

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT[281]

Notice of Intended Action

Proposing rulemaking related to general accreditation standards and providing an opportunity for public comment

The State Board of Education hereby proposes to amend Chapter 12, “General Accreditation Standards,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 256.11.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code section 256.11.

Purpose and Summary

This proposed rulemaking conforms the requirements to offer and teach fine arts at the secondary level to the enabling statutory text and modernizes language regarding reporting for students based on student groups.

Regulatory Analysis

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on July 22, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- August 11, 2026

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

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

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the State Board for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 7—Chapter 2504.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on September 22, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Thomas A. Mayes
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.281.8661
Email: thomas.mayes@iowa.gov

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

September 22, 2026
8 to 9 a.m.

Room B50
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa
Via videoconference: meet.google.com/bqq-inqz-hha
By phone: 1 609.438.1406
PIN: 271 490 390#

Persons who wish to make oral comments at the public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind the definition of “Subgroups” in rule **281—12.2(256)**.

ITEM 2. Adopt the following **new** definition of “Student groups” in rule **281—12.2(256)**:
“*Student groups*” (formerly known as “subgroups”) means a subset of the student population that has a common characteristic. Student groups include but are not limited to gender, race, students with disabilities, and socioeconomic status.

ITEM 3. Amend paragraph **12.5(5)“g”** as follows:

- g. *Fine arts (two units)*. Fine arts instruction ~~will~~ may include ~~at least two~~ any of the following:
- (1) to (4) No change.

ITEM 4. Amend subparagraph **12.8(1)“b”(5)** as follows:

(5) Annual improvement goals. The board, with input from its school improvement advisory committee, will adopt annual improvement goals based on data from at least one districtwide assessment. The goals will describe desired annual increase in the curriculum areas of, but not limited to, mathematics, reading, and science achievement for all students, for particular ~~subgroups of students~~ student groups, or both. Annual improvement goals may be set for the early intervention program as described in subrule 12.5(18), other state indicators, locally determined indicators, locally established student learning goals, other curriculum areas, future student employability, or factors influencing student achievement.

ITEM 5. Amend paragraph **12.8(2)“a”** as follows:

a. *State indicators*. A school or school district will collect data on the following indicators for reporting purposes:

(1) The percentage of all ~~fourth fourth-, eighth eighth-, and eleventh-grade~~ eleventh-grade students achieving proficient or higher reading status using at least three achievement levels and by gender, race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other ~~subgroups~~ student groups as required by state or federal law.

(2) The percentage of all ~~fourth fourth-, eighth eighth-, and eleventh-grade~~ eleventh-grade students achieving proficient or higher mathematics status using at least three achievement levels and for gender,

race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other ~~subgroups~~ student groups as required by state or federal law.

(3) The percentage of all ~~eighth eighth-~~ and ~~tenth-grade~~ tenth-grade students achieving proficient or higher science status using at least three achievement levels.

(4) The percentage of students considered as dropouts for grades 7 to 12 by gender, race, students with disabilities, and other ~~subgroups~~ student groups as required by state or federal law.

(5) to (7) No change.

ITEM 6. Amend subparagraph **12.8(2)“b”(1)** as follows:

(1) Baseline data on at least one districtwide assessment for the state indicators described in subrule 12.8(3). Every year thereafter the school or school district will compare the annual data collected with the baseline data. A school or school district is not to report to the community about ~~subgroup~~ student group assessment results when a ~~subgroup~~ student group contains fewer than ten students at a grade level. A school or school district will report districtwide assessment results for all enrolled and tuitioned-in students.