without an articulable reason) drug testing as a condition of admission to prom. School officials that violate will not be protected in a lawsuit.

[Iowa Code Chapter 808A](#)

## **New rules Noticed or Adopted by State Board**

Several new administrative rules were noticed by the State Board on March 30, 2017. The new rules include changes to Chapter 17 – Open Enrollment, Chapter 65 – Programs for at Risk and Early Elementary Students, and rescission of Chapter 94 - Administrative Advancement and Improvement Program. See the full text of the noticed rules below.

Chapter 17 – Open Enrollment (Notice)

Chapter 65 – Programs for at Risk and Early Elementary Students (Adopt) *Effective May 31, 2017*

Chapter 94 – Administrative Advancement and Improvement Program (Notice)

For comments or questions on the rules please contact Nicole Proesch at 515-281-8661 or [nicole.proesch@iowa.gov](mailto:nicole.proesch@iowa.gov) or Phil Wise at 515-281- 4835 [phil.wise@iowa.gov](mailto:phil.wise@iowa.gov).

## **Students with disabilities**

For questions regarding students with disabilities please contact Thomas Mayes at 515-242-5614 or [thomas.mayes@iowa.gov](mailto:thomas.mayes@iowa.gov).



*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](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)*



[www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov)

## Iowa Department of Education

400 E 14th Street  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Ph: 515-281-5294  
[www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov)