



STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

DATE: September 12, 2008

TO: Administrators of Public School Districts
AEA Administrators

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

SUBJECT: The 8th Grade Plan and Senate File 2216

The purpose of this memo is to provide information and guidance related to the 8th grade plan.

Senate File 2216 Implications:

Senate File (SF) 2216 requires Iowa schools to work with students enrolled in 8th grade to develop a core curriculum plan that, at a minimum, guides the student toward the goal of successfully completing the Iowa Core Curriculum. Senate File 2216 states that... “the plan shall include a timeline for each student to successfully complete, prior to graduation, all components of the state-designated career information and decision-making system administered by the department in accordance with section 118 of the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006.”

The legislation also states that beginning in July 1, 2008, each student enrolled in grade 8 shall develop a core curriculum plan to complete the core curriculum by the time they graduate from high school. The plan shall include:

- Career options.
- Coursework needed in grades 9-12 to support the student's postsecondary education and career options.
- A timeline for each student to complete all components of the state-designated career information and decision-making system before graduation.
- The student's parent or guardian shall sign the core curriculum plan and the signed plan included in the student's cumulative record.

The school district board shall report annually to the students in grade 9-12, and the parent/guardian, the student's progress toward meeting these goals:

- Completing the Iowa Core Curriculum.
- Completing the Iowa minimum graduation requirements (four years of English/language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social studies).

Grimes State Office Building - 400 E 14th St - Des Moines IA 50319-0146

PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988

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The state components pertinent to the 8th grade plan include the following:

- Interest inventory or interest assessment.
- Career options (list of possible careers by cluster).
- Career options research or career information about career options.
- Course plan to support career options.
- Approval form with parent approval.
- Summary of components within student portfolio.

These state components are within the Iowa Choices Explorer and Iowa Choices Planner programs.

In the current state designated system (Iowa Choices), a statewide report can be generated regarding the number of student portfolios, and the state components within those student portfolios. This summative data (not student specific) can assist the school, the region, and the state as we prepare students for a global economy.

If a school or district chooses not to utilize the state designated career information system (provided to all Iowa secondary schools free of charge), the data elements consistent with the state designated system would have to be reported directly to the Department of Education in order to generate reports required by the legislation.

Question 1: What is the 8th grade plan?

The new legislation, SF 2216, enhances the 8th grade plan requirements from legislation of 2006 (SF 2272) and 2007 (statewide graduation requirements). In the legislation reference is made to the state designated career information system. This system can be used as the career planning tool for the 8th grade plan.

Question 2: What are the state components in the 8th grade plan?

There are six state components for the 8th grade plan for students:

- Interest inventory or interest assessment.
- Career options (list of possible careers by career cluster framework).
- Career information and research about their career options.
- Course plan to support career options.
- Approval form with parent approval.
- Summary of components within a student portfolio.

Question 3: The Iowa Core Curriculum isn't required to be implemented until 2012. How are teachers and counselors supposed to connect the Iowa Core Curriculum to the 8th grade plan for students?

Teachers and counselors should focus on helping students choose courses that support their career and educational plans. The Iowa Core Curriculum requirements will be added to the state designated career information system as the districts build leadership capacity and establish their plan for action in implementing Iowa Core Curriculum.

Question 4: Is there a cost to districts to use the state designated career system?

No. Funding for Iowa's secondary schools is provided by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC). The ICSAC also provides professional trainers to provide school staffs professional development in utilizing all the tools of the state designated career information system for students.

Questions 5: Why is there a state designation for a career information system in Iowa?

There are two purposes for a state designation of a career information system. One is to complete the state procurement process for a large statewide contract that meets the collective criteria for Iowa's students and schools for career development and career planning. The second is to provide a system for collecting statewide data on student career directions and plans. Data will be collected to generate reports required by the legislation. It is hoped that in the future this data can be utilized at the school/district level as well.

Question 6: Can a district transition over to Choices in the future and use another career information system?

Yes, but if a district chooses another system at their own expense, it is a district's responsibility to provide data elements to the Department of Education in order to generate the reports required by legislation. It is crucial that data elements are compatible with the state data system. Additional guidance on the required data elements will be shared in the coming months. Data elements from those schools utilizing Choices for the 8th grade plan and other required state components will be provided directly to the Department of Education from the management agency, The Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

If you have additional questions, please contact Linda Berg at linda.berg@iowa.gov or 515.242.5032.