

**281—12.9 (256) General accreditation standards exemption request.** A school or school district may seek department approval for an exemption as stated in Iowa Code sections 256.9(43) and 256.11(8). The school or school district shall submit the exemption request to the director of the department with, at a minimum, the following: (1) the written request and (2) the standard exemption plan as described in subrule 12.9(1). For the 1999-2000 school year, the written request and plan shall be submitted before October 1, 1999. For subsequent school years, the written request and plan shall be submitted on or before January 1 preceding the beginning of the school year for which the exemption is sought. The exemption request may be approved for a time period not to exceed five years. The department may approve, on request of the school or school district, an extension of the exemption beyond the initial five-year period. The department shall notify the school or school district of the approval or denial of its exemption request not later than March 1 of the school year in which the request was submitted.

**12.9(1) General accreditation standards exemption plan.** The plan shall contain, but is not limited to, the following components:

- a.* The standard or standards for which the exemption is requested.
- b.* A rationale for each general accreditation standard identified in paragraph “*a.*” The rationale shall describe how the approval of the request will assist the school or school district to improve student achievement or performance as described in its comprehensive school improvement plan.
- c.* The sources of supportive research evidence and information, when appropriate, that were analyzed and used to form the basis of each submitted rationale.
- d.* How the school or school district staff collaborated with the local community or with the school improvement advisory committee about the need for the exemption request.
- e.* Evidence that the board approved the exemption request.
- f.* A list of the indicators that will be measured to determine success.
- g.* How the school or school district will measure the success of the standards exemption plan on improving student achievement or performance.

In its annual progress report as described in paragraph 12.8(3) “*b.*,” the school or school district that receives an exemption approval shall include data to support increased student learning, achievement, or performance that has resulted from the approved standards exemption.

**12.9(2) General accreditation standards exemption request and exemption plan review criteria.** The department shall use the information provided in the written request and exemption plan as described in subrule 12.9(1) to determine approval or denial of requests for exemptions from the general accreditation standards. The department will use the following criteria for approval or denial of an exemption plan:

- a.* Components “*a.*” through “*g.*” listed in subrule 12.9(1) are addressed.
- b.* Clarity, thoroughness, and reasonableness are evident, as determined by the department, for each component of the accreditation standards exemption plan.