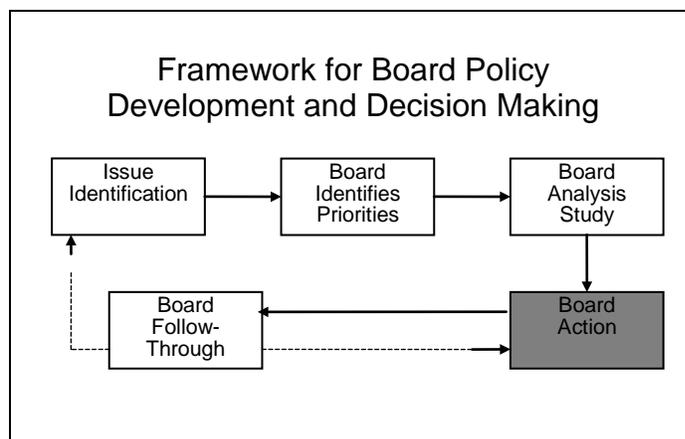


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 14, 2012



Agenda Item: Grant Wood Area Education Agency (GWAEA) Accreditation

Iowa Goal: All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code section 273.11(1) directs the State Board to develop standards and rules for the accreditation of area education agencies (AEAs). The Department of Education is directed to develop and establish, in consultation with the AEAs, an accreditation process for AEAs. Iowa Code section 273.10(1). The State Board shall determine whether a program of an AEA shall receive initial accreditation or remain accredited...based upon the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Education after a study of the factual and evaluative evidence ...in terms of the accreditation standards adopted by the State Board. Iowa Code section 273.10 (3 and 3a).

Presenters: Sharon Hawthorne, Consultant
Co-Lead AEA Accreditation
Bureau of School Improvement

Dee Gethmann, Consultant
Co-Lead GWAEA Accreditation
Bureau of Standards and Curriculum

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the recommendations for AEA accreditation submitted by the director and grant continued accreditation for Grant Wood AEA.

Background:

The central purpose of the accreditation visit is to help AEAs improve the quality and focus of their services, which will in turn assist schools and school districts to improve learning for students.

Iowa AEAs are a critical part of the support structure for schools and ultimately for children. With so much at stake, maintaining high standards of quality in programs and services is a top priority.

Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10 Accreditation Report

Purpose The central purpose of the accreditation visit is to help Area Education Agencies (AEAs) improve the quality and focus of their services, which will in turn assist schools and school districts to improve learning for students.

Iowa's AEAs are a critical part of the support structure for schools and ultimately for children. With so much at stake, maintaining high standards or quality in programs and services is a top priority.

On-Site Visit Onsite visits are an essential part of the AEA accreditation process.

AEA site visits conducted during the school year reflect the requirements outlined in 281—IAC Chapter 72. As a result, the following procedures were applied:

- Assessment of the eight accreditation standards through review of their associated descriptors:
 - School-Community Planning
 - Professional Development
 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
 - Diverse Learner Needs
 - Media
 - School Technology
 - Multicultural, Gender Fair
 - Leadership
- Assessment of common criteria that apply to each standard:
 - Agency services are equitably available.
 - The agency includes a process to monitor implementation of the services.
 - The agency has a process to measure the effectiveness of services provided.
 - The agency has a process to measure the efficiency of services provided.
 - Assessment of the services provided for established agency-wide goals.

Site Visit The agency can address accreditation expectations.

Desired Results

The agency can consistently deliver services that, in aggregate, meet the eight accreditation standards.

The agency can use the site visit findings to continuously improve the quality

of services to positively impact student learning.

Levels of Accreditation

Accreditation applies to the entire agency, not to individual programs, services, or actions.

281—IAC Chapter 72 designates two accreditation options:

- The State Board of Education grants Continuation of Accreditation if the agency meets all standards and other requirements.
 - The State Board of Education grants Conditional Accreditation if the agency has not met all standards and other requirements.
-

Standards Met or Not Met

AEA Accreditation Standards

- School-Community Planning - **Met**
 - Professional Development - **Met**
 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - **Met**
 - Diverse Learner Needs - **Met**
 - Multicultural/Gender Fair - **Met**
 - Media - **Met**
 - School Technology - **Met**
 - Leadership - **Met**
-

Chapter 63

Chapter 63 of the Iowa Code outlines the program requirements for the provision of Educational Programs and Services for Pupils in Juvenile Homes.

The following facilities, located within the boundaries of Grant Wood AEA 10, were reviewed as a part of the agency's accreditation visit:

- Foundations II Youth Shelter
- Youth Emergency Shelter – Y.E.S.
- Linn County Detention Center

No non-compliance with the requirements of 281—IAC Chapter 63 was noted during the review of self-assessment data provided to the site visit team prior to the visit.

Overall Agency Strengths

Agency Staff

Multiple LEA and parent interviewees reported that agency staff are professional, respectful and responsive to their needs; the agency's efforts are appreciated.

Regional Administrators

The AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency's Regional Administrators (RA) are responsive to the needs of LEAs. Their work with data and assisting schools in identifying needs based upon data is appreciated. Specifically, LEA's appreciate the thoroughness and responsiveness of RAs to local needs.

Agency Partnerships

The agency has developed local partnerships to enhance their services. Some of these partnerships include:

- Kirkwood Community College especially the Workplace Learning Connection and the Regional Academies
- Rockwell Collins
- Science Center of Cedar Rapids
- Corridor Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative
- Department of Human Services and local Mental Health Agencies
- Early Childhood Iowa (formally known as Community Empowerment Areas)
- Source Media

Promotes Innovation

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency promotes innovation through various initiatives such as piloting special education specialty teams, designating funds to award eight Innovation Grants and facilitating the development of the Eastern Iowa Compact.

Overall Agency Recommendations

LEA Awareness of Agency Services

Not all LEA interviewees were aware of all services available from the agency.

Continue to communicate whenever possible to dispel the perception held by some that there is an inequity in the quality and quantity of services provided to LEAs.

Enhancing the district service plan process to include data driven conversations and consistently implementing this process could address such misperceptions.

Sharing the special education equity formula with all LEAs would be another strategy to consider.

Support for Gifted and Talented Students

Few interviewee comments were heard by the Accreditation team about support for Gifted and Talented (G/T) students. Comments were limited to College for Kids. ‘

Some of the LEA interviewees reported that it is a struggle to find resources within the agency for teachers to meet the needs of G/T students.

Consider enhancing the provision of G/T services throughout the agency by having agency staff, such as the G/T Consultant, contribute ideas to professional development offerings that will allow teachers to better serve identified students.

School/Community Planning (S/CP) Standard

**Expectations
IAC
281—72.4(1)**

The AEA shall deliver services for school-community planning.

The AEA assists schools and school districts in:

- assessing needs of all students.
 - developing collaborative relationships among community agencies.
 - establishing shared direction.
 - implementing actions to meet goals.
 - reporting progress towards goals.
-

**Strength:
Agency
Partnerships**

The agency has developed many local partnerships. Some of these partnerships include:

- Kirkwood Community College especially the Workplace Learning Connection and the Regional Academies
 - Rockwell Collins
 - Science Center of Cedar Rapids
 - Corridor Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative
 - Department of Human Services and local Mental Health Agencies
 - Early Childhood Iowa (formally known as Community Empowerment Areas)
 - Source Media
-

**Strength:
Leading LEAs
in Use of Data**

LEA interviewees credited the agency with leading them in the collection and use of data to drive instruction. Examples include:

- Helping LEAs identify and analyze student performance gaps.
 - Assisting administrators and teachers in analyzing multiple assessments and student work to improve instruction.
 - Supporting Power School to customize data such as DIBELS assessments to help LEAs adjust instruction based on data.
 - Providing the GWAEA On-line Assessment System, a data base that allows LEAs to disaggregate student data.
-

**Strength:
Early ACCESS
Partnerships
and
Collaborations**

AEA interviewees reported that are multiple community collaborations and partnerships to provide Early ACCESS services. Notable was significant administrator leadership, professional development and training with ECI (Early Childhood Iowa) areas. Other examples include:

- Level II and III hospital neonatal intensive care units and high risk

- follow up programs
- Department of Human Services
 - Parents as Teachers
 - Family Resource Centers
 - CCCC (Community Coordinated Child Care)
 - Child care centers and homes
 - ISU Extension
 - WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
 - Heart of Iowa (Mothers in Recovery)
 - Local school districts
-

**Recommendation:
Regional
Administrators
and Building
Representatives**

Some LEA interviewees reported the relationships between Regional Administrators and building representatives as a positive for their LEA.

In order to develop more of these positive working relationships, the agency is encouraged to implement strategies that consider each LEA's identified needs and include LEA administrators when determining which AEA staff position will best meet LEA needs.

Professional Development (PD) Standard

Expectations:
IAC
281—72.4(2)

The AEA shall deliver professional development services for schools, school districts and AEA instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

The AEA:

- anticipates and responds to schools' and school districts' needs.
 - supports proven and emerging education practices.
 - aligns with school and school district comprehensive long-range and annual improvement goals.
 - uses adult learning theory.
 - supports improved teaching.
 - uses theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching.
 - addresses professional development activities as required by the Iowa Code or administrative rules.
-

Strength:
Interviewee
Reports

AEA and LEA interviewees reported:

- The agency brings in experts to provide PD and then provides follow-up with LEAs. Experts included Kevin Honeycutt for Technology and Digital Learning and Dr. Pamela Bell for Literacy.
 - Agency PD content is evidence-based, follows the Iowa Professional Development Model.
 - Agency staff are well trained and share their expertise with LEAs.
 - Agency has a 3 prong approach to PD that consists of:
 - general PD offerings for train the trainers,
 - targeted PD for specific LEAs, and
 - embedded PD with coaching in building.
-

Strength:
PD matches
LEA Goals

LEA interviewees reported that the PD provided by the AEA matches LEA goals in the following ways:

- AEA staff serve on building cadre teams that help plan PD.
 - Regional Administrators are aware of the needs of the teachers in the LEAs they serve.
 - AEA staff use LEA data to determine what PD will be provided to support the needs of the LEAs.
-

Strength:
RAs Up to Date

LEA interviewees reported that Regional Administrators (RAs) keep LEA

on PD

administrators up to date about professional development opportunities that will benefit their students.

**Strength:
Examples of
Agency
Provided PD**

LEA interviewees gave several examples of PD that the agency has provided. They include:

- Van Allen Science Training (VAST) to utilize the Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
 - Write Tools
 - Building Bridges – Eastern Iowa Technology Conference
 - Shelter Math for English Language Learners (ELL)
 - Individualized Education Program (IEP) Training
 - Developing 21st Century Employability Skills
 - TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication-Handicapped Children)
 - Superintendent’s Network
 - 21st Century Skills
 - Creative Curriculum Series
 - Read It Again – PK
-

**Strength:
Early ACCESS
PD**

AEA Interviewees reported evidence of implementation of the Iowa Professional Development Model for Early ACCESS staff. Examples include:

- Analysis of data to plan a multi-year approach to Professional Development in a logical sequence (solid content before process; with evidence-based focus)
 - Cross-discipline trainings and ongoing follow up
 - Focus on evidence-based interventions curriculum, assessments
-

**Recommen-
dation:
Lost
Instructional
Time**

LEA interviewees reported that even though the agency’s PD is “great”, participating means missing a lot of instructional days.

Continue exploring other options for providing PD such as expanding online learning opportunities (e.g. AEA PD Online, moodles, etc.), blended learning and additional summer and evening classes.

**Recommendation:
Expand
Implementation
and Coaching
following PD**

LEA and AEA interviewees reported that following professional development, AEA staff members often join teachers in the classroom to connect teacher's new learning to classroom instruction. This practice of implementation and coaching is widely supported by some LEA teachers and administrators but is not practiced across the agency.

Consider expanding the implementation of these practices agency wide.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA) Standard

**Expectations:
IAC
281—72.4(3)**

The AEA shall deliver curriculum, instruction and assessment services that address the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, and science but may also be applied to other curriculum areas.

These services support the development, implementation, and assessment of rigorous content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.

The AEA assists schools and school districts in:

- gathering and analyzing student achievement data as well as data about the learning environment.
 - comparing those data to the external knowledge base.
 - using that information to guide school and school district goal setting and implementation of actions to improve student learning.
-

**Strength:
Support for
Iowa Core
Objectives**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported that a variety of structures, processes, programs, and initiatives designed to support and advance Iowa Core objectives are provided to LEAs.

**Strength:
Support for
I-CAT and
Core Content
Areas**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported that the agency provides support for use of Iowa Core Alignment Tool (I-CAT) and concentrates support in core content areas. Examples include:

- Literacy: Second Chance Reading, Literacy 101 and 201, Write Tools, Read it Again, Special Education Literacy Team, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)
 - Math: Cognitively Guided Instruction, Teaching for Math Understanding, Do the Math
 - Science: Van Allen Science Teaching Center
-

**Strength:
PBIS**

AEA and LEA interviewees indicated a strong effort around Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to improve the instructional climate in classrooms and buildings.

**Strength:
Analysis of
Student Data**

LEAs interviewees reported the agency staff led building data teams in analyzing student performance data. The agency staff has assisted many LEAs in the use of universal screening tools and has begun to build a culture

that uses data to guide multi-tiered levels of instruction. The agency is providing pd around the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI).

**Strength:
Characteristics
of Effective
Instruction**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported that the agency supports the development of the Characteristics of Effective Instruction through Instructional Rounds, Leadership Academies, and data teams.

**Strength:
Creative
Curriculum**

The document review indicated that 30 out of 31 districts are implementing Creative Curriculum in the preschool programs. The LEA interviewees reported that the agency is building preschool teachers' capacity to align curriculum, assessment and instruction by providing the following professional development:

- Creative Curriculum framework
 - Literacy and Math Series
 - Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS)
 - *GOLD* Assessment System
-

**Recommen-
dation:
Bring in
expertise to be
shared by all
LEAs**

LEA Interviewees appreciate the agency bringing in national speakers and professional development providers.

As opportunities arise the agency is encouraged to continue to look for opportunities to bring in expertise that can be shared by all LEAs.

**Recommen-
dation:
Formative
Assessment**

LEA interviewees spoke of strong support in the area of screening and diagnostic testing; however, little was mentioned about using formative assessment in the classroom.

The agency might consider emphasizing formative assessment practices, an element of the Characteristics of Effective Instruction, to capitalize on the momentum created by the successful implementation of the universal screening and diagnostic tools.

**Recommendation:
Collaborative partnership between general and special education**

During the October special education teacher interviews, interviewees commented on the shift of support from special education to general education.

AEA and LEA interviewees identified examples of the collaboration between special education and general education (e.g., PBIS, LETRS, RtI, behavioral consultation).

It is recommended the collaborative partnership between general and special education continues and, when possible, be increased.

In addition, the rationale for collaborative partnerships needs to be communicated to stakeholders.

Diverse Learner Needs (DL) Standard

**Expectations:
IAC
281—72.4(4)**

The AEA shall address the diverse learning needs of all children and youth, including, but not limited to, services which address gifted and talented students, and meet the unique needs of students with disabilities who require special education.

Services provide support to schools and school districts and include special education compliance with Iowa Administrative Rules for Special Education.

**Strength:
Autism PD**

AEA and LEA staff reported that professional development around autism has been positive.

The agency offers a wide range of classes for parents, paraprofessionals, and teachers to help schools to build capacity. Examples include Visual Supports for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders; Quality Autism Programming; and Cognitive Strategies for High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Disorder.

The agency has also brought in speakers on autism such as Scott Bellini, Alyson Beytien, Carla McGregor, Brenda Smith Myles and Kari Dunn Buron.

**Strength:
Specialty
Teams**

LEA interviewees reported that the specialty teams are highly valued. Examples include:

- Critical Stress Management Team
- Autism Resource Team
- Challenging Behavior Team
- Special Education Behavioral Team
- Special Education Literacy Team

AEA, LEA and Parent Interviewees reported the Autism, Behavior, and other specialty teams are excellent resources, providing professional development, support and technical assistance to administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents to design, implement and evaluate intervention plans.

**Strength:
Parent
Education
Partnership**

Parent interviewees expressed appreciation for the agency's Parent Education Partnership (PEP) program. Specific activities that parents were made aware of through PEP include RESPECT (Recognizing Everyone's Strengths by Peacebuilding, Empathizing, Communication and Trustbuilding) training, IEP training, and Parents as Presenters.

**Strength:
Special
Education
Teams** AEA and LEA interviewees mentioned the newly formed special education teams (Special Education Literacy Team, Special Education Behavior Team and Special Education Curriculum Specialist Team) as an innovative strategy to enhance services and build capacity of LEAs to meet student needs.

The agency is encouraged to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these teams and expand them as data indicate.

**Strength:
Early ACCESS
Comprehensive
Approach** AEA interviewees reported a comprehensive approach to articulating and embedding family-centered principles and early intervention philosophy throughout Early ACCESS professional development, procedures and change efforts.

**Recommendation:
Analysis of
Early ACCESS
data** AEA interviewees reported that a root cause analysis of Early ACCESS child find and referral data has driven improvement efforts.

Continue to analyze referral source data to determine effectiveness of outreach and target referral sources accordingly.

Continue to identify effective practice; one resource for this would be TRACE (Tracking, Referral and Assessment Center for Excellence at <http://www.tracecenter.info/index.php>).

**Recommendation:
Identification
of Infants
Under Age of
One for Early
Access** AEA interviewees reported challenges in identifying infants under the age of one for Early ACCESS (EA) services.

In order to build relationships with the medical community review IFSP files with service coordinators/ providers to gather and analyze data about communications with referral sources and coordinating other services to assure both referral sources and the child's primary health care providers are:

- Informed of EA referral, notified of initial evaluation results and invited to indicate level of participation,
 - Invited to IFSP meetings (including alternative methods of meeting participation),
 - Recipients of IFSP documents after IFSP meetings.
-

**Recommendation:
Followup
Support and
Technical** AEA and LEA interviewees reported that the agency has provided pd for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and Statewide Voluntary Preschool (SVP) teachers but follow up support and technical assistance was not consistent across the agency.

Assistance for ECSE and SVP

The agency should continue to monitor implementation of professional development to ensure its fidelity (e.g. review implementation/service logs; use video taping of intervention sessions in order to assess implementation fidelity and to coach provider practicing new skills).

Recommendation: English as Second Language

AEA and LEA interviewees indicated that there is one ELL Consultant for the AEA. The services provided by this consultant are excellent, for example, she is relentless in making sure schools and school districts understand what to do when ELL students enroll.

Consider building capacity in ELL strategies for both agency and LEA staff to accommodate changing student demographics.

Recommendation: Parent Awareness of Services

Parent interviewees felt they should be made aware of a full menu of all special education and support/related services offered by the AEA.

The agency, possible through PEP, is encouraged to help parents understand that according to Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) the IEP Team members during an IEP Team meeting make the decisions regarding the special education and support/related services that will be provided to a student based on the student's identified needs rather than on what services are available.

Recommendation: Reduction of Work Experience Coordinator position

AEA and LEA interviewees expressed concern about the reduction of the Work Experience Coordinator positions due to budget constraints. It was assumed that districts would provide these services to their students but many districts lack expertise in this area.

The concern is that, as a result of the agency not providing licensed work experience coordinators, students may not be having their needs met in the postsecondary area of working or getting the services needed to meet their postsecondary expectations.

The agency must have a system in place to monitor whether student needs for employment preparation are being met and provided by qualified personnel. This may include providing support and professional development in order to build district capacity to provide students with work experiences that allow them to meet their post-secondary goals.

Recommendation:

AEA and LEA interviewees stated that due to the shift from a specialist to a generalist model there is confusion about agency special education staff roles.

**Confusion
Sp Ed staff
roles**

It is recommended that the agency provide ongoing clarification of staff roles with LEA and AEA staff.

Multi-Cultural Gender Fair (MCGF) Standard

Expectations: The AEA shall provide services that support multicultural, gender-fair approaches to the educational programs pursuant to Iowa Code section IAC 281—72.4(5) 256.11.

These services assist schools and school districts to:

- take actions that ensure all students are free from discriminatory acts and practices.
 - establish policies and take actions that ensure all students are free from harassment.
 - incorporate into the educational program instructional strategies and student activities related to responsibilities, rights, and the respect for diversity which are necessary for successful citizenship in a diverse community and a global economy.
 - incorporate, on an ongoing basis, activities within professional development that prepare and assist all employees to work effectively with diverse learners.
-

Strength:
Closing the Achievement Gap for subgroups

Multiple groups recognize AEA staff as having a strong understanding of their mission to close the achievement gap for subgroups (e.g. Low SES, Race and Ethnicity, IEP, gender).

AEA staff are very knowledgeable and optimistic about strategies to close the gap, such as increasing expectations and instructional rigor, aligning assessment and instruction, accelerating achievement, improving instruction, and protecting instructional time. The agency is encouraged to continue this work.

Strength:
Oleweus and PBIS Training

AEA and LEA interviewees stated the AEA provided training in Oleweus and PBIS from Early Childhood through high school, allowing LEAs to address diversity and positively impact the climate and culture of the schools

Strength:
Materials to address Diversity

AEA and LEA interviewees reported materials were available through the agency's professional library, media collection, and on-line resources to address diversity as well as harassment and bullying.

**Recommendation:
Cultural
Competency
Training**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported a strong emphasis on multi-cultural, gender fair equity in the Teacher Mentoring program. Diversity is also embedded into teacher substitute and paraprofessional training. However, interviewees reported that diversity training is not a major focus of the AEA.

Due to the growth of ELL and low SES populations, it is recommended that the AEA emphasize cultural competency training for both AEA and LEA staff.

Media (MS) and School Technology Services (STS) Standard

Expectations: Media Services IAC 281—72.4(6)	<p>The AEA shall deliver media services.</p> <p>These services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• align with school and school district needs;• support effective instruction.• provide consultation, research and information services, instructional resources, and materials preparation and dissemination to assist schools and school districts to meet the learning needs of all students and support local district media services.• support the implementation of content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.• support and integrate emerging technology.
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Expectations: School Technology Services IAC 281—72.4(7)	<p>The AEA shall supplement and support effective instruction for all students through school technology services.</p> <p>These services provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• technology planning,• technical assistance, and• professional development. <p>These services support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the incorporation of instructional technologies to improve student achievement, and• the implementation of content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.• and integrate emerging technology.
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Strength: Expanding LEA Capacity	<p>The agency's role in expanding LEA capacity in the area of technology was often mentioned by LEA interviewees as a strength. The agency keeps LEAs informed about the rapid growth of technology, specifically, iPad, 1:1 initiatives, and PowerSchool.</p>
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Strength: i-Pad Training	<p>AEA and LEA interviewees reported numerous times that the iPad training and demonstrations, which include examples of appropriate educational applications, are appreciated, appropriate, and timely.</p>
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**Strength:
Supports to
LEAs to
identify student
needs through
analysis of data**

LEA interviewees reported numerous examples of Media/School Technology supports to help LEAs identify student needs through analysis of data. Examples include:

- PowerSchool
 - Online Assessment System
 - Behavior Management System
 - Summative Assessment Data (I.e.DIBELS, Iowa Assessments)
 - Professional Library
 - Online Learning Programs
-

**Strength:
Assistive
Technology**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported that the AEA's assistive technology program provides appropriate consultation as to what is available. The program encourages LEAs to borrow assistive technology materials and equipment from the AEA to "try them out" before purchasing.

**Strength:
Payroll and
Budget Support**

LEA interviewees stated their appreciation for the payroll and budget software support. These programs help LEAs save money, stay current on rules and regulations, and reduce associated problems.

**Strength:
Support
provided by
Technology and
Media Staff**

LEA interviewees provided numerous examples of specific support provided by technology and media staff to teachers and students. Some additional examples include:

- VAST to support implementation of FOSS kits
 - Leveled Readers
 - Van delivery program
 - Media Production Center
 - VREP (Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder)
 - Applications for the iPad
 - Various online resources
-

**Recommen-
dation:
Increase
awareness of
Media and
Technology
Services**

LEA interviewees reported that they feel communication from the media center, media production center and technology teams are outstanding.

It was reported by outlying districts as well as some metro schools that letting new employees know the services offered by the agency in these areas is a challenge.

The agency should consider developing a virtual tour/webinar to increase awareness of the assistance available

Leadership (LD) Standard

Expectations: The AEA shall deliver services that develop leadership based upon the Iowa Standards for School Administrators as adopted by the board of educational examiners.
IAC
281—72.4(8)

Leadership services assist with:

- Recruitment,
- Induction,
- Retention, and
- professional development of educational leaders.

AEAs develop and deliver leadership programs based on:

- local educational needs,
 - state educational needs, and
 - best practices.
-

Strength:
Development of
Educational
Leaders

AEA and LEA interviewees reported many opportunities are provided for the development of educational leaders. Examples include:

- Building superintendent's capacity through monthly superintendent professional learning sessions
- Supporting the Iowa Leadership Academy Superintendents' Network state wide initiative
- Providing evaluator training for Superintendents and principals
- Providing mentoring program for beginning teachers which assists beginning teachers and also builds capacity among mentor teachers
- Providing direct district support by having Regional AEA administrators participating in school and school district leadership teams
- Assisting in the development of district Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
- Supporting provide direct district support through Quarterly meetings
- Implementing the PBIS Train the Trainer model
- Supporting the Iowa Core
- Supporting SINA/DINA
- Assisting building leadership with incorporating the Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS) in the district's preschool programs
- Facilitating the Superintendent Advisory Committee

**Strength:
Building
Leadership
Capacity**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported working with leadership consultant, Jamie Vollmer, to build leadership capacity within the LEAs and local communities regarding school innovation through the Eastern Iowa Compact.

The agency will be assisting LEA Design Teams with the work of identifying stakeholder groups, developing a common message, and creating a systematic approach within the community to communicate the message.

**Recommen-
dation:
Contemporary
School
Leadership**

LEA interviewees had conflicting reports on the benefits of participation in the agency's Contemporary School Leadership program.

Consider further evaluation of this program to determine what effect it has on improving student achievement.

Accreditation Status: Grant Wood AEA 10

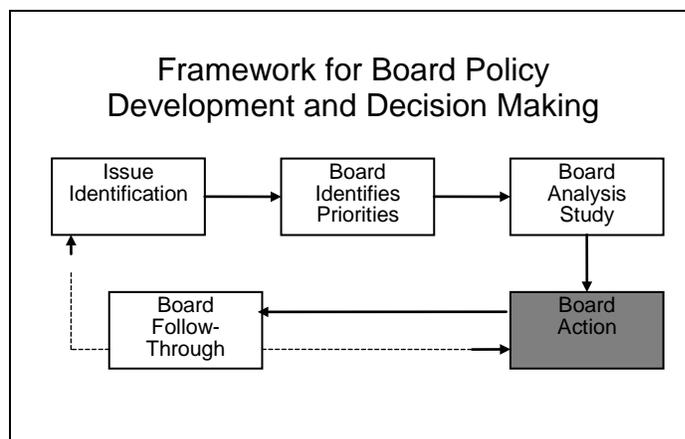
**Team
Recommendation**

Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10 is recommended for continued accreditation pursuant to 281—IAC Chapter 72.

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 14, 2012



Agenda Item: Northwest Area Education Agency (NWAEA) Accreditation

Iowa Goals: All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code section 273.11(1) directs the State Board to develop standards and rules for the accreditation of area education agencies (AEAs). The Department of Education is directed to develop and establish, in consultation with the AEAs, an accreditation process for AEAs. Iowa Code section 273.10(1). The State Board shall determine whether a program of an AEA shall receive initial accreditation or remain accredited...based upon the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Education after a study of the factual and evaluative evidence ...in terms of the accreditation standards adopted by the State Board. Iowa Code section 273.10 (3 and 3a).

Presenter: Sharon Hawthorne, Consultant
Co-Lead AEA Accreditation
Bureau of School Improvement

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the recommendations for AEA accreditation submitted by the director and grant continued accreditation for Northwest AEA.

Background: The central purpose of the accreditation visit is to help AEAs improve the quality and focus of their services, which will in turn assist schools and school districts to improve learning for students.

Iowa AEAs are a critical part of the support structure for schools and ultimately for children. With so much at stake, maintaining high standards of quality in programs and services is a top priority.

Northwest Area Education Agency Accreditation Report

Purpose The central purpose of the accreditation visit is to help Area Education Agencies (AEAs) improve the quality and focus of their services, which will in turn assist schools and school districts to improve learning for students.

Iowa's AEAs are a critical part of the support structure for schools and ultimately for children. With so much at stake, maintaining high standards or quality in programs and services is a top priority.

On-Site Visit Onsite visits are an essential part of the AEA accreditation process.

AEA site visits conducted during the school year reflect the requirements outlined in 281—IAC Chapter 72. As a result, the following procedures were applied:

- Assessment of the eight accreditation standards through review of their associated descriptors:
 - School-Community Planning
 - Professional Development
 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
 - Diverse Learner Needs
 - Media
 - School Technology
 - Multicultural, Gender Fair
 - Leadership
- Assessment of common criteria that apply to each standard:
 - Agency services are equitably available.
 - The agency includes a process to monitor implementation of the services.
 - The agency has a process to measure the effectiveness of services provided.
 - The agency has a process to measure the efficiency of services provided.
 - Assessment of the services provided for established agency-wide goals.

Site Visit The agency can address accreditation expectations.

Desired Results

The agency can consistently deliver services that, in aggregate, meet the eight accreditation standards.

The agency can use the site visit findings to continuously improve the quality

of services to positively impact student learning.

Levels of Accreditation

Accreditation applies to the entire agency, not to individual programs, services, or actions.

281—IAC Chapter 72 designates two accreditation options:

- The State Board of Education grants Continuation of Accreditation if the agency meets all standards and other requirements.
 - The State Board of Education grants Conditional Accreditation if the agency has not met all standards and other requirements.
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Standards Met or Not Met

AEA Accreditation Standards

- School-Community Planning - **Met**
 - Professional Development - **Met**
 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - **Met**
 - Diverse Learner Needs - **Met**
 - Multicultural/Gender Fair - **Met**
 - Media - **Met**
 - School Technology - **Met**
 - Leadership - **Met**
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Chapter 63

Chapter 63 of the Iowa Code outlines the program requirements for the provision of Educational Programs and Services for Pupils in Juvenile Homes.

The following facilities, located within the boundaries of Northwest AEA, were reviewed as a part of the agency's accreditation visit::

- Northwest Iowa Youth Emergency Shelter,
- Crittenton Center Shelter
- Woodbury County Detention Center

No non-compliance with the requirements of 281—IAC Chapter 63 was noted during the review of self-assessment data provided to the site visit team prior to the visit.

Overall Agency Strengths

Instructional Coaches and Special Education Strategists

AEA and LEA interview teams indicated many of the instructional coaches and special education strategists are members of school and/or district leadership teams, assisting with school improvement efforts, and regularly participating in state accreditation visits for public and non-public schools.

AEA interviewees indicated they serve on LEA, SINA and School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) teams.

The agency is organized into Regions to help districts accomplish their goals. This provides connections with LEAs and their communities to focus on student/school/district improvement efforts. One LEA representative reported, "NWAEA is present and involved in our district's planning with our community."

LEA interviewees noted the SINA audit and design process is made available to non-identified schools/districts as a proactive approach to improving student achievement.

Agency Collaborations

AEA and LEA interviewees indicated the agency collaborates with Prairie Lakes AEA. Examples of this collaboration included:

- Media Cooperative
 - Northwest Iowa Leadership Academy
 - Universal Design for Learning Pilot (also includes AEA 267)
 - Technology Integration and Instruction for the 21st Century Learner (TICL) Conference
 - The "FEAST at the Forum" conference
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Statewide AEA Collaboration Efforts

AEA and LEA interviewees indicated the agency is involved with statewide AEA collaboration efforts. Examples included:

- Collaboration for Kids
 - Iowa Culture and Language Conference (ICLC)
 - Iowa English Language Development Assessment (IELDA)
 - State Wide Child Find Leadership Team
 - Iowa Principal Leadership Academy (Collaboration with Prairie Lakes AEA 8, Keystone AEA 1, and School Administrators of Iowa)
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Overall Agency Recommendations

Instructional Coaches and Special Education Strategists Workloads

AEA interviewees reported increased workloads of instructional coaches (1:2200 students) and special education strategists (1:850 students) have made the delivery of services difficult. It is suggested that the agency take the following actions:

- Assure the fidelity of the implementation of Jim Knight’s Instructional Coaching model.
 - Review current survey data (2/2011 survey and 2011-12 AEA Customer Survey) and collect additional internal survey data regarding the new model of delivery and align it with student achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of the agency’s new delivery model.
 - Develop common language and definitions for “delivery of services” and “effectiveness of programs and services”.
 - Review the formula used to make instructional coach and special education strategist assignments to possibly include mileage/drive time, in an attempt to avoid burn-out and attrition.
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Assisting LEAs with Data-Based Decisions

It was reported by LEA interviewees the agency is inconsistent in supporting the analysis and utilization of student achievement data to assist LEAs in making data based decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

It is recommended that agency leadership review the practices of agency staff to ensure that a consistent process is used to facilitate conversations with LEA staff in the analysis and use of student achievement data.

LEA Analysis of Data

LEA interviewees indicated a need for agency support for analyzing student achievement and learning environment data. The analysis of this data could be used to:

- Plan, design, and monitor the implementation of professional development activities that will assist LEAs in meeting district/school-wide goals.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of LEA instructional practices to assure student success in the Iowa Core.
 - Allocate resources to align with district needs (FTE’s, time and money)
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School/Community Planning (S/CP) Standard

Expectations
IAC
281—72.4(1)

The AEA shall deliver services for school-community planning.

The AEA assists schools and school districts in:

- assessing needs of all students.
 - developing collaborative relationships among community agencies.
 - establishing shared direction.
 - implementing actions to meet goals.
 - reporting progress towards goals.
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Strength:
Community
Partnerships

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the partnership between agency staff and community agencies is an effective support for children birth through age twenty-one. Examples included:

- The Early ACCESS (EA) Council provides an opportunity for agency and Early Childhood of Iowa (ECI), formerly known as Community Empowerment, staff to collaboratively work together to provide services to families in an effective and efficient manner.
- Agency staff assists districts in the implementation of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program and the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) verification process. The four-year-old-preschool programs connect with external partners in order to help provide services to school and community preschool programs.
- Secondary Transition training is provided for parents through a workshop that brings together several community agencies to increase awareness of the unique needs of students with disabilities as they transition into post high school living, learning and work settings.
- Siouxland Human Investment Partnership (SHIP) supports the agency's work in the area of early childhood.
- Education Quest Foundation which sponsors the Tri-State College Fair. This event provides an opportunity for students to meet locally with representatives from numerous four and two year colleges, career training schools and branches of the military.
- The agency offers activities and programs to promote student pursuit of careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Examples included:
 - Space Settlement Design Competition
 - JETS Teams (Junior Engineer Technical Society Test of Engineering Aptitude Math and Science)

- Physics Olympics
 - Van Allen Science Training (VAST) to utilize the Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits
 - Star Lab
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**Strength:
Autism
Resource Team**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency's Autism Resource Team (ART) is a strength. Some specific examples are listed below:

- The ART provides parent information and sessions to support families as well as "high quality" professional development for AEA and LEA staff.
 - The ART works with hospitals, clinics and schools to provide services to students and parents.
 - ART assists schools in developing needed skills for post secondary life
 - ART members offer help and services to students and adults on the autism spectrum
 - ART members speak at a variety of community service organizations like Sertoma Club, Lion's Club, Rotary, and the Optimists to raise community awareness
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**Strength:
Interagency
Teams**

AEA and LEA interviewees indicated interagency teams promote awareness and offer opportunities for learning and fun and have included work with organizations such as:

- Siouxland Y-Beyond the Bell program
 - Siouxland Autism Support Group
 - Boys Club-Metronome
 - ARC For People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
 - Children and Adults with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) Group
 - Senior Citizens Group
 - Mercy Medical Residents
 - Head Start
 - Sioux City Police Department
 - Sioux City CSD Bus Drivers
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**Strength:
Early ACCESS
Collaborations**

AEA Interviewees reported numerous collaborative partnerships and professional development opportunities with community agencies and signatory partners to provide Early ACCESS services to meet the needs of children and families. Examples of these partnerships include partnerships with the medical/health community, Department of Human Services, Women, Infant, Children (WIC), Siouxland Cares, Community Action Agency, school nurses, and interpreters in communities.

Recommendation:
Data Analysis

See the following Overall Agency Recommendations on page 4:

- Assisting LEAs with Data-Based Decisions
 - LEA Analysis of Data
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Professional Development (PD) Standard

Expectations: The AEA shall deliver professional development services for schools, school districts and AEA instructional, administrative, and support personnel.
IAC
281—72.4(2)

The AEA:

- anticipates and responds to schools' and school districts' needs.
 - supports proven and emerging education practices.
 - aligns with school and school district comprehensive long-range and annual improvement goals.
 - uses adult learning theory.
 - supports improved teaching;
 - uses theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching.
 - addresses professional development activities as required by the Iowa Code or administrative rules.
-

Strength:
Provision of PD
in variety of
ways

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency is providing professional development in a variety of ways:

- The agency provides professional development for its internal staff such as Instructional Coaching training with Jim Knight prior to implementing an agency-wide instructional coach and special education strategist model.
 - The agency provides a variety of professional development opportunities for LEA educators at the Sioux City facility, regional offices or on-site in districts.
 - Instructional coaches and special education strategists provide professional development in the classroom which presents opportunities, through modeling, feedback and coaching, to implement instructional strategies based on individual and classroom needs.
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Strength:
PD for
Research Based
Practices

AEA and LEA interviewees reported agency staff is aware of current trends and research based practices and offer professional development and support for the following:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW)
 - Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)
 - Response to Intervention (RtI)
 - University of Kansas – Strategic Instruction Model (KU-SIM)
 - APL – Essential Elements of Instruction
 - Iowa Core: Deeper Investigations training for all content areas
 - 21st Century Skills into all content areas
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- Technology (Interactive White Boards, iPads, etc)
 - Every Child Reads (ECR), Every Student Counts (ESC), Every Learner Inquires (ELI)
 - Six +1 Writing Traits
 - I Have a Plan Iowa (IHAPI)
 - Ziggurat Model for children with autism
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**Recommendation:
Types of PD
Delivery**

LEA interviewees described a variety of face-to face opportunities including the use of AEA On-line and NWAEA media on-line resources to support professional development offerings.

Consider expanding and promoting the delivery of professional development to include web-based or other virtual courses and learning modules as an additional delivery approach.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA) Standard

Expectations:
IAC
281—72.4(3)

The AEA shall deliver curriculum, instruction and assessment services that address the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, and science but may also be applied to other curriculum areas.

These services support the development, implementation, and assessment of rigorous content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.

The AEA assists schools and school districts in:

- gathering and analyzing student achievement data as well as data about the learning environment.
 - comparing those data to the external knowledge base.
 - using that information to guide school and school district goal setting and implementation of actions to improve student learning.
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Strength:
Iowa Core

LEA interviewees stated agency staff has been helpful in the implementation of the Iowa Core. Examples included:

- Iowa Core Curriculum meetings
 - Use of Iowa Core Alignment Tool (ICAT)
 - Investigation and Deeper Investigation of Iowa Core Math and English Language Arts Standards professional development materials
 - Incorporate 21st Century into instruction
 - Align text books with Iowa Core
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Strength:
Instructional Coaches

LEA interviewees stated agency instructional coaches have been helpful in supporting LEA teachers in English and Language Arts. Examples included:

- Established benchmarking in Guided Reading
 - Reviewed literacy strategies with LEA staff during the summer
 - Provided Reading Recovery support
 - Assisted with implementation of evidence-based practices in classrooms to ensure fidelity
-

Strength:
Material & Resources to Support Instruction

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency provides a variety of materials and resources to support instruction in various curricular areas. Examples include:

- Language Literacy boxes
 - FUSION Reading Program
 - Reading Recovery Kits
 - FOSS (Full Option Science System) Kits
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- iPad/application supports
-

**Strength:
Training &
Support for
LEA Preschool
Teachers**

AEA and LEA interviewee reported the agency provides training and support for LEA preschool teaching staff to effectively implement curriculum, assessment and instruction. Examples included:

- Preparation for Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) Verification Visits
 - Support implementation of the *GOLD* online assessment system
 - Access specialized expertise to meet individual needs of children
 - Provision of materials and information on research based instructional strategies
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**Recommendations:
Analysis of
Data**

See the following Overall Agency Recommendations on page 4:

- Assisting LEAs with Data-Based Decisions
 - LEA Analysis of Data
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Diverse Learner Needs (DL) Standard

Expectations:
IAC
281—72.4(4)

The AEA shall address the diverse learning needs of all children and youth, including but not limited to services which address gifted and talented students, and meet the unique needs of students with disabilities who require special education.

Services provide support to schools and school districts and include special education compliance with Iowa administrative rules for special education.

Strength:
Early ACCESS
Teamwork

AEA interviewees reported Early ACCESS staff demonstrates effective teamwork by:

- communicating with each other during team meetings and home visits,
- brainstorming resources in the community, and
- utilizing specialists in order to provide Early ACCESS services to meet the needs of children.

Strength:
Early ACCESS
Analysis of
Data

AEA interviewees shared how the Early ACCESS leadership analyzes data using the Web Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in order to make data-informed decisions about caseloads, identify topics requiring additional professional development, and provide resources to meet the needs of Early ACCESS providers.

Strength:
Early ACCESS
Communication with Parents

AEA interviewees discussed how they are supported in effectively meeting the needs of diverse populations. Examples included:

- Utilizing bilingual staff to provide Early ACCESS services
- Adjusting work schedules to provide services to families on weekends and evenings
- Texting families as a means to communicate
- Utilizing wireless internet access cards to connect families to the internet as a means to complete agency forms and applications (e.g., Medicaid forms; DHS Waivers)

Strengths:
Parent
Appreciation
for Agency

Parent interviewees expressed appreciation for the agency. Remarks made by parents during the interview included:

- AEA has been wonderful in valuing our opinions.

- I was made to feel part of the IEP team from the start.
- Agency staff is on top of things.
- They make sure parents have a say.
- I was walked through the IEP process.
- Agency staffs made me feel a part of the process.

**Strength:
Partnership
with Sioux City**

AEA interviewees reported six agency special education strategists will be working with the 5-6 Special Education Instructional Coaches hired by the Sioux City School District. They will be trained together to implement a special education model that is tailored to meet the district's need to increase the achievement of students with disabilities.

**Recommendation:
Inconsistency
of
Implementation
of Sp Ed
Strategist
Model**

LEA interviewees reported an inconsistency in the implementation of the special education strategist model. The quality and availability of strategists is dependent upon who the strategist is and the demands of their assignment.

It is recommended that the agency consider adding mileage/travel time as one of the determiners when making strategist assignments.

As agency staff spends greater amounts of time in LEAs, the agency should continue to support them by providing ongoing professional development and opportunities to collaborate together to build agency cohesiveness and a system of agency support for the strategists.

**Recommendation:
Students with
Challenging
Behaviors**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency provides few options for students with challenging behaviors.

AEA interviewees reported training is going to be provided to special education strategists on how to assist teachers who have students with challenging behaviors. The team is concerned this would be an additional demand on already overwhelmed strategists.

Consider other options for helping principals and teachers who need assistance and support when working with students with challenging behaviors such as:

- Researching options for evaluation of students with challenging behaviors that are closer to the agency such as agencies in South Dakota, Nebraska and Minnesota.
- Providing support in the form of professional development to administrators of buildings where teachers are struggling with students with challenging behaviors.
- Developing a system of support for special education teachers who deal with students with challenging behaviors such as a PLC or a supportive

partnering of neighboring teachers who are struggling with similar situations.

- Contacting Mark Draper at Green Hills AEA and the Director of Special Education at Prairie Lakes AEA to discuss the options used by those agencies.
- Contacting Sean Casey, the DE consultant for students with challenging behaviors, for assistance. He can be reached at sean.casey@iowa.gov or 515-281-5447.
- Connecting with Susan Bruce, the DE consultant for PBIS. She can be contacted at susan.bruce@iowa.gov or 515-725-2244.

Based on input from AEA and LEA staff during the AEA Accreditation Process the DE has decided that there will be an investigation of the issues around the services being provided to students with challenging behaviors.

The Department of Education will be following up on this issue to determine whether the agency will be cited for a violation of IDEA and the following Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education:

281—41.115(256B,34CFR300) Continuum of alternative services and placements.

281—41.115(1) *General*. Each public agency must ensure that a continuum of alternative services and placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

281—41.115(2) *Requirements*. The continuum required in subrule 41.115(1) must meet the following requirements:

a. Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under rule 41.39(256B,34CFR300) (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and

b. Make provision for supplementary services, such as resource room or itinerant instruction, to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

The DE has authority to investigate this concern based on:

281—41.120(256B,34CFR300) Monitoring activities. The state shall carry out activities to ensure that rule 41.114(256B,34CFR300) is implemented by each public agency. If there is evidence that a public agency makes placements that are inconsistent with rule 41.114(256B,34CFR300), the department must review the public agency's justification for its actions and assist in planning and implementing any necessary corrective action. Failure of the public agency to implement any necessary corrective action may result in adverse determinations under rule 41.603(256B,34CFR300) or any other available enforcement action.

NWAEA will be kept current with the investigation process and will be notified of the results of the DE investigation during the fall of 2012.

**Recommendation:
Effectiveness of
Special
Education
Services**

AEA interviewees were unable to articulate how they judge the effectiveness of the services and programs provided by special education strategists.

It is recommended the agency drill down into the data from the special education strategist questions on the February 2011 survey and the 2011-2012 AEA Customer Survey.

It is also recommended the agency survey special education strategists regarding their perceptions about the effectiveness of this model. The agency should align the results of these surveys with the results of the analysis of achievement data of students with disabilities.

**Recommendation:
Support for
Gifted and
Talented
Students**

Few LEA interviewee comments were heard by the Accreditation team about support for Gifted and Talented (G/T) students. Some of the LEA interviewees reported minimal awareness and use of agency G/T services.

The agency conducts some G/T activities for students including math and science competitions. Interviewees also reported that the agency has provided G/T services when requested. A meeting is held twice a year that provides information and allows G/T teachers to network.

Consider enhancing the provision of G/T services throughout the agency by having the G/T Consultant contribute ideas that will help teachers better serve identified students and be integrated within all professional development that addresses instructional practices.

Multi-Cultural Gender Fair (MCGF) Standard

**Expectations:
IAC
281—72.4(5)** The AEA shall provide services that support multicultural, gender-fair approaches to the educational programs pursuant to Iowa Code section 256.11.

These services assist schools and school districts to:

- take actions that ensure all students are free from discriminatory acts and practices.
- establish policies and take actions that ensure all students are free from harassment.
- incorporate into the educational program instructional strategies and student activities related to responsibilities, rights, and the respect for diversity which are necessary for successful citizenship in a diverse community and a global economy.
- incorporate, on an ongoing basis, activities within professional development that prepare and assist all employees to work effectively with diverse learners.

**Strength:
Poverty
Simulation** AEA and LEA interview groups reported benefiting from the poverty simulation provided by the NWAEA. Many schools replicated the simulation.

**Strength:
Programs and
PD addressing
MCGF issues** AEA and LEA interview groups indicated an appreciation for the many programs and professional development opportunities afforded to them by NWAEA. Examples given were:

- OLWEUS training
- MANDT training
- Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training
- Safe and Supportive School Grant
- PBIS training and learning supports, including the use of School-Wide Information System (SWIS) and PBIS data

**Strength:
Support for
LEA Equity
Coordinators** LEA interviewees indicated an appreciation to the agency for holding an annual Equity Conference and Equity Coordinator's meeting for district Equity Coordinators.

**Strength:
Understanding** AEA and LEA interviewees reported that agency staff has provided students and teachers with information that helps them understand student differences;

Student Differences

topics covered by the agency included students who are dwarfs, students with autism, students with Down Syndrome and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

**Recommendation:
Continue and Expand Efforts**

AEA and LEA interviewees reported the agency is providing programs and supports to assist LEAs in meeting the expectations of Iowa Code section 256.11. The agency is encouraged to continue this support and expand current programs and services in this area.

Media (MS) and School Technology Services (STS) Standard

Expectations: Media Services IAC 281—72.4(6)	<p>The AEA shall deliver media services.</p> <p>These services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• align with school and school district needs.• support effective instruction.• provide consultation, research and information services, instructional resources, and materials preparation and dissemination to assist schools and school districts to meet the learning needs of all students and support local district media services.• support the implementation of content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.• support and integrate emerging technology.
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Expectations: School Technology Services IAC 281—72.4(7)	<p>The AEA shall supplement and support effective instruction for all students through school technology services.</p> <p>These services provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• technology planning,• technical assistance, and• professional development. <p>These services support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the incorporation of instructional technologies to improve student achievement.• the implementation of content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.• and integrate emerging technology.
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Strength: iPads	<p>AEA interviewees expressed appreciation for the iPads issued to all coaches, strategists, early childhood staff, and administrators. This technology enables AEA staff to model 21st Century Skills, drive changing practices and communicate with other agency staff.</p>
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Strength: Appreciation of Media & School Technology Services	<p>LEA interviewees indicated an appreciation for the media and school technology services provided by NWAEA. LEA interviewees noted some of these services as strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Google Trainers• Use of Wiki's and BLOGS
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- iPad and SMART Board Training
 - Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) books – assistive technology (board maker, picture books)
 - Excellent van delivery
 - AEA on-line streaming
 - Classroom of the Future
 - Trial use of assistive technology before district purchase.
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**Strength:
Collaboration
with PLAEA**

AEA and LEA interviewees indicated the daily van delivery and collaboration of media services between Prairie Lakes and NWAEA is outstanding. All constituents benefit from these combined resources.

**Recommendation:
Classroom of
the Future**

AEA interviewees noted the agency has created a Classroom of the Future for LEA training purposes. However, it was apparent to the interview team that many LEAs are not familiar with or using this classroom. It is recommended by the interview team that the agency develop strategies to showcase and utilize this classroom with its constituents. Examples included:

- Showcasing the Classroom of the Future
 - Summer workshops
 - Virtual tour
 - Integration workshops (all content areas)
 - Utilizing the Classroom of the Future
 - PLC's meeting there
 - Summer camps
 - Agency staff model use of the classroom for their meetings/professional development
 - Bring students in for a day in the classroom with instructional coaches and strategist modeling differentiated instruction using technology
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**Recommendation:
Monitor
effectiveness of
School
Technology PD**

AEA interviewees indicated the agency provided professional development to enhance technology skills for their instructional coaches and strategist is appreciated and effective.

The site visit team recommends the agency continue this process and develop a tool to monitor its effectiveness and use the data to make changes as indicated.

Leadership (LD) Standard

Expectations: The AEA shall deliver services that develop leadership based upon the Iowa Standards for School Administrators as adopted by the board of educational examiners.
IAC 281—72.4(8)

Leadership services assist with:

- Recruitment,
- Induction,
- Retention, and
- Professional development of educational leaders.

AEAs develop and deliver leadership programs based on:

- local educational needs,
 - state educational needs, and
 - best practices.
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**Strength:
Consistent
contact with
LEAs**

LEA interviewees reported NWAEA administration understands the importance of consistent contact with LEAs. This is demonstrated through NWAEA administration facilitating, attending, and participating in monthly meetings and professional development for LEA district and building and administrators.

**Strength:
Chief
Administrator**

The agency Board of Directors shared their appreciation for the chief administrator. They reported that he:

- keeps the board informed about agency issues.
 - is, as needed, involved in LEA board and administrative team meetings.
 - provides leadership for the agency.
 - is a visible leader in both the agency and community.
 - communicates with agency staff and community.
 - encourages and supports the collaborative efforts of the agency.
 - invites parents and students to come to AEA Board meetings and share what support they have received from the agency.
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**Strength:
Leadership
Program
Responsibilities**

The agency document review and AEA interviewees indicated the agency has allocated time, financial and personnel resources to address the agency's leadership program responsibilities. Examples included:

- Providing Evaluator Approval Training
 - Providing Mentoring and Induction facilitation
 - Participating in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) pilot
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- program with AEAs 8 and 267 for the whole state.
- Facilitating Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) leadership meetings three to four times a year
 - Leading SINA/DINA process with districts in need and as requested
 - Facilitating the Superintendent Network
 - Leading Iowa Core Implementation
 - Leading RtI implementation
 - Leading monthly LEA administrator meetings
 - Supporting the statewide voluntary preschool program and Early Childhood Special Education
 - Providing Budget workshop
 - Sponsoring the Northwest Leadership Academy (NWLA) in collaboration with Prairie Lakes AEA
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**Recommendation:
Workloads**

See the following Overall Agency Recommendation on page 4:

- Instructional Coaches and Special Education Strategists Workloads
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Accreditation Status: Northwest AEA

**Team
Recommendation**

Northwest Area Education Agency is recommended for continued accreditation pursuant to 281—IAC Chapter 72.

Department of Education (DE) Investigation of Possible Noncompliance by Northwest Area Education Agency (NWAEA)

Reason for Investigation

During the 2012 NWAEA Accreditation Visit insufficient information was provided by interviewees regarding the provision of services to eligible individuals identified as having challenging behaviors and being in need of special education services in order to have involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

Legal Obligation of DE to Monitor

The law requires the DE ensure public agencies meet the program requirements of the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education.

281—41.600(2) *Primary focus of monitoring activity.* The primary focus of the state’s monitoring activities must be on the following:

- a. Improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and
 - b. Ensuring that public agencies meet the program requirements under Part B of the Act, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most clearly related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.
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Legal Obligation of AEA to Provide Continuum

The law requires public agencies ensure a continuum of placements for children with disabilities.

281—41.115(256B,34CFR300) Continuum of alternative services and placements.

281—41.115(1) *General.* Each public agency must ensure that a continuum of alternative services and placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

281—41.115(2) *Requirements.* The continuum required in subrule 41.115(1) must meet the following requirements:

- a. Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under rule 41.39(256B,34CFR300) (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and
 - b. Make provision for supplementary services, such as resource room or itinerant instruction, to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.
-

Obligation of DE to Monitor

The law requires compliance with the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special

**Special
Education as
Part of AEA
Accreditation**

Education.

281—72.4(4) The AEA shall address the diverse learning needs of all children and youth, including but not limited to services which address gifted and talented students, and meet the unique needs of students with disabilities who require special education. Services provide support to schools and school districts and include special education compliance with Iowa Administrative Rules for Special Education.

Action of DE

The DE investigated possible noncompliance at NWAEA in regard to the provision of services for students with challenging behaviors to determine whether the agency will be cited for a violation of Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education.

**Investigation
Process**

The investigation process included:

- Review of additional information received electronically from NWAEA on 6/14/12.
 - 7/2/2012 Phone Conversation with Jim Gorman, NWAEA Director of Special Education, to clarify issues and set up actions to follow. (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
 - 7/10/12 Meeting with Jason Glass and David Tilly to discuss NWAEA concern
 - 7/23/2012 Interview with Jim Gorman and Faye DeSmit. (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
 - 7/23/2012 Interview with Challenging Behavior Team (Dana Oas, Jan Turbes, Brenda Janisch). (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
 - 8/22-23/12 Review of IEPs of students with challenging behaviors focusing on Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Implementation Plans (BIPs). Reviews completed by NWAEA Challenging Behavior Team and DE team. (Sharon Hawthorne, Ellen McGinnis-Smith, Dee Gethmann and Fred Kinne)
 - 8/30/2012 Meeting with Jim Gorman to finalize findings and compare results of IEP reviews. (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
-

Findings

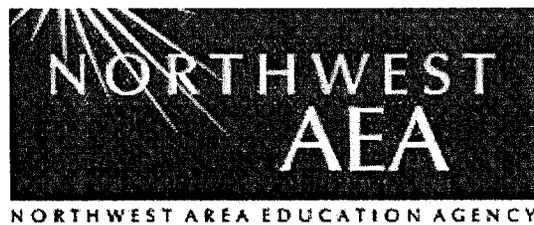
The findings are as follows:

- Sean Casey, DE Consultant for Challenging Behaviors, indicated that NWAEA does have a Challenging Behavior Team (Jan Turbes and Brenda Janisch) who have participated in the Challenging Behavior Team Training provided by Sean Casey and others from University of Iowa for the past 3 years. They have one additional year of training left.

- Jim Gorman indicated that since the Challenging Behavior Team is still “in training” it has not been widely advertised across NWAEA.
- The Challenging Behavior Team reported that they saw 50 students with challenging behaviors from all regions in NWAEA during the 2011-2012 school year.
- Diane Browning Wright will be providing a series of trainings on FBAs and BIPs at NWAEA this fall. All NWAEA Special Education Strategists are required to participate and it is open to all NWAEA school districts
- From the data provided electronically on 6/14/2012:
 - a. it is apparent that placements have been made both in and out of state for NWAEA students with challenging behaviors
 - b. Trainings for teachers and special education services providers for students with autism have been provided (e.g. Ziggurat training, Ocali training, TEACCH training, MANDT training)
- The DE review of 10 NWAEA IEPs, FBAs and BIPs indicated no noncompliance. Results of this review were shared with Jim Gorman and the Challenging Behavior Team on 8/30/2012.

**Conclusion of
DE
Investigation**

Northwest AEA is found to be in compliance with 281—41.115.



June 14, 2012

To: Sharon Hawthorne, Bureau of Student and Family Support Services
Jason Glass, Director, Iowa Department of Investigation

Re: Response to Accreditation Letter and Report dated May 31, 2012 for Northwest AEA

Dear Director Glass and Ms. Hawthorn,

I want to thank you and the Accreditation Team for all the hard work that took place during the Accreditation Visit for Northwest AEA. This letter and packet of information will serve as our response to pages 13 and 14 under the Diverse Learner Needs (DL) Standard. Specifically, this packet of information responds to the recommendation: Students with Challenging Behaviors.

Northwest AEA will fully cooperate with the team as they investigate the issues around the services we provide to students with challenging behaviors in Northwest AEA. We will provide any additional information that the Department of Education requests or needs.

As stated in our plans for the 2012-13 school year, we identified Challenging Behaviors as an ongoing area of focus and intended to provide additional professional development for our staff and schools. Even with this recommendation for ongoing support and focus, we felt that the Challenging Behaviors area is a strength of NWAEA with many quality resources available to our schools and students. We were dumbfounded by the suggestion that an investigation of these services was needed.

As you continue your investigation, we want to point out the following information and reports for you to consider as you research the services in Northwest AEA.

We do want you to consider an inconsistency found on page 8 of the report which identified a strength for Northwest AEA, in the Professional Development (PD) Standard. This strength indicated that "AEA and LEA interviewees reported agency staff is aware of current trends and research, best practices and offer professional development and support for the following: Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS)" which is listed as the first research based practice that is a strength for Northwest AEA. This seems inconsistent with your findings and recommendations on page 13 and 14.

Attached you will find four different reports from each of the divisions of Northwest AEA: 1) Special Education: There are a myriad of services to support students with challenging behaviors identified in the Special-Ed attachment; 2) Media: These services are taken directly from the Service Tracker which was provided to the team for the accreditation visit; 3) Educational Services: These services are taken directly from the Service Tracker which was provided to the team for the accreditation visit; 4) Success stories and Thank You's: We have provided you with a list of stories reported to the agency of parents and LEA staff that treasure Northwest AEA Challenging Behavior Services.

Page -2-

Please consider all of these services and reports provided by Northwest AEA for students with challenging behaviors as you investigate the recommendation on page 14 of your report. Also, take into consideration the expanded training we already planned for the 2012-13 school year before we received this accreditation report, along with the continuation of services we identified as providing in 2011-2012.

We will take into consideration the options that you have recommended on pages 13 and 14 and will respond to you at a later time when we have followed through with these recommendations. We look forward to expanding our options of services for students with challenging behaviors. We will work in collaboration with the Department of Education to expand these services.

Again, if I or any member of the Northwest AEA staff can be of any further help with your investigation, contact us immediately.

Educationally yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timothy S. Grieves".

Timothy S. Grieves, Ph.D.
Northwest AEA, Chief Administrator



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JASON E. GLASS, DIRECTOR

October 13, 2012

Tim Grieves, Chief Administrator
Northwest Area Education Agency
1520 Morningside Ave
Sioux City, Iowa 51106

Dear Dr. Grieves:

This letter is in response to the request from Northwest Area Education Agency (NWAEA) to remove the recommendation regarding NWAEA services to students with challenging behaviors on pages 13-14 of the May 31st NWAEA Accreditation Report.

The following facts led to the accreditation team decision to include this recommendation in the NWAEA Accreditation Report.

- 10/18/2012 – Department of Education (DE) team interviewed two groups of special education teachers from districts in NWAEA. The team asked the teachers “How does your AEA support you in meeting the needs of students with challenging behaviors?” Limited response to this question included how AEA staff supported the teachers following incidents with students with challenging behavior but few, if any, suggestions were provided on how to change the student’s behavior. Sharon Hawthorne spoke to Jim Gorman, the NWAEA Director of Special Education, following the first interview and expressed her concern over a lack of support for teachers of students with challenging behaviors.
- 2/21/2012 – ICN for NWAEA Accreditation Document Review
- 3/27-29/2012 – NWAEA Accreditation Interview Days – AEA staff who support the teachers interviewed in October were asked “How do you collaborate with and support teachers in meeting the need of students with challenging behaviors?” Answers provided did not correspond to the answers provided by the special education teachers. Special education administrators were also asked that question and again the answers did not correspond to the responses from teachers.
- 3/29/2012 – Isaiah McGee, Fred Kinne and Sharon Hawthorne met with Tim Grieves to go over areas of concern. The team’s concerns regarding the provision of services for students with challenging behaviors were discussed at the time.
- 4/10-11/2012 – NWAEA Accreditation Wrap-up
- 5/31/2012 – Completed report was sent electronically to Jason Glass, Director of Iowa DE and Tim Grieves, Chief Administrator NWAEA
- 6/14/12 – Email response received from Tim Grieves which included additional information (Sharon Hawthorne, Jason Glass – DE)
- 7/2/2012 Phone Conversation with Jim Gorman to clarify issues and set up actions to follow. (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
- 7/10/12 Meeting with Jason Glass and David Tilly to discuss NWAEA concerns and establish action plan

- 7/23/2012 Interview with Jim Gorman, NWAEA Director of Special Education and Faye DeSmit. (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
- 7/23/2012 Interview with Challenging Behavior Team (Dana Oas, Jan Turbes, Brenda Janisch). (Sharon Hawthorne – DE)
- 8/22-23/12 Review of IEPs of students with challenging behaviors focusing on Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Implementation Plans (BIPs). Reviews completed by NWAEA Challenging Behavior Team and DE team. (Sharon Hawthorne, Ellen McGinnis-Smith, Dee Gethmann and Fred Kinne)

This recommendation was based on the requirements of the following citations from the Iowa Administrative Code.

- **281—72.4(4)** The AEA shall address the diverse learning needs of all children and youth, including but not limited to services which address gifted and talented students, and meet the unique needs of students with disabilities who require special education. Services provide support to schools and school districts and include special education compliance with Iowa administrative rules for special education.
- **281—41.115(256B,34CFR300) Continuum of alternative services and placements.**
 281—41.115(1) *General.* Each public agency must ensure that a continuum of alternative services and placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.
 281—41.115(2) *Requirements.* The continuum required in subrule 41.115(1) must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under rule 41.39(256B,34CFR300) (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and
 - b. Make provision for supplementary services, such as resource room or itinerant instruction, to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.
- **281—41.600(2) Primary focus of monitoring activity.** The primary focus of the state’s monitoring activities must be on the following:
 - a. Improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities: and
 - b. Ensuring that public agencies meet the program requirements under Part B of the Act, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most clearly related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.

Based on the legal requirements of:

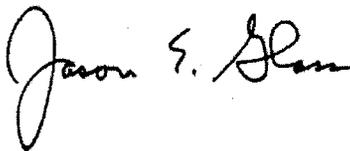
- 281—41.600(2) the DE has a primary responsibility to ensure that public agencies meet the program requirements of the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education (281—41)
- 281—41.115 each public agency, whether an AEA or LEA must provide a continuum of services for students who have been identified as being in need of special education services.
- 281—72.4(4) the DE is required to identify any possible compliance issues related to IDEA and the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education. Any findings made during the AEA Accreditation process must be included in the AEA’s Accreditation report.

The NWAEA request to amend the Accreditation Report is denied. The report adequately reflects what happened during the accreditation visit. The Recommendation "Students with Challenging Behaviors" on pages 13-14 of the May 31, 2012, Northwest AEA Accreditation Report will remain. NWAEA's compliance with Chapter 72 and IDEA are addressed in the May 31, 2012, Accreditation Report and DE Investigation of Possible Noncompliance by NWAEA. This communication and any further correspondence on this matter will be included in the DE's ongoing and permanent documentation.

My decision represents the final agency action in this matter. If your agency disagrees with this decision, you may file a petition for judicial review under section 17A.19 of the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act. That provision give a party who is "aggrieved or adversely affected by agency action" the right to seek judicial review by filing a petition for judicial review in the Iowa District Court for Polk County (home of state government) or in the district court in the county in which the party lives or has its primary office.

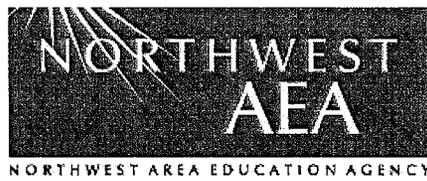
Thank you for your attention to this matter and for the services your agency provides to the residents of Northwest AEA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason E. Glass". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jason E. Glass
Director

Cc: Jim Gorman, Director of Special Education, NWAEA
Marty Ikeda, State Director of Special Education
Amy Williamson, Chief, Bureau of School Improvement
Nicole Proesch, Legal Counsel, Office of the Director
Thomas Mayes, Legal Consultant, Bureau of School Improvement



October 16, 2012

Dr. Jason Glass, Director
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Dear Dr. Glass,

This letter is a response to the October 12, 2012, final Iowa Department of Education agency action in the matter of Northwest Area Education Agency's (AEA's) Accreditation Report. This letter comes from me and was unanimously approved by the Northwest AEA Board of Directors. Though we do not agree with your decision, or the legal support of your decision, Northwest AEA will not be filing a petition for judicial review under section 17A.19 of the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act. We are requesting this letter and the June 14th response letter be placed in the record to explain the position of Northwest AEA.

We agree that it is the responsibility of the Iowa Department of Education to implement the accreditation process for AEAs. The authorization is found in Iowa Code section 273.10. Implicit in the accreditation process is the principle of due process. Information that is collected by the Department during the accreditation process should be accurate, credible, verified and provided to our agency so that the agency can respond. Information that is gathered without conforming to the essential standard of due process should not be entered into the Accreditation Report.

From the beginning, some unidentified number of unnamed persons reported that "the agency provides few options for students with challenging behaviors." This was found in the Northwest AEA Accreditation Report on page 13. This claim then led the Department to include statements in the Accreditation Report which can only be read as a conclusion or finding by the Department that the claim was founded. At no time in the process, or the discussions after the visit, did Northwest AEA expect an "investigation" around our continuum of services for challenging behaviors. The level of findings for "an investigation" is high and should be thoroughly researched by the accreditation team. That research did not happen in this case.

After the agency was apprised of the report, and notified by the Department of Education of the "investigation" of possible noncompliance in the area of challenging behaviors, we provided a response. That response needs to be part of the record for the State Board's final report. I am requesting that Northwest AEA's response, dated June 14, 2012, be included for the State Board's review. When will Northwest AEA be provided with the materials sent to the State Board for our accreditation decision? Do you want me to provide our June 14th information for the State Board or will you place it in their packet?

Regarding your October 12th letter, on page 2, it states the Department of Education is required to identify any possible compliance issues related to IDEA and the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education, and that any findings made during the AEA accreditation process must be included in the AEA's Accreditation Report. I disagree, along with our legal counsels' opinion, with your legal interpretation of 281 I.A.C.72.4(4). Our interpretation of this language is that the Department of Education is not obligated to include the possible compliance issue, especially if the totality of the evidence does not support the findings. Northwest AEA was not afforded due process in the original "investigation" of issues.

-page 2-

The accreditation process is not a rote process by which the Department mechanically collects information and treats that information as accurate without taking appropriate measures to ensure that the information is credible and verifiable. Due process is that concept of fairness which dictates that the party against whom information is to be used has an opportunity to respond to and rebut that information **before** that information is used against them. The process used by the Department in the preparation of its Accreditation Report did not comply with this requirement of due process. If it had, the claim would not have been included in the Accreditation Report because the claim was later found, by the Department itself, to be unfounded.

The Department of Education made its finding and concluded that the agency was found to be in compliance, that the agency did have a continuum of services for challenging behaviors, and determined that Northwest AEA would not be cited for a violation of IDEA and Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education.

In conclusion, Northwest AEA will not appeal for a judicial review, and we request that all of the documents and responses by Northwest AEA (including this letter) be included in the record for the State Board's review of Northwest AEA's accreditation.

Educationally Yours,



Timothy S. Grieves, Ph.D.
Chief Administrator
Northwest AEA

cc: Jim Gorman, Director of Special Education, Northwest AEA
Marty Ikeda, State Director of Special Education
Amy Williamson, Chief, Bureau of School Improvement
Nancy Proesch, Legal Counsel, Office of the Director
Thomas Mayes, Legal Consultant, Bureau of School Improvement
Sharon Hawthorne, Consultant, Special Education Monitoring Part B



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JASON E. GLASS, DIRECTOR

October 25, 2012

Timothy S. Grieves, Ph.D.
Chief Administrator
Northwest AEA
1520 Morningside Ave.
Sioux City, IA 51106-1716

Dear Dr. Grieves:

Thank you for your recent letter. In the interest of continuing collaboration, the Iowa Department of Education will honor your agency's request to place certain letters in the Department's submission to the State Board of Education. Specifically, the Department will be submitting your e-mail of June 14, 2012, and your letter of October 16, 2012. In the interest of completing the record before the Board, the Department will be including my letter of October 12, 2012, as well as a copy of this letter.

I understand this additional matter to be for the Board's information, as the only action item on the Board's agenda is Northwest AEA's continued accreditation. The Department's recommendation continues to be that the Board grant continued accreditation to Northwest AEA.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason E. Glass".

Jason E. Glass
Director

CC: Jim Gorman, Northwest AEA
Martin Ikeda, Amy Williamson, Sharon Hawthorne, Nicole Proesch,
Thomas Mayes, Iowa Department of Education

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

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