
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2021

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Department of Education Administration

Department History

The Department of Education (DE) was created by the General Assembly in 1913 and was originally known as the Department of Public Instruction. The current name was adopted in 1986. Initially, the Department was charged with working with the many small, isolated school buildings throughout Iowa to build a formal system of public education that included organized districts with defined duties and boundaries, as well as specific qualifications for teachers. While the Department was established to provide oversight, local schools maintained the authority to set many of the rules and requirements for their own students.

As the State grew over the decades with greater diversity in business, industry, and population, the public education system evolved to reflect and encompass those changes. In the mid-1960s, a system of 15 public, two-year community colleges was established to provide more students the opportunity for continued education and training beyond high school. In the mid-1970s, the system of Area Education Agencies (AEAs) was developed to provide regional support for local schools and teachers. Originally, the AEAs and community colleges shared the same service area boundaries. In recent years, several AEAs have merged to provide greater efficiency in regions with declining populations.

Department Overview

The DE provides oversight, supervision, and support for the State education system, including all of the following:

- Public elementary and secondary schools
- Community colleges
- Area Education Agencies
- Elementary and secondary schools under the purview of the Department of Human Services
- Nonpublic schools that receive State accreditation
- Teacher preparation programs

The Department also oversees the educational services of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS). The Division assists students with disabilities in high schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and Regents institutions in the State in their transitions from educational settings to employment. Also, the Department works in collaboration with the State Library and assists with the educational services provided by Iowa PBS.

More Information

Iowa Department of Education: educateiowa.gov
LSA Staff Contact: Lora Vargason (515.725.2249) lora.vargason@legis.iowa.gov

The Department Director is appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The Director's role is to provide leadership for the Department as it carries out the policies and programs prescribed by law and the State Board of Education. The Director serves as the executive officer of the Board, a nonvoting role.

The State Board of Education consists of 10 members: nine voting members and one nonvoting student member. The voting members are appointed by the Governor for six-year terms and are subject to Senate confirmation. The nonvoting student member serves a one-year term and is appointed by the Governor. Duties of the Board include adopting and establishing policies to assure quality education for students in elementary and secondary schools, and community colleges; prescribing and approving teacher preparation programs; and hearing appeals of local school board decisions and affirming, modifying, or vacating those decisions.

The DE employs approximately 240 people in four major divisions: Community Colleges, School Finance and Support Services, Policy and Communications, and Learning and Results. The State Library, IVRS, and Iowa PBS are affiliated with the Department, but their operations have expanded and developed into independent entities with independent boards.

Funding

The General Fund appropriation for Administration funds the general operations of the DE, including salaries and benefits. During the 10-year period of FY 2008 through FY 2017, this General Fund appropriation averaged \$6.9 million per year. The current annual General Fund appropriation is \$6.0 million and authorizes approximately 65.0 appropriated full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [256](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [281](#)

Budget Unit Number

28201510001

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