

CHAPTER 61
SCHOOLS, PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR
DROPOUTS AND DROPOUT PREVENTION

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department [670] Ch 58]

281—61.1(257) Scope and general principle.

61.1(1) Scope. These rules apply to the provisions of separate schools, programs and support services for returning dropouts and dropout prevention strategies authorized in Iowa Code Supplement sections 257.38 to 257.41.

61.1(2) General principles. Separate schools, programs and support services may be made available to eligible students by a school district, as a cooperative effort between school districts, and through cooperative arrangements between a school district and other educational agencies and related service providers. School districts can apply for increased allowable growth to serve returning dropout populations and potential dropouts only if the local plan includes both populations. Returning dropouts and potential dropouts are considered to be two distinct populations and shall be considered as such in the planning, implementation, and funding of programs. Separate schools, programs, and support services shall be implemented under timelines established by the school district.

281—61.2(257) Definitions. For the purpose of this chapter the following definitions apply.

“At-risk” means any identified student who is at-risk of not meeting the goals of the educational program established by the district as demonstrated by any one or combination of the following: functioning below chronological age in two or more developmental areas determined by an appropriate professional; having special circumstances such as foster care or being homeless; residing in a household where one or more of the parents or guardians have not completed high school or have been identified as a substance abuser or chronically mentally ill or illiterate, or is incarcerated or a child or spouse abuser; born to a parent who is under the age of 18; or born at biological risk such as low birth weight (under 1500 grams—approximately 3 pounds) or with a diagnosed medical disorder such as spina bifida or Down’s syndrome.

“Department” means the state department of education.

“Dropout” means a pupil who has been in membership in a school in any of grades seven through twelve at any time during the 12-month period from July 1 through the following June 30 who withdraws from such school for reason other than death or transfer to another school.

“Other educational agencies” means all in-state as well as out-of-state public or private education agencies excluding public school districts.

“Other service providers” means all public or private human service deliveries apart from education.

“Outreach” means seeking out dropouts or youth who have quit attending and participating in school activities to provide advice and encouragement and help organize needed services upon the approval of the person being contacted.

“Potential dropouts” means at-risk students enrolled in kindergarten to grade three or pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school program who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated by two or more of the following: high rate of absenteeism, truancy or frequent tardiness; no or limited extracurricular participation; lack of identification with school such as expressed feelings of not belonging; poor grades, such as failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels; low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflect two years or more below grade level.

“Program” means an established alternative class or environment within or apart from the regular school designed to accommodate specific student educational needs such as work related training, reading, mathematics, science, communication, social skills, physical skills, employability skills, study skills, or life skills.

“*Regular school*” means an established environment designed to provide a comprehensive education to the general populace and to which assignment of students is made more on the basis of geographical location than unique educational need.

“*Separate school*” means an established environment apart from the regular school with policies and rules, educational objectives, staff and resources designed to accommodate student needs and to provide a comprehensive education consistent with the goals established by the school district. Students attend via choice.

“*Support service*” means activities designed to help students complete a comprehensive education program within the regular school or separate school such as tutoring; counseling and advising; housing; child care; medical assistance; transportation; and diagnostics.

“*Withdraw.*” To withdraw from school means to quit attending and participating in school activities and that a school official recognizes the withdrawal by recording the withdrawal date and reason for withdrawal.

281—61.3(257) Development of a plan. For the purpose of seeking approval for increased allowable growth, on or before November 1 of each year a school district must submit plans to the department to provide separate schools, programs and support services or combinations thereof for the school year commencing the following July 1.

281—61.4(257) Program plan. The following items shall constitute a program plan which must be filed with the department to qualify for additional allowable growth to provide for separate schools, programs and support services for returning dropouts and dropout prevention.

Content of the plan. The plan shall:

61.4(1) Identify need for the school, program or support services.

61.4(2) Identify objectives and expected student outcomes.

61.4(3) Explain support services if applicable.

61.4(4) Explain the evaluation procedure to be used in measuring program objectives and student outcomes.

61.4(5) Explain the roles and responsibilities of staff.

61.4(6) Specify provisions for the ongoing identification, assessment, evaluation, and placement of students.

61.4(7) Specify staff development plans and other activities designed to address dropout prevention in the traditional school.

61.4(8) Identify facilities and equipment to be used.

61.4(9) Describe cooperative arrangements with other agencies or service groups.

61.4(10) Include a budget based on forms provided by the department.

61.4(11) Specify provisions for an advisory council.

61.4(12) Describe the procedure for providing each student with a written personalized plan for completion of an education consistent with the goals and objectives of the local education agency and needs of the student.

281—61.5(257) Responsibilities of school districts.

61.5(1) Establishing need. An explanation shall be provided for why existing local programs and support services are not effective in reaching dropouts and potential dropouts. The explanation shall include but not be limited to:

a. Dropout rate for school district.

b. Numbers of students identified as needing a separate school, program or support service or combinations thereof. The means of identification shall be described such as tests, records, professional judgments, other. Other agency involvement in identification shall be specified.

c. Staff-student ratios and relations in traditional school.

d. Existing staff capabilities and training in addressing the needs of returning dropouts and potential dropouts.

- e. Involvement and achievement of students in existing extracurricular activities.
- f. Existing services or activities within the school directed at reaching the target population.
- g. Existing agencies and support persons involved with target population outside the school.
- h. The need for financial support beyond what is already available.

61.5(2) *Identifying objectives and expected student outcomes.* Each school district must include objectives for providing:

- a. Minimum program as defined in Iowa Code section 256.11 and Iowa Administrative Code 281—11.5(256).
- b. Personal and social development.
- c. Career and vocational education.
- d. Staff development for dropout prevention. At least one in-service shall be offered annually for all classroom teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in elementary and secondary schools within the school district to maintain and update understandings and skills about accommodating student needs. In addition, a staff development plan for personnel responsible for returning dropouts shall be provided.

61.5(3) *Support services.* Any or all of the following services to be provided students enrolled in the regular school program or separate school or program shall be described.

- a. Orientation and transition services for students to adjust to programs.
- b. Vocational assessment or educational diagnostics.
- c. Counseling.
- d. Work placement or placement in other educational institutions.
- e. Follow-up.
- f. Remedial, tutorial or supplemental instruction.
- g. Transportation, child care, housing, medical.
- h. Family support services.

61.5(4) *Evaluation.* The school district shall give attention to the following guidelines in its evaluation design:

- a. Evaluation shall be for the purpose of determining and improving program effectiveness.
- b. Both cognitive and affective components of student development shall be evaluated.
- c. Personalized education plans must be in writing for each returning dropout and potential dropout and reviewed annually.
- d. Evaluation shall be age-appropriate and coincide with the objectives established for the separate school, program, and support service and for the students. The methods that are used to monitor progress shall be identified. Monitoring and testing instruments shall be kept on file within the school district.

61.5(5) *Roles and responsibilities of staff.* The responsibilities of staff, including instructors, para-professionals, peer helpers, clerical, guidance, and outreach shall be identified and the responsibilities related to program objectives. The administration and supervision of this activity shall be described. All districts and their administrators must be identified if this activity is jointly sponsored. The role and responsibility of other agency persons involved in the activity shall be described.

61.5(6) *Qualifications of program personnel.* All personnel supervising and providing services for returning dropouts and potential dropouts shall have preservice or in-service training that is commensurate with the extent of their involvement in providing services.

61.5(7) *Staff utilization plan.* Staff shall be assigned to ensure a quality education by employing the following procedures:

- a. A designated person shall be responsible for the overall coordination throughout the school district. If a joint agreement exists, one person shall be responsible for the coordination between local education agencies as well as coordination within the locale of the separate school, program and support service.
- b. The administrative, instructional, and support service staff shall work in cooperation with the regular school teachers as necessary to assess, plan, implement and evaluate outcomes.

c. Time shall be made available to staff for coordination and in-service and to carry out professional responsibilities.

61.5(8) *Student identification procedures.* Students shall be placed in separate schools, programs or support services in accordance with the following guidelines:

a. Identification shall be for the purpose of determining the appropriateness of placement in a separate school, program or support service for dropouts or dropout prevention rather than for categorically labeling a student.

b. The decision to place a student in a separate school or program or to provide support services for a student shall be based on a comprehensive appraisal of the student; consideration of the nature of the available services; and an assessment of actual and potential opportunities within the student's regular school program.

c. Multiple criteria shall be used in identifying students. Criteria will combine subjective and objective data, including data with direct relevance to program goals, objectives and activities.

d. In the event that the number of eligible students exceeds the capacity of available services, participants shall be selected according to greatest need as determined by multiple criteria used in identification.

e. Each identified student's progress shall be reviewed at least annually to consider modifications in program or student placement.

61.5(9) *Facilities and equipment.* The facilities, equipment and resources needed and available for providing services shall be indicated. Assurances that the facilities are accessible and equipment and materials are appropriate for the population to be served shall be provided.

61.5(10) *Budget.* When separate schools, programs, and support services are jointly provided by two or more school districts or by a school district in cooperation with other agency or service providers, the budget shall specify the contribution of each cooperating agency and service provider. Funds generated through the process described in Iowa Code section 257.41 will be for expenditures directly related to providing the separate school, program and support services described in the submitted plan to the department. The following limits shall apply to the budget of the separate school, program and support services for returning dropouts and dropout prevention.

a. No more than 5 percent of the district's budget enrollment shall be identified as returning dropouts and potential dropouts. Returning dropouts shall be identified with respect to whether they are included in the present budget enrollment.

b. The maximum budget eligible for the separate school, program and support services or any combination thereof for returning dropouts not presently included in the district's budget enrollment shall approximate 1.4 of the district cost per pupil in addition to other sources. Allowable costs for returning dropouts presently included in the district's budget enrollment shall approximate .4 of the district's cost per pupil in addition to other sources.

c. Indirect costs and costs for materials, supplies and equipment shall be part of the total budget.

d. The dropout program budget, after subtracting out funds from other sources for that purpose, shall be funded on a basis of 25 percent or more from the district cost of the school district and up to 75 percent by an increased growth as defined in Iowa Code section 442.7.

61.5(11) *Advisory council.* All written plans shall include an advisory council made up of parents, students, teachers, administrators, business persons and other interested persons. Where possible, other service providers should be represented on the advisory council to ensure collaboration and ultimate cooperation. A plan of action for the council shall be included in the written application.

281—61.6(257) Responsibilities of area education agencies. Upon request and as provided for in Iowa Code sections 273.3 and 273.7, staff of the area education agency shall cooperate with local school districts. Cooperation may include but is not limited to:

61.6(1) Assisting school districts in identifying dropout and potential dropout populations and the reasoning for such.

61.6(2) Assisting in the development of alternative education strategies including dropout prevention and alternative strategies for returning dropouts.

61.6(3) Providing assistance informing collaborative efforts for joint partnership programs and in developing appropriate requests for department approval.

61.6(4) Assisting in the planning and implementation of in-service for all persons involved in planning and implementing services for returning dropouts and potential dropouts.

281—61.7(257) Responsibilities of the department. The department shall:

61.7(1) Provide forms to the school districts for submitting plans.

61.7(2) Provide technical assistance to school districts, other education agencies and other service providers in the development of plans to serve returning dropouts and potential dropouts.

61.7(3) Perform reviews and approval of written plans not later than February 1 of each fiscal year.

61.7(4) Notify the department of management and the school budget review committee of the names of approved school districts by February 15 of each fiscal year.

61.7(5) Develop and administer a format for evaluation of separate schools, support services and programs. An annual evaluation report shall be filed with the department by administering agencies following the close of the regular school year.

61.7(6) Provide technical assistance to school districts and other education agencies in planning and designing preservice and in-service training for all persons involved in planning and implementation of services for returning dropouts and potential dropouts.

61.7(7) Assign the necessary human resources for carrying out the responsibilities of the department.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code Supplement sections 257.38 to 257.41.

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