

281—12.3(256) Administration. The following standards apply to the administration of accredited schools and school districts.

12.3(1) Board records. Each board is to adopt by written policy a system for maintaining accurate records. The system will provide for recording and maintaining the minutes of all board meetings, coding all receipts and expenditures, and recording and filing all reports required by the Iowa Code or requested by the director of the department. Financial records of school districts are to be maintained in a manner as to be easily audited according to accepted accounting procedures.

12.3(2) Policy manual. The board shall develop and maintain a policy manual that provides a codification of its policies, including the adoption date, the review date, and any revision date for each policy. Policies shall be reviewed at least every five years to ensure relevance to current practices and compliance with the Iowa Code, administrative rules and decisions, and court decisions.

12.3(3) Personnel evaluation. Each board will adopt evaluation criteria and procedures that conform to Iowa Code sections 279.14 and 279.23A for all contracted staff.

12.3(4) Student records. Each board will establish and maintain a system of student records, which will include for each student a permanent office record and a cumulative record.

The permanent office record serves as a historical record of official information concerning the student's education. The permanent office record is to be recorded and maintained under the student's legal name. At a minimum, the permanent office record will contain evidence of attendance and educational progress, serve as an official transcript, contain other data for use in planning to meet student needs, and provide data for official school and school district reports. This record is to be permanently maintained and stored in a fire-resistant safe or vault or can be maintained and stored electronically with a secure backup file.

The cumulative record provides a continuous and current record of significant information on progress and growth. It should reflect information such as courses taken, scholastic progress, school attendance, physical and health record, experiences, interests, aptitudes, attitudes, abilities, honors, extracurricular activities, part-time employment, and future plans. It is the "working record" used by the instructional professional staff in understanding the student. At the request of a receiving school or school district, a copy of the cumulative record will be sent to officials of that school when a student transfers.

For the sole purpose of implementing an interagency agreement with state and local agencies in accordance with Iowa Code section 280.25, a student's permanent record may include information contained in the cumulative record as defined above.

The board is to adopt a policy concerning the accessibility and confidentiality of student records that complies with the provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as effective on February 7, 2024, and Iowa Code chapter 22.

12.3(5) Requirements for graduation. Each board providing a program through grade 12 will adopt a policy establishing the requirements students will meet for high school graduation. This policy will make provision for early graduation and be consistent with these requirements, Iowa Code sections 280.14 and 256.7(26).

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

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

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

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

12.3(7) *Audit of school funds.* This subrule applies to school districts. The results of the annual audit of all school district funds conducted by the state auditor or a private auditing firm will be made part of the official records of the board as described in Iowa Code section 11.6.

12.3(8) *School or school district building grade-level organization.* The board shall adopt a grade-level organization for the buildings under its jurisdiction as described in Iowa Code sections 279.39 and 280.3.

12.3(9) *Standards for school counseling programs.* Each school district will establish a kindergarten through grade 12 comprehensive school counseling program, driven by student data and based on standards in academic, career, personal, and social areas, which supports the student achievement goals of the total school curriculum and to which all students have equitable access.

a. A qualified school counselor, licensed by the board of educational examiners, who works collaboratively with students, teachers, support staff and administrators will direct the program and provide services and instruction in support of the curricular goals of each attendance center. The school counselor is the member of the attendance center instructional team with special expertise in identifying resources and technologies to support teaching and learning. The school counselor and classroom teachers will collaborate to develop, teach, and evaluate attendance center curricular goals with emphasis on the following:

(1) Sequentially presented curriculum, programs, and responsive services that address growth and development of all students; and

(2) Attainment of student competencies in academic, career, personal, and social areas.

b. The program will be regularly reviewed and revised and designed to provide all of the following:

(1) Curriculum that is embedded throughout the district's overall curriculum and systemically delivered by the school counselor in collaboration with instructional staff through classroom and group activities and that consists of structured lessons to help students achieve desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental levels;

(2) Individual student planning through ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish educational and career goals to develop future plans;

(3) Responsive services through intervention and curriculum that meet students' immediate and future needs as occasioned by events and conditions in students' lives and that may require any of the following: individual or group counseling; consultation with parents, teachers, and other educators; referrals to other school support services or community resources; peer helping; and information; and

(4) Systemic support through management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program, including professional development, consultation, collaboration, program management, and operations.

12.3(10) *Standards for library programs.*

a. The board of directors of each school district shall establish a kindergarten through grade 12 library program to support the student achievement goals of the total school curriculum as referenced in Iowa Code section 256.11(9). The board of directors of each school district will adopt policies to address selection and reconsideration of school library materials; confidentiality of student library records; and legal and ethical use of information resources, including plagiarism and intellectual property rights.

b. Each school district shall establish a kindergarten through grade 12 library program that is consistent with Iowa Code section 280.6 and with the educational standards established in this chapter, that contains only age-appropriate materials, and that supports the student achievement goals of the total school curriculum. In complying with the requirements in Iowa Code section 279.77(3), the district, if it does not make available a comprehensive list of all books available to all students in libraries offered by the district on its website in real time, must post an updated list at least two times per calendar year.

c. Support, monitoring, and enforcement.

(1) If, after investigation, the department determines that a school district or an employee of a school district has violated the provisions of this subrule 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:

1. For the first violation of this subrule, the department shall issue a written warning to the board of directors of the school district or the employee, as applicable.

2. For a second or subsequent violation of this subrule, if the department finds that a school district knowingly violated this subrule, the superintendent of the school district shall be subject to a hearing conducted by the board of educational examiners that may result in disciplinary action.

3. For a second or subsequent violation of this subrule, 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 this subrule, the employee shall be subject to a hearing conducted by the board of educational examiners that may result in disciplinary action.

(2) This paragraph relates solely to library programs operated by the district, which means library programs over which the district exercises administrative control.

(3) Concerning enforcement provisions relating to library books containing only age-appropriate materials, the department may exercise enforcement discretion if any violation is voluntarily and permanently corrected prior to the department making a determination of a violation.

(4) For library collections that serve multiple grade ranges, the district will exercise reasonable physical, administrative, and technological controls to ensure that students have access to age-appropriate materials based on the students' ages and grades.

12.3(11) *Policy declaring harassment and bullying against state and school policy.* Each school and school district will adopt a policy declaring harassment and bullying against state and school policy and complying with the terms of Iowa Code section 280.28.

12.3(12) *Policy prohibiting the aiding and abetting of sexual abuse.*

a. General. The department and each public school district and area education agency shall adopt policies that prohibit any individual who is a school employee, contractor, or agent, or any state educational agency or local educational agency, from assisting a school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the individual or agency knows, or has probable cause to believe, that such school employee, contractor, or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law.

b. Exception. The requirements of paragraph 12.3(12)“a” do not apply if all of the following conditions are met.

(1) The information giving rise to probable cause has been properly reported to a law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the alleged misconduct; and has been properly reported to any other authorities as required by federal, state, or local law, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and the regulations implementing such title under Part 106 of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, or any succeeding regulations.

(2) The matter has been officially closed or the prosecutor or police with jurisdiction over the alleged misconduct have investigated the allegations and notified school officials that there is insufficient information to establish probable cause that the school employee, contractor, or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law; or the school employee, contractor, or agent has been charged with, and acquitted or otherwise exonerated of, the alleged misconduct; or the case or investigation remains open and there have been no charges filed against, or indictment of, the school employee, contractor, or agent within four years of the date on which the information was reported to a law enforcement agency.

12.3(13) *Display of United States flag, Iowa state flag, Pledge of Allegiance.* Iowa Code section 280.5 is incorporated by this reference.

12.3(14) *Parental rights in education.*

a. A school district shall not knowingly give false or misleading information to the parent or guardian of a student regarding the student's gender identity or intention to transition to a gender that is different than the sex listed on a student's official birth certificate or certificate issued upon adoption if the certificate was issued at or near the time of the student's birth.

b. If a student enrolled in a school district requests an accommodation that is intended to affirm the student's gender identity from a licensed practitioner employed by the school district, including a request that the licensed practitioner address the student using a name or pronoun that is different than the name or pronoun assigned to the student in the school district's registration forms or records, the licensed practitioner shall report the student's request to an administrator employed by the school district, and the administrator shall report the student's request to the student's parent or guardian. Concerning a student's request to use a name that is different from the name on the student's registration forms or records, that request is governed by this subrule only if the request is an accommodation intended to affirm a student's gender identity.

c. If, after investigation, the department determines that a school district or an employee of a school district has violated this subrule, the school district or employee of the school district, as applicable, shall be subject to the following:

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

(2) For a second or subsequent violation of this subrule, if the department finds that a school district knowingly violated this subrule, the superintendent of the school district shall be subject to a hearing conducted by the board of educational examiners, which may result in disciplinary action.

(3) For a second or subsequent violation of this subrule, 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 this subrule, the employee shall be subject to a hearing conducted by the board of educational examiners, which may result in disciplinary action.

d. Concerning enforcement of this subrule, the department may exercise enforcement discretion if any violation is voluntarily and permanently corrected prior to the department making a determination of a violation.

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

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

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

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

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

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