

# 2019 Annual Report



**iowa**collaboration  
for**youth**development

**State of Iowa**  
February 1, 2019



February 1, 2019

Dear Governor Reynolds and Members of the General Assembly:

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council respectfully submits its Annual Report, as required by Iowa Code Section 216A.140.

The ICYD Council is committed to providing the Legislature and Governor with information, data, and recommendations to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by continuing to:

- coordinate youth policy and programs across state agencies;
- increase the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services for youth; and
- support, adopt, and apply positive youth development practices at the state and local level.

The 2019 Annual Report includes our primary issue and goal, data that demonstrate the state's current position, activities and accomplishments in the area of youth development completed by the ICYD Council in 2018; emerging activities being implemented in 2019; and recommended actions that will help Iowa achieve the ICYD goal – *Increasing Iowa's Graduation Rate to 95% by 2020*. With the understanding that several issues (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, teen pregnancy, and mental health) prevent many youth from graduating from high school, the ICYD Council agencies address these issues as individual agencies and work together as a team by making the best use of existing resources to maximize efficiency in state government in order to create substantial and lasting positive changes for Iowa's youth. The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC) is now an official member of the ICYD Council, raising membership to 12 entities.

The ICYD Council continues to leverage grant funding and in-kind staff support to implement many of the recommended actions without increased funding. However, as the state continues to invest in Iowa's youth, ICYD has identified prioritized actions where that investment may be directed to maximize positive outcomes. These include sustaining the use of the Iowa Youth Survey every two years, formalizing curricula for youth initiatives, funding for youth to participate in state-level initiatives, Iowa's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan assisting in eliminating the educational achievement gap for underrepresented students, and a shift in staff time to consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing infrastructure of the ICYD Council. In addition, as pilot projects are completed (currently funded with grants), there will be a need to incorporate effective programs into current agency structures that facilitate expansion to other areas in the state.

We look forward to working with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to increase the graduation rate and promote positive youth development. The ICYD Council will continue to keep you informed of the progress made toward that goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this information.

Sincerely,



San Wong

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council



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**Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council Members**  
February 2019

San Wong, Director, Department of Human Rights  
Steve Michael, ICYD Chair, Administrator, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice  
Planning, Department of Human Rights  
Jim Hennessey, Administrator, Child Advocacy Board  
Julie Hibben, Bureau of Substance Abuse, Department of Public Health  
Adam Lounsbury, Executive Director, Commission on Volunteer Service  
Gary Niles, Chief Juvenile Court Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District  
Sibani Ram, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC)  
Jana Rhoads, Department of Human Services  
Beth Townsend, Director, Iowa Workforce Development  
Shanell Wagler, Facilitator, Early Childhood Iowa  
Ryan Wise, Director, Department of Education  
Dale Woolery, Director, Office of Drug Control Policy  
Vacant, State 4-H/K-12 Youth Development Program Leader

***Acknowledgments***

The ICYD Council thanks all of the staff who contributed to producing this report. A special acknowledgment is extended to Kathy Stone, Division Director for the Department of Public Health, who has recently retired. In addition, representing the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), Sabani Ram and Kevin Drahos, provided unique perspectives and important contributions by sharing their thoughts, ideas, expertise, and youth voice.



## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – ICYD COUNCIL 2019 ANNUAL REPORT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Recommended Actions in 2019: .....	2
<b>I. OVERVIEW OF THE ICYD COUNCIL AND THE STATE OF IOWA YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (SIYAC)</b> .....	<b>3</b>
State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council’s (SIYAC) Purpose and Priorities.....	5
<b>II. PRIORITIZED ISSUE: INCREASING IOWA’S GRADUATION RATE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Graduation and Dropout Data.....	10
<b>III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2018 AND EMERGING ACTIVITIES IN 2019</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Focus on Underperforming Schools and Communities .....	13
• Eliminate Educational Achievement Gap .....	13
Assess Current State Initiatives and Maximize Existing Resources .....	14
• Juvenile Justice System Improvement (Formerly Smart).....	14
• Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (JJRRI).....	16
Investigate Research-Based Approaches and Effective Strategies.....	17
• Adolescent Brain Research and Implications For Youth Programs .....	17
Coordinate Across Systems to Identify and Support Vulnerable Students .....	18
• Statewide Comprehensive Juvenile Reentry Systems (JRES) .....	18
• Two-Generation Approach.....	19
• Interagency Data Sharing Agreement.....	21
• Coordinate, Consolidate, and Convene Required Advisory Groups .....	21
• Iowa Youth Survey.....	22
• Family First Prevention Services Act .....	23
Engage Additional Stakeholders.....	23
• National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) .....	23
• Evaluate DHR Youth Programs & Develop Curriculums.....	25
• Coordinate and Align “Youth-Fueled” Councils and Initiatives and Expand Opportunities for Youth to Participate .....	26
• Iowa Digital Literacy Project.....	27
<b>IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IN 2019</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: GRADUATION RATE CALCULATION METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>30</b>





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – ICYD COUNCIL 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council members are leaders of 12 state entities with the vision that **“All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood.”** The ICYD Council oversees the activities of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC) and has sought input from these youth leaders in the development of more effective policies, practices, programs, and this Annual Report. SIYAC consists of youth between 14 to 21 years of age who reside in Iowa, with the purpose to foster communication with the governor, general assembly, and state and local policymakers regarding programs, policies, and practices affecting youth and families and to advocate on important issues affecting youth. In 2009, legislation passed formalizing the ICYD Council and SIYAC in Iowa Code §216A.140.

The ICYD Council has prioritized the following youth issue: **By 2020, Iowa will increase the graduation rate from 89% to 95%.** Iowa’s high school graduating class of 2017 four-year cohort graduation rate was 91%, the highest in the nation.<sup>1</sup> Even with this achievement, several issues remain (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, teen pregnancy, and mental health) that may prevent youth from graduating from high school. ICYD Council members work to address these issues through their individual agencies and together as a team to maximize efficiency in state government and make the best use of existing resources. The five-year fixed cohort graduation rate in 2016 was 93.4%.

The ICYD Council has several emerging activities in 2019:

- Implement strategies to eliminate the educational achievement gap for underrepresented students in pilot communities by utilizing innovative strategies and incorporate federal initiatives, such as Every Student Succeeds Act and Family First Prevention Services Act.
- Participate in the completion of the Juvenile Justice System Improvement comprehensive strategic plan to improve outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system and decrease racial and ethnic disparities.
- Continue efforts through the statewide implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (JJRRI). The overall goal of the project is to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders by ensuring that the right services are provided to the right youth at the right time.
- Implement the Juvenile Reentry System (JReS) guiding efforts to reduce the historical baseline recidivism rates for youth returning from placement in the Boys’ State Training School (STS) and other residential facilities.
- Provide the core membership to new youth-serving advisory groups allowing state agencies to utilize the ICYD Council infrastructure as the coordinating body and consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing ICYD Council.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics Report. 2017.  
[https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_RE\\_and\\_characteristics\\_2015-16.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2015-16.asp)

## Recommended Actions in 2019:

The ICYD Council seeks support from the Iowa State Legislature and Governor's Office to continue these activities by modifying laws and policies, as necessary, and providing resources needed to support the activities noted above in an effort to achieve this very ambitious goal.

Specific recommendations to support the ICYD Council are:

- Support the ICYD Council in identifying new and better ways to provide services and supports to Iowa's youth and families by encouraging multi-agency approaches in the development of innovative strategies and to incorporate federal initiatives that will eliminate the educational achievement gap for underrepresented students:
  - Two-Generation Approaches – Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)
  - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  - Family First Prevention Services Act
  - Juvenile Justice System Improvement (formerly SMART)
  - Juvenile Reentry System Implementation
  - Iowa Digital Literacy Project
- Provide resources to continue and expand evidence-based practices and programs as they are developed and identified.
- Support the ICYD Council's approach to consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing infrastructure of the ICYD Council. The model will result in a reduction of duplication, enhanced coordination and collaboration between state agencies, and a reduction in costs.
- Support the Iowa Youth Survey. The survey is administered every two years to 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. The results are valuable to state agencies and communities in assessing self-reported youth behaviors and perceptions.
- Provide resources to support state-level youth opportunities and youth-led initiatives (e.g. State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, Achieving Maximum Potential).
- Engage youth on state boards and commissions, and provide the training and support necessary for youth members to be active participants. In addition, state agencies should seek new and creative ways to involve youth.
- Continue to develop ways to share information among agencies to address issues affecting youth who receive services and supports from multiple agencies.
- Support the continued use of state agency staff time to implement activities that meet the goals of the ICYD Council.
- Infuse positive youth development (PYD) principles in all youth programming which includes PYD trainings for youth workers and establishing policies to include PYD principles in all state-funded youth initiatives.

## I. OVERVIEW OF THE ICYD COUNCIL AND THE STATE OF IOWA YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (SIYAC)

This is the the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council’s annual report to the Governor and General Assembly. The report provides information on the:

- Purpose, goals, 2018 accomplishments, and emerging activities for 2019;
- Membership of the ICYD Council and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC);
- Progress on achieving the priority youth goal– ***Increasing Iowa’s graduation rate to 95% by 2020***, with data and information on progress; and
- Recommendations for action in 2019 to the Governor and General Assembly.

In 2009, legislation passed placing the ICYD Council and SIYAC in Iowa Code §216A.140. Prior to becoming “codified councils”, both ICYD and SIYAC operated as non-statutory entities. The ICYD began in 1999 as an informal network of state agencies from 10 departments serving as a forum to foster improvement and coordination of state and local youth policy and programs.

The ICYD Council’s vision is:

***“All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood.”***

The ICYD Council meets quarterly to receive reports from state agencies and SIYAC, review progress of current activities, review data, and establish priorities and recommended actions on many issues affecting youth. The prioritized goal – ***Increasing Iowa’s Graduation Rate to 95% by 2020*** – was selected due to its summative measure of youth development efforts, and the many cross-agency issues that contribute to youth graduating from high school. Each agency on the ICYD Council has a role in achieving this goal.

ICYD has historically participated in a variety of state and national youth initiatives and has been recognized nationally (e.g. National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, federal Interagency Working Group for Youth Programs, Forum for Youth Investment, and Children’s Cabinet Network) for its work in coordinating youth development efforts. The ICYD Council provides a venue to enhance information and data sharing, develop strategies across state agencies, and present prioritized recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly that will improve the lives and futures of Iowa youth.

The Department of Human Rights is the lead agency and oversees activities for the ICYD Council.

### **ICYD Council’s Purpose**

The ICYD Council strives to improve the lives and futures of Iowa’s youth by:

- Adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels;
- Increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth;
- Improving and coordinating youth policy and programs across state agencies.

## ICYD Council's Membership

The ICYD Council's membership includes the director or chief administrator (or their designee) of 11 state entities and the SIYAC. The ICYD Council has the ability to expand membership to include others that will assist the Council in achieving its purpose. In addition to each agency's director (or designee) serving on the ICYD Council, many of the agencies have additional staff that actively participate in meetings and complete tasks as directed by the ICYD Council on the ICYD Results Team. Below are the agencies and members of the ICYD Council:

### ICYD Council Members – February 2019

<b>Department of Human Rights</b> San Wong, Director  Steve Michael, Division Administrator Chair of ICYD Council	<b>Early Childhood Iowa</b> Shanell Wagler, Facilitator
<b>Child Advocacy Board</b> Jim Hennessey, Administrator *Amy Carpenter	<b>Iowa Workforce Development</b> Beth Townsend, Director *Kristi Judkins, Rapid Response and WIOA Program Coordinator
<b>Commission on Volunteer Service</b> Adam Lounsbury, Executive Director *Mary Sheka, Economic Development Specialist	<b>ISU Extension and Outreach, 4-H Youth                  Development</b> Vacant, State 4-H/K-12 Youth Development Program Leader
<b>Department of Education</b> Ryan Wise, Director *Jay Pennington, Public Service Manager	<b>Judicial Branch</b> Gary Niles, Chief Juvenile Court Officer 3 <sup>rd</sup> Judicial District
<b>Department of Human Services</b> Jana Rhoads, Administrator - Division of Adult, Children, and Family Services *Doug Wolfe, Program Planner	<b>Office of Drug Control Policy</b> Dale Woolery, Director
<b>Department of Public Health</b> Julie Hibben, Bureau of Substance Abuse	<b>State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC)</b> Sibani Ram, Chair Anna Breese, SIYAC Coordinator

\*Agency Designee when member is unable to participate

## STATE OF IOWA YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL'S (SIYAC) PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

The purpose of SIYAC, as stated in Iowa Code §216A.140(8), is to “foster communication among a group of engaged youth and the Governor, General Assembly, and state and local policymakers regarding programs, policies, and practices affecting youth and families; and to advocate for youth on important issues affecting youth.”

The mission statement of SIYAC is: “***To raise awareness of issues that affect young Iowans by providing civic opportunity and to inspire youth to create a better future for Iowa.***”

Originally established in 2001, SIYAC was formalized in Iowa Code in 2009 as an avenue for youth to inform state leaders and local communities on issues important to young people. SIYAC consists of 21 youth voting members and three youth non-voting members aged 14 to 21 who reside in Iowa. The non-voting members become a voting member if members resign during a SIYAC term year.

The ICYD Council oversees the activities of SIYAC and seeks input from these youth leaders in the development of more effective statewide policies, practices, and programs.

SIYAC meets quarterly to identify issues affecting youth, discuss community needs, form partnerships to meet those needs, draft positions on youth issues, communicate those positions with legislators, and plan and conduct service activities. In addition, SIYAC members participate in ICYD Council meetings. Members serve two-year staggered terms that begin in July.

SIYAC presents independent information and recommendations on youth issues to the Iowa General Assembly and Governor during the legislative session. SIYAC members also carry out two service projects in their respective communities and statewide.

In September 2018, SIYAC identified focus areas and developed four subcommittees: Appropriations, Education, Health, and Human Rights. SIYAC may also advocate for other issues facing Iowa's youth throughout the legislative session.

Notable SIYAC accomplishments during 2018:

- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Gov. Kim Reynolds signed SF2113 into law. SF2113 requires that school employees receive training on suicide prevention, toxic stress mitigation, and the identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). SIYAC advocated for these issues and played a key role in raising awareness within the legislature.

- SIYAC Executive Committee members attended the Iowa Youth Congress (IYC) Mock Congress event in October. Members of the Executive Committee helped guide IYC members in debate and critical thinking skills when addressing their position statements and ways to successfully work with legislators.
- Members of SIYAC completed a group service project by working at the Feed Iowa First organic farm near Cedar Rapids.
- Subcommittees created more than a dozen position statements that were presented and debated by the entire council in December 2018. SIYAC chose 13 legislative position statements to support during the 2019 legislative session.
- During bi-weekly conference calls, SIYAC members made time for Community Spotlight segments. During Community Spotlight presentations, members invite local leaders from community service organizations to speak about their work and how it impacts Iowa's youth. Guests included speakers from RunDSM, an after school youth program that teaches young people self-expression through art and poetry. Other speakers provided information regarding their work with individuals with special needs, youth in marginalized racial groups, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The following members accomplished individual achievements and received notable recognition:

- Kevin Drahos, SIYAC Vice Chair, was chosen to represent Iowa in the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) during March 2019.
- Tyler Juffernbruch, SIYAC Secretary, was accepted to attend Yale University and was chosen as an alternate representative in the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) that is held in March 2019.
- Isabel Hanson was selected to represent SIYAC on the Iowa Prevention Partnership Advisory Council (PPAC) and will work to bridge efforts between SIYAC and the PPAC.
- SIYAC Alumni member and former Secretary for 2015-16 was elected Student Body President of Harvard's 2020 Undergraduate Class.
- Animesh Joshi won the Yale University Invitational Debate Tournament.
- Alaa Ali was accepted to attend Columbia University.
- Many other SIYAC members have been accepted to various universities and colleges during their senior year.

During 2018-2019, SIYAC members are working to strengthen partnerships with other youth-led councils like IYC and Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) to increase visibility and coordinate advocacy efforts on issues that affect Iowa's youth. SIYAC has identified a diverse array of issues to advocate for during the 2019 legislative session.

In partnership with the Iowa Youth Congress, SIYAC will host a "Day on the Hill" to meet with legislators and advocate for their youth-focused position statements. The position statements outlined below overlap between committees, SIYAC, and IYC.

The 2018-2019 SIYAC issues are:

**Education Committee:**

- Civics Education Trust Fund—A fund that allows schools to become ‘democracy schools’ and be compensated for offering electives for civic-minded students like “Contemporary Events”.
- Argumentation Classes Resolution—This would require high school courses that develop skills in critical thinking and debate.
- Extension of 1% Sales Tax for Education—Extend the 1% Secure Advancement Value Education (SAVE) tax to the year 2049. (SAVE began in 2008 and is currently planned to expire in 2029.)
- Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) —An effort to implement ERPOs with clear provisions and a fair, safe, and simple process. ERPOs allow families and law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily suspend a person’s access to firearms if there is documented evidence that an individual is threatening harm to themselves or others. The person must surrender their guns to police and will not be able to buy, sell, or possess other firearms for up to one year.
- Student Representation on School Boards—This would require that all Iowa school districts have at least one student representative serve on their school board.

**Health Committee:**

- Feminine Hygiene Products in Schools—School districts would be required to allocate funds from existing toiletry supply budgets to supply basic feminine hygiene products in at least half of all restrooms in school buildings with grades 6-12.

**Human Rights Committee:**

- Prohibit Gay and Transgender Panic Defense—Prohibit the use of the gay/transgender panic defense in legal cases in the state of Iowa.
- Gender Identity Hate Crime Code—Add gender identity under the Iowa Hate Crime Statute.
- LGBTQ+ Inclusive Sexual Education—Rewrite Iowa Code §279.50 to include LGBTQ+ issues in the school health curriculum.
- Representation of the People Act—An effort to reform Iowa voting laws to include, but not be limited to, automatic voter registration, restoration of felon voting rights, and voter registration at 16 years of age.
- Higher Education Programs for Low-Funded Schools—Advocate for additional funding for existing programs for students from low income households.

**Appropriations Committee:**

- Mandatory Reporting of Lost or Stolen Firearms—Require firearm owners to report lost or stolen firearms to local law enforcement within 48 hours of discovery or face penalties.
- Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund Sales Tax—Increase funding for the existing trust fund with 3/8 of a penny sales tax. The fund would improve Iowa’s water quality, natural habitats, and ecosystems.
- Plastic Straws Upon Request—Prevent restaurants from automatically providing straws to all customers and only on request, or face a penalty.

**2018-2019 SIYAC Members:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Held</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>Alaa Ali</b>		Iowa City	Johnson
<b>Jillian Baker</b>	<i>Service Chairperson</i>	North Liberty	Johnson
<b>Louise Bequeaith</b>	<i>Public Relations Chair</i>	Des Moines	Polk
<b>Kunal Chugh</b>		Asbury	Dubuque
<b>Jaden Deal</b>		Norwalk	Warren
<b>Kevin Drahos</b>	<i>Vice Chair</i>	Cedar Rapids	Linn
<b>Andrew Dunn</b>		Spirit Lake	Dickinson
<b>Isabel Hanson</b>		Norwalk	Warren
<b>Nick Jennings</b>		Bettendorf	Scott
<b>Animesh Joshi</b>		West Moines	Des Polk
<b>Tyler Juffernbruch</b>	<i>Secretary</i>	Indianola	Warren
<b>Vanessa Kawala</b>		Clive	Polk
<b>Will Keck</b>		Waukee	Dallas
<b>Kyle Kopf</b>	<i>Education Committee Chair</i>	West Moines	Des Polk
<b>Anu Lamsal</b>	<i>Human Rights Committee Chair</i>	Ames	Story
<b>Jack Lauer</b>		Ackworth	Warren
<b>Cing Mang</b>		Clive	Polk
<b>Kiran Marla</b>	<i>Health Committee Chair</i>	Bettendorf	Scott
<b>Matt Messer</b>	<i>Appropriations Committee Chair</i>	Burlington	Des Moines
<b>Jessica Moonjely</b>		Coralville	Johnson
<b>Melissa Nakyeyune</b>		Clive	Polk
<b>Isabella O'Connor</b>	<i>Legislative Affairs Chair</i>	Des Moines	Polk
<b>Sibani Ram</b>	<i>Executive Chair</i>	Dubuque	Dubuque
<b>Sydney Uhlman</b>		Ankeny	Polk



## II. PRIORITIZED ISSUE: INCREASING IOWA'S GRADUATION RATE

**Good is the enemy of great.** And that is one of the reasons that we have so little that becomes great. We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools.  
-Jim Collins in *Good to Great* (2001)

The ICYD Council has prioritized two of the Youth Development Result Areas:

- All Iowa youth are successful in school.
- All youth are prepared for a productive adulthood.

Graduation and dropout rates are included as performance measures for both of these result areas in the first annual report dated February 1, 2010. At that time, the ICYD Council agreed that the focal point for collaborative youth development efforts should address a specific and aggressive goal for the state, which is:

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By 2020, Iowa will increase the graduation rate from 89% to 95%. If the cohort enrollment remains approximately 39,000 students, about 2,000 additional youth will graduate each year.

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It is with the understanding that several issues (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, teen pregnancy, and mental health) prevent many youth from graduating from high school. The ICYD Council agencies work to address these issues as individual agencies and together as a team to maximize efficiency in state government, make the best use of existing resources, and create substantial and lasting positive changes for Iowa's youth.

The critical performance measures to assist in showing all Iowa youth are on the path to graduate are:

1. The number of students at each high school grade level who are on the trajectory to graduate on time.
2. The gaps for graduation and dropout rates for subpopulations (i.e. race, ethnicity, second language learners, low socioeconomic, and students with disabilities).

Department of Education data show 91 percent of students in Iowa's Class of 2017 graduated within four years, down from 91.3 percent for the Class of 2016. Since 2011, Iowa's four-year graduation rate has climbed 2.7 percentage points overall, with significant long-term gains in nearly every student demographic subgroup (see Table 1 below). For example, graduation rates for African American students have increased four years in a row and by 9.1 percentage points since 2011.<sup>2</sup>

"High school graduation is an essential step for every student because it opens the door to postsecondary education and training opportunities that lead to rewarding jobs," Iowa Department of Education Director Ryan Wise said.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://educateiowa.gov/article/2018/04/11/iowa-s-high-school-graduation-rate-91-percent>


<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

“Once again, Iowa is leading the nation when it comes to students graduating high school,” said Gov. Reynolds. “While we can be proud of where we are, there’s a lot more work to do to ensure our students not only graduate high school but they do so ready to meet the demands of the 21st century.”<sup>4</sup>

## Graduation and Dropout Data

The information and data on the graduation and dropout rates are from the Iowa Department of Education.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1



Four-Year Graduation Rate by Student Subgroup								
	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Comparison 2011-17
All	88.3%	89.3%	89.7%	90.5%	90.8%	91.3%	91.0%	↑ 2.7%
Individualized Education Program	69.9%	72.7%	72.7%	76.4%	77.0%	69.5%	74.2%	↑ 4.3%
Low Socioeconomic Status	78.1%	79.7%	80.4%	84.1%	84.8%	83.9%	83.7%	↑ 5.6%
English Language Learner	70.0%	73.9%	75.7%	83.1%	82.9%	80.8%	80.3%	↑ 10.3%
African American	73.2%	74.1%	73.8%	78.6%	79.2%	79.7%	82.3%	↑ 9.1%
American Indian	79.2%	72.7%	83.2%	78.3%	85.6%	80.6%	83.3%	↑ 4.1%
Asian	88.5%	89.9%	91.1%	90.8%	92.7%	91.5%	92.5%	↑ 4.0%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	81.6%	76.9%	67.5%	80.0%	86.4%	88.1%	77.5%	↓ 4.1%
Hispanic	75.2%	77.5%	79.5%	81.7%	82.8%	84.5%	82.4%	↑ 7.2%
Multi-racial	82.0%	84.4%	84.9%	85.8%	83.9%	83.9%	85.2%	↑ 3.2%
White	90.2%	91.1%	91.5%	92.2%	92.4%	92.9%	92.7%	↑ 2.5%

**Individualized Education Program:** Students who participate in special education programs.  
**English Language Learner:** Student whose native language is not English and participate in an English Language Learner program  
**Low Socio-economic Status:** Eligible for free and reduced-price meals  
**Multi-Racial:** Non-Hispanic students identified as more than one race


Table 1 shows the four-year fixed graduation rates for the Classes of 2011 through 2017 graduating classes. The rates listed are for all students and 10 subgroups. In 2017, among the ethnic/race subgroups, White and Asian students had the highest graduation

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <https://educateiowa.gov/graduation-rates-and-dropout-rates>

rates; the students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander had the lowest graduation rates. English Language Learners and African American students had the largest graduation rate percentage increase between 2011 and 2017. See Appendix 1 for the graduation rate calculation methodology.

Table 2




### Five-Year Graduation Rate by Student Subgroup

	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016
<b>All</b>	<b>91.4%</b>	<b>92.1%</b>	<b>92.3%</b>	<b>93.1%</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>93.4%</b>
Individualized Education Program	80.7%	82.4%	81.9%	84.9%	84.6%	80.1%
Low Socioeconomic Status	83.6%	84.8%	85.0%	87.9%	88.5%	87.6%
English Language Learner	80.1%	82.9%	82.4%	88.1%	88.6%	86.8%
African American	79.3%	79.6%	78.9%	83.6%	85.0%	84.7%
American Indian	82.5%	80.4%	86.3%	82.9%	90.2%	85.1%
Asian	92.0%	93.4%	95.3%	94.7%	96.7%	95.0%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	86.8%	79.5%	80.0%	91.4%	93.2%	90.5%
Hispanic	82.3%	83.6%	83.7%	86.6%	87.8%	88.8%
Multi-racial	86.1%	88.0%	88.0%	89.1%	87.6%	87.4%
White	92.8%	93.5%	93.8%	94.4%	94.4%	94.6%

**Individualized Education Program:** Students who participate in special education programs.  
**English Language Learner:** Student whose native language is not English and participate in an English Language Learner program  
**Low Socio-economic Status:** Eligible for free and reduced-price meals  
**Multi-Racial:** Non-Hispanic students identified as more than one race

The five-year fixed cohort graduation rates for the graduating class of 2011 through 2016 are displayed in Table 2. The overall graduation rate in 2016 is 93.4%. The Asian subgroup had the highest graduation rate at 95%, and the White subgroup was next at 94.6%. All subgroups had graduation rates above 80%. See Appendix 1 for the graduation rate calculation methodology.

Table 3



### Grades 9-12 Dropout Rate by Student Subgroup

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
<b>All</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
Individualized Education Program	5.2%	5.1%	4.4%	4.5%	3.8%	4.9%	4.9%
Low Socioeconomic Status	5.9%	6.0%	5.6%	5.3%	5.0%	5.6%	5.7%
English Language Learner	7.2%	6.0%	5.7%	5.2%	5.8%	6.7%	6.6%
African American	8.6%	9.0%	6.9%	7.2%	5.5%	6.7%	7.2%
American Indian	9.2%	6.4%	6.7%	6.2%	6.0%	6.4%	7.7%
Asian	2.5%	2.3%	2.0%	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5.5%	4.6%	6.6%	3.0%	3.4%	2.9%	5.7%
Hispanic	6.4%	5.8%	5.3%	4.4%	4.7%	5.2%	5.0%
Multi-racial	4.6%	5.0%	4.8%	4.6%	4.3%	4.3%	5.0%
White	2.8%	2.6%	2.3%	2.2%	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%

**Individualized Education Program:** Students who participate in special education programs.  
**English Language Learner:** Student whose native language is not English and participate in an English Language Learner program  
**Low Socio-economic Status:** Eligible for free and reduced-price meals  
**Multi-Racial:** Non-Hispanic students identified as more than one race

Table 3 shows the public school grade 9-12 dropout and enrollment data for the Classes of 2011-2017. The Asian subgroup had the lowest dropout rate. African American and American Indian students had the largest decrease in dropout rates between 2011 and 2017

### III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2018 AND EMERGING ACTIVITIES IN 2019

The ICYD Council has listed recommendations in the following categories:

- Focus on underperforming schools and communities.
- Assess current state initiatives and maximize existing resources.
- Investigate research-based approaches and effective strategies.
- Coordinate across systems to identify and support vulnerable students.
- Engage additional stakeholders.

Based on the graduation and dropout data, the ICYD Council recognizes that minority youth, migrant youth, youth in poverty, and youth with disabilities are in need of additional and specific supports and services. Engaging these youth and removing barriers so these students are able to stay in school and graduate from high school will be required to reach the goal of a 95% graduation rate. Below are ICYD Council accomplishments and emerging ongoing activities that address the broad recommended actions.

#### **Focus on Underperforming Schools and Communities**

- **Eliminate Educational Achievement Gap**

In Iowa, 91% of students graduate from high school in four years, but many subpopulations (e.g. minority students, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty) are not currently achieving that level (see Table 1 – page 10). Each of the subpopulations under 90% has specific needs, cultural elements, and demographic considerations. In addition, many students are represented in multiple subgroups. Research suggests that the intersectionality of poverty, crime and minority status are at higher risk and the cumulative effect of these factors substantially impacts school performance for youth and many do not graduate from high school.

The state and its communities need to establish methods to identify students with these multiple risk factors and provide high-quality and effective supports and services to the respective students and their families.

The U.S. Department of Education approved Iowa's plan for school accountability and support under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Iowa's plan reflects a commitment to ensuring every student graduates ready for success in college and in the workplace.

Iowa's plan builds on bold education improvement efforts underway that align with ESSA requirements, including clear and rigorous standards for what students should know and be able to do, a school accountability system that steers support where and when schools need it most, and a structure for professional learning that emphasizes teacher leadership and evidence-based practices. The plan also

features unique measures of student engagement, safety and learning environment, as well as postsecondary readiness.

“We have the right roadmap in place for education, and I’m proud of the collaborative spirit with which this plan was developed,” Iowa Department of Education Director Ryan Wise said.

A portion of Iowa’s ESSA plan include reports, Iowa School Performance Profiles, on each school on a set of accountability measures. The reports display scores based on a school’s overall performance, as well as the performance of subgroups of students, such as children from low-income backgrounds.

The accountability measures include a unique indicator of school climate based on student surveys of engagement, safety and overall learning environment called Conditions for Learning. The other measures are: Student participation on state assessments, academic achievement, student academic growth, graduation rate, and progress in achieving English language proficiency. A postsecondary readiness measure will be added in 2019.

“We have a great opportunity through ESSA to take Iowa’s accountability focus beyond test scores and proficiency to look at school performance more holistically,” Wise said.

The new reports specify schools that have been identified for additional support and improvement based on their performance. ESSA requires these identifications to ensure students have the same opportunities for success that exist for students in other schools. Of Iowa’s 1,302 public schools:

- Thirty-four are identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement. Schools receive this designation either because their overall scores fall within the lowest 5 percent of Iowa schools receiving federal Title I funding, or because they are high schools with a graduation rate below 67.1 percent.
- 307 are identified for Targeted Support and Improvement. Schools receive this designation if one or more student subgroup score is as low as the lowest 5 percent of schools in the state.

Identified schools receive support from the state and area education agencies and will develop improvement plans with input from local stakeholders. Schools also will have an opportunity to put resources toward a cohesive improvement effort.

## **Assess Current State Initiatives and Maximize Existing Resources**

- **Juvenile Justice System Improvement (Formerly Smart)**

Iowa is one of three states to receive a two-year federal planning grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for the purpose of developing a comprehensive, statewide plan to improve Iowa's juvenile justice

system. The grant provided an opportunity to partner with national experts from the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG), National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners (NYSAP), and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown (CJJR) to conduct an extensive assessment of Iowa's juvenile justice system in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The anticipated outcomes of this project are reduced recidivism, improved outcomes for youth, increased public safety, and reduced disproportionate minority contact through the development of a comprehensive plan which will standardize policies and practices and ensure the quality and effectiveness of services that youth receive.

The project's Leadership Team is composed of juvenile justice stakeholders from all three branches of government. This team was tasked with determining priorities for improvement, identifying necessary partners, and developing an ambitious, but achievable, plan for the future of Iowa's juvenile justice system.

Now in the final year of the plan, the Leadership Team has been reorganized into several working groups to address the recommendations from the assessment of the juvenile justice system. These working groups include:

- Governance: This team is working under the leadership of State Court Administrator Todd Nuccio to add a high-level position that can focus on creating a unified juvenile justice system with consistent, statewide policies and practices on detention, assessment, diversion, and services. In addition, this team is collaborating with DHS to shift the state-allocated Graduated Sanctions funds to State Court Administration.
- Detention: This team is working to revise and correct a risk assessment tool called the Detention Screening Tool (DST) to ensure accurate scoring and consistent use. This team will also work more broadly on detention policy in Iowa.
- Statewide Policies: This team is working to develop statewide policies on two things: (1) the use of the Iowa Delinquency Assessment (IDA) and (2) diversion.
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities: This standing Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Subcommittee serves as this team, with a particular focus on supporting and assessing diversion programs in several Iowa communities as well as supporting trainings on implicit and explicit bias.
- Deep End Girls and Extension of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction: The Iowa Task Force for Young Women serves as this team, focusing on the lack of services for girls deep into the juvenile justice system. This team is also exploring the merit of extending juvenile court jurisdiction beyond the age of 18.

The comprehensive strategic plan will be completed in September 2019.

- **Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (JJRRI)**

The original goals of the Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (JJRRI) were to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders, increase public safety, and lower costs. Additional long-term positive effects anticipated were: improved family and peer relations, alleviated mental health symptoms, and consistent school attendance by ensuring that ***the right youth receive the right service at the right time.***

The ICYD Council oversaw the implementation of the JJRRI which began as a three-year demonstration award from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) in the Department of Human Rights has coordinated the activities. The federal award ended in September 2016, but the project continues.

First, the JJRRI facilitated Iowa's use of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™) to assess the likely effectiveness of services in terms of recidivism reduction. The SPEP™ diagnostic tool assesses this by examining four domains:

- Service Type
- Amount of Service
- Quality of Service
- Risk Level of Youth

Service providers receive a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) at initial and subsequent scorings with recommendations related to recidivism reduction. Services are intended to be rescored to assess performance no more frequently than 18-month intervals. This allows for sufficient time to make programmatic changes, the results of which would then be reflected within future cohorts of youth receiving the service.

It has always been the intention to expand usage of the SPEP™ tool into all judicial districts. Initially, this expansion was to occur one district at a time, however, given limited resources, a two-part adjusted plan has emerged.

- 1) CJJP has made participation in the SPEP process a requirement for any services receiving federal funding that passes through CJJP and is distributed to the judicial districts. This creates the potential for the SPEP to be present in all eight judicial districts, but on a smaller scale. CJJP will also target residential settings identified as either being prepared for or having a need for evaluation of their services and will continue to revisit services that have already been evaluated for ongoing re-evaluation.
- 2) The creation of a statewide service inventory with the assistance of Juvenile Court Services will allow all community-based services to be "SPEP™ ready" at all times. A similar inventory will be created for residential services as well,



using information directly from providers and compiled by CJJP. CJJP would then maintain that database and use it to identify and begin the SPEP™ process with any given service across the state, whether it was in a community-based or residential setting. CJJP is in the process of collecting the necessary information to populate the database and has also created a web app to facilitate access to the programmatic information about various services. This web app will allow users to search for services in a number of different ways (e.g. location, service type, provider name, population served, etc.)

System officials will be able to utilize aggregate and individual results from the service inventory to make more informed decisions about resources and services for justice-involved youth. They will also be better equipped to formalize statewide evidence-based practices and improve the overall functioning of the juvenile justice system. Additionally, organizations which provide these services will have access to a research-based tool and evaluation results which they can use to improve the services they offer to youth in terms of recidivism reduction.

The next step to ensure ***the right youth receive the right service at the right time*** is the development of a data-driven decision matrix. The purpose of this tool is to act as a structure for juvenile court decision making, weighing youth risk to reoffend (including offense severity) as well as other relevant variables in order to assist system officials with determining the most appropriate level of supervision and type of services for youth, thereby reducing recidivism and improving outcomes.

An advisory team has been meeting to fine tune the tool and the process for deploying it. The pilot will occur in two stages. The first stage will be limited to the members of the advisory team (i.e. judges, attorneys, juvenile court officers) testing the process only. The second stage will broaden the number of system officials using the tool and include data collection in order to validate the functionality of the tool.

## **Investigate Research-Based Approaches and Effective Strategies**

- **Adolescent Brain Research and Implications For Youth Programs**

Research by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative<sup>6</sup> found that youth gradually transition to adulthood between 18 and 25 years of age. It was also found that adolescence is a time of “use it or lose it” in brain development: When young people are actively engaged in positive relationships and opportunities to contribute, create, and lead, they develop skills to become successful adults.

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<sup>6</sup> The Adolescent Brain – New research and its implications for young people transitioning from foster care, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, St. Louis, MO, 2011.

There are five recommendations that come from the research:

- Take a positive youth development approach to all opportunities for young people in foster care.
- Engage young people in their own planning and decision-making.
- Provide “interdependent” living services that connect young people with family and caring adults.
- Be trauma-informed to promote healing and emotional security.
- Extend developmentally appropriate foster care to 21.

In addition, Child Trends<sup>7</sup> identified “What we now know” to guide appropriate services and interventions to provide youth:

- Brains evolve over time. The strict windows of time are more flexible than previously thought.
- Physical and emotional trauma and stress disrupt brain development. Some pathways are more vulnerable and this changes with age.
- Brain recovery from trauma can improve given appropriate immediate and long-term interventions.
- The way DNA influences brain development and functioning is influenced by life experiences and can change over time in all brain cells.<sup>8</sup>

The ICYD Council continues to apply these recommendations in policy and practice when making decisions affecting youth in foster care and for all youth.

## **Coordinate Across Systems to Identify and Support Vulnerable Students**

- **Statewide Comprehensive Juvenile Reentry Systems (JRES)**

In 2014, Iowa was awarded a Second Chance Juvenile Reentry Planning grant from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Since that time, Iowa was awarded funding to implement the plan from 2016 to 2019.

The ICYD Council has been the oversight body for the Juvenile Reentry System Planning initiative. A Juvenile Reentry Systems Task Force was formed in January 2015 and has served as a subcommittee of ICYD.

The JRTF is implementing a comprehensive Juvenile Reentry System (JReS) plan that includes extensive work in four out-of-home placement settings. During 2019, this effort will be expanded to additional residential placement settings. The reentry plan seeks to reduce historical baseline recidivism rates for these youth by 50% over five years.

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<sup>7</sup> The Developing Brain: Implications for Youth Programs, Child Trends, Bethesda, MD, May 2015. Childtrends.org

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Major JReS plan components, including work in the facilities, is comprised of the following:

- Policy—Development of a standardized structure for practices, case planning, and policy related to placement and reentry for juvenile offenders. The standardized policy includes utilization of risk and needs assessments, collaboration
  - Assessment—Standardization and policy related to the utilization of the Iowa Delinquency Assessment (IDA) and other assessment tools.
  - Collaboration—Broader engagement and participation by various stakeholders in reentry planning for permanency and transition (e.g. youth, families/extended family, juvenile justice system officials, school staff, private youth-serving agencies, Iowa Workforce Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Aftercare Services Network, faith communities, advocacy/mentor groups).
  - Youth Transition Decision Making Teams—Introduction of Youth Transition Decision Making team meetings (YTDMs) for youth returning from STS and other select group care settings. YTDMs are professionally facilitated and youth-led. YTDMs facilitate discussions between formal and informal support networks to help youth develop a personalized plan that may include arrangements for housing, continuing education, workforce entry/training, medication and/or counseling, or address other issues such as leisure activities prior to their return home from placement. The transition effort includes follow up with youth after their exit from out-of-home placement.
  - Evidence-Based Programs—Engagement of youth in the aforementioned evidence-based programs upon release from placement. This may also include Multi-dimensional Family Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.
  - Technology—Utilization of technology (e.g. Skype, video conferencing) to better connect youth with families and other formal/informal supports and to further development of their transition plans.
  - Data Collection/Performance Measures—Provides accountability, changes have been made to the juvenile court case planning system. These changes will allow for data analysis, outcome/performance measurements, and reporting to monitor success and provide recommendations to system stakeholders, the governor’s office, and legislators.
- **Two-Generation Approach**

Two-Generation approaches provide opportunities to meet the needs of children and their parents together.<sup>9</sup> Two-Generation strategies are defined as action taken to simultaneously promote children’s learning and healthy development and parents success as both caregivers and breadwinners.<sup>10</sup>

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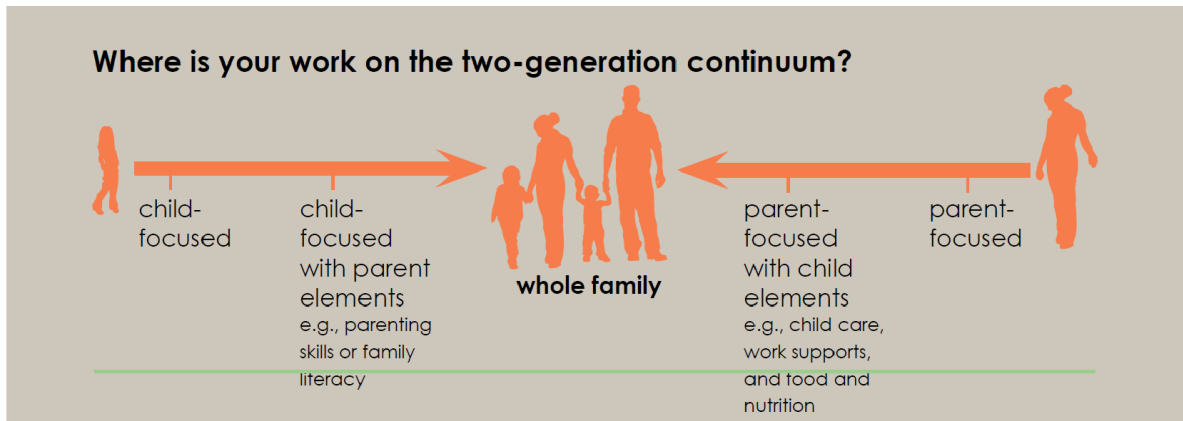
<sup>9</sup> Two Generations, One Future. 2017 Ascend at the Aspen Institute. <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

Two-Generation approaches must:

- Strategically align programs and resources;
- Collaborate across systems;
- Define common language;
- Meet the needs of families.

Two-Generation strategies do not require new programs, just a new mindset that seeks to understand the intersecting needs of parents and their children when designing and implementing programs and policies.<sup>11</sup>



The purpose of Iowa’s TANF 2-Gen initiative is to improve the lives of families in poverty who are enrolled in the Family Investment Program (FIP). Specifically, these are families participating in the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Program and PROMISE JOBS through a partnership with the Department of Human Rights, Division of Community Action Agencies; the Department of Human Services; and Iowa Workforce Development. This initiative strengthens Two-Generation strategies in the FaDSS program.

A major contribution to Iowa’s plan for a more integrated system was through input from stakeholders and families participating in PROMISE JOBS and FaDSS. In April 2018, four focus groups were formed with families participating in FaDSS and PROMISE JOBS. In the late spring, input from staff with FaDSS and PROMISE JOBS was received through surveys and a focus group.

The information from families, staff, and stakeholders is being used to develop specific strategies for a pilot. Pilot sites and state partners are co-creating the implementation process and performance measures. The pilot effort will begin in late spring of 2019. Lessons learned from the pilot and replication efforts will be explored to expand and institutionalize the Two-Generation mindset within additional initiatives that strive to assist families.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

For more information on Iowa's 2-Gen <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/fadss/2-gen-initiative>

- **Interagency Data Sharing Agreement**

The Education Collaborative orchestrated a data sharing agreement between the Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Human Rights – Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, and the Judicial Branch – State Court Administration – Juvenile Court Services.

The purpose of the agreement is to share relevant information on children who are subject to court jurisdiction under Iowa Code chapter 232. The result will be improved outcomes regarding safety, education, family stability, and reduce the likelihood of further abuse, neglect, delinquency, and criminal conduct.

- **Coordinate, Consolidate, and Convene Required Advisory Groups**

There is a growing trend of funders (e.g. federal agencies, private foundations) that require advisory groups as part of funded initiatives. Many state agency staff are asked to participate on several multi-agency advisory groups created to address specific youth-related issues. Advisory groups may have similar representation, yet have a different youth focus. In addition, some of the advisory groups may replicate activities, creating additional silos within state agencies.

The ICYD Council is now offering to act as the core membership to new youth-serving advisory groups to allow state agencies to meet workgroup requirements and consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing infrastructure of the ICYD.

The alignment of youth advisory groups will create more effective and efficient services and supports for youth and families. Strategies to reduce the inefficiency and burden of having disconnected youth councils/commissions/coalitions are to:

- Use existing councils.
- Identify and publicize existing councils.
- Compare councils side-by-side.
- Connect related efforts.
- Develop common language and complementary goals.
- Look to broad councils to oversee the coordinating bodies.
- Consolidate existing councils.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Evennou, Danielle, (January 2011). Don't Stop Collaborating – Just Stop Creating New Collaboratives. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.

The coordination of advisory groups will:

- Reduce duplication of planning and services.
- Result in cost avoidance with a more efficient use of staff time and agency resources (time, state staff and travel costs).
- Enhance collaborative opportunities, combined trainings, common use of data and information.
- Generate new funding opportunities.<sup>14</sup>

The ICYD Council approach will be a model for cross-agency collaboration and government efficiency.

- **Iowa Youth Survey**

The Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) is a collaborative effort led by the Department of Public Health's Division of Behavioral Health with assistance by the following agencies:

- Department of Education,
- Department of Human Rights' Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning and Statistical Analysis Center, and
- Department of Human Services.

In the fall of 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 students in 6th, 8th, and 11th grades across the state of Iowa answered questions about their attitudes and experiences regarding alcohol and other drug use and violence, and their perceptions of their peer, family, school, and neighborhood/community environments. In 2008, the survey was administered online for the first time.

IYS reports list responses to every survey question and provide total percentages and breakdowns by grade and gender. Thirty-four constructs within nine framework domains are included.

Reports are available in the following categories:

- State of Iowa,
- Counties,
- Judicial Districts
- Department of Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Planning Regions,
- Decategorization areas,
- Department of Human Services Regions,
- School Districts\*.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

With the exception of School Districts, 2018 IYS reports will be available in the spring of 2019, online at <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov>. Individual school district reports can be accessed by contacting the respective district. Also available online will be the Iowa Youth Survey Trend Report.

- **Family First Prevention Services Act**

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was signed into law on February 9, 2018. This Act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams (Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act) to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. Family First will restructure how the federal government spends money on child welfare to improve outcomes for children. It will prevent the need for removal by strengthening families with evidence-based family preservation services.

Family First shifts focus and resources from out-of home placement to keeping families together and preventing children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for community-based services, such as mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training.

Iowa has requested a delay in implementation until July 1, 2020, which will allow the Department of Human Services (DHS) to utilize public/private partnerships to develop the Iowa Family First plan.

Family First will allow funding to:

- provide family reunification services for children in foster care and after their return home;
- recruit and retain high-quality foster families;
- address opioids and other substance abuse and provide services to prevent child maltreatment as a result of substance abuse;
- provide supports for youth transitioning from care;
- extend independent living services to assist former foster youth up to age 23 and extends eligibility for education and training vouchers for these youth to age 26.

### **Engage Additional Stakeholders**

- **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**

Iowa NYTD is a federal mandate for the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to collect outcome information (via a standardized survey) from current and former youth in foster care or other out-of-home placement. DHS contracts with CJJP to collect the survey information from youth aged 17, 19, and 21.

Outcomes are derived from survey questions that measure youth across six domains:

- educational attainment,
- financial self-sufficiency,
- access to health insurance,
- experience with homelessness, and
- positive connections with adults.

The outcomes collected through the NYTD survey provides information on areas for improvements to the foster care system to better serve youth transitioning to independence.

In FFY2017, Iowa NYTD met federal compliance by surveying 90% of the 17 year-old population and providing a required data report highlighting outcomes<sup>15</sup>. In FFY2018, Iowa NYTD surveyed the 21 year-old follow-up population and again met federal compliance by surveying over 60% of the youth. A data report summarizing the information collected from that follow-up population will be available in February, 2019. From October 1, 2018, through September, 2019, Iowa NYTD will complete surveys and obtain outcomes from the 19 year-old follow-up population.

In addition to collecting survey results from these youth populations, Iowa NYTD has positively engaged youth in placement through additional outreach activities.

NYTD outreach efforts for 2019 include:

- Continue efforts to implement “The Talking Wall”—An activity that provides an opportunity for youth to appropriately use their voice as a tool for change. This effort has been implemented in several residential placement facilities and AMP youth councils. The activity allows youth to express their suggestion(s) regarding improvements to Iowa’s foster care and/or juvenile justice system.
- Iowa Youth Resources Website<sup>16</sup>—Distribute and update the new Iowa Youth Resources website. The site features seven videos and other resources designed to help youth who are transitioning to adulthood. The videos focus on employment, education, housing, medication, and other resources. Although the information is aimed at youth who are exiting the foster care or delinquency systems, the resources provided can be used by all youth, parents, or others who work with youth. The site was created through a collaborative effort by Iowa NYTD, CJJP, the Juvenile ReEntry Systems Task Force, Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP), the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Boys’ State Training School, and other state agencies.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Creative Expressions Art Contest—This contest is open to youth (up

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<sup>15</sup> <https://sites.google.com/a/iowa.gov/national-transition-youth-database-nytd/annual-report/17-year-old-annual-reports>

<sup>16</sup> <https://sites.google.com/a/iowa.gov/dhr-youth-services/>



- to age 24) who have experienced foster care or other out-of-home placement. It invites youth to submit artwork that captures the given theme of the contest. Entries include a variety of art media.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Iowa NYTD Expressive Creations Showcase—This effort allows local and state agencies to host and display previously submitted art entries.
  - Partnerships—Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Iowa Foster Care Youth Council, AMP, the Iowa Aftercare Network, and other state and local entities.

Overall, NYTD strives to promote youth voice through compiling and publishing the survey results and providing other creative avenues for positive expression.

- **Evaluate DHR Youth Programs & Develop Curriculums**

In August 2018, CJJP partnered with Future Leaders in Action (FLIA). FLIA is a non-profit organization founded in 2015. The agency places emerging leaders with youth-oriented nonprofits for three months where they develop critical leadership and work skills through program development and program support.

The goals of this fellowship were to:

- Examine DHR youth programs.
- Examine adherence to federal Positive Youth Development (PYD) standards.
- Recommend improvements to DHR youth programs to better align with federal standards.
- Develop a curriculum for each DHR youth program.

The Curriculum Development Fellow created and deployed an evaluation tool to garnish input on two of DHR's youth programs from current and former members. The following highlights those findings:

- 95% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs provided sessions that were planned, presented, and paced appropriately for the age of the audience.
- 91% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs had staff who supported youth by encouragement and building new skills.
- 86% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs provided opportunities for youth to make choices based on their interests.
- 80% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs promoted psychological and emotional safety.
- 80% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs provided opportunities for youth to act as group facilitators and mentors.
- 70% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs provide opportunities for youth to develop a sense of belonging.
- 68% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs provide appropriate emergency procedures and supplies.

- 50% of respondents indicated DHR youth programs had effective staff longevity with the programs that created supportive youth-staff relationships.

As a result of these findings, the FLIA fellow identified several areas of overall improvement for the two DHR youth programs assessed. The recommendations include both short-term and long-term goals which help to better align the programs with federal PYD standards.

The FLIA fellow also created curricula to be incorporated in future years which embed the recommendations. DHR intends to utilize them in 2019 to enhance the positive experiences of youth participants.

- **Coordinate and Align “Youth-Fueled”<sup>17</sup> Councils and Initiatives and Expand Opportunities for Youth to Participate**

Several state agencies have state-level youth initiatives providing leadership opportunities for youth. The multiple initiatives need to be better aligned and coordinated to attract more youth to participate and to specifically seek more diverse youth. The state-level youth-fueled councils and initiatives include:

- Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP),
- Capitol Girls (in partnership with Girl Scouts),
- Iowa Youth Congress (IYC),
- ISU Extension and Outreach, 4-H Youth Development,
- State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC),
- Local Youth Human Rights Chapters
- Iowa Students for Tobacco Education and Prevention (I-STEP).

Many of these initiatives target underrepresented youth. All of them promote opportunities for youth to engage state leaders, discuss issues affecting youth, and develop leadership skills.

The Department of Human Rights (DHR) is leading the coordination effort of the multiple agencies and organizations that support state-level youth-fueled councils and initiatives. The goal is to effectively remove barriers for historically underrepresented youth by empowering them to realize their leadership capabilities and by challenging adults to recognize and engage youth. The effort will equip youth with the tools to communicate their vision, inspire collaboration, and make significant contributions that result in positive change.

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<sup>17</sup> Youth-fueled – The participation of youth contributes to achieving the goals of the initiative. Youth participate either as leaders or participants. All of youth-fueled initiatives are conducted “with” youth, not “to” youth.

The following strategies are being implemented to create pathways to engage youth:

- Market state-level youth initiatives;
- Identify and recruit underrepresented youth;
- Develop venues to offer leadership training opportunities for youth; and
- Provide adult leaders with information to identify opportunities for quality youth engagement and to value youth voices in their ongoing decision making.

Increasing the number of youth selected to serve on state boards and commissions is another way to engage youth in state government. Agencies and commissions need to articulate the skill sets necessary for youth members. Training should be available to prepare youth to ensure active participation. ICYD will explore additional opportunities for youth engagement.

- **Iowa Digital Literacy Project**

Digital Literacy is a set of critical thinking skills that help people to understand how the media work, what effects they have, and how to manage them to get the maximum benefits while minimizing potential risks.

The Partnership for a Healthy Iowa (formerly Partnership for a Drug-Free Iowa) reports that Iowa children between the ages of 8 and 18 spend more than 54 hours weekly on digital media and, if unsupervised, can contribute to high-risk behavior.

To raise awareness, the Partnership has developed a website<sup>18</sup> devoted to “Digital Literacy”. The site provides free resources and lesson plans for parents and teachers to help youth develop the following critical thinking skills:

- Awareness of the amount of time spent outside of school using various media and how it is used.
- Develop skills to question and/or understand the underlying purpose of viewpoints represented, technical and psychological tricks used, and what points of view may have been omitted.
- Awareness of who creates the media and their underlying goals. Youth should be taught about the forces behind media creation and distribution and learn to critically evaluate who stands to profit or lose.

Youth are constantly surrounded by media, all trying to get their attention and to leave an impression. Children today spend vastly more time with screen media than with traditional print media, and the Iowa Digital Literacy Program is designed to help educators enhance the teaching of traditional literacy with digital literacy.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://ahealthyiowa.org/programs/digital-literacy>

#### IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IN 2019

Achieving a 95% graduation rate by 2020 is an ambitious target. The ICYD Council is committed to focus attention and monitor progress toward this goal. Reaching it will require continued coordinated efforts by policymakers, education systems, and multiple state and community partners. The Council's work (see *Section III Accomplishments in 2018 and Emerging Activities in 2019*) will be refined and expanded into specific action steps to accomplish the goal by 2020.

To maintain focus on these efforts, the ICYD Council will continue to address the following five broad areas:

- Focus on underperforming schools and communities.
- Assess current state initiatives and maximize existing resources.
- Investigate research-based approaches and effective strategies.
- Coordinate across systems to identify and support vulnerable students.
- Engage additional stakeholders.

The ICYD Council seeks support from the Iowa Legislature and Governor's Office to continue these activities by modifying laws and policies as necessary, and providing resources needed to achieve this very ambitious goal.

Specific recommendations to support the ICYD Council are to:

- Support the ICYD Council in identifying new and better ways to provide services and supports to Iowa's youth and families by encouraging multi-agency approaches in the development of innovative strategies and to incorporate federal initiatives that will eliminate the educational achievement gap for underrepresented students:
  - Two-Generation Approaches – Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)
  - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  - Family First Prevention Services Act
  - Juvenile Justice System Improvement (formerly SMART)
  - Juvenile Reentry System Implementation
  - Iowa Digital Literacy Project
- Provide resources to continue and expand evidence-based practices and programs as they are developed and identified, such as:
  - Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (JJRRI);
- Support the ICYD Council's approach to consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing infrastructure of the ICYD Council. The model will result in a reduction of duplication, enhanced coordination and collaboration between state agencies, and a reduction in costs.
- Support the Iowa Youth Survey. The survey is administered every two years to 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. The results are valuable to state agencies and communities in assessing self-reported youth behaviors and perceptions.

- Provide resources to support state-level youth opportunities and youth-led initiatives (e.g. State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, Achieving Maximum Potential).
- Engage youth on state boards and commissions, and provide the training and support necessary for youth members to be active participants. In addition, state agencies should seek new and creative ways to involve youth.
- Continue to develop ways to share information among agencies to address issues affecting youth who receive services and supports from multiple agencies.
- Support the continued use of state agency staff time to implement activities that meet the goals of the ICYD Council.
- Infuse positive youth development (PYD) principles in all youth programming which includes PYD trainings for youth workers and establishing policies to include PYD principles in all state-funded youth initiatives.

## APPENDIX 1: GRADUATION RATE CALCULATION METHODOLOGY

The methodology to calculate Iowa's high school graduation rate requires that the graduating classes have statewide identification numbers for six years or longer. With this identification system, Iowa can follow the same group of students over several years and implement the first-time freshman cohort rates (students who repeated their freshmen year were not included in the cohort). Below, the methodology is described for the four-year fixed cohort graduation rate and the five-year cohort graduation rate.<sup>19</sup>

### Four-year Graduation Rates

With the statewide identification system and Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) data, Iowa can follow the same group of students over several years and implement the first-time freshman rates (students who repeated their 9th grade year were not included). The four-year graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less by the number of first-time 9th graders enrolled minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in.

#### **Iowa Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate = (FG + TIG) / (F + TI - TO)**

FG - First time 9th grade students in fall four years ago and graduated within four years

TIG - Students who transferred in grades 9 to 12 and graduated in four consecutive school years

F - First time 9th grade students in fall four years ago

TI - Transferred in the first time 9th graders in grades 9 to 12

TO - Transfer out (including emigrates and deceased)

First-time freshmen and transferred-in students include: resident students attending a public school in the district; non-resident students open-enrolled in, whole-grade sharing in, or tuition in; and foreign students on Visa. Those excluded are: home-schooled and nonpublic schooled students; public school students enrolled in another district, but taking courses on a part-time basis; and foreign exchange students. Students receiving regular diplomas are included as graduates in the numerator. Early graduates are included in the original cohort. All students who take longer to graduate (including students with IEPs) are included in the denominator, but not in the numerator for the four-year rate.

### Five-year Graduation Rates

The five-year cohort graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years or less by the number of first-time 9th graders enrolled minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in. The five-year cohort rate will maintain the same denominator as the previous year's four-year rate, simply adding students who graduate in the fifth year to the numerator.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://educateiowa.gov/graduation-rates-and-dropout-rates>

**Iowa Five Year Cohort Graduation Rate = (FG + TIG) / (F + TI - TO)**

FG - First time 9th grade students in fall five years ago and graduated in five years

TIG - Students who transferred in grades 9 to 12 and graduated in four consecutive school years

F - First time 9th grade students in fall five years ago

TI - Transferred in the first time 9th graders in grades 9 to 12

TO - Transfer out (including emigrates and deceased)

**Dropout Rates**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definitions used for dropouts include students who satisfy one or more of the following conditions:

- Was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year and was not enrolled as of Count Day of the current year or
- Was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year and left the school before the previous summer and
- Has not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved educational program; and
- Does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
  - a. transfer to another public school district, private school, or state or district-approved educational program,
  - b. temporary school-recognized absence for suspension or illness,
  - c. death, or
  - d. move out of the state or leave the country

A student who has left the regular program to attend an adult program designed to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) or an adult high school diploma administered by a community college is considered a dropout. However, a student who enrolls in an alternative school or alternative program administered by a public school district is not considered a dropout.

The numerator of the dropout rate is the total number of dropouts in the school year for the grade span being calculated and the denominator is the total fall enrollment of grades for the grade span being calculated.