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State Board of Education Approves Iowa Core Curriculum

Curriculum establishes essential skills and concepts Iowa students should know in literacy, math, science, social studies and 21st century skills

DES MOINES – The State Board of Education yesterday approved a major portion of the Iowa Core Curriculum, formerly known as the model core curriculum, to make it available to Iowa schools beginning in the fall. The goal of the Iowa Core Curriculum is to ensure Iowa students are engaged in rigorous curriculum.

Specifically, the board approved the essential concepts and skills for kindergarten through eighth grade students in Iowa in literacy, math and science. In addition, it approved the essential concepts and skills for high school students in social studies and for 21st century skills, which include employability skills, financial literacy, health literacy and technology literacy.

“The essential skills and concepts outlined in the Iowa Core Curriculum are key components to raising expectations for Iowa’s students,” said State Board of Education President Gene Vincent. “It helps ensure that all Iowa students experience a challenging learning environment that prepares them for lifelong success.”

While the curriculum is aligned with the mandated Iowa core content standards in reading, math and science, it does not require specific textbooks or specific course titles.

The Iowa Core Curriculum does help educators know what to teach, said Iowa Department of Education Director Judy Jeffrey. “The Iowa Core Curriculum gives Iowa teachers what they have been asking for — a tool to help ensure that the most critical subject matter is being taught. It also provides guidance in incorporating the identified skills and concepts into their local curriculum,” she said. An example of this assistance is model unit plans that teachers can review as a resource.

(more)

The board's decision marks the second major chapter in the Iowa Core Curriculum project. The initiative began in 2005 after Jeffrey and members of the State Board of Education completed a series of high school visits in spring 2005. In 2006, the Iowa legislature passed Senate File 245, which called for the establishment of a model core curriculum for high school math, science and literacy.

In 2007, the passage of Senate File 588 directed the Iowa Department of Education to expand the Iowa Core Curriculum to include K-8 literacy, mathematics, and science; and K-12 social studies and 21st century skills.

The Iowa Core Curriculum was developed by teams representing teachers, students, administrators, higher education, the business community, and experts in the fields of science, literacy, math, social studies, and 21st century skills.

The social studies and 21st century skills work teams continue to collaborate to develop the K-8 social studies and 21st century skills and concepts. The Iowa Department of Education will be presenting that work to the State Board of Education later this year.

More information on the Iowa Core Curriculum is available through an Iowa Department of Education podcast available at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/1365/1157/>. In addition, the full text of the Iowa Core Curriculum report for this second portion may be found at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/1366/1495/> under Tab K.

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The State Board of Education and the Iowa Department of Education provide oversight, supervision, and support for the state education system that includes all public elementary and secondary schools, nonpublic schools that receive state accreditation, area education agencies, community colleges, and teacher preparation programs. The State Board of Education consists of ten members: nine voting members who are appointed by the governor for six-year terms and subject to Senate confirmation; and one nonvoting student member who serves a one-year term, also appointed by the governor.