ARC 9806C

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT[281]

Adopted and Filed

Rulemaking related to school accreditation and practitioner preparation approval

The State Board of Education hereby amends Chapter 12, "General Accreditation Standards," Chapter 79, "Standards for Practitioner and Administrator Preparation Programs," and Chapter 80, "Standards for Paraeducator Preparation Programs," Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 256.16.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

Purpose and Summary

This rulemaking updates the State Board's rules concerning school accreditation and practitioner preparation approval to comply with 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on October 1, 2025, as **ARC 9601C**. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- October 21, 2025

Two individuals attended the hearing as observers. No public comments were received. No changes from the Notice have been made.

Adoption of Rulemaking

This rulemaking was adopted by the State Board on November 19, 2025.

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 281—Chapter 4.

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).

Effective Date

This rulemaking will become effective on January 14, 2026.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Amend subrule 12.3(6) as follows:

12.3(6) *Student responsibility and discipline.* The board will adopt student responsibility and discipline policies as required by Iowa Code section 279.8. The board will involve parents, students, instructional and noninstructional professional staff, and community members in the development and revision of those policies where practicable or unless specific policy is mandated by legislation. The policies will relate to the educational purposes of the school or school district. The policies will include the following: attendance; use of tobacco; the use or possession of alcoholic beverages or any controlled substance; harassment of or by students and staff as detailed in subrule 12.3(13); violent, destructive, and seriously disruptive behavior; suspension, expulsion, emergency removal, weapons, and physical restraint; out-of-school behavior; participation in extracurricular activities; academic progress; and citizenship.

The policies will ensure due process rights for students and parents, including consideration for students who have been identified as requiring special education programs and services.

The board will also consider the potential, disparate impact of the policies on students because of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation as defined in Iowa Code section 216.2, ~~gender identity as defined in Iowa Code section 216.2,~~ disability, religion, creed, or socioeconomic status.

The board will publicize its support of these policies, its support of the staff in enforcing them, and the staff's accountability for implementing them.

ITEM 2. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **12.3(14)"e"**:

e. "Gender identity" has the meaning given in Iowa Code section 279.78(1)*"a"* as amended by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

ITEM 3. Amend subrule 12.3(15) as follows:

12.3(15) *Compliance with Iowa Code section 279.80.*

a. A school district shall not provide any program, curriculum, test, survey, questionnaire, promotion, or instruction relating to gender ~~identity~~ theory or sexual orientation to students in kindergarten through grade six.

b. "Gender ~~identity~~ theory" and "sexual orientation" have the same meanings as those given in Iowa Code section ~~216.2~~ 279.80(1) as amended by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

c. In monitoring and enforcing this subrule, the department will not conclude that a neutral statement regarding sexual orientation or gender ~~identity~~ theory violates Iowa Code section 279.80 as amended by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418, or this subrule.

ITEM 4. Amend rule **281—79.2(256)**, definition of "Diverse groups," as follows:

"Diverse groups" means one or more groups of individuals possessing certain traits or characteristics, including age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, ~~gender identity,~~ physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status.

ITEM 5. Amend rule **281—80.1(272)**, definition of "Diverse groups," as follows:

"Diverse groups" means one or more groups of individuals possessing certain traits or characteristics, including but not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, ~~gender identity,~~ physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

[Filed 11/19/25, effective 1/14/26]
[Published 12/10/25]
EDITOR'S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 12/10/25.