Legislative Services Agency
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Fiscal Services Division

Fiscal Update Article

Iowa State Board of Education — October 2026

October 27, 2026

Meeting
The Iowa State Board of Education (Board) met on Thursday, October 15, 2026, in the State Board Room at the Grimes State Office Building in Des Moines.

Community College Advisory Committee Update
Board member Cassandra Halls provided an update from the Community College Advisory Committee (CCAC), which met on September 30. The CCAC reviewed community college strategic plans, common course numbering and general education framework, and serving adult learners.

The CCAC gained two members, student representative Savannah Orr from Iowa Central Community College and Board member Erica Roth.

Nonpublic School Advisory Committee Update
Board member Jeff Henderson provided an update from the Nonpublic School Advisory Committee (NAC), which met on October 6. Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are available for fall application through November 15. This is the first year that ESAs are available for a fall application process.

Desk audits are now open for nonpublic schools. The Department of Education (DE) reviewed six areas that the nonpublic schools must complete. Iowa currently has 256 nonpublic schools with the following accreditations:

- Three specially accredited.
- 133 accredited by an independent accrediting agency approved by the Board.
- 116 accredited by the DE.

The NAC also reviewed the new State assessment, discussing its administration, resources, and potential implications.

Consent Agenda
The following consent agenda items were approved by the Board:

- September 17, 2026, Board meeting minutes.
- Great Oaks High School and Career Center charter amendment to increase the contracted maximum enrollment from 240 to 400 students.
- Appeal decisions for dockets 5249, 5250, and 5253.
- The adoption and filing of rules pertaining to 281 IAC 12 (fine arts) and 281 IAC 41 (special schools).

Administrative Rules
Thomas Mayes, general counsel for the DE, presented the following rules and actions:

- An Adopted and Filed rulemaking amending 281 IAC 21 to implement 2026 Iowa Acts, chapter 1181 (Course Numbering and Transfer and Curricula Act).
- A Notice of Intended Action (NOIA) amending 281 IAC 5 to make technical corrections related to the adoption of the Uniform Rules on Administrative Procedure.
- An NOIA amending 281 IAC 37 to make technical corrections regarding athletic conference waivers.

Charter Response to Report

The Board heard and discussed the following charter school responses to the charter schools' renewal performance reports:

- Hamburg Charter High School.
- Storm Lake/Iowa Central/Buena Vista Early College High School.
- Choice Charter High School.

Northwestern College Administrator Superintendent Program Approval

Northwestern College presented the addition of a superintendent preparation program for Board approval. The college maintains approved educator preparation programs, including graduate-level educational leadership preparation, and currently offers programs for building-level administrator preparation. The college proposed a 30-credit online education specialist (Ed.S.) program in superintendency and district-level administration.

The Board awarded full approval until the next site visit, scheduled for the 2029-2030 academic year.

Social Studies Essential Elements

The revised Social Studies Essential Elements were first read and discussed by the Board. The Iowa Academic Essential Elements (EEs) are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to grade-level expectations identified in the Iowa Academic Standards. They describe challenging expectations for students who meet the criteria for alternate academic achievement standards in relation to the Iowa Academic Standards.

There will be a second read in November.

Iowa Department of Transportation Human Trafficking Prevention Training Cooperation

The Board heard and discussed the Human Trafficking Prevention Training, effective January 2027, approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and developed by Truckers Against Trafficking. 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 2598 (Commercial Driver's Licenses, Human Trafficking Training Act), requires new applicants for Class A, B, and C commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) to complete at least 30 minutes of approved human trafficking prevention training and pass the assessment. This will not apply to renewing or current CDL holders.

Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be on November 18 in the State Board Room at the Grimes State Office Building in Des Moines.

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Doc ID 1617040