

256.11 Educational standards.

The state board shall adopt rules under [chapter 17A](#) and a procedure for accrediting all public and nonpublic schools in Iowa offering instruction at any or all levels from the prekindergarten level through grade twelve. The rules of the state board shall require that an age-appropriate, multicultural, and gender-fair approach is used by schools and school districts. The educational program shall be taught from an age-appropriate, multicultural, and gender-fair approach. Global perspectives shall be incorporated into all levels of the educational program. The rules adopted by the state board pursuant to [section 256.17, Code Supplement 1987](#), to establish new standards shall satisfy the requirements of [this section](#) to adopt rules to implement the educational program contained in [this section](#). The educational program shall be as follows:

1. *a.* If a school offers a prekindergarten program, the program shall be designed to help children to work and play with others, to express themselves, to learn to use and manage their bodies, and to extend their interests and understanding of the world about them. The prekindergarten program shall encourage cooperative efforts between home and school and shall focus on community resources. Except as otherwise provided in [this subsection](#), a prekindergarten teacher shall hold a license certifying that the holder is qualified to teach in prekindergarten. A nonpublic school which offers only a prekindergarten may, but is not required to, seek and obtain accreditation.

b. If the board of directors of a school district contracts for the operation of a prekindergarten program, the program shall be under the oversight of an appropriately licensed teacher. If the program contracted with was in existence on July 1, 1989, oversight of the program shall be provided by the district. If the program contracted with was not in existence on July 1, 1989, the director of the program shall be a licensed teacher and the director shall provide program oversight. Any director of a program contracted with by a school district under [this section](#) who is not a licensed teacher is required to register with the department of education.

c. For the purposes of [this subsection](#), “*prekindergarten program*” includes but is not limited to a school district’s implementation of the preschool program established pursuant to [chapter 256C](#).

2. The kindergarten program shall include experiences designed to develop healthy emotional and social habits and growth in the language arts and communication skills, as well as a capacity for the completion of individual tasks, and protect and increase physical well-being with attention given to experiences relating to the development of life skills and, subject to [section 279.80](#), age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development. A kindergarten teacher shall be licensed to teach in kindergarten. An accredited nonpublic school must meet the requirements of [this subsection](#) only if the nonpublic school offers a kindergarten program; provided, however, that [section 279.80](#) shall not apply to a nonpublic school.

3. *a.* All of the following areas shall be taught in grades one through six:

- (1) English-language arts.
- (2) Social studies.
- (3) Mathematics.
- (4) Science.
- (5) Health. The health curriculum shall include the characteristics of communicable diseases.
- (6) Physical education.
- (7) Traffic safety.
- (8) Music.
- (9) Visual art.
- (10) Subject to [section 279.80](#), age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development.

(11) In grades five and six, career planning and pathways. The career planning and pathways curriculum shall include career investigation, career connections, and career

intentions to help such students understand career opportunities in order to fully utilize the individualized career and academic plan developed pursuant to [section 279.61](#).

b. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards established under [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph “a”, subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade level commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023.

c. In grades five and six, the age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development instruction shall incorporate the standards established under [section 279.50, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”.

d. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the elementary program.

4. a. All of the following shall be taught in grades seven and eight:

(1) English-language arts.

(2) Social studies, including instruction related to civics.

(3) Mathematics.

(4) Science.

(5) Health. The health curriculum shall include age-appropriate and research-based information regarding the characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases.

(6) Age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development that incorporates the standards established under [section 279.50, subsection 3](#), paragraph “b”.

(7) Career instruction, exploration, and development, which shall include career investigation, career connections, and career intentions.

(8) Physical education.

(9) Music.

(10) Visual art.

b. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards established under [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph “a”, subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade level commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023. Career exploration and development shall be designed so that students are appropriately prepared to create an individual career and academic plan pursuant to [section 279.61](#), incorporate foundational career and technical education concepts aligned with the six career and technical education service areas as defined in [subsection 5](#), paragraph “h”, incorporate relevant twenty-first century skills to facilitate career readiness, and introduce students to career opportunities within the local community and across this state.

c. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the program in grades seven and eight.

d. This [subsection](#) shall not apply to the teaching of career instruction, exploration, and development in nonpublic schools.

5. In grades nine through twelve, a unit of credit consists of a course or equivalent related components or partial units taught throughout the academic year. The minimum program to be offered and taught for grades nine through twelve is:

a. Five units of science.

(1) The five units of science shall include physics and chemistry, which may be taught in alternate years.

(2) The five units of science may include not more than two units of instruction related to agriculture, which may be offered and taught through dedicated units of coursework or through units of coursework that also meet the requirements of the coursework required under paragraph “h”, subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a). The state board shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to implement this subparagraph.

b. Five units of the social studies including instruction in voting statutes and procedures, voter registration requirements, the use of paper ballots and voting systems in the election process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee ballot. All students shall complete a minimum of one-half unit of United States government and one unit of United States history. The one-half unit of United States government shall include the voting procedure as described in this lettered paragraph and [section 280.9A](#). The government instruction shall also include a study of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill

of Rights contained in the Constitution and an assessment of a student's knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

c. Six units of English-language arts.

d. Four units of a sequential program in mathematics.

e. Two additional units of mathematics. The two additional units of mathematics may include instruction related to applied sciences, technology, engineering, or manufacturing, including transportation, distribution, logistics, architecture, and construction, which may be offered and taught through dedicated units of coursework or through units of coursework that also meet the requirements of the coursework required under paragraph "h", subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (c). The state board shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to implement this paragraph.

f. Two sequential units of one world language, which may include American sign language.

g. (1) All students physically able shall be required to participate in a minimum of one-eighth unit of physical education activities during each semester they are enrolled in school except as otherwise provided in this paragraph. A student who meets the requirements of this paragraph shall be excused from the physical education requirement by the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled if the parent or guardian of the student requests in writing that the student be excused from the physical education requirement. A student who wishes to be excused from the physical education requirement must be seeking to be excused in order to enroll in academic courses not otherwise available to the student, or be enrolled or participating in any of the following:

(a) A work-based learning program or other educational program authorized by the school which requires the student to leave the school premises for specified periods of time during the school day.

(b) An activity that is sponsored by the school in which the student is enrolled which requires at least as much physical activity per week as one-eighth unit of physical education.

(2) The principal of the school shall inform the superintendent of the school district or nonpublic school that the student has been excused. Physical education activities shall emphasize leisure time activities which will benefit the student outside the school environment and after graduation from high school.

(3) A student who is enrolled in a junior reserve officers' training corps shall not be required to participate in physical education activities under subparagraph (1) or to meet the physical activity requirements of [subsection 6](#), paragraph "b", subparagraph (2), but shall receive one-eighth unit of physical education credit for each semester, or the equivalent, of junior reserve officers' training corps the student completes.

h. (1) A minimum of three sequential units in at least four of the following six career and technical education service areas:

(a) Agriculture, food, and natural resources.

(b) Arts, communications, and information systems.

(c) Applied sciences, technology, engineering, and manufacturing, including transportation, distribution, logistics, architecture, and construction.

(d) Health sciences.

(e) Human services, including law, public safety, corrections, security, government, public administration, and education and training.

(f) Business, finance, marketing, and management.

(2) Instructional programs provided under subparagraph (1) shall comply with the provisions of [subchapter VII, part 2](#), relating to career and technical education, and shall be articulated with postsecondary programs of study and include field, laboratory, on-the-job training, or work-based learning, as defined in [section 256.125](#). Each sequential unit shall contain a portion of a career and technical education program approved by the department. Standards for instructional programs shall include but not be limited to new and emerging technologies; job-seeking, job-adaptability, and other employment, self-employment and entrepreneurial skills that reflect current industry standards and labor-market needs; and reinforcement of basic academic skills. Instructional programs that include work-based

learning may be provided when school is not in session, including but not limited to during the summer months.

(3) The department of education shall permit school districts, in meeting the requirements of [this section](#), to use career and technical education core courses in more than one career and technical education service area and to use multi-occupational courses to complete a sequence in more than one career and technical education service area.

(4) This paragraph “h” does not apply to the teaching of career and technical education in nonpublic schools.

i. Two units in the fine arts which may include any of the following: dance, music, theater, or visual art.

j. (1) One unit of health education which may include personal health; food and nutrition; environmental health; safety and survival skills; consumer health; family life; age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development that incorporates the standards established under [section 279.50, subsection 3](#), paragraph “b”; substance use disorder and nonuse; emotional and social health; health resources; cardiopulmonary resuscitation; and prevention and control of disease, including age-appropriate and research-based information regarding sexually transmitted diseases.

(2) The state board as part of accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum standards for implementing the program in grades nine through twelve.

k. (1) One-half unit of personal finance literacy, which may be offered and taught through dedicated units of coursework or through units of coursework that also meet the requirements of the coursework required under paragraph “a”, “b”, “c”, “d”, “e”, or “h”. The personal finance literacy curriculum shall, at a minimum, address all of the following:

(a) Savings, including emergency fund, purchases, and wealth building.

(b) Understanding investments, including compound and simple interest, liquidity, diversification, risk return ratio, certificates of deposit, money market accounts, single stocks, bonds, mutual funds, rental real estate, annuities, commodities, and futures.

(c) Wealth building and college planning, including long-term and short-term investing using tax-favored plans, individual retirement accounts and payments from such accounts, employer-sponsored retirement plans and investments, public and private educational savings accounts, and uniform gifts and transfers to minors.

(d) Credit and debt, including credit cards, payday lending, rent-to-own transactions, debt consolidation, automobile leasing, cosigning a loan, debt avoidance, and the marketing of debt, especially to young people.

(e) Consumer awareness of the power of marketing on buying decisions including zero percent interest offers; marketing methods, including product positioning, advertising, brand recognition, and personal selling; how to read a credit report and correct inaccuracies; how to build a credit score; how to develop a plan to deal with creditors and avoid bankruptcy; and the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, codified at 15 U.S.C. §1692 – 1692p.

(f) Financial responsibility and money management, including creating and living on a written budget and balancing a checkbook; basic rules of successful negotiating and techniques; and personality or other traits regarding money.

(g) Insurance, risk management, income, and career decisions, including career choices that fit personality styles and occupational goals, job search strategies, cover letters, resumes, interview techniques, payroll taxes and other income withholdings, and revenue sources for federal, state, and local governments.

(h) Different types of insurance coverage including renters, homeowners, automobile, health, disability, long-term care, identity theft, and life insurance; term life, cash value and whole life insurance; and insurance terms such as deductible, stop loss, elimination period, replacement coverage, liability, and out-of-pocket.

(i) Buying, selling, and renting advantages and disadvantages relating to real estate, including adjustable rate, balloon, conventional, government-backed, reverse, and seller-financed mortgages.

(2) Units of coursework that meet the requirements of any combination of coursework required under paragraph “a”, “b”, “c”, “d”, “e”, or “h” and incorporate the curriculum

required under subparagraph (1) shall be deemed to satisfy the offer and teach requirements of this paragraph “k”.

l. One-half unit of computer science commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2022. The one-half unit of computer science shall incorporate the standards established pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph “a”, subparagraph (4), and may be offered online in accordance with rules adopted pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 32](#), paragraph “a”.

5A. a. The board of directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school may authorize a teacher who is appropriately licensed by the board of educational examiners to teach two or more sequential units of one subject area in the same classroom at the same time in grades nine through twelve. The board of directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school shall award high school credit to a student upon the student’s successful completion of the course. The teacher must meet the minimum certification requirements of the national organization that administers the advanced placement program if one of the units being offered pursuant to this paragraph is an advanced placement course.

b. The board of directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school may authorize a community college-employed instructor who is providing instruction in the school pursuant to [section 261E.8](#) through a contractual agreement between a community college and the school district or accredited nonpublic school to teach two or more sequential units of one subject area in the same classroom at the same time in grades nine through twelve. The board of directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school shall award high school credit to a student upon the student’s successful completion of the course if the board of directors of the school district or the authorities in charge of the accredited nonpublic school approved the course pursuant to [section 261E.8, subsection 3](#). The community college-employed instructor must meet the minimum certification requirements of the national organization that administers the advanced placement program if one of the units being offered pursuant to this paragraph is an advanced placement course.

6. a. A pupil is not required to enroll in either physical education or health courses, or meet the requirements of paragraph “b” or “c”, if the pupil’s parent or guardian files a written statement with the school principal that the course or activity conflicts with the pupil’s religious belief.

b. (1) All physically able students in kindergarten through grade five shall be required to engage in a physical activity for a minimum of thirty minutes per school day.

(2) All physically able students in grades six through twelve shall be required to engage in a physical activity for a minimum of one hundred twenty minutes per week. A student participating in an organized and supervised athletic program or non-school-sponsored extracurricular activity which requires the student to participate in physical activity for a minimum of one hundred twenty minutes per week is exempt from the requirements of this subparagraph.

(3) The department shall collaborate with stakeholders on the development of daily physical activity requirements and the development of models that describe ways in which school districts and schools may incorporate the physical activity requirement of this paragraph into the educational program. A school district or accredited nonpublic school shall not reduce instructional time for academic courses in order to meet the requirements of this paragraph.

c. Every student by the end of grade twelve shall complete a certification course for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The administrator of a school may waive this requirement if the student is not physically able to successfully complete the training. A student is exempt from the requirement of this paragraph if the student presents satisfactory evidence to the school district or accredited nonpublic school that the student possesses cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification.

7. Programs that meet the needs of each of the following:

- a. Pupils requiring special education.
- b. Gifted and talented pupils.

c. At-risk students.

8. a. The state board shall establish a flexible student and school support program to be administered by the director. Under the program, upon request of the board of directors of a public school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school, the director may, for a period not to exceed three years, grant the applicable board of directors or the authority in charge of the nonpublic school the ability to use the flexible student and school support program to implement evidence-based practices in innovative ways to enhance student learning, well-being, and postsecondary success.

b. Approval to participate in the flexible student and school support program shall exempt the school district or nonpublic school from one or more of the requirements of the educational program specified in [subsection 3, 4, or 5](#), [subsection 6](#), paragraph “b” or “c”, [subsection 7](#), paragraph “b” or “c”, or the minimum school calendar requirements in [section 279.10, subsection 1](#). An exemption shall be granted only if the director deems that the request made is an essential part of an educational program to support student learning, well-being, and postsecondary success; is necessary for the success of the program; and is broadly consistent with the intent of the requirements of the educational program specified in [subsection 3, 4, or 5](#), [subsection 6](#), paragraph “b” or “c”, [subsection 7](#), paragraph “b” or “c”, or the minimum school calendar requirements in [section 279.10, subsection 1](#).

c. Approval to participate in the flexible student and school support program shall include authority for a school district to use funds from the school district’s flexibility account under [section 298A.2, subsection 2](#), to implement all or part of the flexible student and school support program.

d. The application for the flexible student and school support program shall include all of the following and be submitted on forms and in a format prescribed by the department:

(1) A description of the proposed educational program, including evidence used to design the program and evidence of involvement of board members, parents, students, community members, and staff in development of the program.

(2) Program goals and measures of program effectiveness and success, including student success and performance.

(3) A plan for program administration, including the use of personnel, facilities, and funding.

(4) A plan for evaluation of the proposed program on at least an annual basis, including a plan for program revisions, if necessary.

(5) The estimated financial impact of the program on the school district or nonpublic school.

e. Approval to participate in the program does not exempt the school district or nonpublic school from federal law or any other requirements of state law that are not specifically exempted by the director.

f. Each school district or nonpublic school approved to participate in the flexible student and school support program shall file an annual report with the department on the status of the program on forms and in a format prescribed by the department.

g. Participation in the flexible student and school support program may be renewed for additional periods of years, each not to exceed three years. The director may revoke approval of all or part of any application or approved education program if the annual report or any other information available to the department indicates that conditions no longer warrant use of an exemption or funding from the school district’s flexibility account under [section 298A.2, subsection 2](#). Notice of revocation must be provided by the director to the school district or nonpublic school prior to the beginning of the school year for which participation is revoked.

9. a. (1) Beginning July 1, 2023, each school district shall employ either a qualified teacher librarian licensed by the board of educational examiners or a person previously employed as a librarian by a public library. The board of educational examiners shall not require an applicant for a teacher librarian license to have a master’s degree.

(2) Each school district shall establish a kindergarten through grade twelve library program that is consistent with [section 280.6](#) and with the educational standards established in this section, contains only age-appropriate materials, and supports the student achievement goals of the total school curriculum.

(3) If, after investigation, the department determines that a school district or an employee of a school district has violated the provisions of subparagraph (2) related to library programs containing only age-appropriate materials, beginning January 1, 2024, the school district or employee of the school district, as applicable, shall be subject to the following:

(a) For the first violation of subparagraph (2), the department shall issue a written warning to the board of directors of the school district or the employee, as applicable.

(b) (i) For a second or subsequent violation of subparagraph (2), if the department finds that a school district knowingly violated subparagraph (2), the superintendent of the school district shall be subject to a hearing conducted by the board of educational examiners pursuant to [section 256.146, subsection 13](#), which may result in disciplinary action.

(ii) For a second or subsequent violation of subparagraph (2), if the department finds that an employee of the school district who holds a license, certificate, authorization, or statement of recognition issued by the board of educational examiners knowingly violated subparagraph (2), the employee shall be subject to a hearing conducted by the board of educational examiners pursuant to [section 256.146, subsection 13](#), which may result in disciplinary action.

b. The state board shall establish in rule standards for school district library programs, which shall be designed to provide for methods to improve library collections to meet student needs, include a current and diverse collection of fiction and nonfiction materials in a variety of formats to support student curricular needs, and include a plan for annually updating and replacing library materials and equipment.

c. The state board shall establish in rule a definition of and standards for an articulated sequential kindergarten through grade twelve media program.

d. A school district that entered into a contract with an individual for employment as a media specialist or librarian prior to June 1, 2006, shall be considered to be in compliance with [this subsection](#) until June 30, 2011, if the individual is making annual progress toward meeting the requirements for a teacher librarian endorsement issued by the board of educational examiners.

9A. Beginning July 1, 2007, each school district shall have a qualified guidance counselor who shall be licensed by the board of educational examiners under [subchapter VII, part 3](#). Each school district shall work toward the goal of having one qualified guidance counselor for every three hundred fifty students enrolled in the school district. The state board shall establish in rule a definition of and standards for an articulated sequential kindergarten through grade twelve guidance and counseling program. The program shall be designed to ensure that the guidance counselor can work collaboratively with students, teachers, support staff, and administrators to support the curricular goals of the school by offering responsive services that address the growth and development needs of students and the attainment of student competencies in academic, career, and social areas.

9B. Beginning July 1, 2007, each school district shall have a school nurse to provide health services to its students. Each school district shall work toward the goal of having one school nurse for every seven hundred fifty students enrolled in the school district. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “school nurse” means a person who holds an endorsement or a statement of professional recognition for school nurses issued by the board of educational examiners under [subchapter VII, part 3](#).

10. The state board shall establish, and the department shall use, for the school year commencing July 1, 2021, and each succeeding school year, an accreditation, monitoring, and enforcement process for school districts and nonpublic schools seeking accreditation pursuant to [this subsection](#) and [subsections 11 and 12](#). The process established shall include all of the following requirements:

a. *Phase I monitoring.*

(1) Phase I monitoring shall consist of annual monitoring by the department of all accredited schools and school districts for compliance with state and federal school laws, regulations, and rules adopted by the state board under [chapter 17A](#), including but not limited to the following:

(a) Accreditation standards adopted by the state board as provided in [this section](#).

(b) Fiscal compliance.

(c) Federal education laws including but not limited to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq., as amended.

(d) The federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and [chapter 216](#).

(e) All other requirements of this title applicable to accredited schools and school districts.

(2) Phase I monitoring may include but shall not be limited to the following:

(a) One or more desk audits requiring submission of information to the department in a manner and on forms prescribed by the department.

(b) One or more remote or on-site visits to schools or school districts to address accreditation issues identified in a desk audit. Such a visit may be conducted by an individual departmental consultant or may be a comprehensive site visit by a team of departmental consultants and other subject-matter professionals.

(c) A review of district finances by department staff or a neutral third party.

(d) A review of local school board policies and procedures by department staff or a neutral third party.

(3) The department shall provide a public report annually of findings of noncompliance and required corrective actions for each accredited school and school district. The purpose of the phase I process is to bring schools and school districts into minimum compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and rules and no citation or corrective action may be designed to require more than minimum compliance.

(4) The department shall provide a written report annually to the state board of any monitoring review resulting in multiple or substantial findings of noncompliance or noncompliance findings that remain uncorrected for more than thirty days past the deadline set by the department for correction.

(5) The department shall eliminate duplicative reporting on the part of schools and school districts for phase I monitoring, and is prohibited from collecting information not specifically permitted by federal or state law, regulation, or rule.

(6) Enforcement actions under phase I monitoring are limited to actions permitted pursuant to paragraph “c”, subparagraphs (2) and (3). Violations of federal legal requirements shall follow the procedures and limitations of the governing statute.

b. Phase II monitoring.

(1) Phase II monitoring shall take place when any of the following conditions are present:

(a) When either the annual monitoring or the biennial on-site visit of phase I indicates that an accredited school or school district is deficient and fails to be in compliance with accreditation standards.

(b) In response to a petition filed with the director requesting such an accreditation committee visitation that is signed by eligible electors residing in the school district equal in number to at least twenty percent of the registered voters of the school district.

(c) In response to a petition filed with the director requesting such an accreditation committee visitation that is signed by twenty percent or more of the parents or guardians who have children enrolled in the school or school district.

(d) At the direction of the state board.

(e) The school budget review committee submits to the department a recommendation for a fiscal review pursuant to [section 257.31, subsection 18](#).

(2) Phase II monitoring shall consist of a full desk audit of all monitoring requirements and an on-site visit to the school or school district for the purpose of determining the extent of noncompliance, the reason for lack of correction, if applicable, and a recommendation for corrective action to the director and the state board.

(3) Phase II monitoring requires the use of an accreditation committee appointed by the director. The accreditation committee shall be made up primarily of department staff but may request the assistance of third-party specialists at the discretion of the director. An accreditation committee visit to a nonpublic school requires membership on the committee from nonpublic school instructional or administrative staff or board members. A member of a committee shall not have a direct interest in the school district or nonpublic school being visited.

(4) After visiting the school district or nonpublic school, the accreditation committee shall,

within thirty days, determine whether the accreditation standards have been met and shall make a report to the director, together with a recommendation on what enforcement actions, if any, should be recommended to the state board.

c. Enforcement.

(1) The department shall enforce the laws, regulations, and rules applicable to school districts and nonpublic schools consistent with the process outlined in [this subsection](#). The department shall coordinate its enforcement of [chapter 216](#) with the Iowa state civil rights commission to reduce duplication of efforts.

(2) If, after having an opportunity to correct, if permitted, a school district is found to be in noncompliance with federal education laws including but not limited to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq., as amended, the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, [chapter 216](#), [section 279.73](#), or [section 279.74](#), the director shall recommend, and the state board may do, one of the following within thirty days of the finding of noncompliance:

(a) Impose conditions on funding provided to a school district, including directing the use of school district funds and designating the school district a high-risk grantee under [2 C.F.R. §200.207](#).

(b) Withhold payment of state or federal funds to a school district, in whole or in part, until noncompliance is corrected. Initial withholding of state funds is at the discretion of the director for a period of sixty calendar days, after which it is subject to approval of the state board every sixty calendar days. Withholding of federal funds is subject to the governing federal statute or regulation.

(3) The director may use any of the following permitted enforcement mechanisms and shall exercise discretion to ensure that enforcement actions are proportionate to school district or nonpublic school noncompliance:

(a) Advise the school district or nonpublic school on the availability of appropriate technical assistance.

(b) Require the school district or nonpublic school to complete a corrective action plan or plan for improvement by a reasonable deadline.

(c) Recommend a phase II visit to the school district or nonpublic school to the state board.

(d) Refer conduct of school district or nonpublic school staff or school board members, or school authorities, to the office of the attorney general for investigation.

(e) Refer financial concerns to the auditor of state for investigation.

(f) Recommend removal of accreditation of the school district or school to the state board.

(g) Take any other enforcement mechanism available to the director.

(4) The department shall focus enforcement activities on all of the following:

(a) Improving educational results for children, families, and students.

(b) Ensuring that public agencies and their governing boards meet requirements of state and federal laws.

11. *a.* If the recommendation pursuant to [subsection 10](#) is that a school district or nonpublic school not remain accredited, the accreditation committee shall provide the school district or nonpublic school with a report that includes a list of all of the deficiencies, a plan prescribing the actions that must be taken to correct the deficiencies, and a deadline date for completion of the prescribed actions. The accreditation committee shall advise the school district or nonpublic school of available resources and technical assistance to improve areas of weakness. The school district or nonpublic school shall be provided with the opportunity to respond to the accreditation committee's report. The director shall review the accreditation committee's report and the response of the school district or nonpublic school and shall provide a report to the state board along with copies of the accreditation committee's report, the response to the accreditation committee's report, and other pertinent information. At the request of the school district or nonpublic school, the school district or nonpublic school may appear before the state board and address the state board directly regarding any part of the plan specified in the report. The state board may modify the plan. During the period of time specified in the plan for its implementation by a school district or nonpublic school, the school district or school shall remain accredited.

b. The accreditation committee shall revisit the school district or nonpublic school and shall determine whether the deficiencies in the standards have been corrected.

c. The accreditation team shall make a report and recommendation to the director and the state board. The committee recommendation shall specify whether the school district or nonpublic school shall remain accredited. For a school district, the committee report and recommendation shall also specify under what conditions the district may remain accredited. The conditions may include but are not limited to providing temporary oversight authority, operational authority, or both oversight and operational authority to the director and the state board for some or all aspects of the school district in order to bring the school district into compliance with minimum standards.

d. The state board shall review the report and recommendation, may request additional information, and shall determine whether the deficiencies have been corrected.

e. If the deficiencies have not been corrected, and the conditional accreditation alternatives contained in the report are not mutually acceptable to the state board and the local board, the state board shall deaccredit the school district and merge the territory of the school district with one or more contiguous school districts at the end of the school year. The state board may place a district under receivership for the remainder of the school year. The receivership shall be under the direct supervision and authority of the area education agency in which the district is located. The decision of whether to deaccredit the school district or to place the district under receivership shall be based upon a determination by the state board of the best interests of the students, parents, residents of the community, teachers, administrators, and school district board members and upon the recommendations of the accreditation committee and the director.

f. In the case of a nonpublic school, if the deficiencies have not been corrected, the state board may deaccredit the nonpublic school. The deaccreditation shall take effect on the date established by the resolution of the state board, which shall be no later than the end of the school year in which the nonpublic school is deaccredited.

12. If the state board deaccredits a school district and merges the territory of the school district with one or more contiguous school districts, the deaccredited school district ceases to exist as a school corporation on the effective date set by the state board for deaccreditation. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the contiguous school districts receiving territory of the deaccredited school district are not considered successor school corporations of the deaccredited school district.

a. Division of assets and liabilities of the deaccredited school district shall be as provided in this paragraph “a” and in [sections 275.29 through 275.31](#).

(1) If one or more of the contiguous school districts receiving assets and liabilities of the deaccredited school district utilizes the equalization levy, only that territory in the school district imposing the equalization levy that comprises territory of the deaccredited school district shall be taxed.

(2) Income surtax revenue and revenues generated by property taxes shall be distributed proportionately based on taxable value of the territory received by one or more school districts contiguous to the deaccredited school district.

(3) Revenues that are based on student enrollment shall be distributed based on percentages of students who were enrolled in the deaccredited school district in the school year immediately prior to deaccreditation and who now reside in territory received by one or more school districts contiguous to the deaccredited school district.

(4) If the deaccredited school district has a negative fund balance in its general fund at the time it is deaccredited by the state board, the director may order that the positive balance from one or more other funds of the deaccredited school district be transferred to the deaccredited school district’s general fund.

b. Prior to the effective date set by the state board for deaccreditation, the school district shall remain responsible for, and may retain such authority as is necessary to complete, all of the following:

(1) Execution of one or more quitclaim deeds, in fulfillment of the merger of territory received by one or more contiguous school districts from the deaccredited school district.

(2) Preparation of and payment for a final audit of all the district’s financial accounts.

(3) Preparation and certification of a final certified annual report to the department.

c. The provisions of [section 275.57](#) apply when deaccreditation of a school district and merger of the territory of such school district with a contiguous school district that is currently divided into director districts leads to the formation of new director districts.

13. Notwithstanding [subsections 1 through 12](#) and as an exception to their requirements, a private high school or private combined junior-senior high school operated for the express purpose of teaching a program designed to qualify its graduates for matriculation at accredited four-year or equivalent liberal arts, scientific, or technological colleges or universities shall be placed on a special accredited list of college preparatory schools, which list shall signify accreditation of the school for that express purpose only, if:

a. The school complies with minimum standards established by the Code other than [this section](#), and rules adopted under the Code, applicable to:

- (1) Courses comprising the limited program.
- (2) Health requirements for personnel.
- (3) Plant facilities.
- (4) Other environmental factors affecting the programs.

b. At least eighty percent of those graduating from the school within the four most recent calendar years, other than those graduating who are aliens, graduates entering military or alternative civilian service, or graduates deceased or incapacitated before college acceptance, have been accepted by accredited four-year or equivalent liberal arts, scientific, or technological colleges or universities.

c. A school claiming to be a private college preparatory school which fails to comply with the requirement of paragraph “b” of [this subsection](#) shall be placed on the special accredited list of college preparatory schools probationally if the school complies with the requirements of paragraph “a” of [this subsection](#), but a probational accreditation shall not continue for more than four successive years.

14. Notwithstanding [subsections 1 through 13](#) and as an exception to their requirements, a nonpublic grade school which is reopening is accredited even if it does not have a complete grade one through grade six program. However, the nonpublic grade school must comply with other minimum standards established by law and administrative rules adopted pursuant to the law, and the nonpublic grade school must show progress toward reaching a grade one through grade six program.

15. The board of directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of a nonpublic school may award credit toward graduation to a student if the student successfully completes basic training for service as a member of the Iowa army national guard, the Iowa air national guard, the active military forces of the United States, the army national guard of the United States, or the air national guard of the United States.

16. a. Notwithstanding [subsections 1 through 12](#), a nonpublic school may be accredited by an approved independent accrediting agency instead of by the state board as provided in [this subsection](#). The state board shall maintain a list of approved independent accrediting agencies comprised of at least six regional or national nonprofit, nongovernmental agencies recognized as reliable authorities concerning the quality of education offered by a school and shall publish the list of independent accrediting agencies on the department’s internet site. The list shall include accrediting agencies that, as of January 1, 2013, accredited a nonpublic school in this state that was concurrently accredited under [this section](#); and any agency that has a formalized partnership agreement with another agency on the list and has member schools in this state as of January 1, 2013.

b. A nonpublic school that participates in the accreditation process offered by an independent accrediting agency on the approved list published pursuant to paragraph “a” shall be deemed to meet the education standards of [this section](#). However, such a school shall comply with statutory health and safety requirements for school facilities.

c. If the state board takes preliminary action to remove an agency from the approved list published on the department’s internet site pursuant to paragraph “a”, the department shall, at least one year prior to removing the agency from the approved list, notify the nonpublic schools participating in the accreditation process offered by the agency of the state board’s intent to remove the accrediting agency from its approved list of independent accrediting

agencies. The notice shall also be posted on the department's internet site and shall contain the proposed date of removal. The nonpublic school shall attain accreditation under [this subsection](#) or [subsections 1 through 12](#) not later than one year following the date on which the state board removes the agency from its list of independent accrediting agencies.

17. a. (1) The offer and teach requirements of [subsection 5](#), paragraphs "a" through "e" and "g" through "j", shall not apply for up to two specified subjects at a school district or accredited nonpublic school if any of the following apply:

(a) The school district or accredited nonpublic school makes every reasonable and good faith effort to employ a teacher licensed under [subchapter VII, part 3](#), for the specified subject and is unable to employ such a teacher.

(b) Fewer than ten students typically register for instruction in the specified subject at the school district or accredited nonpublic school.

(2) If a school district or accredited nonpublic school meets the requirements of subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a) or (b), the school district or accredited nonpublic school may exceed the two-subject limitation specified in subparagraph (1), unnumbered paragraph 1, for the purpose of providing world language, personal finance literacy, and computer science coursework online in accordance with paragraph "c".

b. The department may waive the applicability of [subsection 5](#), paragraphs "a" through "e" and "g" through "j", for up to two additional specified subject areas for a school district or accredited nonpublic school that proves to the satisfaction of the department that the school district or accredited nonpublic school has made every reasonable effort, but is unable to meet such requirements. A school district or accredited nonpublic school may apply for an annual waiver each year.

c. If the provisions of [subsection 5](#), paragraphs "a" through "e" and "g" through "j", are made inapplicable under paragraph "a", or are waived under paragraph "b", the specified subject shall be provided by an area education agency under [section 273.16](#), or by the school district or accredited nonpublic school if an online alternative satisfying the requirements of subparagraph (1), (2), or (3) can be made available by the school district or accredited nonpublic school. Any course not required under [subsection 5](#) may also be provided by an area education agency under [section 273.16](#) or by the school district or accredited nonpublic school. However, in either case, if offered by the school district or accredited nonpublic school, the specified subject or course shall be offered through any of the following means:

(1) An online learning platform if the course is developed by the school district or accredited nonpublic school itself or is developed by a partnership or consortium of schools that have developed the course individually or cooperatively, provided the course is taught and supervised by a teacher licensed under [subchapter VII, part 3](#), who has online learning experience and the course content meets the requirements established by rule pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 32](#), paragraph "c". A partnership or consortium of schools may include two or more school districts or accredited nonpublic schools, or any combination thereof.

(2) A private provider utilized to provide the course that meets the standards of [this section](#) and is approved in accordance with [section 256.9, subsection 55](#).

(3) An online learning platform offered, subject to the initial availability of federal funds, by the department in collaboration with one or more area education agencies or in partnership with school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. The online learning platform may deliver distance education to students, including students receiving competent private instruction under [chapter 299A](#), provided such students register with the school district of residence and the coursework offered by the online learning platform is taught and supervised by a teacher licensed under [subchapter VII, part 3](#), who has online learning experience and the course content meets the requirements established by rule pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 32](#), paragraph "c". The department and the area education agencies operating online learning programs pursuant to [section 273.16](#) shall coordinate to ensure the most effective use of resources and delivery of services. Federal funds, if available, may be used to offset what would otherwise be costs to school districts for participation in the program.

d. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “good faith effort” means the same as defined in [section 279.19A, subsection 9](#).

18. The board of directors of a school district and the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school shall each establish a policy to award credit toward graduation to a student if the student participates in the legislative page program at the state capitol for a regular session of the general assembly. The student shall be excused from the physical education requirements of [subsection 5](#), paragraph “g”, subparagraph (1), and is exempt from the physical activity requirements of [subsection 6](#), paragraph “b”, subparagraph (2), while participating in the legislative page program. The student must complete the graduation requirements of [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph “a”, but participation in the legislative page program for a complete regular session of the general assembly shall count as one-half unit of social studies credit required for purposes of [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph “a”.

19. For purposes of [this section](#):

a. (1) “Age-appropriate” means topics, messages, and teaching methods suitable to particular ages or age groups of children and adolescents, based on developing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity typical for the age or age group. “Age-appropriate” does not include any material with descriptions or visual depictions of a sex act as defined in [section 702.17](#).

(2) Notwithstanding subparagraph (1), for purposes of the human growth and development curriculum, “age-appropriate” means the same as defined in [section 279.50](#).

b. “Research-based” means the same as defined in [section 279.50](#).

86 Acts, ch 1245, §1411; 87 Acts, ch 224, §26; 87 Acts, ch 233, §451; 88 Acts, ch 1018, §1, 2; 88 Acts, ch 1262, §1, 2; 89 Acts, ch 210, §4, 5; 89 Acts, ch 265, §23 – 26; 89 Acts, ch 278, §1, 2; 89 Acts, ch 319, §39, 40; 90 Acts, ch 1272, §32, 39, 40; 91 Acts, ch 104, §1; 91 Acts, ch 193, §1; 92 Acts, ch 1088, §1; 92 Acts, ch 1127, §1, 2; 92 Acts, ch 1159, §2; 92 Acts, ch 1163, §58; 93 Acts, ch 127, §1, 2; 94 Acts, ch 1091, §13; 94 Acts, ch 1152, §1; 2001 Acts, ch 56, §11; 2001 Acts, ch 159, §1 – 3; 2002 Acts, ch 1140, §7; 2004 Acts, ch 1027, §1; 2005 Acts, ch 3, §55; 2006 Acts, ch 1182, §2; 2007 Acts, ch 42, §1; 2007 Acts, ch 98, §2, 3; 2007 Acts, ch 108, §4; 2007 Acts, ch 148, §7; 2008 Acts, ch 1031, §42; 2008 Acts, ch 1187, §142, 145; 2009 Acts, ch 50, §1, 2; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §74; 2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180; 2010 Acts, ch 1064, §1, 2; 2013 Acts, ch 121, §89; 2016 Acts, ch 1108, §26 – 28; 2016 Acts, ch 1138, §15, 24; 2017 Acts, ch 29, §58; 2018 Acts, ch 1083, §2; 2018 Acts, ch 1119, §20, 21; 2018 Acts, ch 1163, §10; 2019 Acts, ch 93, §1; 2020 Acts, ch 1062, §37; 2020 Acts, ch 1107, §5; 2020 Acts, ch 1117, §9, 10; 2021 Acts, ch 88, §1; 2021 Acts, ch 105, §1; 2021 Acts, ch 134, §1; 2021 Acts, ch 139, §1; 2021 Acts, ch 170, §28; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §985, 2524, 2545 – 2547; 2023 Acts, ch 90, §11, 14, 16 – 20; 2023 Acts, ch 91, §1 – 4; 2023 Acts, ch 119, §25; 2024 Acts, ch 1159, §7; 2024 Acts, ch 1162, §11, 14; 2024 Acts, ch 1164, §1; 2025 Acts, ch 30, §52; 2025 Acts, ch 63, §2; 2025 Acts, ch 127, §1, 2

Referred to in §161A.7, 237.1, 237A.1, 256.7, 256.9, 256.10A, 256.11B, 256.125, 256.129, 256.130, 256.133, 256.136, 256.137, 256E.7, 256F.4, 257.11, 257.31, 261E.8, 261E.9, 261I.1, 273.2, 273.11, 279.50, 279.50A, 279.61, 280.2, 280.3, 280A.1, 282.18, 282.34, 285.16, 298A.2, 299.2, 299.24, 422.7(22)(c), 422.11S, 422.12, 455E.8, 483A.27, 514C.35, 714.19

Career and technical agriculture education; §280.20

See Code editor’s note on simple harmonization at the beginning of this Code volume

Subsections 3 and 4 amended

Subsection 5, paragraph j, subparagraph (1) amended

Subsection 5, paragraph k, subparagraph (1), unnumbered paragraph 1 amended