

Iowa Studies Committee Interim Report

to

Iowa House and Senate Joint Education Committee

January 23, 2009

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## Introduction

In 2006 the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs was charged by the General Assembly and the Governor under Code Chapter 303.17 to establish a committee comprised of secondary teachers, faculty members of regents institutions and community colleges, state agencies, and historical organizations in Iowa to carry out the following charges:

- Work to inform Iowa's school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and area education agencies of the Iowa studies professional development plan, including effectively utilizing curriculum developed.
- Develop partnerships with organizations such as nonprofit history or humanities organizations, civic organizations, libraries and the business community to support and promote Iowa studies statewide.
- Establish evaluation criteria for the Iowa studies professional development plan, including but not limited to teacher and student evaluation and curriculum and plan effectiveness.
- Develop a strategy and plan for the implementation of the Iowa studies professional development plan and curriculum in a limited number of schools and area educational agencies on a voluntary basis.

## The Iowa Studies Committee

The following individuals were appointed by the director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Because there were no funds appropriated for this work, these individuals were supported in this effort by their institutions. In 2007, the Des Moines Area Community College launched their Iowa Studies Center. DMACC became a partner in the committee's effort and helped support this work.

Dr. Lisa Ossian Associate Professor of History Des Moines Area Community College	Mr. David Johns Social Studies Coordinator Des Moines Public Schools
Mr. John Liepa Professor of History Des Moines Area Community College	Mr. Gregg Cruickshank Superintendent Sidney Consolidate School District
Mr. Jason Follett Program Coordinator, Teacher Education Iowa State University	Dr. William Friedrichs Professor of History Simpson College
Dr. Frank Heffner History Instructor Western Iowa Tech Community College	Ms. Shalla Wilson Curator Pentacrest Museums, University of Iowa
Dr. Lynn Nielsen Professor of Education University of Northern Iowa	Ms. Melissa Feilmeier, Chair Social Studies Teacher Villisca High School
Ms. Cheryl Mullenbach Social Studies Coordinator Iowa Department of Education	Ms. Lynn Alex Director of Education and Outreach University of Iowa Office of the State Archeologist
Ms. Kristen Steingraber Media Specialist AEA 15	Mr. Bryan Bauer Education Consultant Iowa Public Television
Mary Evans Director of Education Herbert Hoover Presidential Library	Mr. Jerome Thompson State Curator State Historical Society of Iowa

## Summary of Committee Work

Mindful of the charges in 303.17, the committee had to do some preliminary work. Rather than exerting effort to create curriculum, curriculum materials and professional development plans when it was unknown who would use them or want to use them, some survey work was necessary. The committee focused their efforts on the following tasks.

- Identify and inventory materials already produced and available to teachers and students featuring Iowa history and cultural content. Prominent among these are on-line resources such as “Iowa Pathways” from Iowa Public Television, “Prairie Voices” from the State Historical Society of Iowa, “Iowa Folklife” curriculum from the Iowa Arts Council, and web-based content from the University of Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist.
- Identify current Iowa history courses or opportunities for professional development for secondary teachers with specific Iowa content.
- Identify secondary schools currently offering courses in Iowa history or Iowa Studies for credit. Interview those teachers and administrators to determine the scope of the course, texts or other resources used in the course, amount of credit offered and other details.

The following schools and teachers offering Iowa history/Iowa studies courses were visited by DMACC Iowa Studies faculty during the fall of 2008.

Ankeny Community High School, Tyler Anderson  
Ballard High School, Catherine Mein and Barb Baumgardner  
Southeast Webster-Grand, Janet Wills and Bethany Rippentrop  
Earlham Community Schools, Jan Fletcher and Jon Peterson  
Adel Community Schools, Maureen Taylor  
Scavo Alternative High School, Des Moines, Stephen Peters and Carl Stamey  
Waukee Community Schools, Dr. David Wilkerson and Dr. Amanda Ross  
Iowa City West High School, Gary Neuzil  
North Scott Community School, Randy Denner  
Solon Community High School, Todd Kopecky  
Villisca Community High School, Melissa Feilmeier  
Stanton Community High School, Sheila Mainquist  
Roosevelt High School, Des Moines, Stefanie Rosenberg-Cortes, Terry Gioffredi, and  
Vince Schweiger

This interim report will address the results of those efforts. It is important to note that while the Iowa Studies committee was engaged in this work, a committee of the Iowa Department of Education was at work on the social studies section of the Iowa Core Curriculum. It was the united opinion of the Iowa Studies committee that any work to develop curriculum without knowing the final requirements of the Iowa Core would be unwise. Now that the Iowa Core Curriculum has been released, Iowa Studies content can be developed with the knowledge that it will not conflict with the Core and more likely be accepted and adopted by teachers and their administrators.

## Teaching Iowa Studies

Part of the charge of the committee was to identify schools to pilot an Iowa Studies curriculum at a secondary level. The committee thought to first identify schools already offering some type of course in Iowa Studies. Faculty from Des Moines Area Community College visited the following high schools to interview teachers and administrators about their courses or needs if a course is not offered.

1. Ankeny Community High School (September 11); Mr. Taylor Anderson, teacher

Last year, the Ankeny School Board approved a one credit elective, sophomore class in Iowa Studies, and thirty students signed up for each semester of its first year. The order of topics presented have been an overview of Iowa history, community heritage, Iowa's "stars," and then a future portrait of an Iowa town titled "Why Iowa?" (See the appendix for the class outline) One of the class projects is to create an Iowa i-movie. No books are assigned for students, but instead they create a binder with added materials; in other words, students are "building" their own textbook to complete their final portfolio. A particularly useful web-site has been IPTV "Iowa Pathways."

2. Ballard High School (September 18); Catherine Mein & Barb Baumgardner, teachers

Ballard has offered a semester credit, elective course for over six years composed predominantly of fifteen to twenty-five freshmen. The two instructors utilize an older book titled *Iowa Past and Present* (3rd edition), and their students' projects include a famous Iowans paper and a tourism advertisement along with skits of Iowa's historical events. A difficulty in starting the course has been developing materials from scratch along with finding the needed funding for field trips. For course enhancement, the two teachers desired increased Iowa web site development, a list of possible class speakers, and a better networking of local groups. Each advised other teachers to be creative--so many things can be done within this course because Iowa Studies certainly doesn't have to be "lecture, test, lecture, and test."

3. Southeast Webster-Grand (September 25); Janet Wills & Bethany Rippentrop, teachers

Southeast Webster-Grand school has offered a team-taught, elective social studies credit course which begins with genealogy, immigration, a cemetery visit, and then geology, Native Americans, early explorers, Iowa statehood process, and local town histories with a possible exploration of educational systems. The IPTV site "Iowa Pathways," with its quests and challenges, has been utilized for main topic areas as well as library books. This course has emphasized "differentiated instruction" and as "credit redemption" for a makeup class. Other students take it for a "fun class" as one that focuses on projects rather than tests. Creative, multi-skilled projects, particularly emphasizing math skills, have included barn quilts and census population data spreadsheets. The teachers have also utilized Randy Lyon's "Iowa History" CDs (available through the Iowa State Educational Association) to teach map skills. Students are creating web sites using Dream Weaver, and the teachers are planning the Mega Field Trip, one day during the week where the buses leave at 8:30 and return at 4:00. Both

teachers strongly advise administrators “to be in on the ground floor in starting this course.”

4. Scavo Alternative High School (October 9); Stephen Peters & Carl Stamey, teachers

A community-based learning, social science course is offered at Scavo as an elective, 9 week course for full credit; this is an all-day course offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students break the course into distinct units--not a sequential focus, and the State Historical Society of Iowa’s museum is utilized as well as projects on the DNR and environmental history. Local and state government is also emphasized with field trip experiences, and the teachers try to pull in community people to give students a deeper a sense of community because these students will be staying here in Des Moines and Iowa. The teachers also try to develop a sense of community among the students as well. They utilize the essential curriculum for both history and government but change topics each semester, depending on what is in the community. The main purpose is to develop individual thinking with a self-paced course for six weeks. The book on African-American history in Iowa, *Outside In*, is read by the students, and the teachers have created booklets of information along with use of web sites and the local newspaper. Students like the concentrated approach with less formal structure, as an initial appeal, but find out the work is harder as they develop into independent thinkers with a good taste of the community and the value of civic responsibility.

5. Solon Community High School (October 23): Todd Kopecky, teacher This Iowa

Studies high school course starts with “dirt” to introduce the students to their state’s land and environment. The teacher asks them, “Does a fish know it’s surrounded by water? What do you know about the state that surrounds you?” He believes his main goal is to get kids excited about their state. The course is a one semester class (84 minute blocks) for one credit. The class outline begins with geography, early settlers, Native Americans, Lewis & Clark, frontier Iowa, European immigrants, railroads, coal mining, industry, farm life, and state parks. Students are also encouraged to start investigations into Iowa businesses as careers. The big field trip is an all-day event in Dubuque, and students also study Iowa City and Solon. Approximately fifty students enroll in the course each year with a number of at-risk students. The teacher has not been able to find a textbook but utilizes websites from IPTV (“Iowa Pathways”) and UNI’s “Explorations in Iowa.” One of the class components is a “Your Town Project” in which students pick a town to adopt and must research the city or town completely, then creating a power point presentation or an i-movie. Students also investigate a town building and interview a community person as local history projects. The teacher, who has taught this course for six years and replaced a teacher who had taught Iowa studies for twenty years, remarked that this is the class that all the parents like to positively comment on. My goal is “to get these kids excited about the state, to learn about the state. Some of these kids who will have some great plans for Iowa.”

High Schools visited who may offer an Iowa Studies Course in the future:

1. Earlham Community Schools (October 2), Jan Fletcher & Jon Peterson
2. Adel Community Schools (October 2), Maureen Taylor
3. Waukee Community Schools (October 16), Dr. David Wilkerson & Dr. Amanda Ross
4. Iowa City West High School (October 22), Gary Neuzil
5. North Scott Community School (October 23), Randy Denner
6. Villisca Community High School (November 6), Melissa Feilmeier
7. Stanton Community High School (November 6), Sheila Mainquist
8. Roosevelt High School (November 18), Stefanie Rosenberg-Cortes, Terry Gioffredi, & Vince Schweiger

Preliminary Summation of High Schools Considering Iowa Studies as Course Offering:

1. Administrative Support: Iowa Studies course idea receives positive community and parental responses.
2. Iowa Core Curriculum: Teachers are concerned if this proposed course can meet the Iowa Core curriculum requirements perhaps as a local/regional history requirement.
3. Differentiated Students: Class content of Iowa Studies encourages creative, project-centered course for various high school learners.
4. Community Partnerships: Teachers will need to rely on regional web sites and need various field trips and local speakers to create a dynamic, creative, and community-based course.

### **Teacher Resources**

In the 2001 survey conducted by the State Historical Society most teachers who responded taught in elementary or middle school. The most recent text book on Iowa history, *Iowa Past to Present* is geared toward an elementary reader and was the most common text being used. University of Iowa Press released the third edition in 2003. There is no text for secondary courses; however Dr. Dorothy Schwieder's *Iowa: The Middle Land* could be a useful book

Some were aware of the curriculum produced for the Iowa Sesquicentennial called *Prairie Voices*. This curriculum can be scaled for use at various grade levels. A copy of *Prairie Voices* was sent to every public and parochial school building in the state in 1996. Making *Prairie Voices* more accessible became a goal. This curriculum is available on-



line to anyone through the State Historical Society website ([www.iowahistory.org](http://www.iowahistory.org)) although the curriculum actually rests on a server at the University of Northern Iowa. <http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/prairievoices/>

The Iowa Folk Life curriculum developed by the Iowa Arts Council during the Statehood Sesquicentennial was also made available on-line. A second volume of the Folk Life curriculum was added in October 2008.

<http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife/intro/index.htm>  
[http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife\\_v2/](http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife_v2/)

Iowa Pathways, an interactive website developed by Iowa Public Television allows a user to explore Iowa history through individualized study quests or by simply exploring different subject areas such as agriculture, arts and culture, business, communities, education, government, war and conflict, among others. Using State Historical Society of Iowa and other organizations images and content, this site delivers good quality Iowa content from trusted sources.

<http://www.iptv.org/iowapathways/default.cfm>

The University of Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist maintains a website for many levels of users. Their education and outreach program connects users to quality information on Iowa's past cultures <http://www.uiowa.edu/~osa/edu/edu.htm> . They also offer various teacher resources, traveling educational trunks, and conduct programs geared for students at various grade levels.

Future work by the committee will be to recommend resources and best ways to alert educators to their use in the classroom.

### **Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers**

In 2001 the State Historical Society of Iowa conducted a survey of teachers of Iowa history. Through this survey it was determined that the typical teacher has never taken a university level course in Iowa history, however they may have attended an Iowa history workshop or in-service offered by an AEA or the State Historical Society of Iowa.

At the time of the 2001 survey, there was an informal survey of Iowa colleges and universities to determine where courses on Iowa history were offered. Only two community colleges offered an Iowa history course for credit. There seemed to be an obvious relationship between the lack of courses offered and the fact that few teachers had never taken a course. In the eight years since that informal survey many more colleges are offering Iowa history courses including DMACC, Simpson, Buena Vista, NIACC and several others.

Des Moines Area Community College also started an Iowa Studies Center. DMACC faculty was given release time to help with committee work and this report. In the 2007-2008 academic year, DMACC offered a lecture series to students, teachers, and the

general public (See the Appendix). The lectures featured researchers and historians presenting recent research on a wide range of Iowa history and culture. This April DMACC will be hosting a one day Iowa Studies seminar that will be open to the public.

Simpson College has started an Iowa History Center with the following mission

- Promote Iowa history in the state's schools and communities by providing a fund to award competitive grants to kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers who develop innovative approaches to introducing Iowa history in their classrooms
- Encourage the study and research of Iowa history by funding a prize for the best master's thesis in Iowa history, encouraging students from Iowa's three universities to complete work in Iowa history
- Place Simpson College students in internships with various state historical associations
- Fund faculty research in Iowa history
- Create and offer an Iowa history course at Simpson College
- Provide a method of publishing Iowa history books.

The State Historical Society of Iowa partnered for several years with AEA 11 to offer weeklong summer classes on Iowa studies that provided continuing education units for teachers. Iowa Public Television developed the interactive website, "Iowa Pathways" as a new Iowa studies tool for teachers and students. In support of the "Iowa Pathways" Web-based educational resource, Iowa Public Television education specialists conducted a series of two-day professional development courses across the state. The course curriculum focused on connecting research-based literacy, technology and inquiry classroom strategies to the study of Iowa. Since 2006, eight events have been conducted in six locations across Iowa, reaching 130 teachers.

The Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist has partnered with AEAs across the state to offer weeklong summer classes on Iowa's past cultures that provide continuing education units and college credits for teachers.

Further work by the committee in the coming year will make recommendations on professional development opportunities.

## Appendix 1

### **Why Iowa? Taylor Anderson, Ankeny High School**

The students will discover the history of Iowa, how we have grown, and what we have to offer today and into tomorrow.

#### **Unit I: Iowa History**

**Geography:** Northwest Iowa Plains, Loess Hills, Des Moines Lobe, Iowan Surface, Paleozoic Plateau, Southern Iowa Drift Plain, & Alluvial Plains.

**Native Americans:** Dakota Sioux, Illinois (Illini), Ioway, Otoe, & Sac and Fox (Mesquakie)

**Explorers:** Marquette and Joliet, Lewis and Clark, & Zebulon Pike

**Settlers:** Julien Dubuque, Black Hawk Purchase, Mormons, Homestead Act, & Ethnic Settlements

**Growth of Cities:** Des Moines, Iowa City, Dubuque, Burlington, Waterloo, Sioux City, Fort Dodge, & Mason City

**Iowa and the Nation:** Agriculture, Industry, & Tourism

#### **Unit II: A Portrait of Iowa**

##### **Your Heritage and Iowa:**

Each student will select a town in Iowa where their family is from. They will research why their family settled in that area, what they did for a living, and why they still live there or moved from there.

##### **Power Point:**

The students will also create a power point presentation on the town they selected today. They will contact individuals, businesses from the community, and other resources to collect research on their town. What should people know about this town, and what does this town have to offer. If a student is not from Iowa originally, they will research why their family came to Iowa, and then I will assist them in selecting a town in Iowa to research. A copy of the final product will be sent to the communities that were researched.

#### **Unit III: Iowa's Resources**

##### **Agriculture/Industry/Recreation**

The students will brainstorm everything Iowa has to offer. The class will select what they feel best represents what Iowa has to offer. The students will then be put into groups. Each group will create a marketing campaign that will promote their resource they are focusing on to Iowans and the nation. Each group will develop marketing pieces that we will distribute to the resources we had researched.

#### **Unit IV: Iowa's Stars**

Iowans have made many contributions to society. From the Oval Office to the box office, from the Old West frontier to the new frontiers that science is leading us to, from theaters of war to the stages of Broadway, Iowans have always been there, and will continue to lead the way. Students will individually identify 25 famous Iowans. The class will then put together a Master list of famous Iowans. Each student will choose a famous Iowan to research in depth. The students will create a presentation on their famous Iowan that they will give in first person.

## **Unit V: Why Iowa?**

The final Unit of the class will be “Why Iowa?” We will bring relevance to the class. As a class we will split up into four groups (the previous four Units), each group will revisit the material we had created for each Unit and compile a summary that we will put together as a marketing book for the State of Iowa. Once we have completed the book we will send it to local libraries, and the Governor’s office.

### **Why Iowa?**

Iowa has gone through a variety of slogans over the years. One of Iowa’s best motto’s in recent years read, “Iowa A Place to Grow”. It was a nice slogan; it gives a sense of our agriculture background, strong family values, overall feeling that Iowa is a nice place to grow old. The problem with that slogan is that so many young people are growing up in Iowa and leaving as soon as they can!

Young people comment all the time how Iowa is so boring, there is nothing to do here, and how they can’t wait to get out of here. While this is a typical teenage comment, they are being reinforced by some of our own Iowans:

“I’m from Iowa, we don’t know what cool is!”

**Ashton Kutcher**

Many of the young people who look to leave Iowa, don’t understand what attracted their family to Iowa, and more importantly everything that Iowa has to offer.

It is a state law that Iowa history must be taught in Iowa schools. Like Ankeny, most schools address Iowa history in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. They learn about the Buffalo’s that once roamed, the Indians who lived on the prairie, living in a sod house and the early days of agriculture, Herbert Hoover, and how we Iowans have a rich history with a reputation of family values and a strong work ethic.

Just as Ankeny High Schools is working to increase rigor and relevance, we need to bring that to how we educate our students about Iowa. Governor Vilsack called for a committee to study how we can keep Iowans from leaving the State after high school and college. By having an Iowa history course taught at the high school level, that has a rigorous curriculum and brings relevance to Iowa history, it will open student’s minds to what this State has to offer. Students will discover the diverse topography of Iowa, the impact early explorers and settlers had on our State, and their family’s history in Iowa. They will discover what Iowans such as Carrie Chapman Catt, Aldo Leopold, Norman Borlaug, and John Wayne were able to contribute to our society, and to create a marketing campaign for the many resources and opportunities that Iowa has to offer.

A few years back, when people crossed into Iowa, our sign read “Iowa – Fields of Opportunities”, let’s educate students about all the opportunities that lie within our fields. Our current state motto is “Iowa – Life Changing”, let’s give our students the tools needed for them to take ownership of this motto, and we might just keep a few more Iowans in State.

The 2008 Iowa Studies Forum  
A Celebration of Iowa's  
History, Science, Politics, Literature, & Art  
*The World in Iowa . . . Immigrants and Immigration*

Hosted by The Iowa Studies Center at DMACC  
at the Conference Center/Building #7 & Building #2  
on Friday, April 11, 2008

**Break Out Sessions**

**Session A: 9:05 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

**Rooms**

"Your Immigrant Ancestor's Road to  
Citizenship--The Process & Records"  
presented by Theresa Liewer, President  
Iowa Genealogical Society

DMACC Host: Rafael Geronimo, Spanish  
"The 53 Frontier Forts of Iowa with Immigrant Ties"  
presented by Dr. William E. Whittaker,  
Office of the State Archaeologist

&

"Nature's Gift: The Immigrant Use of the Des  
Moines River in Iowa History"  
presented by Jane M. Johnson, graduate  
student at University of Northern Iowa

DMACC Host: Rose Taubes, English

"The Evolution of the Amish & Mennonite  
Schools in Iowa"  
presented by William Sherman,  
Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance

DMACC Host: David Hauser, Philosophy

"Shining Stars & Everyday Heroes: A One-of-a-Kind  
CD Encyclopedia of Iowa History"  
presented by Randy Lyon, ISEA member,  
Dubuque Community School District

DMACC Host: Galin Berrier, History

"The Museum Curator and the Meskwaki:  
Edgar Harlan and the Indian Life School"  
presented by Jerome Thompson, curator  
State Historical Society of Iowa

DMACC Host: Barb Lang, Developmental Learning

"Nisei, Iowa Colleges, and the Definition of  
Citizenship: A Debate Within a War"  
presented by Bill R. Douglas,  
Independent Scholar

DMACC Host: Melissa Feilmier,  
Chair of the Iowa Studies Committee

**Session B: 10:10 a.m. to 11:05 a.m.**

**Rooms**

"Teaching Iowa Studies in a Differentiated Class"  
presented by Janet Wills & Bethany Rippentrop-Nuss  
Southeast-Webster Grand High School

DMACC Host: Jan LaVille, Journalism

"Poweshiek & Meskwaki History, 1791-1854"  
presented by Dr. Thomas Burnell Colbert,  
Marshalltown Community College

DMACC Host: Bradley Dyke, Political Science

"Ma Vlast, My Country: Czechs in Cedar Rapids"  
presented by Leah Wilson, Director of Programs,  
National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

DMACC Host: John Liepa, History

"Crocker, first African American YMCA: 1917-1960"  
presented by Michael P. Kates,  
Fort Des Moines Museum

DMACC Host: Sue Wickam,  
Academic Achievement Center

"New Perspectives on Teaching & Learning Iowa  
History with IPTV's Iowa Pathways Web Site"  
presented by Bryan Bauer, Iowa Public Television

DMACC Host: Galin Berrier, History

"The French Icarian Colony Foundation--A Social  
Experiment, 1852-1898"  
presented by Teresa M. Parmenter, President

French Icarian Colony Foundation

DMACC Host: Joann Dudgeon, History

**Session C: 11:15 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.**

**Rooms**

"Getting Settled in the Heartland: Community Formation among First and Second Generation Iranians in Iowa City, Iowa" presented by Dr. Mohammad A. Chaichian, Chair, Department of Sociology, Mount Mercy College

DMACC Host: Eden Pearson, English

"Store Per: A Norwegian Paul Bunyan of the Prairie" presented by Nathan Harstad, Bethany Lutheran College

DMACC Host: Randy Jedele, Composition

"A Town of 1,000 People Disappears . . . But the Spirit Lives On" presented by Rachel A. Jones, Little Brown Church in the Vale

&

"Storms on the Early Iowa Prairie, a poem" presented by Rosella Myles, student DMACC Iowa Honors Seminar

DMACC Host: Sharon Bittner, Director of Program Development

"The Irish Travellers of Iowa" presented by Michael Delaney, retired DMACC professor

DMACC Host: Galin Berrier, History

"Iowa Folklife II Online--Explore this New Multicultural Curriculum!" presented by Dr. Rachelle H. Salzman, Iowa Arts Council

DMACC Host: Will Zhang, Mathematics

"Did Iowa Elect the First Woman to Public Office?" presented by Cheryl Mullenbach, Iowa Department of Education

