

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The goals and objectives of the school district shall be designed to achieve the philosophy statement of the school district. An advisory committee of representatives of the school district community and the school district shall be appointed to make recommendations for the goals and objectives of the education program.

Short-term and long-term objectives for the education program shall be established annually by the board. These objectives shall reflect the results of the needs assessment, recommendation of the advisory committee, recommendations from the superintendent, and changes in law.

Annually, the board shall report to the committee regarding progress toward the achievement of the goals and objectives of the education program

Approved December 2009

Reviewed November 2009

Revised _____

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar shall accommodate the education program of the school district. The school calendar shall be for a minimum of 180 days and include, but not be limited to, the days for student instruction, staff development, in-service days and teacher conferences.

The academic school year for students shall be for a minimum of one-hundred and eighty days in the school calendar. The academic school year for students may not begin prior to September but may begin in the week in which September 1 falls unless a waiver is obtained from the Iowa Department of Education. Should September 1 fall on a Sunday, school may begin any day during the calendar week which immediately precedes September 1. Employees may be required to report to work at the school district prior to this date.

Special education students may attend school on a school calendar different from that of the regular education program consistent with their Individualized Education Program.

The board, in its discretion, may excuse graduating seniors from up to five days of instruction after the school district requirements for graduation have been met. The board may also excuse graduating seniors from making up days missed due to inclement weather if the student has met the school district's graduation requirements.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop the school calendar for recommendation, approval, and adoption by the board annually.

The board may amend the official school calendar when the board considers the change to be in the best interests of the school district's education program.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 20.9; 279.10, 280.3 (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.2(1).

Cross Reference: 501.3 Compulsory Attendance
601.2 School Day
603.3 Special Education
606.10 Early Release for Seniors

Approved December 2009

Reviewed November 2009

Revised _____

SCHOOL DAY

The student school day for grades one through twelve shall consist of a minimum of five and one-half hours, not including the lunch period. The school day consists of the schedule of class instruction and class activities as established and sponsored by the school district. Time during which students are released from school for parent/teacher conferences may be counted as part of the student's instructional time. The minimum school day shall meet the requirements as established for the operation of accredited schools.

The board may define the number of days kindergarten will be held and the length of each school day for the students attending kindergarten. The school day shall consist of a schedule as recommended by the superintendent and approved by the board.

The school district may also record a day of school with less than the minimum instructional hours if the total hours of instructional time for grades one through twelve in any five consecutive school days equals a minimum of twenty-seven and one-half hours, even though any one day of school is less than the minimum instructional hours because of a staff development opportunity provided for the instructional staff or parent-teacher conferences have been scheduled beyond the regular school day. If the total hours of instructional time for the first four consecutive days equal at least twenty-seven and one-half hours because parent-teacher conferences have been scheduled beyond the regular school day, the school district may record zero hours of instructional time on the fifth consecutive school day as a school day. Schedule revisions and changes in time allotments will be made by the superintendent.

When the school is forced to close due to weather or other emergencies, that part of the day during which school was in session will constitute a school day.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to inform the board annually of the length of the school day.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code § 279.8 (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.2(2), .2(3), .2(6).

Cross Reference: 601.1 School Calendar

Approved December 2009

Reviewed November 2009

Revised _____

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum development is an ongoing process in the school district and consists of both research and design. Research is the studious inquiry and critical investigation of the various content areas for the purpose of revising and improving curriculum and instruction based on relevant information pertaining to the discipline. This study is conducted both internally (what and how we are currently doing at the local level) and externally (what national standards, professional organizations, recognized experts, current research, etc. tell us relative to the content area). Design is the deliberate process of planning and selecting the standards and instructional strategies that will improve the learning experiences for all students.

A systematic approach to curriculum development (careful research, design, and articulation of the curriculum) serves several purposes:

- Focuses attention on the content standards of each discipline and ensures the identified learnings are rigorous, challenging, and represent the most important learnings for our students.
- Increases the probability that students will acquire the desired knowledge, skills and dispositions and that our schools will be successful in providing appropriate learning experiences.
- Facilitates communication and coordination.
- Improves classroom instruction.

The superintendent shall be responsible for curriculum development and for determining the most effective method of conducting research and design activities. A curriculum framework shall describe the processes and procedures that will be followed in researching, designing, and articulating each curriculum area. This framework will, at a minimum, describe the processes and procedures for the following curriculum development activities to:

- Study the latest thinking, trends, research, and expert advice regarding the content/discipline;
- Study the current status of the content/discipline (what and how well students are currently learning);
- Identify content standards, benchmarks, and grade level expectations for the content/discipline;
- Describe the desired learning behaviors, teaching, and learning environment related to the content/discipline;
- Identify differences in the desired and present program and develop a plan for addressing the differences;
- Communicate with internal and external publics regarding the content area;
- Involve staff, parents, students, and community members in curriculum development decisions;
- Verify integration of local, state, and/or federal mandates (MCNS, school-to-work, etc.);
- Verify how the standards and benchmarks of the content/discipline support each of the broader student learning goals and provide a K-12 continuum that builds on the prior learning of each level.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to keep the board apprised of necessary curriculum revisions, progress of each content area related to curriculum development activities, and to develop administrative regulations for curriculum development including recommendations to the board.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (1994).
34 C.F.R. pt. 98 (2002).
Iowa Code §§ 216.9, 256.7, 279.8, 280.3-.14 (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.8(1)(c)(1).

Cross Reference: 101 Educational Philosophy of the School District
105 Long-Range Needs Assessment
505 Student Scholastic Achievement
602 Curriculum Development
603 Instructional Curriculum

Approved December 2009

Reviewed November 2009

Revised _____

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Without careful and continuing attention to implementation, planned changes in curriculum and instruction rarely succeed as intended. How change is put into practice, to a large extent, determines how well it fares.

Implementation refers to what actually happens in practice as compared to what was supposed to happen. Curriculum implementation includes the provision of organized assistance to staff in order to ensure that the newly developed curriculum and the most powerful instructional strategies are actually delivered at the classroom level. There are two components of any implementation effort that must be present to guarantee the planned changes in curriculum and instruction succeed as intended:

- Understanding the conceptual framework of the content/discipline being implemented; and,
- Organized assistance to understand the theory, observe exemplary demonstrations, have opportunities to practice, and receive coaching and feedback focused on the most powerful instructional strategies to deliver the content at the classroom level.

The superintendent shall be responsible for curriculum implementation and for determining the most effective way of providing organized assistance and monitoring the level of implementation. A curriculum framework shall describe the processes and procedures that will be followed to assist all staff in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully implement the developed curriculum in each content area. This framework will, at a minimum, describe the processes and procedures for the following curriculum implementation activities to:

- Study and identify the best instructional practices and materials to deliver the content;
- Describe procedures for the purchase of instructional materials and resources (See Policy 605.1).
- Identify/develop exemplars that demonstrate the learning behaviors, teaching, and learning environment to deliver the content;
- Study the current status of instruction in the content area (how teachers are teaching);
- Compare the desired and present delivery system, identify differences (gap analysis), and develop a plan for addressing the differences;
- Organize staff into collaborative study teams to support their learning and implementation efforts (address the gaps);
- Provide ongoing professional development related to instructional strategies and materials that focuses on theory, demonstration, practice and feedback;
- Regularly monitor and assess the level of implementation;
- Communicate with internal and external publics regarding curriculum implementation;
- Involve staff, parents, students, and community members in curriculum implementation decisions.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to keep the board apprised of curriculum implementation activities, progress of each content area related to curriculum implementation activities, and to develop administrative regulations for curriculum implementation including recommendations to the board.

Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (1994).
34 C.F.R. pt. 98 (2002).
Iowa Code §§ 216.9, 256.7, 279.8, 280.3-.14 (2005).
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Revised _____

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Regular evaluation of the total curriculum is necessary to ensure that the written and delivered curriculum is having the desired effect for students.

Curriculum evaluation refers to an ongoing process of collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in understanding what students know and can do. It refers to the full range of information gathered in the school district to evaluate (make judgments about) student learning and program effectiveness in each content area.

Curriculum evaluation must be based on information gathered from a comprehensive assessment system that is designed for accountability and committed to the concept that all students will achieve at high levels, is standards-based, and informs decisions which impact significant and sustainable improvements in teaching and student learning.

The superintendent shall be responsible for curriculum evaluation and for determining the most effective way of ensuring that assessment activities are integrated into instructional practices as part of school improvement with a particular focus on improving teaching and learning. A curriculum framework shall describe the procedures that will be followed to establish an evaluation process that can efficiently and effectively evaluate the total curriculum. This framework will, at a minimum, describe the procedures for the following curriculum evaluation activities:

- Identify specific purposes for assessing student learning;
- Develop a comprehensive assessment plan;
- Select/develop assessment tools and scoring procedures that are valid and reliable;
- Identify procedures for collecting assessment data;
- Identify procedures for analyzing and interpreting information and drawing conclusions based on the data (including analysis of the performance of various sub-groups of students);
- Identify procedures for establishing at least three levels of performance (specific to the content standard and the assessment tool when appropriate) to assist in determining whether students have achieved at a satisfactory level (at least two levels describe performance that is proficient or advanced and at least one level describes students who are not yet performing at the proficient level);
- Identify procedures for using assessment information to determine long-range and annual improvement goals;
- Identify procedures for using assessment information in making decisions focused on improving teaching and learning (data based decision making);
- Provide support to staff in using data to make instructional decisions;
- Define procedures for regular and clear communication about assessment results to the various internal and external publics (mandatory for communication about students receiving special education services);
- Define data reporting procedures;
- Verify that assessment tools are fair for all students and are consistent with all state and federal mandates;

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

- Verify that assessment tools measure the curriculum that is written and delivered;
- Identify procedures for deciding when multiple assessment measures are necessary for making good decisions and drawing appropriate conclusions about student learning;
- Identify roles and responsibilities of key groups;
- Involve staff, parents, students, and community members in curriculum evaluation;
- Ensure participation of eligible students receiving special education services in district-wide assessments.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to keep the board apprised of curriculum evaluation activities, the progress of each content area related to curriculum evaluation activities, and to develop administrative regulations for curriculum evaluation including recommendations to the board.

Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (1994).
34 C.F.R. pt. 98 (2002).
Iowa Code §§ 216.9, 256.7, 279.8, 280.3-.14 (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.8(1)(c)(1).

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Approved December 2009

Reviewed November 2009

Revised _____

PILOT - EXPERIMENTAL - INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

The board welcomes new ideas in curriculum. Proposals for pilot or experimental projects shall first be reviewed and analyzed by the superintendent. Projects recommended by the superintendent will be considered by the board. Pilot and experimental projects approved by the board, the Iowa Department of Education, or the U. S. Department of Education may be utilized in the education program.

Students, who may be or are asked to participate in a research or experimental project or program, must have their parents' written consent on file prior to participating in the project or program. A research or experimental program or project requiring parents' prior written consent is a program or project designed to explore or develop new or unproven teaching methods or techniques. These programs or projects shall be designated as research or experimental projects or programs. The educational materials of a program or project designated as a research or experimental program or project may be inspected and reviewed by the parents of the students participating or being considered for participation in the program or project. The inspection and review by the parents shall be in accordance with board policy 605.2, "Instructional Materials Inspection."

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (1994).
34 C.F.R. Pt. 98 (2002).
Iowa Code §§ 279.8, .10; 280.3-.14 (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.5.

Cross Reference: 602 Curriculum Development
603 Instructional Curriculum

Approved December 2009

Reviewed November 2009

Revised _____

