

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT[281]

Notice of Intended Action

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code section 256.7(5), the State Board of Education hereby proposes to amend Chapter 41, “Special Education,” Iowa Administrative Code.

These two amendments are required based on amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) that were made by the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”). On June 30, 2017, the United States Department of Education issued final regulations that incorporated these changes that the ESSA made to the IDEA.

The State Board is noticing these rules separately from a currently pending rulemaking. This is because these rules amendments, although required by the ESSA, represent a practice change for many Iowa educators.

Item 1 amends the definition of “regular high school diploma.” This amendment makes clear that a regular high school diploma must be fully aligned to State-required standards. In Iowa’s case, that would be the graduation requirements set forth in Iowa Code section 256.7(26).

Item 2 explains the requirements that all students with disabilities participate in statewide and district-wide assessments, including providing children with significant intellectual disabilities with alternate assessments aligned to alternate academic achievement standards.

Interested individuals may make written comments on the proposed amendment on or before January 8, 2018, at 4:30 p.m. Comments on the proposed amendments should be directed to Thomas A. Mayes, Attorney II, Iowa Department of Education, Third Floor, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319–0146; telephone (515) 242-5614; E-mail thomas.mayes@iowa.gov; or fax (515)242-5988.

A public hearing will be held on January 8, 2018, from 10 to 11 a.m. in the State Board Room, Second Floor, Grimes State Office Building, East 14th Street and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, at which time persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should advise the Department of Education of their specific needs by calling (515)281-5295.

An agencywide waiver provision is provided in 281 – Chapter 4.

After analysis and review of this rule making, no impact on jobs has been found.

These amendments are intended to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. 114-95, and federal regulations published at 82 Federal Register 29,755 (June 30, 2017).

ITEM 1. Amend rule 281—41.102(256B;34CFR300), subsection 1, paragraph “c”, as follows.

c. Graduates with a regular high school diploma.

(1) General. Children with disabilities who have graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma.

(2) Inapplicability of exception. The exception in 41.102(1) “*c*”(1) does not apply to children who have graduated from high school, but have not been awarded a regular high school diploma.

(3) Graduation is a change in placement. Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change in placement requiring written prior notice in accordance with rule 281—41.503(256B,34CFR300).

(4) Rule of construction. As used in 41.102(1) “*c*”(1) to (3), the term “regular high school diploma” means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high

school diploma shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA. A regular high school diploma does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential~~an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the state's academic standards, such as a certificate or a general educational development credential (GED).~~

Item 2. Adopt a new rule 281—41.160(256B;34CFR300)

281—41.160(256B;34CFR300) Participation in assessments.

41.160(1) *General.* The State must ensure that all children with disabilities are included in all general State and district-wide assessment programs, including assessments described under section 1111 of the ESEA, 20 U.S.C. Section 6311, with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments, if necessary, as indicated in their respective IEPs.

41.160(2) *Accommodation guidelines.*

a. The State (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must develop guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations.

b. The State's (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, the LEA's) guidelines must -

(1) Identify only those accommodations for each assessment that do not invalidate the score;

and

(2) Instruct IEP Teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score.

41.160(3) *Alternate assessments.*

a. The State (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must develop and implement alternate assessments and guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities

in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in regular assessments, even with accommodations, as indicated in their respective IEPs, as provided in subrule 41.160(1).

b. For assessing the academic progress of students with disabilities under Title I of the ESEA, the alternate assessments and guidelines in paragraph “a” of this subrule must provide for alternate assessments that -

(1) Are aligned with the State's challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards;

(2) If the State has adopted alternate academic achievement standards permitted in 34 CFR 200.1(d), measure the achievement of children with the most significant cognitive disabilities against those standards; and

(3) Except as provided in paragraph “b”, item 2, of this subrule, a State's alternate assessments, if any, must measure the achievement of children with disabilities against the State's grade-level academic achievement standards, consistent with 34 CFR 200.6(a)(2)(ii)(A).

c. Consistent with 34 CFR 200.1(e), a State may not adopt modified academic achievement standards for any students with disabilities under section 602(3) of the Act.

41.160(4) *Explanation to IEP teams.* The State (or in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must provide IEP teams with a clear explanation of the differences between assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards and those based on alternate academic achievement standards, including any effects of State or local policies on the student's education resulting from taking an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (such as whether only satisfactory performance on a regular assessment would qualify a student for a regular high school diploma).

41.160(5) *Inform parents.* The State (or in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA)

must ensure that parents of students selected to be assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards are informed that their child's achievement will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards.

41.160(6) Reports. The State (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children, the following:

a. The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations (that did not result in an invalid score) in order to participate in those assessments.

b. The number of children with disabilities, if any, participating in alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards.

c. The number of children with disabilities, if any, participating in alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards in school years prior to 2015-2016.

d. The number of children with disabilities, if any, participating in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards.

e. Compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, the performance results of children with disabilities on regular assessments, alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards, alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards (prior to 2015-2016), and alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards if -

(1) The number of children participating in those assessments is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information; and

(2) Reporting that information will not reveal personally identifiable information about an

individual student on those assessments.

41.160(7) *Universal design*. The State (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must, to the extent possible, use universal design principles in developing and administering any assessments under this rule.