

Teaching Standards and Teacher Evaluation Task Force

Final Report



Senate File 2284

Iowa Department of Education

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146



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Senate File 2284

Senate File 2284, passed by the Iowa Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Terry E. Branstad, directs the state to convene two task forces, one on the Iowa teaching standards and one on teacher evaluation, in order to improve the Iowa education system. The issues of the two task forces are interrelated and, therefore, are combined into one.

The task force will address the issues of an improved teacher evaluation system and a tiered evaluation system that differentiates ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective teachers. It will also identify and recommend ways to improve the Iowa teaching standards, align the teaching standards with best practices and nationally accepted standards, and recommend measures to improve teacher evaluation based on the Iowa teaching standards.

This task force, which is made up of teachers, school administrators and representatives from Area Education Agencies, educator stakeholder groups, and higher education, will study these important issues and will make recommendations for the 2013 legislative session.

Sec. 9. Statewide Educator and Evaluation System Task Force

1. The director of the Iowa Department of Education shall convene a task force to conduct a study regarding a statewide teacher evaluation system and a statewide administrator evaluation system.¹
2. The task force shall be comprised of at least 12 members as follows:
 - a. Eight members shall be appointed by the director to represent education stakeholders and practitioners knowledgeable about the Iowa core curriculum and may include members currently serving on the department's teacher quality partnership teacher evaluation team.
 - b. One member shall be the deputy director and administrator of the division of learning and results of the department of education or the deputy director's designee.
 - c. One member shall represent the area education agencies.
 - d. One member shall represent a certified employee organization representing teachers licensed under chapter 272.

¹ Recommendations for an administrator evaluation system will be issued by a separate task force, the Administrator Evaluation Task Force.

- e. One member shall represent a statewide organization representing school administrators licensed under chapter 272.
- 3. The person representing the area education agency shall convene the initial meeting. The task force shall elect one of its members as chairperson. After the initial meeting, the task force shall meet at the time and place specified by call of the chairperson. The Department of Education shall provide staffing services for the task force.
- 4. To the extent possible, appointments shall be made to provide geographical area representation and to comply with sections 69.16, 69.16A, and 69.16C.
- 5. The task force shall develop a statewide teacher evaluation system and a statewide administrator evaluation system that standardize the instruments and processes used by school districts, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic schools throughout the state to evaluate teachers and administrators. The components of the statewide teacher evaluation system shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Direct observation of classroom teaching behaviors.
 - b. Balanced consideration of student growth measures, when available for tested subjects and grades, to supplement direct observation of classroom teaching behaviors.
 - c. Integration of the Iowa teaching standards.
 - d. System applicability to teachers in all content areas taught in a school.
- 6. The task force, at a minimum, shall include in its recommendations and proposal a tiered evaluation system that differentiates ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective performance by teachers and administrators.
- 7. The task force shall submit its findings, recommendations, and a proposal for each system to the General Assembly by October 15, 2012.

Sec.10. Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria Review Task Force

- 1. The Department of Education shall convene a task force to identify and recommend measures to improve the Iowa teaching standards and criteria and align the Iowa teaching standards with best practices and nationally accepted standards, and to identify and recommend measures to improve the educator evaluations conducted based on the Iowa teaching standards. The task force shall recommend changes to the Iowa Code as appropriate.

2. The task force shall consist of teachers, administrators, and representatives of the Department of Education, the Board of Educational Examiners, an organization representing teachers, an organization representing school boards, accredited institutions of higher education, and any other appropriate educational stakeholders.
3. The task force shall submit its findings and recommendations, including recommendations for changes to the Iowa Code as appropriate, to the General Assembly by Oct. 15, 2012.

Task Force Membership

Salvador Aguirre, Teacher, Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines

Mary Jane Cobb, Executive Director, Iowa State Education Association, Des Moines

Joan Crawl, Administrator, Glenwood Community School District, Glenwood

Melissa Devereaux, Teacher, Newell-Fonda Community School District, Newell

Tom Downs², Executive Director, Iowa Association of School Boards, Des Moines

Shaelynn Farnsworth, Teacher, BCLUW Community School District, Conrad

Jessica Gogerty, School Improvement Leader, Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines

Joel Larson, President, Iowa Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Clinton

Duane Magee, Executive Director, Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, Des Moines

Erin Olson, Teacher, Sioux Central Community School District, Sioux Rapids

Kim Owen, Regional Administrator, Grant Wood Area Educational Agency, Cedar Rapids

Greg Smith, Fort Madison Community School District, Fort Madison

David Tilly, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

Dwight Watson³, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls

Cynthia Wissler, Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines

² Lou Ann Gvist attended in place of Tom Downs.

³ Mary Herring attended in place of Dwight Watson.

Non-Voting Task Force Membership

Byron Darnall, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

Mary Beth Schroeder Fracek, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

2012 Meeting Schedule

Date	City	Facility	Time
September 19	Des Moines	Plymouth Congregational Church	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Introduction

History of Teacher Standards and Teacher Evaluation in Iowa

The elements of the Iowa Teacher Quality Program are based on eight Iowa Teaching Standards. Those standards are written in the Iowa Code and are:

1. Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.
2. Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.
3. Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.
4. Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students.
5. Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.
6. Demonstrates competence in classroom management.
7. Engages in professional growth.
8. Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.

For each of these standards, the Iowa Department of Education developed criteria that built upon and helped further define each standard. The standards and 42 criteria are listed in the Appendices section of this report.⁴

Initial License (previously known as Provisional License)

When a teacher leaves a teacher preparation program at a college or university, the teacher can request that the institution recommend one of two licenses for the new teacher: an initial license or a substitute license. The initial license is the first regular teaching license. It is issued for two years and may be renewed twice.⁵ No renewal credits are required. A letter must accompany the second renewal of the license from a school district administrator indicating employment. The substitute license, with the some exceptions such as a long-term substitute teacher, cannot be utilized for a contracted teacher of record.

A beginning teacher, at the end of the second year of teaching, must receive a comprehensive evaluation used to determine whether the district will recommend to the

⁴ See Appendix A on page 17.

⁵ Under new rules, the initial license may be renewed only if the holder does not yet have the two years of teaching experience (three years if out of state or in a nonpublic school in Iowa) needed to move to the standard license.

Board of Educational Examiners that the teacher should be issued a standard five-year license. The district has three choices:

- Recommend the teacher for a standard license.
- Recommend that the teacher's initial license be extended for one year and the teacher receive additional mentoring and induction support in the district with the recommendation on licensure delayed for one year.
- Recommend that the teacher not be issued a standard license.

If the teacher is not recommended for licensure, the district formally notifies the individual of the decision against licensure. The teacher has a right to an appeal to an adjudicator if denied licensure (unless, of course, everyone agrees to a one-year extension).

The Iowa Teacher Quality statute requires school districts to provide a system of career development and evaluation for all teachers. The career development portion includes four program areas to support teachers and their growth:

- Mentoring and induction for beginning teachers.
- Individual career development plans for career teachers.
- District career development plans that support the growth of all teachers.
- Intensive assistance programs for career teachers not meeting one or more of the Iowa Teaching Standards.

The evaluation system must include:

- Comprehensive evaluations for all beginning teachers by the end of their second year of teaching.
- Performance reviews at least once every three years for career teachers.

Individual Career Development Plans

In cooperation with the teacher's evaluator, each career teacher employed by a school district shall develop an individual teacher career development plan. The evaluator shall consult with the teacher's supervisor on the development of the individual teacher career development plan. The purpose of the plan is to promote individual and group career development.

The individual plan shall be based, at minimum, on:

- The needs of the teacher.
- The Iowa Teaching Standards.
- The student achievement goals of the attendance center and those outlined by the school/district in the comprehensive school improvement plan.

The teacher's evaluator shall annually meet with the teacher to review progress in meeting the goals in the teacher's individual plan. The teacher shall present to the evaluator evidence of progress.

The purpose of the meeting shall be to:

- Review the teacher's progress in meeting career development goals in the plan.
- Review collaborative work with other staff on student achievement goals.
- Modify as necessary the teacher's individual plan to reflect the individual teacher's and the school district's needs and the individual's progress in meeting the goals in the plan.

The teacher's supervisor and the evaluator shall review, modify, or accept modifications made to the teacher's individual plan.

Performance Reviews

Performance review means a summative evaluation of a teacher other than a beginning teacher that is used to determine:

- Whether the teacher's practice meets school district expectations and the Iowa Teaching Standards.
- Whether the teacher's practice meets school district expectations for career advancement.

A participating school district shall review a teacher's performance at least once every three years for the purpose of:

- Assisting teachers in making continuous improvement.
- Documenting continued competence in the Iowa Teaching Standards.
- Identifying teachers in need of improvement.
- Determining whether the teacher's practice meets school district expectations for career advancement.

The review shall include, at minimum:

- Classroom observation of the teacher.
- Teacher's progress and implementation of the teacher's individual career development plan.
- Supporting documentation from other evaluators, teachers, parents, and students.
- May include video portfolios as evidence of teaching practice.

Executive Summary

The task force developed a theory of action to provide clarity for the thinking and discussion that shaped our recommendations. This theory of action is as follows:

- If teachers and evaluators are given standards and criteria that specify clearly differentiated levels of proficiency: ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective;
- If standards are based on nationally recognized teaching standards;
- If the teaching standards are developed to support a continuum of teacher development from pre-service through the practicing teacher levels;
- If a common language is used in teacher preparation programs in Iowa and in the PK-12 system of education;
- If the teaching standards address knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions;
- If evaluators and teachers have a clear understanding on the standards and criteria;
- If the standards are aligned with measures based on best practices supported by research;
- If a work group is established by the Legislature to revise or replace the current Iowa Teaching Standards;
- If teaching standards and criteria are developed to identify teacher leaders;
- If teaching criteria based on standards are manageable in number and scope;

AND

- If Iowa's teacher evaluation system is improved to measure clearly differentiated levels of proficiency, including ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective and teacher leaders;
- If the improved evaluation system for teachers is used by school districts, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic schools throughout the state;
- If the evaluation system uses language that supports a continuum of teacher development from pre-service through practicing teacher levels;

- If the teacher evaluation training clearly differentiates peer review from teacher evaluation;
- If clear, consistent, and appropriately frequent training is provided for teacher evaluators statewide;
- If the teacher evaluation system provides a mechanism to ensure the consistent, fair, reliable, and valid implementation of the evaluation of teachers at all levels of proficiency;
- If the direct observation of classroom teaching behaviors is included in the evaluation process;
- If the evaluation system includes a balanced consideration of student growth measures when available for tested grades and subjects;
- If the improved evaluation system is based on revised teaching standards;
- If the evaluation system demonstrates applicability to teachers in all content areas and all grade levels;
- If a rubric that clearly describes the criteria and expectations for each level of teaching performance is developed as part of the evaluation system;

AND

- If the development of improved teaching standards and a teacher evaluation process is implemented statewide as a teacher development system;

AND

- If there is a coherent theory of action for school improvement and education reform delivered through the PK-16 system from the Department of Education, AEAs, professional associations, and the accredited institutions of higher education;

THEN

A teacher development system from pre-service to the highest level of teacher performance will be implemented; teachers will have opportunities and support for professional growth; and teacher effectiveness will be high.

SO THEN

Student learning will increase.

Our Recommendations

- 1.) **Revise current Iowa Teaching Standards to align pre-service with PK-12 teaching.** Standards will be based on best practice and nationally accepted standards. The standards should address knowledge, skill, performance, and dispositions.
- 2.) **An improved teacher evaluation system will be developed to replace the existing evaluation system for teachers.** The new system will include a researched-based rubric that differentiates each level of teaching performance and ensures a consistent implementation statewide. Training and professional development will be an integral component of the system.
- 3.) **The Iowa Legislature will require the formation of a work group to identify standards and create an improved teacher evaluation system** to be implemented with fidelity statewide in an effort to create effective teachers as part of a system of development.

Conclusion

The Teaching Standards and Teacher Evaluation Task Force concluded that it is time to revise Iowa's teaching standards and, even more important, put an improved evaluation system in place that allows teachers to clearly understand their path for growth and development. Such a system must be implemented in a reliable manner by trained evaluators who are accountable for fair implementation. Finally, it is crucial that teacher development is supported by all facets and levels of the system, from the candidate in a teacher preparation program to each classroom teacher's performance.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria

- 1.) Standard: Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.

The teacher:

- a. Provides evidence of student learning to students, families, and staff.
- b. Implements strategies supporting student, building, and district goals.
- c. Uses student performance data as a guide for decision-making.
- d. Accepts and demonstrates responsibility for creating a classroom culture that supports the learning of every student.
- e. Creates an environment of mutual respect, rapport, and fairness.
- f. Participates in and contributes to a school culture that focuses on improved student learning.
- g. Communicates with students, families, colleagues, and communities effectively and accurately.

- 2.) Standard: Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.

The teacher:

- a. Understands and uses key concepts, underlying themes, relationships, and different perspectives related to the content area.
- b. Uses knowledge of student development to make learning experiences in the content area meaningful and accessible for every student.
- c. Relates ideas and information within and across content areas.
- d. Understands and uses instructional strategies that are appropriate to the content area.

- 3.) Standard: Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.

The teacher:

- a. Uses student achievement data, local standards, and the district curriculum in planning for instruction.
- b. Sets and communicates high expectations for social, behavioral, and academic success of all students.
- c. Uses student's developmental needs, backgrounds, and interests in planning for instruction.
- d. Selects strategies to engage all students in learning.
- e. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the development and sequencing of instruction.

- 4.) Standard: Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students.

The teacher:

- a. Aligns classroom instruction with local standards and district curriculum.
- b. Uses research-based instructional strategies that address the full range of

- cognitive levels.
 - c. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in adjusting instruction to meet student needs.
 - d. Engages students in varied experiences that meet diverse needs and promote social, emotional, and academic growth.
 - e. Connects students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in the instructional process.
 - f. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the delivery of instruction.
- 5.) Standard: Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.
The teacher:
- a. Aligns classroom assessment with instruction.
 - b. Communicates assessment criteria and standards to all students and parents.
 - c. Understands and uses the results of multiple assessments to guide planning and instruction.
 - d. Guides students in goal-setting and assessing their own learning.
 - e. Provides substantive, timely, and constructive feedback to students and parents.
 - f. Works with other staff and building and district leadership in analysis of student progress.
- 6.) Standard: Demonstrates competence in classroom management.
The teacher:
- a. Creates a learning community that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement, and self-regulation for every student.
 - b. Establishes, communicates, models, and maintains standards of responsible student behavior.
 - c. Develops and implements classroom procedures and routines that support high expectations for student learning.
 - d. Uses instructional time effectively to maximize student achievement.
 - e. Creates a safe and purposeful learning environment.
- 7.) Standard: Engages in professional growth.
The teacher:
- a. Demonstrates habits and skills of continuous inquiry and learning.
 - b. Works collaboratively to improve professional practice and student learning.
 - c. Applies research, knowledge, and skills from professional development opportunities to improve practice.
 - d. Establishes and implements professional development plans based upon the teacher's needs aligned to the Iowa teaching standards and district/building student achievement goals.
- 8.) Standard: Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.
The teacher:
- a. Adheres to board policies, district procedures, and contractual obligations.

- b. Demonstrates professional and ethical conduct as defined by state law and district policy.
- c. Contributes to efforts to achieve district and building goals.
- d. Demonstrates an understanding of, and respect for, all learners and staff.
- e. Collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and communities to enhance student learning.