

256.9 Duties of director.

Except for the college student aid commission, the commission of libraries and division of library services, and the public broadcasting board and division, the director shall:

1. Carry out programs and policies as determined by the state board.
2. Recommend to the state board rules necessary to implement programs and services of the department.
3. Establish divisions of the department as necessary or desirable in addition to divisions required by law. The organization of the department shall promote coordination of functions and services relating to administration, supervision, and improvement of instruction.
4. Employ personnel and assign duties and responsibilities of the department. The director shall appoint a deputy director and division administrators deemed necessary. They shall be appointed on the basis of their professional qualifications, experience in administration, and background. Members of the professional staff are not subject to the merit system provisions of [chapter 8A, subchapter IV](#), and are subject to [section 256.10](#).
5. Transmit to the department of management information about the distribution of state and federal funds pursuant to state law and rules of the department.
6. Develop a budget and transmit to the department of management estimates of expenditure requirements for all functions and services of the department.
7. Accept and administer federal funds apportioned to the state for educational and rehabilitation purposes and accept surplus commodities for distribution when made available by a governmental agency. The director may also accept grants and gifts on behalf of the department.
8. Cooperate with other governmental agencies and political subdivisions in the development of rules and enforcement of laws relating to education.
9. Conduct research on education matters.
10. Submit to each regular session of the general assembly recommendations relating to revisions or amendments to the school laws.
11. Approve, coordinate, and supervise the use of electronic data processing by school districts, area education agencies, and merged areas.
12. Act as the executive officer of the state board.
13. Act as custodian of a seal for the director's office and authenticate all true copies of decisions or documents.
14. Appoint advisory committees, in addition to those required by law, to advise in carrying out the programs, services, and functions of the department.
15. Provide the same educational supervision for the schools maintained by the director of human services as is provided for the public schools of the state and make recommendations to the director of human services for the improvement of the educational program in those institutions.
16. Interpret the school laws and rules relating to the school laws.
17. Hear and decide appeals arising from the school laws not otherwise specifically granted to the state board.
18. Prepare forms and procedures as necessary to be used by area education agency boards, district boards, school officials, principals, teachers, and other employees, and to insure uniformity, accuracy, and efficiency in keeping records in both pupil and cost accounting, the execution of contracts, and the submission of reports, and notify the area education agency board, district board, or school authorities when a report has not been filed in the manner or on the dates prescribed by law or by rule that the school will not be accredited until the report has been properly filed. The director shall include, on any report for which the department prescribes the form and manner of its submission, a reference to any state or federal statute, rule, or regulation that requires the inclusion of certain information in the report.
19. The department shall compile the financial information related to [chapters 423E and 423F](#) from the certified annual reports of each school district received pursuant to [section 291.10, subsection 2](#), and shall submit the information to the general assembly in an annual report each February 1.

20. Determine by inspection, supervision, or otherwise, the condition, needs, and progress of the schools under the supervision of the department, make recommendations to the proper authorities for the correction of deficiencies and the educational and physical improvement of the schools, and request a state audit of the accounts of a school district, area education agency, school official, or school employee handling school funds when it is apparent that an audit should be made.

21. Preserve reports, documents, and correspondence that may be of a permanent value, which shall be open for inspection under reasonable conditions.

22. Keep a record of the business transacted by the director.

23. Endeavor to promote among the people of the state an interest in education.

24. Classify and define the various schools under the supervision of the department, formulate suitable courses of study, and publish and distribute the classifications and courses of study and promote their use.

25. Direct area education agency administrators to arrange for professional teachers' meetings, demonstration teaching, or other field work for the improvement of instruction as best fits the needs of the public schools in each area.

26. Approve the salaries of area education agency administrators.

27. Develop criteria and procedures to assist in the identification of at-risk children and their developmental needs.

28. Develop, in conjunction with the child development coordinating council or other similar agency, child-to-staff ratio recommendations and standards for at-risk programs based on national literature and test results and Iowa longitudinal test results.

29. Develop programs in conjunction with the center for early development education to be made available to the school districts to assist them in identification of at-risk children and their developmental needs.

30. *a.* Conduct or direct the area education agency to conduct feasibility surveys and studies, if requested under [section 282.11](#), of the school districts within the area education agency service areas and all adjacent territory, including but not limited to contiguous districts in other states, for the purpose of evaluating and recommending proposed whole grade sharing agreements requested under [section 282.7](#) and [section 282.10, subsections 1 and 4](#). The surveys and studies shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency, adjacent territory, and contiguous districts in other states. The surveys and studies shall include a cover page containing recommendations and a short explanation of the recommendations. The factors to be used in determining the recommendations include, but are not limited to:

(1) The possibility of long-term survival of the proposed alliance.

(2) The adequacy of the proposed educational programs versus the educational opportunities offered through a different alliance.

(3) The financial strength of the new alliance.

(4) Geographical factors.

(5) The impact of the alliance on surrounding schools.

b. Copies of the completed surveys and studies shall be transmitted to the affected districts' school boards.

31. *a.* Develop standards and instructional materials to do all of the following:

(1) Assist school districts in developing appropriate before and after school programs for elementary school children.

(2) Assist school districts in the development of child care services and programs to complement half-day and all-day kindergarten programs.

(3) Assist school districts in the development of appropriate curricula for all-day, everyday kindergarten programs.

(4) Assist school districts in the development of appropriate curricula for the early elementary grades one through three.

(5) Assist prekindergarten instructors in the development of appropriate curricula and teaching practices.

b. Standards and materials developed shall include materials which employ developmentally appropriate practices and incorporate substantial parental involvement.

The materials and standards shall include alternative teaching approaches including collaborative teaching and alternative dispute resolution training. The department shall consult with the child development coordinating council, the state child care advisory committee established pursuant to [section 135.173A](#), the department of human services, the state board of regents center for early developmental education, the area education agencies, the department of human development and family studies in the college of human sciences at Iowa state university of science and technology, the early childhood elementary division of the college of education at the university of Iowa, and the college of education at the university of northern Iowa, in developing these standards and materials.

c. For purposes of [this section](#) “*substantial parental involvement*” means the physical presence of parents in the classroom, learning experiences designed to enhance the skills of parents in parenting and in providing for their children’s learning and development, or educational materials which may be borrowed for home use.

32. Develop, or direct the area education agencies to develop, a statewide technical assistance support network to provide school districts or district subcontractors under [section 279.49](#) with assistance in creating developmentally appropriate programs under [section 279.49](#).

33. Administer and approve grants to school districts which provide innovative in-school programming for at-risk children in grades kindergarten through three, in addition to regular school curricula for children participating in the program, with the funds for the grants being appropriated for at-risk children by the general assembly. Grants approved shall be for programs in schools with a high percentage of at-risk children. Preference shall be given to programs which integrate at-risk children with the rest of the school population, which agree to limit class size and pupil-teacher ratios, which include parental involvement, which demonstrate community support, which cooperate with other community agencies, which provide appropriate guidance counseling services, and which use teachers with an early childhood endorsement. Grant programs shall contain an evaluation component that measures student outcomes.

34. Provide educational resources and technical assistance to schools relating to the implementation of the nutritional guidelines for food and beverages sold on public school grounds or on the grounds of nonpublic schools receiving funds under [section 283A.10](#).

35. Explore, in conjunction with the state board of regents, the need for coordination between school districts, area education agencies, regents institutions, and community colleges for purposes of delivery of courses, use of telecommunications, transportation, and other similar issues. Coordination may include but is not limited to coordination of calendars, programs, schedules, or telecommunications emissions.

36. Develop an application and review process for approval of administrative and program sharing agreements between two or more community colleges or a community college and an institution of higher education under the board of regents entered into pursuant to [section 260C.46](#).

37. Develop in-service and preservice training programs through the area education agencies and practitioner preparation institutions and guidelines for school districts for the establishment of family support programs. Guidelines developed shall describe barriers to learning and development which can affect children served by family support programs.

38. Serve as an ex officio member of the commission of libraries.

39. a. Grant annual exemptions from one or more of the minimum education standards contained in [section 256.11](#) and rules adopted by the state board of education to nonpublic schools or public school districts who are engaging in comprehensive school transformation efforts that are broadly consistent with the current standards, but require exemption from one or more standards in order to implement the comprehensive school transformation effort within the nonpublic school or school district. Nonpublic schools or public school districts wishing to be exempted from one or more of the minimum standards contained in [section 256.11](#) and rules adopted by the state board of education shall file a request for an exemption with the department. Requests for exemption shall include all of the following:

(1) A description of the nonpublic school or public school district’s school transformation

plan, including but not limited to new structures, methodologies, and creative approaches designed to help students achieve at higher levels.

(2) Identification of the standard or standards for which the exemption is being sought, including a statement of the reasons for requesting the exemption from the standard or standards.

(3) Identification of a method for periodic demonstration that student achievement will not be lessened by the granting of the exemption.

b. The director shall develop a procedure for application for exemption and receipt, review, and evaluation of nonpublic school and public school district requests, including but not limited to development of criteria for the granting or denying of requests for exemptions and a timeline for the submission, review, and granting or denying of requests for exemption from one or more standards.

40. Develop and administer, with the cooperation of the department of veterans affairs, a program which shall be known as operation recognition. The purpose of the program is to award high school diplomas to veterans of World War I, World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts who left high school prior to graduation to enter United States military service. The department of education and the department of veterans affairs shall jointly develop an application procedure, distribute applications, and publicize the program to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, county commissions of veteran affairs, veterans organizations, and state, regional, and local media. All honorably discharged veterans who are residents or former residents of the state; who served at any time between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918, at any time between September 16, 1940, and December 31, 1946, at any time between June 25, 1950, and January 31, 1955, or at any time between February 28, 1961, and May 5, 1975, all dates inclusive; and who did not return to school and complete their education after the war or conflict shall be eligible to receive a diploma. Diplomas may be issued posthumously. Upon approval of an application, the department shall issue an honorary high school diploma for an eligible veteran. The diploma shall indicate the veteran's school of attendance. The department of education and the department of veterans affairs shall work together to provide school districts, schools, communities, and county commissions of veteran affairs with information about hosting a diploma ceremony on or around Veterans Day. The diploma shall be mailed to the veteran or, if the veteran is deceased, to the veteran's family.

41. Reconcile, with the assistance of the community colleges, audited financial statements and the financial data submitted to the department. The reconciliation shall include an analysis of funding by funding source.

42. Develop core knowledge and skill criteria, based upon the Iowa teaching standards, for the evaluation, the advancement, and for teacher career development purposes pursuant to [chapter 284](#). The criteria shall further define the characteristics of quality teaching as established by the Iowa teaching standards. The director, in consultation with the board of educational examiners, shall also develop a transition plan for implementation of the career development standards developed pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 25](#), with regard to licensure renewal requirements. The plan shall include a requirement that practitioners be allowed credit for career development completed prior to implementation of the career development standards developed pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 25](#).

43. Disburse, transfer, or receive funds as authorized or required under federal or state law or regulation in a manner that utilizes electronic transfer of the funds whenever possible.

44. Develop and implement a comprehensive management information system designed for the purpose of establishing standardized electronic data collections and reporting protocols that facilitate compliance with state and federal reporting requirements, improve school-to-school and district-to-district information exchanges, and maintain the confidentiality of individual student and staff data. The system shall provide for the electronic transfer of individual student records between schools, districts, postsecondary institutions, and the department. The director may establish, to the extent practicable, a uniform coding and reporting system, including a statewide uniform student identification system.

45. Prepare and submit to the chairpersons and ranking members of the senate and house education committees a report on the state's progress toward closing the achievement gap,

including student achievement for minority subgroups, and a comprehensive summary of state agency and local district activities and practices taken in the past year to close the achievement gap.

46. *a.* Develop and make available to school districts, examples of age-appropriate and research-based materials and lists of resources which parents may use to teach their children to recognize unwanted physical and verbal sexual advances, to not make unwanted physical and verbal sexual advances, to effectively reject unwanted sexual advances, that it is wrong to take advantage of or exploit another person, about the dangers of sexual exploitation by means of the internet including specific strategies to help students protect themselves and their personally identifiable information from such exploitation, and about counseling, medical, and legal resources available to survivors of sexual abuse and sexual assault, including resources for escaping violent relationships. The materials and resources shall cover verbal, physical, and visual sexual harassment, including nonconsensual sexual advances, and nonconsensual physical sexual contact. In developing the materials and resource list, the director shall consult with entities that shall include but not be limited to the departments of human services, public health, and public safety, education stakeholders, and parent-teacher organizations. School districts shall provide age-appropriate and research-based materials and a list of available community and internet-based resources to parents at registration and shall also include the age-appropriate and research-based materials and resource list in the student handbook. School districts are encouraged to work with their communities to provide voluntary parent education sessions to provide parents with the skills and appropriate strategies to teach their children as described in [this subsection](#). School districts shall incorporate the age-appropriate and research-based materials into relevant curricula and shall reinforce the importance of preventive measures when reasonable with parents and students.

b. Make available scientifically based research studies in the area of health and wellness literacy for use by school districts and nonpublic schools in educating students. The content shall include but not be limited to research on instructional materials and teaching strategies that have proven effective in teaching students the knowledge and skills included in paragraph “a” and [section 256.11](#). School districts are encouraged to incorporate as much of this material as practical.

47. Develop Iowa standards for school administrators, including knowledge and skill criteria, and develop, based on the Iowa standards for administrators, mentoring and induction, evaluation processes, and professional development plans pursuant to [chapter 284A](#). The criteria shall further define the characteristics of quality administrators as established by the Iowa standards for school administrators.

48. Establish and maintain a process and a procedure, in cooperation with the board of educational examiners, to compare a practitioner’s teaching assignment with the license and endorsements held by the practitioner. The director may report noncompliance issues identified by this process to the board of educational examiners pursuant to [section 272.15, subsection 4](#).

49. *a.* Develop and distribute, in collaboration with the area education agencies, core curriculum technical assistance and implementation strategies that school districts and accredited nonpublic schools shall utilize, including but not limited to the development and delivery of formative and end-of-course model assessments classroom teachers may use to measure student progress on the core curriculum adopted pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 26](#). The department shall, in collaboration with the advisory group convened in accordance with paragraph “b” and educational assessment providers, identify and make available to school districts end-of-course and additional model end-of-course and additional assessments to align with the expectations included in the Iowa core curriculum.

b. Convene an advisory group comprised of education stakeholders including but not limited to school district and accredited nonpublic school teachers, school administrators, higher education faculty who teach in the subjects for which the curriculum is being adopted, private sector employers, members of the boards of directors of school districts, and individuals representing the educational assessment providers. The task force shall review the national assessment of educational progress standards and assessments used by

other states, and shall consider standards identified as best practices in the field of study by the national councils of teachers of English and mathematics, the national council for the social studies, the national science teachers association, and other recognized experts.

c. Establish, subject to an appropriation of funds by the general assembly, an Iowa reading research center which shall collaborate with the area education agencies in implementing the provisions of this paragraph “c”.

(1) The purpose of the center shall be to apply current research on literacy to provide for the development and dissemination of all of the following:

(a) Instructional strategies for prekindergarten through grade twelve to achieve literacy proficiency that includes reading, reading comprehension, and writing for all students.

(b) Strategies for identifying and providing evidence-based interventions for students, beginning in kindergarten, who are at risk of not achieving literacy proficiency.

(c) Models for effective school and community partnerships to improve student literacy.

(d) Reading assessments.

(e) Professional development strategies and materials to support teacher effectiveness in student literacy development. Subject to an appropriation of funds by the general assembly, the center shall collaborate and coordinate with the area education agencies and the department to develop and offer to school districts at no cost professional development services to enhance the skills of elementary teachers in the use of evidence-based strategies to improve the literacy skills of all students.

(f) Data reports on attendance center, school district, and statewide progress toward literacy proficiency in the context of student, attendance center, and school district demographic characteristics.

(g) An intensive summer literacy program. The center shall establish program criteria and guidelines for implementation of the program by school districts, under rules adopted by the state board pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 31](#).

(2) The first efforts of the center shall focus on kindergarten through grade three. The center shall draw upon national and state expertise in the field of literacy proficiency, including experts from Iowa’s institutions of higher education and area education agencies with backgrounds in literacy development. The center shall seek support from the Iowa research community in data report development and analysis of available information from Iowa education data sources. The center shall work with the department to identify additional needs for tools and technical assistance for Iowa schools to help schools achieve literacy proficiency goals and seek public and private partnerships in developing and accessing necessary tools and technical assistance.

(3) The center shall submit a detailed annual financial report, a description of the center’s activities for the prior fiscal year, and a statement of its proposed and projected activities to the general assembly by January 15 annually.

50. Convene, in collaboration with the department of public health, a nutrition advisory panel to review research in pediatric nutrition conducted in compliance with accepted scientific methods by recognized professional organizations and agencies including but not limited to the institute of medicine. The advisory panel shall submit its findings and recommendations, which shall be consistent with the dietary guidelines for Americans published jointly by the United States department of health and human services and department of agriculture if in the judgment of the advisory panel the guidelines are supported by the research findings, in a report to the state board. The advisory panel may submit to the state board recommendations on standards related to federal school food programs if the recommendations are intended to exceed the existing federal guidelines. The state board shall consider the advisory panel report when establishing or amending the nutritional content standards required pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 29](#). The director shall convene the advisory panel by July 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter to review the report and make recommendations for changes as appropriate. The advisory panel shall include but is not limited to at least one Iowa state university extension nutrition and health field specialist and at least one representative from each of the following:

a. The Iowa academy of nutrition and dietetics.

b. The school nutrition association of Iowa.

- c. The Iowa association of school boards.
- d. The school administrators of Iowa.
- e. The Iowa chapter of the American academy of pediatrics.
- f. A school association representing parents.
- g. The Iowa grocery industry association.
- h. An accredited nonpublic school.
- i. The Iowa state education association.

51. Monitor school districts and accredited nonpublic schools for compliance with the nutritional content standards for foods and beverages adopted by the state board in accordance with [section 256.7, subsection 29](#). School districts and accredited nonpublic schools shall annually make the standards available to students, parents, and the local community. A school district or accredited nonpublic school found to be in noncompliance with the nutritional content standards by the director shall submit a corrective action plan to the director for approval which sets forth the steps to be taken to ensure full compliance.

52. Develop and implement a plan to provide, at least twice annually to all principals and guidance counselors employed by school districts and accredited nonpublic schools, notice describing how students can find and use the articulation information available on the internet site maintained by the state board of regents. The plan shall include suggested methods for elementary and secondary schools and community colleges to effectively communicate information about the articulation internet site to the following:

a. To all elementary and secondary school students interested in or potentially interested in attending a community college or institution of higher education governed by the state board of regents.

b. To all community college students interested in or potentially interested in admission to a baccalaureate degree program offered by an institution of higher education governed by the state board of regents.

53. Grant to public school districts and accredited nonpublic schools waivers from statutory obligations with which the entities cannot reasonably comply within two years after a disaster as defined in [section 29C.2, subsection 4](#).

54. Provide guidance and standards to area education agencies for federal and state education initiatives which the area education agencies must implement statewide.

55. Develop and establish an online learning program model in accordance with rules adopted pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 32](#), and in accordance with [section 256.43](#). The director shall maintain a list of approved online providers that meet the standards of [section 256.42, subsection 6](#), and provide course content through an online learning platform taught by a teacher licensed under [chapter 272](#) who has specialized training or experience in online learning. Providers shall apply for approval annually or as determined by the department.

56. a. Develop and implement a coaching and support system for teachers aligned with the framework and comparable systems approved as provided in [section 284.15](#).

b. Develop and implement in collaboration with education stakeholders, a coaching and support system for administrators. The coaching and support system shall be aligned with the beginning administrator mentoring and induction program created pursuant to [section 284A.5](#) and shall also be designed to support administrators in school districts approved to implement the framework and comparable systems set forth pursuant to sections [284.15](#), [284.16](#), and [284.17](#). For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, and each subsequent fiscal year, the coaching and support system for administrators shall be available to any school district whether or not the district has been approved to implement the framework and comparable systems set forth pursuant to sections [284.15](#), [284.16](#), and [284.17](#).

57. Administer the workforce training and economic development funds created pursuant to [section 260C.18A](#).

58. Dedicate at least one-half of one of the department's authorized full-time equivalent positions to maintain a fine arts consultant to provide guidance and assistance, including but not limited to professional development, strategies, and materials, to the department, school districts, and accredited nonpublic schools relating to music, visual art, drama and theater, and other fine and applied arts programs and coursework.

59. Develop and administer a seal of biliteracy program to recognize students graduating

from high school who have demonstrated proficiency in two or more world languages, one of which may be American sign language, though one of which must be English. Participation in the program by a school district, attendance center, or accredited nonpublic school shall be voluntary. The department shall work with stakeholders to identify standardized tests that may be utilized to demonstrate proficiency. The department shall produce a seal of biliteracy, which may include but need not be limited to a sticker that may be affixed to a student's high school transcript or a certificate that may be awarded to the student. A participating school district or school shall notify the department of the names of the students who have qualified for the seal and the department shall provide the school district or school with the appropriate number of seals or other authorized endorsement. The department may charge a nominal fee to cover printing and postage charges related to issuance of the biliteracy seal under [this subsection](#).

[86 Acts, ch 1245, §1409](#); [87 Acts, ch 115, §36](#); [88 Acts, ch 1114, §1](#); [88 Acts, ch 1158, §54](#); [88 Acts, ch 1263, §1](#); [89 Acts, ch 155, §2](#); [89 Acts, ch 206, §6](#); [90 Acts, ch 1152, §1](#); [90 Acts, ch 1253, §6, 122](#); [90 Acts, ch 1271, §1101](#); [91 Acts, ch 84, §2](#); [91 Acts, ch 126, §1](#); [92 Acts, ch 1158, §3](#); [92 Acts, ch 1159, §1, 6](#); [92 Acts, ch 1221, §2](#); [92 Acts, ch 1246, §27](#); [93 Acts, ch 48, §14, 15](#); [94 Acts, ch 1091, §4 – 12](#); [98 Acts, ch 1215, §23, 63](#); [99 Acts, ch 192, §30](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1081, §1](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1167, §2](#); [2001 Acts, ch 161, §14](#); [2001 Acts, ch 181, §12](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1140, §5](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1152, §2](#); [2002 Acts, 2nd Ex, ch 1003, §92, 95](#); [2003 Acts, ch 145, §222](#); [2003 Acts, ch 180, §3, 4](#); [2005 Acts, ch 115, §29, 40](#); [2005 Acts, ch 169, §18](#); [2005 Acts, ch 179, §91](#); [2006 Acts, ch 1152, §18](#); [2007 Acts, ch 98, §1](#); [2007 Acts, ch 108, §3](#); [2007 Acts, ch 214, §18](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1127, §2, 3](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1187, §141](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1191, §156](#); [2009 Acts, ch 54, §2](#); [2009 Acts, ch 65, §2, 3](#); [2009 Acts, ch 168, §1](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1001, §1](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1031, §269, 359, 361](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1193, §118](#); [2011 Acts, ch 132, §43, 106](#); [2012 Acts, ch 1119, §16, 32](#); [2013 Acts, ch 30, §56](#); [2013 Acts, ch 90, §257](#); [2013 Acts, ch 121, §102](#); [2013 Acts, ch 129, §64](#); [2013 Acts, ch 141, §33](#); [2014 Acts, ch 1077, §1](#); [2014 Acts, ch 1135, §8 – 11](#); [2015 Acts, ch 138, §15, 161, 162](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1036, §2](#); [2017 Acts, ch 172, §10](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1057, §4, 5](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1071, §1](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1119, §4, 17](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1163, §9](#)

Referred to in [§15H.7, 22.7\(1\), 256.7, 256.42, 256.43, 256F.4, 257.50, 261E.9, 273.2, 273.10, 279.50, 282.11, 284.3, 284.6, 284.8](#)
Section not amended; internal reference change applied