

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Compulsory Age Attendance Report

**Report
2009-2010**

**Senate File 478
Section 160**

Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E 14th St
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The Iowa Department of Education (DE) would like to extend a thank you to all participants across the state who participated in the Compulsory Age Attendance Workgroup.

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We would also like to extend our appreciation to the nearly 200 students, parents and community members across the state who provided extensive feedback within focus groups in regards to the supports needed if the compulsory attendance age is increased from 16 to 18 years of age.

Purpose

Senate File 478, Section 160 directed the DE to convene a workgroup for the purpose of reviewing supports for students that would be affected by an increase in the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 years of age. The workgroup was assigned to consider:

- The necessity of expansion of support programs and services for such students,
- Online at-risk academy courses,
- Career academies,
- Current allowable growth provisions, and
- Current instructional support levy.

The following report provides a summary of the tasks completed by the workgroup, survey findings, and recommendations.

Definition of Compulsory School Attendance: Compulsory school attendance refers to state legislative mandates for attendance in public schools. Components generally include age ranges, specific periods of time within the year, enrollment requirements, alternatives, waivers and exemptions, enforcement, and truancy. See Appendix A for a definition of Iowa's Compulsory Age Attendance Law.

The need for a general education for all children emerged in the early 1900s as a result of the need to protect children from abuse in the workplace as well as an increasing demand for skilled and literate workers as the industrial age gained momentum. In addition, working children competed for jobs with adults. These factors brought labor and human services leaders together to advocate for laws that require increased required years of education and mandatory attendance.

The reasons for compulsory school attendance have not changed as we have moved into the 21st century. What has changed are the types of skills that are demanded in the workplace, competition that is international rather than national, and the learning that is required to obtain a skill set that will lead to success in employment that provides a livable wage/salary. There is also increasing awareness of the need to better prepare students to be engaged citizens that demonstrate civic values, tolerance for diversity, and respect for differences.

There is no debate about whether dropouts or graduates have improved outcomes related to earning power and a variety of other variables such as health, incarceration, and dependence on social service supports. Graduates have demonstrably better outcomes. High expectations for students must be supported at the policy level as well as in the classroom. If we want the best for Iowa students in the 21st century, laws that require their attendance in school beyond the age of 16 must be part of the solution to increasing graduation rates and lowering dropout rates.

With higher expectation comes the need to implement different and better ways to support those students who would opt out of high school before graduating. This report provides a summary of the activities, findings, and recommendations from the Compulsory Age Attendance Workgroup that came together to study the supports that would need to be in place if Iowa increased the age of compulsory attendance.

"Many students tolerate what happens in school, but are not gaining nearly as much as they could or should. They are playing the game of "getting grades" very well, but are not necessarily learning the information as deeply as they should, nor are they learning the skills that will be expected of them in either college or in a work environment. Communities must be willing to allow, and be supportive of, school change. Far too often the attitude is: "It was good enough for me, and it should be good enough for those kids."

—Muscatine Community Member

Activities Completed

The DE completed the following activities to address the purpose outlined by Senate File 478:

- 1) Identified and convened a 30 member workgroup,
- 2) Reviewed current Iowa data concerning graduation and dropout rates including fiscal impact, and
- 3) Contracted with the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) to:
 - a. Interview states who have raised the compulsory age to 18 about the challenges they may have faced as well as the supports necessary for such an action to be successful,
 - b. Conduct a brief literature review of current best practices to support students to the age of 18,
 - c. Conduct statewide focus groups that included parents, students and community/businesses to obtain information about system and community supports needed, and
 - d. Develop a report of results (This document is used throughout the text of this report. If a complete report is desired, one will be provided, 29 pages).

The final outcome of the activities was the development of recommendations to the legislature regarding the supports necessary if the compulsory age was raised from 16 to 18 (please refer to page 10 for recommendations).

1) Identified and Convened a 30 member workgroup.

The workgroup was comprised of education stakeholders from across Iowa and members were chosen for the workgroup based on consideration of the following criteria:

- a. A minimum of 2 members from each area/region of the state, following AEA boundaries,
- b. Diversity (racial, ethnic, age, disability, beliefs, levels of authority),
- c. Gender (50 percent male, 50 percent female), and
- d. Members of organizations representing interested parties across the state (students, area education agencies, teachers, administrators, business owners, parents, urban education, higher education, foster care, DHS, juvenile court, faith based and the Safe Schools Task Force).

Workgroup members met in West Des Moines on September 29, 2009, to learn more about how Iowa law defines compulsory attendance, receive information about strategies that are currently in place to support dropouts, develop questions to use within a focus group format, as well as, provide suggestions for potential focus group participants. The workgroup received information about the following supports that are currently in place for students who drop out of school:

<i>Iowa Learning Online</i>	(Appendix B)
<i>ABE/GED</i>	(Appendix C)
<i>Alternative Options</i>	(Appendix D)
<i>Career Academies</i>	(Appendix E)
<i>Learning Supports</i>	(Appendix F)

2) Reviewed Current Iowa Data.

Graduation and dropout rates were obtained from the DE, Bureau of Planning and Research, Development and Evaluation Services, Project EASIER. Results of the data review are provided on page 8. The DE staff reviewed documents in regards to the number of students who dropped out last school year, modified allowable growth for dropout prevention (three-year span), the instructional support levy, district cost per pupil, and state economic impact.

3) Contracted with RISE.

Maryland, Nebraska, North Dakota, Indiana, and Wisconsin State Departments of Education were identified as states to contact for interviews. A state department of education representative in each state was asked: (1) What if any changes had occurred in their compulsory age law, (2) How the changes impacted graduation rates, (3) What the financial impact of the policy change was, (4) The supports needed, and (5) Any advice they could provide for Iowa to consider. Results were analyzed and included with focus group results in a summary document sent to the Compulsory Attendance Age Workgroup for review.

A brief literature review was conducted by RISE as well as the DE. Please refer to Appendix L and Appendix M.

Seventeen focus group sessions were conducted during November, 2009, for the purpose of collecting data from students, parents, and community members regarding supports necessary if there was a change in the mandatory compulsory age. Representatives from five regions of the state were contacted to assist with securing the appropriate participants and arranging for the time and location of the focus groups. Each representative was asked to secure participants representing the following:

- a. **Students** who have considered dropping out of school or have dropped out of school,
- b. **Parents** who have children who have dropped out of school or are at-risk for dropping out of school, and
- c. **Community members** representing those who would have connections to students at-risk of dropping out or who have dropped out of school such as: Juvenile Justice, youth organizations, school administrators and/or counselors, clergy, Department of Human Services, and businesses that hire students. A total of 198 participants took part in the focus groups. Data from the focus groups were analyzed specific to three questions:
 - o What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school?
 - o What supports are needed if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level?
 - o What supports are needed if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the community level?

Results were analyzed and included in a summary document sent to the Compulsory Attendance Age Workgroup for review (Focus Group Analysis, Appendix H).

Results

Workgroup

Workgroup members were taken through several exercises to develop questions and identify people or groups of people that they could interview to gain information. Each workgroup member was given a set of agreed upon questions to use with their communities and provided these results to RISE to include in the analyses. The group also requested that RISE interview other states that had already raised their compulsory attendance age to identify what those states learned from the process. Official notes were posted on the DE website and are included in Appendix G. The two questions developed by the workgroup were:

- 1) What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school?
- 2) What supports are needed; if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level? At the community level?

These two critical questions developed by the workgroup were posed back to the workgroup within small teams. Responses to question 1 revealed that students tend to drop out of school due to: (1) credit deficiency, (2) mismatch between instructional methods used and student learning needs/style, (3) individual learning needs, (4) lack of teacher support and large class sizes, (5) lack of positive adult/peer relationships, (6) students' feelings of not fitting in, or being disconnected from school, (7) lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities, (8) competing life issues (e.g., pregnancy/parenthood, family financial needs, a traumatic event such as losing parent/sibling), mental health issues, homelessness, drug/alcohol use), (9) family attitudes/beliefs about education, and (10) a inflexible/rigid school structure/schedule.

Responses to question two pointed to the need for: (1) relevant, engaging, and individualized instructional methods, (2) more vocational course offerings, (3) a system that is flexible to accommodate individual student real-life issues such as pregnancy, family financial needs, homelessness, transportation, mental health issues, as well as provide a variety of educational options for completing high school (e.g., GED, alternative schools), (4) positive adult and/or peer relationships, (5) parental expectations that an education is relevant and valuable for their children, (6) community engagement to support students, families and schools as well as course development, mentoring, donating for rewards for grades, and showing educational statistics on school success within local businesses, (7) positive re-engagement techniques, and (8) funding to support efforts at keeping students in school to age 18 such as enforcement of truancy and absenteeism, support staff (i.e., social workers, counselors), and support for developing positive parent engagement (e.g., helping parents get students to schools and becoming problem-solvers with parents).

Iowa Data

Graduation and Dropout Data. Iowa's 2008 graduation rate was 88.7 percent and dropout rate was 1.96 percent. Although Iowa's rates are among the best in the nation, there are significant gaps for students enrolled in urban districts, minority students, and students with disabilities, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Iowa Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate (Grades 7-12), 2007-2008.*

	White	Asian	Enrollment 7,500+	All Minority	American Indian	Hispanic	African American	Students with IEPs	Overall
Graduation	90.80	88.40	78.70	72.80	67.70	69.30	71.00	84.40	88.70
Dropout	1.69	1.75	3.64	3.74	5.96	3.90	4.06	2.31	1.96

Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning and Research, Development and Evaluation Services, Project EASIER.

The graduation gap for students with IEPs is 6 percent, 12 percent for urban districts, and 18 percent for all minority students. While minority students represent only 15.4 percent of the total enrollment, they represent 25 percent of all dropouts in Iowa. Further, minorities have been overrepresented in Iowa's juvenile detention centers for many years; in 2007, minority youth comprised just 13 percent of the State's youth population, but nearly 40 percent of detention facility holds. According to the Alliance for Excellence in Education, if the graduation rates of Hispanic, African-American, and Native-American students were raised, "to the levels of white students by 2020, the potential increase in personal income in the state would add more than \$336 million to Iowa's economy." In 2002, four Iowa high schools were identified as "dropout factories" or schools with promoting power of 60 percent or less (Balfanz and Legters, 2004). By 2006, the number of high schools identified as 60 percent or less promoting power had doubled to eight (Balfanz and West).

Currently, students in Iowa are identified as a potential dropout in four areas, these are found in Iowa Administrative Code Section 281, chapter 12.2:

The term "*Potential dropouts*" means resident pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated **by two or more** of the following:

- 1) High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness.
- 2) Limited or no extracurricular participation or lack of identification with school including, but not limited to, expressed feelings of not belonging.
- 3) Poor grades including, but not limited to, failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels.
- 4) Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflects achievement at two years or more below grade level.

The term "*Returning dropouts*" means resident pupils who have been enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in any of grades seven through twelve who withdrew from school for a reason other than transfer to another school or school district and who subsequently enrolled in a public school in the district.

In the spring of 2009, 3,146 students aged 16-18 years old were reported by districts as dropouts. However, this count does not take into consideration the other methods of capturing dropouts such as

expulsions, long-term illness, students who failed to return in the fall, and/or students marked as transfers who never enrolled in a new district.

Fiscal Impact. The general fund expenditures per pupil include expenditures for instruction, student support services, administration, operation and maintenance, student transportation, and central support. Expenditures per pupil are calculated by dividing the total general fund expenditures by the certified enrollment. In FY09, the state district cost per pupil (DCPP) was \$5,333, with \$213 for allowable growth, for a total of \$5,546 State cost per pupil.

If all 3,146 students returned to their respective community school district, it would cost the state \$5,768 (FY10 calculation of DCPP), per student for a cost of \$18,146,128. A report by Joshua Angrist and Alan Krueger (2008), found that approximately one out of every four potential dropouts remains in school because of compulsory schooling laws. In addition, the study shows that states allowing students to drop out of school at 16 also have lower enrollment rates among 16 year olds. The authors also find support in their research for the view that students who attend school longer because of compulsory laws earn higher wages in the future. Therefore, if one-fourth (787) of the students stayed in school because the compulsory attendance age was raised to 18, that would only cost the state an additional \$4,539,416.

All districts receive a dedicated allocation for students at-risk, which is based on a formula using the district free and reduced lunch count (K-6) and certified enrollment. In the FY09 school year, this amount was \$12,011,533. Modified allowable growth for dropout prevention is also a funding stream for providing supports for students. In the FY09 school year, 322 districts levied a total of \$101,821,339. Each of these districts must use a 25 percent match with general funds (\$3,394,046) for a total of \$135,761,785 budgeted for supports for students to help prevent them from dropping out and re-engaging those students who had previously dropped out. Although not all districts levy modified allowable growth, each year the number increases. One of the biggest challenges that districts face when using modified allowable growth for dropout prevention is that it is not a per pupil expenditure, it is based on a percentage of the funding formula and the amount of allowable growth. This notion of funding leads many districts to believe that it can be spent for a broad array of activities such as school wide supports, guidance counselors, reading programs, and be used as a rainy day account or savings account. With increased guidance and monitoring from the DE, districts would have enough money to support potential/returning dropouts if those funds are used for targeted interventions and supports and not broad based activities that are in place for all students.

In addition to the above stated information, Dr. James Veale has tabulated the impact and the cost to Iowa's economy as seen in abbreviated version in Appendix J. The Instructional Support Levy is explained in Appendix K, however, fully funding this levy does not seem to be able to be a reality at this point. If fully funding the Instructional Support Levy were a reality, then a fiscal note to the DE, Bureau of Finance, Facilities and Operation Services, would be necessary.

RISE Results.

Focus Group Data. Responses to *What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school?* indicated that students tend to drop out of school due to: (1) a lack of engaging, relevant and individualized instruction (too much lecture), (2) a lack of positive adult and peer relationships, (3) negative relationships, stigmatization and/or marginalization, (4) competing life issues that face students such as parenthood, financial need to support families, homelessness, family illness (including child illness), and (5) parental expectations that an education is relevant and valuable for their children.

Responses to *What supports are needed, if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level? At the community level?* pointed to the need for: (1) classroom instruction that is focused on individual student needs, learning styles, interests, and strengths, (2) a system that is flexible with scheduling to accommodate student's needs, and course options/completion (e.g., pace of instruction, component recovery, schedule of day), (3) an established climate of respect by peers and teachers regardless of student status/background, (4) positive, caring relationships with teachers/staff to help connect students to school, (5) additional parent support to provide additional skills/knowledge in order to support their child in school and help problem-solve how to get and keep

students in school and attend classes, (6) community engagement, and (7) positive re-engagement techniques. Complete focus group analyses are available in Appendix H.

Convergence Data. Results across all data sources were analyzed for themes, and finally for convergence¹ - complete analysis and results are available in Themes Across Data Sources, Appendix I. Final convergence indicated the following themes across data sources (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Convergent Themes Across Data Sources (Focus Group, Workgroup and Research Results)

<p>What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school (Workgroup question: Why did you stay in/drop out of school?)</p>	<p>What supports are needed, if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level? At the Community level? (Workgroup question: What supports kept/would have kept you at school?)</p>
<p>Convergent Themes</p>	
<p>Instructional Delivery Focus groups and workgroup participants indicated students tend to drop out because there is a lack of individualized instruction matched to their learning needs/style (e.g., learning disability needs, pace of instruction too fast/slow, lack of teacher help, too much lecture format).</p> <p>Relationships/Climate Focus group, workgroup and research results indicated student dis-engagement from school contributes to student dropout.</p> <p>Focus group and workgroup participants agreed that a lack of positive adult and/or peer relationships contribute to the dropout problem.</p> <p>Competing Life Issues Focus groups, workgroup members, and research results pointed to competing life issues as a major factor in students dropping out of school (e.g., early adult responsibilities, household stress)</p> <p>Educational Relevance/Value Focus groups, workgroup members and research results indicated family attitudes/beliefs about education were important to students staying in school.</p>	<p>Instructional Delivery All data sources supported the need for instruction that is engaging, relevant, and individualized to student needs.</p> <p>Relationships/Climate All data sources suggested schools should foster positive adult and peer relationships with all students.</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility All data sources indicated the system needs to support a variety of pathways to obtain a high school diploma.</p> <p>All data sources indicated that schools need to be flexible to accommodate individual student real-life issues.</p> <p>All data sources indicated a need to address credit/component recovery for students at risk of school failure.</p> <p>Family Resources/Engagement Workgroup members and research results indicated that parents need to view education as relevant and valuable for their children.</p> <p>Community Support/Engagement All data sources suggested that community engagement is important in supporting students, families and schools.</p> <p>Positive Re-engagement All data sources indicated schools need to employ positive re-engagement techniques rather than relying on punitive consequences for truancy/attendance.</p>

¹ Convergence occurs when two or more data sources indicate the same theme.

The convergent themes across all groups were reflective of a need for a statewide system of learning supports. Learning Supports is a wide range of strategies, programs, services and practices implemented to remove barriers to and create conditions that enhance student learning. The foundation of Learning Supports is a continuous improvement process within a three-tiered system of supports necessary to: (1) promote core learning and healthy development for all students, (2) to prevent problems and serve as early interventions and supplemental support for targeted groups of students, and (3) provide intensive and highly individualized supports for some students. Learning supports does not create new initiatives or programs - rather it is a systemic perspective to assist in creating supports system wide, not just by person, building or district. Recommendations from the workgroup are encompassed by Learning Supports.

Recommendations

The working group shall submit its findings and recommendations, including any proposed changes in policy or statute, to the state board of education and the general assembly (SF 478):

Although the purpose of Senate File 478 did not specify reviewing whether or not Iowa should increase the compulsory age from 16 to 18 (see page 1 for purpose), a critical concern voiced repeatedly by the Compulsory Age Attendance Workgroup was appropriate fiscal resources to support students if the age were indeed raised. It goes without question that increasing the age that students must attend sends a clear message from the state that we care for ALL students and want to ensure that all students are in environments that will maximize their opportunities for a quality education. It also provides a consistent policy message to hold all districts accountable for increasing graduation rates, to identify the need to raise performance expectations for all students, and to identify the need for increased rigor and relevance in high schools.

1. **Promote instructional delivery techniques that are engaging, relevant, and individualized to student needs.** Such supports for instruction foster healthy cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development. Examples of supports for instruction include:
 - i) Universal Design for Learning so that curriculum is accessible to all students,
 - ii) Student centered instruction,
 - iii) Multi-tiered system of supports,
 - iv) Differentiated Instruction, and
 - v) Career Academies.

2. **Develop and support flexible systems that support a variety of pathways to obtain a high school diploma, and accommodate students' real-life issues.** Supports for flexible scheduling, component recovery, and transitions within and outside of school enhance the schools' ability to address a variety of real-life concerns that confront children, youth and their families. Examples of flexible systems and transition support include:
 - i) Component Recovery,
 - ii) Multiple Alternative Options,
 - iii) Online Learning,
 - iv) Anytime-Anywhere Learning,
 - v) Community Based learning,
 - vi) Continuation Schools, and
 - vii) Middle College Programs.

3. **Establish positive supports in schools that foster adult and peer relationships and welcoming school climate.** Supports for safe, healthy and caring learning environments promote school-wide environments that ensure the physical and psychological well-being and safety of all children and youth through positive youth development efforts and proactive planning for management of crises. Examples of fostering such a climate/culture include:
 - i) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports,
 - ii) Olweus Bullying Program, and
 - iii) Mental Health Wraparound.

4. **Promote active parent engagement and providing resources/support to help parents increase skills and knowledge regarding the relevance of education.** Family supports and involvement promote and enhance the involvement of parents and family members in education. Examples include:
 - i) Family literacy,
 - ii) Parent Education,
 - iii) Diverse Parent Representation in Decision-Making Groups,
 - iv) Bridging cultural differences,
 - v) Activities and programs for families that are linked to student achievement,
 - vi) Home/School Communications, and
 - vii) Sponsor college visits and assist families in completing financial aid applications for post-high school educational opportunities.

5. **Actively garnering community engagement and support.** Community partnerships promote school partnerships with multiple sectors of the community, build linkages and collaborations for youth development services, opportunities and supports. Examples include:
 - i) Formal agency and school linkages such as school-based youth services (health, mental health, employment, recreation, basic needs),
 - ii) Mentors,
 - iii) Community-based volunteer and work experience opportunities for students,
 - iv) Community-based classrooms/learning experiences,
 - v) Student Recognitions, and
 - vi) Outreach to disconnected students and their families.

6. **Developing positive re-engagement techniques as opposed to punitive consequences.** Positive engagement and re-engagement promotes opportunities for youth to be engaged in and contribute to their communities. Examples include:
 - i) Restorative practices,
 - ii) Service Learning,
 - iii) Mentoring Programs,
 - iv) Diverse opportunities for participation in extracurricular or community activities,
 - v) Opportunities to build skills,
 - vi) Opportunities for recognition,
 - vii) Community-based volunteer and work experience opportunities, and
 - viii) Leadership opportunities.

Appendix A Iowa Code Chapter 299

299.1 ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS.

Except as provided in section 299.2, the parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian of a child who is of compulsory attendance age, shall cause the child to attend some public school, an accredited nonpublic school, or competent private instruction in accordance with the provisions of chapter 299A, during a school year, as defined under section 279.10. The board of directors of a public school district or the governing body of an accredited nonpublic school shall set the number of days of required attendance for the schools under its control.

The board of directors of a public or the governing body of an accredited nonpublic school may, by resolution, require attendance for the entire time when the schools are in session in any school year and adopt a policy or rules relating to the reasons considered to be valid or acceptable excuses for absence from school.

Section History: Early Form

[S13, § 2823-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § 4410; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, § 299.1]

Section History: Recent Form

83 Acts, ch 17, § 2, 4; 85 Acts, ch 6, §3; 88 Acts, ch 1087, § 2;
88 Acts, ch 1259, §2, 3; 89 Acts, ch 265, §41; 91 Acts, ch 200, §3
Referred to in § 299.2, 299.6, 299.11, 299.12, 299A.1

299.1A COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGE.

A child who has reached the age of six and is under sixteen years of age by September 15 is of compulsory attendance age. However, if a child enrolled in a school district or accredited nonpublic school reaches the age of sixteen on or after September 15, the child remains of compulsory age until the end of the regular school calendar.

Section History: Recent Form

91 Acts, ch 200, §4; 2001 Acts, ch 110, §1
Referred to in § 299.6, 299.11, 299A.1

299.1B FAILURE TO ATTEND -- DRIVER'S LICENSE.

A person who does not attend a public school, an accredited nonpublic school, competent private instruction in accordance with the provisions of chapter 299A, an alternative school, or adult education classes shall not receive an intermediate or full driver's license until age eighteen.

Section History: Recent Form

94 Acts, ch 1172, §32; 2005 Acts, ch 8, §1
Referred to in § 299.6, 299.11, 299A.1, 321.213B

299.2 EXCEPTIONS.

Section 299.1 shall not apply to any child:

1. Who has completed the requirements for graduation in an accredited school or has obtained a high school equivalency diploma under chapter 259A.
2. Who is excused for sufficient reason by any court of record or judge.
3. While attending religious services or receiving religious instructions.
4. Who is attending a private college preparatory school accredited or probationally accredited under section 256.11, subsection 13.
5. Who has been excused under section 299.22.
6. Who is exempted under section 299.24.

Section History: Early Form

[S13, § 2823-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § 4411; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, § 299.2]

Section History: Recent Form

86 Acts, ch 1245, § 1490; 91 Acts, ch 200, §5
Referred to in § 299.1, 299.6, 299.11, 299A.1, 321.178

Appendix B

Iowa Learning Online

Iowa Learning Online (ILO) is designed to help local Iowa school districts expand learning opportunities for high school students through courses delivered "at a distance" using technologies such as the Internet and interactive video classrooms of the Iowa Communications Network (ICN).

Students enroll in ILO courses through their local school district. Each student must be supported locally by a student coach—a school employee, such as a school counselor, teacher or paraprofessional.

Courses marked "Free!" on the list of High School Credit Classes have waived enrollment fees. In addition, ILO will pay all ICN video and online class management system fees associated with the classes.

Variety of course formats and course providers

1. Blended (online, ICN, face-to-face labs) Science courses developed by Iowa teachers: Anatomy & Physiology, Chemistry, General Biology, Physics.
2. Courses purchased by DE from Florida Virtual High School: American History, American Government, English 9, World History.
3. ICN and online courses shared by Iowa school districts: Algebra I, Calculus, Pre-calculus, English 10, AP Music Theory, Chinese, German, Spanish.
4. Apex courses offered through Kirkwood's High School Distance Learning program.

For more information:

www.iowalearningonline.org

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Appendix C

Community College/GED Program

Key Points About 2008 Iowa Statistics (Source: Data, Figures and Appendices cited are from the 2008 GED Testing Program Statistical Report)

- In Iowa, the percentage of adults without a high school diploma is in the 10-15 percent range.
- In Iowa, the percentage of adults without a high school diploma who took the GED tests in 2008 fall in the 2.1-2.5 percent range.
- Of the target population of 289,280 adults without a high school diploma, 5,999 candidates tested, 3,911 completed the tests, and 3,870 passed, which is a 99 percent pass-rate. U.S. pass-rate is 73.1 percent.
- 1.3 percent of the target population completed and passed the GED Battery of Tests. This is the highest pass-rate in the U.S. and Canada.
- The average candidate age in 2008 was 24.7.
- Of the 5,999 GED candidates in Iowa in 2008, 58.9 percent were male; 41.1 percent were female.
- Candidates identified themselves as 7.9 percent Hispanic; 1.8 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native; 1.3 percent Asian; 14.7 percent African American; 0.2 percent Pacific Islander or Hawaiian; and 74.1 percent white.
- The average highest grade completed by the candidates was 11th grade; the average number of years out of school was 7.4 years.
- There was a 2.8 percent increase in the number of candidates tested in 2008.
- The average age of the passing student was 23.6 years.
- Sixty-eight GED candidates tested in Spanish.

Iowa Policy Guidelines RE: Age

To receive the diploma, every applicant must:

- Have obtained the age of 18 years of age,
- Be a non-high school graduate, and
- Not be enrolled in a secondary school.

GED testing is prohibited for individuals below age 16 or any individual, regardless of age, who is a secondary school student or a high school graduate. In Iowa, the general rule for a student is that they must be 17 years of age to test and can receive their diploma at 18. An applicant is NOT eligible for a diploma until after the class in which the applicant was enrolled has graduated. However, there are some exceptions, as defined below:

1) Residents of Iowa Juvenile Institutions.

Under a special agreement with the General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) of the American Council on Education (ACE), controlling agency for the GED, and in compliance with Chapter 259A, Section 259A.6, Code of Iowa, the GED tests may be administered to minors who are minimally 16 years of age and are RESIDENTS of one of three Iowa juvenile institutions.

2) Minors Placed Under the Supervision of a Juvenile Probation Office.

Under a special agreement with the General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education and in compliance with Chapter 259A, Section 259A.6 Code of Iowa, the GED tests may be administered to minors who are minimally 16 years of age and are placed by the court under the supervision of a juvenile probation office.

3) Individuals Seventeen Years of Age, Not Residents of a State Training School or Iowa Juvenile Home, and Not Under the Supervision of a Probation Office.

The Code of Iowa makes no provision for individuals in this age and status category to receive the Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma. However, when specific criteria are met, admission to GED testing is permitted. Prior to admission to testing for all seventeen-year-olds who are not residents of a state training school or the Iowa Juvenile Home or who have not been placed under the supervision of a probation office, the chief or alternate chief examiner must have written verification that the GED candidate:

- Is not enrolled in a secondary school,
- Has the consent of his/her parent or guardian for admission to GED testing,
- Please note, that even if the student meets this criteria, the student cannot receive the GED diploma until his/her class from 9th grade has graduated, and
- Any testing with the GED is prohibited for any individual, regardless of age, who is a secondary school student or a high school graduate.

4) Eighteen Year Olds Who Are Eligible for the Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma.

Anyone 18 years of age who is not enrolled in a secondary school may be admitted to testing. The only requirement for admission to testing is proof of age and verification of non-enrolled status. The student cannot receive the GED diploma until his/her class from 9th grade has graduated.

5) 17 Year Olds Enlisting in the Armed Services.

The GED tests may be administered to persons 17 years of age who need the test for enlistment in the Armed Services, employment, admission to a college, university or training program, or license for an occupation. Adequate written verification or documentation is required. However, the diploma will not be awarded until his/her class from 9th grade has graduated.

GED Fees and Costs

Iowa Code:

1. The DE can set an application fee for each GED test. (259A.2).
2. The diploma fee is an additional \$5. (259A.3).

Rules:

1. Application for re-tests can cost \$5. (281-32.5/259A).
2. The applicant or supporting agency shall pay an application fee of \$20.00 (281-32.6/259A).

Iowa's Community College Adult Literacy Programs charge a maximum of \$100 (\$20 per test X 5) plus \$5 for the diploma. The \$5 fee for a re-test would be additional.

Questions: Impact on the GED Program of Changing the Compulsory Attendance Age

- 1) Would we implement GED Option programs to prepare students for GED testing in-house? Local school superintendents would be able to refer other 16 and 17 year old students for GED testing if the students meet specific criteria. GED testing is an approved alternative plan for the individual student agreed to by the student's parent or guardian. 16 and 17-year-old students referred for GED testing remain under the auspices of the school, although they have been "withdrawn for the purpose of taking GED tests." Those who pass are considered to be school "completers" and do not have to return to school. Any who don't pass GED Tests will be required to attend school until age 18.
- 2) Would we have a transition period for those who are already engaged in the GED testing process?
- 3) How would this impact the use of adult education federal funds to serve 16 and 17-year-old students?
- 4) Would parents be able to remove their child from school before 18 as they can in Kansas?
- 5) Would we have waivers for 16 and 17 year olds that wish to take the GED tests as they do in Arkansas?
- 6) Would the student have to be accepted by the adult education center to avoid the centers becoming alternative schools? If a student has a troubling record in high school, would the center have the right not to accept them?
- 7) Quote from field:
If the compulsory attendance policy passes, there needs to be a state push for the GED to be included as a recognizable completion for the high school. If students are forced to stay in school until 18, those who attend and do not meet the state requirements for graduation should be allowed an alternate testing if they

cannot obtain the traditional high school diploma. The GED program should be an option of completion for those in the alternative schools and those who cannot and will not meet the requirements for graduation in 4 years. It is a disservice to tell kids that they learn many different ways and then only give them one option for completion.

- 8) As you know, the state does not provide funding for students working on their GED. Ideally, the state would recognize and accept the GED as part of their graduation rate under NCLB and then provide some level of funding to support these students.
- 9) Our K-12 partners have not experienced any budget cuts in their state aid similar to what the community colleges and universities have experienced. If this happens, there will be even greater challenges providing these alternatives.

Appendix D

Iowa Code 280.19A Alternative Options

Alternative options education programs - disclosure of records.

By January 15, 1995, each school district shall adopt a plan to provide alternative options education programs to students who are either at-risk of dropping out or have dropped out. An alternative options education program may be provided in a district, through a sharing agreement with a school in a contiguous district, or through an area-wide program available at the community college serving the merged area in which the school district is located. Each area education agency shall provide assistance in establishing a plan to provide alternative education options to students attending a public school in a district served by the agency.

If a district has not adopted a plan as required in this section and implemented the plan by January 15, 1996, the area education agency serving the district shall assist the district with developing a plan and an alternative options education program for the pupil. When a plan is developed, the district shall be responsible for the operation of the program and shall reimburse the area education agency for the actual costs incurred by the area education agency under this section.

Notwithstanding section 22.7, subsection 1, records kept regarding a student who has participated in a program under this section shall be requested by school officials of a public or nonpublic receiving school in which the student seeks to enroll, and shall be provided by the sending school. A school official who receives information under this section shall disclose this information only to those school officials and employees whose duties require them to be involved with the student. A school official or employee who discloses information received under this section in violation of this paragraph shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to reprimand, suspension, or termination.

"School officials and employees" means those officials and persons employed by a nonpublic school or public school district, and area education agency staff members who provide services to schools or school districts.

90 Acts, ch 1271, §1102; 94 Acts, ch 1131, §4; 94 Acts, ch 1172, §30

Minimum hours of instruction requirement adopted by state board of education not applicable to alternative programs;

90 Acts, ch 1271, §1104

"Alternative program" means a class or environment established within the regular educational program and designed to accommodate specific student educational needs such as, but not limited to, work-related training; reading, mathematics or science skills; communication skills; social skills; physical skills; employability skills; study skills; or life skills.

"Alternative school" means an environment established apart from the regular educational program and that includes policies and rules, staff, and resources designed to accommodate student needs and to provide a comprehensive education consistent with the student learning goals and content standards established by the school district or by the school districts participating in a consortium. Students attend by choice.

Appendix E
Career Academies

See Attachment

Appendix F
Learning Supports

See Attachment

Appendix G

Workgroup Meeting-Public Minutes 9-29-09

Welcome

Kevin Fangman, DE, PK-12 Division Administrator, introduced the purpose of workgroup as defining the supports needed if the Compulsory Age was raised from 16 to 18 years of age, and punctuated the commitment of the DE to the outcome of the workgroup.

Workgroup Members Introductions (Please refer to the list in the front of this presentation)

Review of the timeline posted:

September 29, 2009:

Workgroup meets to discuss the options and supports needed for students if the compulsory attendance age is raised from age 16 to age 18.

October 26, 2009:

Workgroup meets to discuss findings of discussions held in their own communities, discuss questions that arose from those discussions and formulate questions for the Focus Groups.

Month of November:

Focus Groups are held in 5 areas throughout the state.

December 11, 2009:

The workgroup will review the findings from the focus groups and identify needs for recommendations to go to the legislature.

January 15, 2010:

Workgroup Findings and recommendations are presented to the legislature.

Schedule for September 29, 2009 Workgroup Meeting:

A. The Workgroup was divided into five groups. The following questions were asked of participants and the top 3 responses given:

1. If you stayed in school, why did you stay in school?
 - Parent expectations
 - Never considered dropping out
 - Aspired to go to college

2. What are the supports that kept you there?
 - Adult/Teacher mentoring or encouragement
 - Friends with similar goals
 - Parents valued education/support from parents

3. If you left school, why did you leave?
 - It was not a priority in my family, expected to work to support the family, difficult home life
 - Inflexible/rigid school structure
 - Felt disconnected, felt second class, didn't fit in (tied with - a traumatic event)

4. What supports would have kept you there/what supports did keep you there?
 - A caring educator that cared about me as a whole child, they connected with me/positive relationships
 - Secure home life, food, stability
 - A change in the relationship or outreach of the school has with the parents/family (attendance issues, culture, values)

B. Several of the issues mentioned as minimal considerations in Senate File 478 were presented to the workgroup by DE Staff:

ABE/GED

Alternative Options in schools

Career Academies

Learning Supports

Iowa Learning Online

C. The remainder of the day focused on questions directed to the Workgroup in the following areas and the top 3 responses given:

1. Who will be impacted by this change?

- Parents/Guardians/Foster Parents
- Students, in & out of school
- Schools & Supports Provided by the Schools
- Community/Businesses
- Justice System/Truancy Court

2. If the law is passed, what would it take to make it successful?

- Make school relevant, engaging and hands-on
- Have caring, supportive and accepting adults, positive relationships
- Access to community agencies, transportation, support for families

3. What questions might the Workgroup ask of their communities to clarify/garner more information about this issue?

A list of 22 questions was submitted, which will be gleaned for repetition and structure. These will then be set to each Workgroup member to ask of community members.

4. Who might the Workgroup ask these questions of in their communities? The top 5 answers were given by all 5 groups of Workgroup members. The following 5 answers were given by at least 4 of the groups.

All 5 groups stated:

- Alternative education teachers
- Dropouts/Returning Dropouts
- Courts/Juvenile Court Officers
- DHS
- School Boards

4 of the 5 Groups stated:

- Teachers (elementary, middle/junior high, high school)
- Building Administrators
- Guidance Counselors/School Counselors (private agencies who may provide service in the schools)
- Parents of dropouts/Returning dropouts (including foster care/adoptive parents)
- Employers/Businesses
- Faith Community

5. Workgroup members also asked the DE to check with other states which have changed their compulsory attendance rate and inquire to the supports that were provided by those states.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Appendix H Focus Group Analysis

The Research Institute for Studies in Education conducted seventeen focus group sessions during November, 2009 for the purpose of collecting data from students, parents and community members regarding a possible change in the mandatory compulsory age. Representatives from five regions of the state were contacted to assist with securing the appropriate participants and arranging for the time and location of the focus groups. Each representative was asked to secure participants representing the following:

Students who have considered dropping out of school or have dropped out of school

Parents who have children who have dropped out of school or are at-risk for dropping out of school

Community members representing those who would have connections to students at-risk of dropping out or who have dropped out of school such as: Juvenile Justice, youth organizations, school administrators, and/or counselors, clergy, Department of Human Services, and businesses that hire students. A total of 198 participants took part in the focus groups (Table 1).

**Table 1
Focus Group Demographic Information**

	Students	Parents	Community members	Total
Region 1: NW	6	12	12	30
Region 2: NE	10	7	11	28
Region 3: SE	16	14	18	48
Region 4: Central	20	19	8	47
Region 5: SW	9	16	20	45
Grand Total	61	68	69	198

The focus group format included a primary facilitator who conducted each session and a note-taker who recorded the focus group discussion, keying responses in a template on a laptop computer. In addition, all focus groups consented to be audio-taped for future transcribing. Each session lasted approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours, and was attended by 6 - 20 participants. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and assured that all information obtained would not be identifiable to them either as individuals or to the focus group in which they participated

This format provided three levels of data and analyses: debriefing notes, note-taker transcripts, and full transcriptions from each focus group. Data from the focus groups were analyzed specific to three questions:

- What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school?
- What supports are needed if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level?
- What supports are needed if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the community level?

Data presented in this document reflect the analysis of the full audio-tape transcriptions of the focus groups. All data were merged, coded, and original source materials stored separately, to insure confidentiality. Data were analyzed using *NVivo8* (2009) a qualitative software program that allows for the identification of themes within large data-sets, using analysis of text through coding. Each question generated large data-sets of text, which were then analyzed for emerging themes. Although many sections of text contained only one theme, some contained two or more and therefore were coded as such. Each section of text was counted as one reference. Also, the amount of coverage as a percentage of all text was provided. Figure 1 below provides a summary of themes across participant groups for *Question One: What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school?* The final column, **Convergence**, contains the convergence of themes across participant groups. The **Convergence**

column is provided in the final document - *Themes across data sources* – that should be referenced in developing recommendations to the legislature (see email attachment labeled as such). Figure 2 provides a summary of themes across participant groups for *Questions Two and Three: What supports are needed, if Iowa's compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level? At the community level?* These questions were combined as the results within each were so similar, reporting results separately was unnecessary. Again, the **Convergence** column is in the final document – *Themes across data sources*.

Figure 1: Themes Across Participant Groups, Question One: What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school?

THEMES ACROSS PARTICIPANT GROUPS			KEY THEMES
Student	Parent	Community	Convergence
<p>Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly all students indicated a need for a different style of teaching rather than lecture – students like to be involved and participate in activity-based learning. Most of students felt there was too much sitting in classroom instruction. Most students believed the pace of school leaves students falling farther and farther behind (e.g. were not informed about number of credits they had/needed to graduation; too few credits to graduate; did not understand well what was covered in a course, but the course just kept going). <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most students could point to one adult connection at school, however indicated that one bad teacher or peer (bullying) pushed them to either consider dropping out of school, or actually drop out of school. Some students indicated that no one cared about them at school. Some students felt they had trouble getting along with peers (e.g., bullying). Most students said that though they asked for help from an adult when attending a regular school -they failed to get it. Some indicated they were viewed as “bad” kids and felt the school was glad to have them drop out. General consensus across student groups was that either no one asked why they were not in school or the automated calls received were so impersonal that they believed school must not care. Some felt that no one encouraged them or helped them get out of the academic hole they had fallen into (e.g., not passing classes, few credits). Most felt they were treated disrespectfully by adults at school and that even just one teacher could make the whole day a bad experience. Some indicated that at regular school students cannot talk about things with an adult that matter to the student personally – felt like adults wanted to keep their distance. <p>Competing Life Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several students felt that it was hard to pay attention and hard to attend school when there were real-life 	<p>Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many parents indicated that there is an expectation that students are able to learn by listening to the teacher; but this is not the case with their child, they need to learning by other methods than lecture. Parents said that teachers expect students to learn by doing homework, and assume the family is able to help with homework (e.g., work schedules, skill/ability). Several parents pointed to the lack of help for some students from the teachers/system (e.g. students with learning disabilities). Some parents said that if students did receive help, the help was provided to students in ways that stigmatized and/or humiliated the student. Nearly all parents said that the school system supports the “ideal student” – for example, the student who can go to school all day and concentrate with traditional teaching methods, participate in activities, get support at home, doesn't have to work. <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many teachers were seen as under qualified and poorly motivated to teach their students. Parents said that tend to quit school when they feel like they do not fit in with their peers. Many parents suggested some students have none or just one adult at school with whom they feel they can get help. Parents also felt some teachers did not do enough to engage all students. Some parents shared specific experiences where some students were humiliated/ putdown, treated disrespectfully, picked on and harassed, and perceived to be given up on by adults in the school. Parents also shared that some students are humiliated/ putdown, treated disrespectfully, picked on and harassed by other students and it is not stopped by the adults at the school. Some parents suggested adults 	<p>Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many community members indicated that schools do not differentiate instruction within the classroom to fit the various learning styles of students. Many also felt the pace of education did not allow some kids to adequately progress in schools. <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members pointed to the need for student social skills, getting along with peers, and programs that deal with bullying. Many also indicated that not all students have a connection to and/or positive relationship with school/teachers. Some said that students labeled as the “bad kid” become marginalized by adults at school. Some also felt that it is painful for students who fail to keep up with their classmates; they feel stigmatized. <p>Competing Life Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many indicated that students experience responsibilities or distractions outside of school (e.g., work, family, children). Some community members said that some families pressure students to help support the family, and so students work long hours. Some felt that families may have limited resources, and that many families are concerned with survival and may not be able to garner the resources to keep students engaged in school. <p>Educational Relevance/Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall community members suggested parents and families were an important factor in whether students believed school was relevant/ of value. Some indicated that the lack of parent skill and/or knowledge may also have impact on drop-outs Some believed that, if a parent had negative school 	<p><i>Convergence = 2 or more groups had the same theme</i></p> <p>Instructional Delivery Overall, students, parents and community members indicated that schools engage in more lecture format and do not support other learning styles/instructional delivery methods. Students need instruction individualized to their needs.</p> <p>Relationships/Climate All groups indicated that a dearth of positive adult and peer relationships increased the likelihood of a student dropping out of school.</p> <p>Students, parents and community believed that some students are targeted as bad kids by adults, and therefore are pushed out of school by established negative relationships, stigmatization, and/or marginalization. Students need positive adult and peer relationships. Students need the opportunity to be engaged, or re-engaged, in school.</p> <p>Competing Life Issues All groups indicated that there are real-life issues that face students such as parenthood, financial need to support families, homelessness, family illness (including child illness), which compete with school responsibilities. Schools need to support the individual needs of students.</p> <p>Educational Relevance/Value Student and community respondents indicated that students do not understand the value of education or the consequences of dropping out of school.</p> <p>(Note – although the community believed that parents of students who have dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out may not value education or a high school diploma, responses from students and parents do not uniformly support this belief).</p>

responsibilities and distractions outside of school (e.g. pregnancy, work, stress, sick child, family drama) having some fun).

Educational Relevance/Value

- Some students indicated that everything else seemed more important than school and there are so many things to worry about (e.g. socializing, relaxing, real-life issues).
- Overall, students said they didn't really understand about what it would be like to drop out of high school – they did not realize there is nowhere to go in your life without graduating.

(**Note** – students were specifically asked if their parents/family believed that school/high school diploma was important; all but one student indicated that family wanted them to graduate/cared about whether graduated, high school)

in the system talk like they want students to stay in school, but as soon as they drop out they celebrate not having to deal with the student any longer.

Competing Life Issues

- Parents felt that the school expects students to get help from the family to get to school, but that this is not possible in some family circumstances (e.g., work schedules, transportation issues)
- Many believed that the school expects students to be able to focus on school and not be distracted by struggles at home.
- Parents indicated that the school doesn't want to deal with distractions in some students lives which leads to dis-engagement and increases the possibility of a student dropping out (e.g. students need to work, family stress, lack of family support due to work hours, health etc., struggles with learning).

(**Note** – parents were specifically asked if they believed school was important/relevant for their children; all responses indicated parents believed school was important, that their child needed a high school diploma, and that they were trying to support their child and the school in this effort; many indicated that the regular school was not helpful)

experiences, then it is difficult when their child also experiences difficulties – this makes it hard to support the child and/or school.

- Members indicated that some students do not find their education valuable or are not able to see the relevance of an education.
- Community also indicated that some students were unaware of the consequences of foregoing a high school diploma when considering dropping out.
- Many felt that students failed to make meaningful connections between school and life.

System Supports/Flexibility

- Community members indicated that the possibility of dropping out of school increases with the number of transitions between schools (e.g., mobility). For example, when students change from school to school due to circumstances beyond their control, the tendency is that their files get lost, their needs aren't communicated, they lose credits, and so on.
- Some felt that the students were not considered a graduate if it takes them more time to do so, or they need to engage in an alternative system (e.g., GED).
- Some felt that there was a system failure to recognize how differences of students in terms of race, socio-economic status and learning styles etc. can influence a student's feelings of marginalization
- There was a suggestion that more minorities were going to prison - black, Hispanic, Asian - and that these students are being disciplined disproportionately. And if they are disciplined more harshly and more often, then it was suggested that these students are probably not being taught as well and this would cause a student to feel unwelcomed and potentially drop out.

Figure 2: Themes Across Participant Groups, Questions Two and Three: What supports are needed, if Iowa’s compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level? At the community level?

THEMES ACROSS PARTICIPANT GROUPS			KEY THEMES
Student	Parent	Community	Convergence
<p>Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly all students indicated that teachers need to pay more attention to individual needs such as how students learn best. Students also said that teachers need to make sure whether a student has learned or understood the lesson before going on in the content (e.g., allow student to learn at own pace, individualize learning to fit needs). <p>System Supports/Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students felt there needed to be more educational options for finishing high school. Students indicated there needs to be better transportation options (e.g., school bus used to pick up in-town residence). Many indicated that schools need to recognize and work with students who have responsibilities outside the school (e.g., some have families they must support; some live on their own); schools need to be more flexible with scheduling to accommodate such responsibilities. Students suggested that there should be the opportunity for students to work to gain credits or pass courses at their own pace. <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students felt that being connected to a group and engaging in group activities provides motivation because of the relationships/connections a student makes with peers and adults. Most believed that having relationships with supportive adults at school helps students connect school to life and provides students the information they need to graduate, get work, obtain scholarships, apply for college and so on. Some students felt that when the school (teachers) showed concern they were not in school or that they were falling behind (e.g. call or get a hold of me and ask what is going on) – that this facilitated connection and motivation to graduate. Nearly all students indicated it was important to have adults available to talk with and who really want to listen (students said it was easy to spot an 	<p>Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents said that teachers need to focus on student individual needs and how students learn best. Parents indicated that teachers need to make sure a student has learned or understood the lesson before moving on in the lesson. <p>System Supports/Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents suggested that there needs to be more educational options for finishing high school; Parents said that pursuing the GED was an option, but indicated they saw it as a last option to take and would suggest a student needs to do everything possible to earn a high school diploma. Many indicated that the school should support the opportunity for students to work to gain credits or pass courses at their own pace. Parents felt that the school needs to be more flexible with schedules in order to accommodate student/family needs. <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents believed that there must be positive and respectful peer and adult relationships in school. Most indicated that teachers need to both care and believe in abilities of each and every student is important to student success. Many said that the climate needs to be free from racial and class-based discrimination. Many suggested that there needs to be an established system for positive feedback and recognition for students, other than sports or grade point average. Parents felt that there needed to be groups and opportunities for all students to be involved other than sports. Parents indicated that there needs to be the same high expectations for all students regardless of class or race. Overall, parents suggested that all students need to feel like they matter and are valued at the 	<p>Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most believed that there needs to be more flexibility in terms of addressing learning styles in the traditional classroom. Many indicated that there needs to be a better way to meet individual student learning needs, interests and strengths. <p>System Supports/Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many suggested that there should be a variety of options to earn a high school diploma (e.g. online, technical, and alternative schools) in addition to traditional schools. Community members indicated that there needs to be flexibility in schedules and timelines to graduation that would accommodate students working, parenting, or needing more than four years to complete their degree. Some pointed to the difficulty of the term and calculation of drop-out, such as the problem of counting GED recipients as dropouts, NCLB definition, stigmas of being labeled a dropout and the pressures that schools face when their students are labeled dropouts <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many felt that schools need to make the climate welcoming to all students by creating connections to the school through activities and relationships with adults and peers. Most believed that adults need to treat all students with respect when they are at school even if they have transgressed or they believe the student is not likely to return. Community members suggested that all staff at the school is respectful not just the teachers and administrators. 	<p><i>Convergence = 2 or more groups had the same theme</i></p> <p>Instructional Delivery</p> <p>All groups indicated that teachers need to focus on student needs, learning styles, interests, strengths and pace of the lesson (e.g., student needs to understand content before moving on in instruction). Students need instruction individualized to their needs.</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility</p> <p>Students, parents and the community suggested that there should be more educational options for completing high school.</p> <p>All groups indicated that schools need to be flexible with scheduling to accommodate individual student needs/outside responsibilities, which includes time to complete course content/credit (pace of instruction), and timeline to graduation, schedule of the day</p> <p>Relationships/Climate</p> <p>All groups indicated that there needs to be an established climate of respect by peers and teachers, regardless of student status/background.</p> <p>Groups indicated that there needs to be positive, caring relationships with teachers/staff to help connect students to school, and motivate them to remain in school.</p> <p>Family Resources/Engagement</p> <p>Both parent and community groups recognized that some parents may need help getting additional skills/knowledge in order to support their child in school.</p> <p>Parent and community members indicated parents/schools need help problem-solving how to get students to school and attend</p>

adult who was listening as part of their job, as opposed to an adult who was listening because they cared).

- Some students said that there has to be someone in a student's life that pushes them to be in school and do their work.

Community Support/Engagement

- Students indicated that businesses should support schools by not allowing students to work during school hours or late at night.
- Students felt that community members could engage with students and help keep them in school by sharing what their life path has been, what they do, and own high school experience.
- Students believed that successful community members who had a difficult time in high school could be good mentors.
- Students suggested that the system needs to understand the difficulty level of getting a GED and honor it like a high school diploma when hiring.
- Students said that it was important for community members not to judge students because they attend an alternative school (e.g. – must be a "bad" kid, getting off easy, doesn't have as difficult of school work), or not judge students if they are different than the established standard of a "model" or "good" student.
- Students suggested that community members should get involved with the alternative schools or with students who aren't "model" students so they understand the issues, needs, and accomplishments of such students better.

Positive Re-engagement

- Students indicated that there needs to be more efforts to deter students from skipping classes and more effective consequences in place.
- Students felt that the consequences used (or discipline methods used) should affect the student personally to re-engage and motivate them to want to get an education – not just punitive methods; there needs to be a reason to re-engage with school.
- Students did not believe re-engagement methods like an automated calling system were effective; too impersonal, easy to intercept, not motivating, and no personal connection.

Adult Expectations

- Students believed that parents and grandparents can influence whether students stay in school.

school. If students feel ostracized by other students or unwanted by the adults at school, the parents felt it deterred the students from wanting to be in school.

Family Resources/Engagement

- Some parents indicated that parents care about whether their child graduates high school, but that they needed help getting the skills and the knowledge to support their child to succeed in school.
- Some parents felt it was difficult to enforce attendance; parents struggled to maintain their other responsibilities and still ensure that their high school aged children not only arrived at school but also attended classes.
- Parents suggested that there needs to be more supports as well as a general awareness by schools of real-life - because there are more single parents and there are more parents from different types of homes, parents with many responsibilities and few resources get overwhelmed with the pressures of life- parent support and engagement is difficult in such circumstances.

Community Support/Engagement

- Parents believed community involvement is important though no specific supports were mentioned other than after-school programs.
- Parents felt that the community as a whole should be involved in holding schools accountable for student learning, and should individually encourage students to stay in school.
- One parent mentioned a restaurant in their area chased students out if they stayed too long in the establishment – so there is no place for kids to go in the community.
- Parents stressed students need for a safe place to be after-school if they are not in an activity or working. It was suggested there were very few places for a student to go to be productive rather than just hang out or play video games.

classes.

Family Resources/Engagement

- Many indicated there needs to be support for developing parent engagement - helping parents figure out ways to get students to school and being problem solvers with parents instead of adversaries.
- Some felt that schools need to recognize some families cannot make it on their own.
- The community identified that many resources are needed for parents and families that schools, in collaboration with community, need to work toward providing, including:
 - parenting skills training
 - mental health services
 - basic needs resources such as food and shelter
 - helping to discipline/report students who were not attending school
 - infuse community services into the school (e.g., drug counseling, medical health such as dentist and family practitioner), DHS social worker, court liaison

Community Support/Engagement

- The community group suggested that perhaps the community works against the family and schools in some ways by supporting low expectations for some students – need to take a more active role in setting high expectations for education for all students
- Many indicated that there needs to be an effective collaboration between organizations/ individuals in the community with the schools; Need "It Takes a Village Approach"

Positive Re-engagement

- The community believed that there needs to be some established way to motivate students to continue to pursue their education; a goal or a reason for the child to stay encouraged and involved that is individualized due to differences in students.
- Many indicated there needs to be enforcement of truancy and absenteeism that would lead to student re-engagement.

Community Support/Engagement

All groups indicated that community support and engagement were important in helping kids stay connected to and in school.

In some way, all groups suggested that the community not judge students taking an alternative path to graduation or needing more supports to graduate, in ways such as seeing a GED as not acceptable, to not supporting a youth-centered program/place to go after school, to having low expectations for some students.

Positive Re-engagement

Both students and the community believed there needs to be personal and positive ways to re-engage students so that they are motivated to continue their education.

**Funding for necessary
capacity building**

- Community members indicated the following funding needs should be considered for capacity if the age is raised:
 - Teacher development
 - Enforcement of truancy and absenteeism
 - Support staff (i.e. social workers and counselors)
 - Overall higher level of financial support for schools that demonstrates education is a priority
 - Hiring qualified teachers at pay reflecting their value
 - Support for developing parent engagement - helping parents figure out ways to get these students to school and being problem solvers with parents instead of adversaries
-

Appendix I

Themes Across Data Sources

Figures 1 and 2 below provides themes across data sources for each question indicated. Focus Group data were obtained via seventeen focus group sessions during November, 2009 for the purpose of collecting data from students, parents and community members regarding a possible change in the mandatory compulsory age. The following participant groups were represented in five regions across the state:

Students who have considered dropping out of school or have dropped out of school

Parents who have children who have dropped out of school or are at-risk for dropping out of school

Community members representing those who would have connections to students at-risk of dropping out or who have dropped out of school such as: Juvenile Justice, youth organizations, school administrators and/or counselors, clergy, Department of Human Services, and businesses that hire students. A total of 198 participants took part in the focus groups (see the document *Focus Group Analysis* for a more detailed description). Figure 1 below contains theme results from focus group analysis (i.e., the Convergence column).

Workgroup results include results of an all-day work session as well as workgroup submission of individual interview results. Research results include literature review results as well as results of phone interviews with the following State Departments of Education that have experienced a change in compulsory age to age 18: Nebraska, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Maryland was also interviewed though the age was not changed in this state to 18, rather the results of Maryland's study on raising the compulsory age led to the age remaining at the current age of 16.

Final Analysis results are provided on page 4.

Figure 1: Themes Across Data Sources, Question One: What are the reasons students consider dropping out of school (Workgroup question: Why did you stay in/drop out of school?)

THEMES ACROSS DATA SOURCES			KEY THEMES
Focus Groups	Workgroup ²	Research Results ³	Convergence
<p>Instructional Delivery Overall, students, parents and community members indicated that schools engage in more lecture format and do not support other learning styles/instructional delivery methods. Students need instruction individualized to their needs.</p> <p>Relationships/Climate All groups indicated that a dearth of positive adult and peer relationships increased the likelihood of a student dropping out of school.</p> <p>Students, parents and community believed that some students are targeted as bad kids by adults, and therefore are pushed out of school by established negative relationships, stigmatization, and/or marginalization. Students need positive adult and peer relationships. Students need the opportunity to be engaged, or re-engaged, in school.</p> <p>Competing Life Issues All groups indicated that there are real-life issues that face students such as parenthood, financial need to support families, homelessness, family illness (including child illness), which compete with school responsibilities. Schools need to support the individual needs of students.</p> <p>Educational Relevance/Value Student and community respondents indicated that students do not understand the value of education or the consequences of dropping out of school.</p> <p>(Note – although the community believed that parents of students who have dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out may not value education or a high school diploma, responses from students and parents do not uniformly support this belief).</p>	<p>Instructional Delivery Responses suggested that credit deficiency as well as instructional methods not matched to student learning needs/style as contributing factors to drop out.</p> <p>Individual learning needs, large classes, and lack of teacher support/help was suggested as potential barriers to staying in school.</p> <p>Relationships/Climate Workgroup members indicated positive adult/peer relationships contribute to student-school connection and student graduation.</p> <p>Members felt that students who feel disconnected, or who do not feel like they fit in at school, were at a higher risk of dropping out.</p> <p>Responses pointed to extra-curricular involvement related to student connection to school, and lack of such connection as potential for students to drop out.</p> <p>Competing Life Issues Members indicated real-life issues make it difficult for students to stay in/focus on school such as pregnancy/parenthood, family financial needs, a traumatic event (e.g., losing parent/sibling), mental health issues, homelessness, drug/alcohol use.</p> <p>Educational Relevance/Value Workgroup members felt that parents/family and/or peers of students who drop out do not value education; the expectation is not set that students must stay in school</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility Members cited inflexible/rigid school structure/schedule making it difficult for students to stay in school.</p>	<p>NA – Research results indicated a variety of contributing factors to student success and/or risk of dropping out of school which include each theme discussed across students, parents, community and workgroup members. The list of contributing factors is exhaustive, and includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor academic performance • failure to be promoted to the next grade level • truancy or poor attendance • academic problems after transferring to ninth grade • failure to meet or keep up with the school's graduation requirements • being an English Language Learner • being a special education student • large class sizes at the students' institution • having a low proportion of highly qualified teachers • displaying discipline or behavior problems <p>Individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high risk demographics • early adult responsibilities • high-risk attitudes, values, and behaviors poor school performance • disengagement from school • educational stability <p>Family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background characteristics • level of household stress • attitudes, values, and beliefs about education • behavior related to education <p>School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school structure • school resources • student body performance • school environment • academic policies and practices • supervision and discipline policies and practices <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location and type • demographic characteristics • environment 	<p><i>Convergence = 2 or more groups had the same theme</i></p> <p>Instructional Delivery Focus groups and workgroup participants indicated students tend to drop out because there is a lack of individualized instruction matched to their learning needs/style (e.g., learning disability needs, pace of instruction too fast/slow, lack of teacher help, too much lecture format).</p> <p>Relationships/Climate Focus group, workgroup and research results indicated student dis-engagement from school contributes to student drop-out.</p> <p>Focus group and workgroup participants agreed that a lack of positive adult and/or peer relationships contribute to the dropout problem.</p> <p>Competing Life Issues Focus groups, workgroup members, and research results pointed to competing life issues as a major factor in students dropping out of school (e.g., early adult responsibilities, household stress)</p> <p>Educational Relevance/Value Focus groups, workgroup members and research results indicated family attitudes/beliefs about education were important to students staying in school.</p>

² Workgroup results include results of an all-day work session as well as workgroup submission of individual interview results.

³ Research results include literature review results as well as results of phone interviews with the following State Departments of Education that have experienced a change in compulsory age to age 18: Nebraska, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Maryland was also interviewed though the age was not changed in this state to 18, rather the results of Maryland's study on raising the compulsory age led to the age remaining at the current age of 16.

Figure 2: Themes Across Data Sources, What supports are needed, if Iowa’s compulsory age for school attendance is increased from 16 to 18, at the school level? At the Community level? (Workgroup question: What supports kept/would have kept you at school?)

THEMES ACROSS DATA SOURCES			KEY THEMES
Focus Group	Workgroup	Research Results	Convergence
<p>Instructional Delivery All groups indicated that teachers need to focus on student needs, learning styles, interests, strengths and pace of the lesson (e.g., student needs to understand content before moving on in instruction). Students need instruction individualized to their needs.</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility Students, parents and the community suggested that there should be more educational options for completing high school.</p> <p>All groups indicated that schools need to be flexible with scheduling to accommodate individual student needs/outside responsibilities, which includes time to complete course content/credit (pace of instruction), and timeline to graduation, schedule of the day</p> <p>Relationships/Climate All groups indicated that there needs to be an established climate of respect by peers and teachers, regardless of student status/background.</p> <p>Groups indicated that there needs to be positive, caring relationships with teachers/staff to help connect students to school, and motivate them to remain in school.</p> <p>Family Resources/Engagement Both parent and community groups recognized that some parents may need help getting additional skills/knowledge in order to support their child in school.</p> <p>Parent and community members indicated parents/schools need help problem-solving how to get students to school and attend classes.</p> <p>Community Support/Engagement All groups indicated that community support and engagement were important in helping kids stay connected to and in school.</p> <p>In some way, all groups suggested that the community not judge students taking an alternative path to graduation or needing more supports to graduate, in ways such as seeing a GED as not</p>	<p>Instructional Delivery Members suggested that schools need to make instruction more relevant, engaging, active/hands-on, individualized and not one-size-fits-all.</p> <p>Members also suggested that smaller class sizes, individualized help, and more vocational class offerings might make a difference for some students.</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility Responses indicated the school needs to be flexible to accommodate individual student real-life issues such as homelessness, basic needs being met, parenthood, transportation needs, mental health issues.</p> <p>Flexibility in regards to a variety of educational options for completing high school should be supported/offered (e.g., GED, alternative schools)</p> <p>Relationships/Climate Workgroup members indicated that positive adult and/or peer relationships would keep students in school.</p> <p>Members felt that creating a caring educator teaching the whole child not just content would create a climate that would encourage students to stay in school.</p> <p>Family Resources/Engagement Responses suggested that parents need to value education in order for students to value education.</p> <p>Members suggested that schools need to change their relationship/outreach to parents to foster positive involvement/engagement.</p> <p>Community Support/Engagement Members indicated that schools need to foster positive community involvement/engagement.</p> <p>Communities need an opportunity to be involved in course development, mentoring, donating for rewards for grades, showing statistics on school</p>	<p>Instructional Delivery Research results indicated that teachers need to teach to different learning styles using a variety of teaching strategies.</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility Results pointed to the need for a variety of pathways for meeting the requirements for earning a high school diploma (e.g., school and work-based learning; GED).</p> <p>Results indicated the need to employ multiple strategies and interventions to meet individual student needs (e.g., real-life issues such as homelessness, parenthood, transportation).</p> <p>Schools need to engage in the continuous improvement cycle of identification of problem (e.g., early warning system to identify students at-risk of dropping out), implementation of intervention, evaluation of impact, and review of results.</p> <p>Relationships/Climate Research results indicated there needs to be a better student connection to school through positive adult and/or peer relationships and a welcoming environment.</p> <p>Results indicated adults need to have high expectations for all students, and treat all students and families with respect.</p> <p>Research suggested adults need to deal with bullying and harassment promptly and appropriately to create a positive culture and address adult-adult, student-student and adult-student bullying.</p> <p>Family Resources/Engagement Research indicated that effective parent/family and school engagement policy and practices should be in place to foster home-school connections.</p> <p>Community Support/Engagement</p>	<p><i>Convergence = 2 or more groups had the same theme</i></p> <p>Instructional Delivery All data sources supported the need for instruction that is engaging, relevant, and individualized to student needs.</p> <p>System Supports/Flexibility All data sources indicated the system needs to support a variety of pathways to obtain a high school diploma.</p> <p>All data sources indicated that schools need to be flexible to accommodate individual student real-life issues.</p> <p>All data sources indicated a need to address credit/component recovery for students at risk of school failure.</p> <p>Relationships/Climate All data sources suggested schools should foster positive adult and peer relationships with all students.</p> <p>Family Resources/Engagement Workgroup members and research results indicated that parents need to view education as relevant and valuable for their children.</p> <p>Community Support/Engagement All data sources suggested that community engagement is important in supporting students, families and schools.</p> <p>Positive Re-engagement All data sources indicated schools need to employ positive re-engagement techniques rather than relying on punitive consequences for truancy/attendance.</p>

acceptable, to not supporting a youth-centered program/place to go after school, to having low expectations for some students.

Positive Re-engagement

Both students and the community believed there needs to be personal and positive ways to re-engage students so that they are motivated to continue their education.

success in businesses.

Positive re-engagement

Workgroups members felt that schools needed to establish relationships with students and parents to positively engage them in school activities, rather than a singular focus on punitive efforts at reinforcing school attendance.

Funding for support

Members indicated some concern on the funding for enforcement of attendance for such things as:

- o Enforcement of truancy and absenteeism
- o Support staff (i.e. social workers and counselors)
- o Support for developing parent engagement - helping parents figure out ways to get these students to school and being problem solvers with parents instead of adversaries

Research pointed to the need to develop strong community partnerships (interagency collaboration) to help provide supports to families, students and schools.

Positive Re-engagement

Research supported actions to positively re-engage students rather than basing truancy/lack of connection on punitive responses/consequences.

FINAL ANALYSIS indicates the need to develop and sustain a variety of supports for learning within Iowa's educational system, including but not limited to:

- 1) Promoting instructional delivery techniques that are engaging, relevant, and individualized to student needs;
- 2) Developing and supporting flexible systems that support a variety of pathways to obtain a high school diploma, and accommodate students' real-life issues;
- 3) Establishing positive supports in schools that foster adult and peer relationships and welcoming school climate;
- 4) Promoting active parent engagement and providing resources/support to help parents increase skills and knowledge regarding the relevance of education;
- 5) Actively garnering community engagement and support;
- 6) Developing positive re-engagement techniques as opposed to punitive consequences.

Appendix J

Dropping Out and the Effect on Iowa's Economy

Potential Net Increase in State Treasury Associated with Educating Dropouts to High School Graduation (Veale, 2009)

"Opportunity Cost" to State Treasury vs. State Cost for Educating Iowa's 4,442 Dropouts (FY08 Condition of Education)

- Reduced state tax revenues over 45 year lifetime of work due to reduced personal income of dropouts: **\$87.2 million** ("opportunity cost" to state treasury) [(\$1,178-\$742) taxes/year x 4,442 dropouts x 45 years]
- State cost ("one-time") to educate 4,442 dropouts to high school completion: **\$52.6 million** [\$5,333 state cost/student for one year x 4,442 dropouts x 2.22 years]
- Potential net increase in state treasury over 45 year lifetime of work of current dropouts associated with educating them to the status of graduates:

\$87.2 million - \$52.6 million = **\$34.6 million** or **about \$768 thousand** per year

Note: The above estimate should be "conservative" since we are using 2000 personal income figures (based on overall estimated income for graduates, with 2004 tax rates) and 2008 state cost for education and dropout data.

Quantifiable Costs of Dropping Out of School - Estimates for Iowa

- Reduced personal income over lifetime = **\$386,055**
- Reduced state tax revenues over lifetime = **\$87.2 million**
- Increase in welfare burden due to dropouts' higher rate of unemployment = **\$1.8 million** per year
- Increased risk of incarceration = **10.0** (assuming cohort dropout rate of 11.8 percent)

The full report could be provided by Dr. Veale, upon request

Appendix K

Instructional Support Levy

Instructional Support Program Limitation on Using Resources for Returning Dropout and Dropout Prevention Programs

The following information was provided by Iowa Code section 257.19, on the Instructional Support Program states: However, money received by a district for the instructional support program shall not be used as, or in a manner which has the effect of, supplanting funds authorized to be received under sections 257.41, 257.46, 298.2, and 298.4, or to cover any deficiencies in funding for special education instructional services resulting from the application of the special education weighting plan under section 256B.9.

The Instructional Support Program is limited to no more than 10 percent of the regular program district cost of the district and is funded by the instructional support state aid and either an instructional support property tax or a combination of an instructional support property tax and an instructional support income surtax.

Iowa Code section 257.41 covers the funding for the return dropout and dropout prevention program. These programs are funded by 25 percent or more from the regular program district cost of the district and 75 percent from modified allowable growth funded by a local property tax.

Iowa Code section 257.46 covers the funding for the gifted and talented program. These programs are funded by 25 percent or more from the regular program district cost of the district and 75 percent from the district cost per pupil included in the Iowa School Foundation Formula (combination of state foundation aid and foundation property tax).

Iowa Code section 298.2 covers the funding of the physical plant and equipment levy for infrastructure purposes. The PPEL consists of an amount up to 33 cent per \$1000 of assessed valuation for regular PPEL, which is all property tax, and an amount up to \$1.34 for voter-approved PPEL, which is funded by a local property tax or a combination of a local property tax and an income surtax.

Iowa Code section 298.4 covers the funding of the district management levy will is an unlimited local property tax levy for unemployment, insurance, legal judgment, or early retirement purposes.

Iowa Code section 256B.9 covers the special education weighting plan which “weights” students at more than 1.0 for purposes of covering the costs of providing the instructional program and services pursuant to the students’ IEPs. Iowa Code subsection 257.31(14) covers the balances in the weighted funding to determine if the revenues exceeded expenditures (called positive balance or excess balance) or if the expenditures exceed revenues (called a negative balance or deficit balance). The district may request modified allowable growth funded by a local property tax in the amount of the deficit.

The purpose of the limitation in Iowa Code section 257.19 is to prevent revenue switching. Districts cannot use Instructional Support Program, which is a supplementary program, to supplant the funding mechanism already available in Code for Returning Dropout and Dropout Prevention Program. Revenue switching in this case would be to use Instructional Support State Aid or Instructional Support Income Surtax instead of using the Returning Dropout and Dropout Prevention Program property tax and a portion of the district’s regular program district cost.

This does not prevent the district from using the Instructional Support Program revenues for Returning Dropout and Dropout Prevention Programs AFTER the district has maximized the funding that is available to the district under Iowa Code section 257.41.

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What Works Clearinghouse



Career Academies

Program description	<i>Career Academies</i> are school-within-school programs operating in high schools. They offer career-related curricula based on	a career theme, academic coursework, and work experience through partnerships with local employers. ¹
Research	One study of <i>Career Academies</i> met What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. This randomized controlled trial included 474 youth who were predicted to be most at-risk of	dropping out of high school prior to the intervention. ² The <i>Academies</i> were located in eight urban areas in six states.
Effectiveness	<i>Career Academies</i> were found to have potentially positive effects on staying in school, potentially positive effects on progressing in school, and no discernible effects on completing school for those youth most at-risk of dropping out prior to the	intervention. ³ The <i>Career Academies</i> served a more heterogeneous population, and the results for the high-risk youth may not be independent of their participation in the intervention with youth less at risk of dropping out.

	Staying in school	Progressing in school	Completing school
Rating of effectiveness	Potentially positive effects	Potentially positive effects	No discernible effects
Improvement index⁴	Average: +13 percentile points	Average: +13 percentile points Range: +11 to +15 percentile points	Average: -0.1 percentile points

1. This report focuses on *Career Academies* with a school-within-school structure. Some *Career Academies* have operated as entire schools but are outside the scope of the review because their primary focus is not dropout prevention.
2. This report focuses on the 474 youth in the study sample who were most at risk of dropping out of high school because the *Career Academies* model initially focused on high-risk youth; these youth represent 27% of the total study sample of 1,764. Researchers used student background characteristics (including sibling dropped out, overage for grade, transferred schools two or more times, and attendance, GPA, and credits earned in the year of random assignment) to develop a model to predict whether students in the comparison group dropped out of school, and then applied the estimated model to predict which intervention-group students were most likely to drop out. The findings for those youth considered less at-risk of dropping out of school are presented in Appendices A4.1–A4.3.
3. The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.
4. These values show the average and range of improvement indices for all findings in the three review domains across the one study included in this report. The range is provided only if more than one outcome was measured within a domain.

Additional program information

Developer and contact

Information on the history of *Career Academies* and current resources for program implementation is available from the [National Career Academy Coalition \(NCAC\)](#) and the [Career Academy Support Network \(CASN\)](#).

Scope of use

The [NCAC](#) reports that at least 1,500 *Career Academies* are currently in operation, and a registry maintained by the [CASN](#) includes more than 1,600 *Career Academies*.

Description of intervention

Career Academies were developed more than 30 years ago as a drop-out prevention strategy and targeted youth considered most at risk of dropping out of high school. More recently, *Career Academies* have broadened the kinds of students they serve, consistent with efforts to integrate rigorous academic curricula with career themes and to attract students who are

preparing for post-secondary education. *Career Academies* operate within a larger high school and are guided by a career theme such as health care, finance, technology, communications, and public service. Students take their career-related courses within the *Academy*, which often are taught by the core team of *Academy* teachers. Some *Academies* integrate their courses with other academic subjects required for graduation. *Career Academies* also partner with local employers, who provide internship opportunities and mentoring to students, contribute resources, participate in special events, and serve on *Academy* advisory boards.

Cost

Information on the cost of *Career Academies* was found for the California Partnership Academies and was estimated in 2004 to be \$600 a pupil more than a district's average per pupil expenditure.⁵ The WWC did not find information on the cost to deliver services to the high-risk youth within the *Career Academies*.

Research

The WWC reviewed seven studies of the effectiveness of *Career Academies*. One study (Kemple & Snipes, 2000; Kemple, 2004) was a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards. Six studies did not meet WWC evidence screens.

The Kemple and Snipes (2000) and Kemple (2004) study was a randomized controlled trial that included a total of 1,764

students who applied to the entrance grade (9th or 10th) of nine *Career Academies* included in the evaluation. Of these, 474 students were predicted to be at high risk of dropping out of high school.² The study measured outcomes at the end of a student's projected 12th-grade year and then four years after a student's projected 12th-grade year.

Effectiveness

Findings²

The WWC review of interventions for dropout prevention addresses student outcomes in three domains: staying in school, progressing in school, and completing school.

Staying in school. Kemple and Snipes (2000) reported that for the sample of youth most at risk of dropping out of high school,

Career Academies had a positive and statistically significant effect on dropping out. At the end of the students' projected 12th-grade year, 21% of the *Career Academy* group and 32% of the comparison group had dropped out of high school. Findings for youth who were predicted to have a low or medium risk of dropping out of high school are presented in Appendix A4.1.

5. This estimate is derived from the following sources: www2.bc.cc.ca.us/techprep/partnershipplus.html and www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/part3.3.02.asp.

Effectiveness *(continued)*

Progressing in school. Kemple and Snipes (2000) reported that for the sample of youth most at risk of dropping out of high school, *Career Academies* had a positive and statistically significant effect on progressing through high school. At the end of the students' projected 12th-grade year, *Career Academy* youth had earned an average of 19 credits and comparison youth had earned an average of 17 credits, and 40% of *Career Academy* youth and 26% of comparison youth had earned sufficient credits to graduate. Findings for youth who were predicted to have a low or medium risk of dropping out of high school are presented in Appendix A4.2.

Completing school. Kemple (2004) reported that four years after students' projected 12th-grade year, there was no statistically significant difference between the percentage of high-risk *Career Academy* and comparison youth who earned a diploma or GED certificate; 83% of the youth in both groups had either graduated with a diploma or received a GED. Findings for youth who were predicted to have a low or medium risk of dropping out of high school are presented in Appendix A4.3.

Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates an intervention's effects for a given outcome as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings,⁶ the size of the difference between participants in the intervention condition and the comparison condition, and the consistency in findings across studies (see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#)).

The WWC found *Career Academies* to have potentially positive effects on staying in school, potentially positive effects on

progressing in school, and no discernible effects on completing school.

Improvement index

The WWC computes an improvement index for each individual finding. In addition, within each outcome domain, the WWC computes an average improvement index for each study and an average improvement index across studies (see [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#)). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition versus the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is entirely based on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the analysis. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results for the intervention group. The improvement index for staying in school is +13 percentile points based on one study. The average improvement index for progressing in school is +13 percentile points based on one study, with a range of +11 to +15 percentile points across the findings. The improvement index for completing school is -0.1 percentile point based on one study.

Summary

The WWC reviewed seven studies on *Career Academies*. One of these studies met WWC evidence standards, and the remaining six studies did not meet WWC evidence screens. Based on this one study, the WWC found potentially positive effects on staying in school, potentially positive effects on progressing in school, and no discernible effects on completing school. The evidence presented in this report is limited and may change as new research emerges.

6. The level of statistical significance was reported by the study authors or, where necessary, calculated by the WWC to correct for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation, see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). See [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#) for the formulas the WWC used to calculate the statistical significance. In the case of *Career Academies*, a correction for multiple comparisons was needed for the multiple measures reported in the progressing in school domain.

References **Met WWC evidence standards**

Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000). *Career Academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school*. New York: MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation).

Additional sources:

Kemple, J. J. (2004). *Career Academies: Impacts on labor market outcomes and educational attainment*. New York: MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation).

Kemple, J. J., & Rock, J. L. (1996). *Career Academies: Early implementation lessons from a 10-site evaluation*. New York: MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation).

Did not meet WWC evidence screens

Dayton, C., & Weisberg, A. (1987). *School-to-work and academy demonstration programs: 1986-87 evaluation report* (Policy Paper No. PC87-11-12-EMCF). Berkeley, CA: Policy Analysis for California Education.⁷

Additional source:

Dayton, C. (1988). "Jobs for the Disadvantaged" graduate follow-up survey (Policy Paper No. PP88-5-6). Berkeley, CA: Policy Analysis for California Education.

Dayton, C., Weisberg, A., & Stern, D. (1989). *California Partnership Academies: 1987-88 evaluation report* (Policy Paper No. PP89-9-1). Berkeley, CA: Policy Analysis for California Education.⁷

Additional sources:

Stern, D., Dayton, C., Paik, I., & Weisberg, A. (1989). Benefits and costs of dropout prevention in a high school program combining academic and vocational education: Third-year results from replications of the California Peninsula Academies. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(4), 405–416.

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Maxwell, N., & Rubin, L. (2000). *High school career academies: A pathway to educational reform in urban school districts?* Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.⁸

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Maxwell, N. (2001). Step to college: Moving from the high school career academy through the 4-Year University. *Evaluation Review*, 25(6), 619–654.

Maxwell, N., & Rubin, L. (2001). *Career academy programs in California: Outcomes and implementation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, California Policy Research Center.

7. Lack of evidence for baseline equivalence: the study, which used a quasi-experimental design, did not establish that the comparison group was equivalent to the intervention group at baseline.

8. Severe overall attrition: the study, which used a quasi-experimental design, lost a large proportion of its sample from the pretest to the posttest.

References *(continued)*

Maxwell, N., & Rubin, L. (1997). *The relative impact of a career academy on post-secondary work and education skills in urban, public high schools* (Discussion Paper No. 97-2). Hayward, CA: California State University, Human Investment Research and Education Center.

Reller, D. J. (1984). *The Peninsula Academies: Final technical evaluation report*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research.⁷

Additional sources:

Reynolds, D. F. (1984). *The Peninsula Academies: Third yearly interim report*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research.

Reynolds, D. F., & Reeves, J. K. (1983). *The Peninsula Academies: Second yearly interim report*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research.

For more information about specific studies and WWC calculations, please see the [WWC Career Academies Technical Appendices](#).

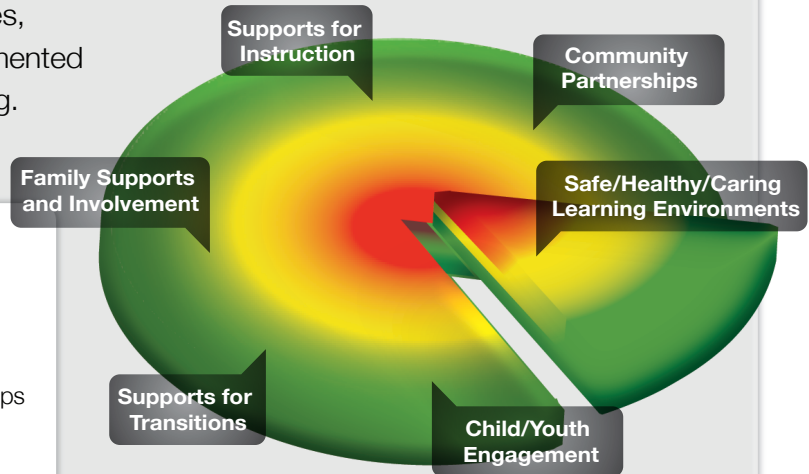
LEARNING SUPPORTS

Enhancing a continuum of integrated supports for learning in order to promote (1) student learning in the Iowa Core Curriculum, (2) healthy development, and (3) success in school and in life.

Learning Supports are the wide range of strategies, programs, services, and practices that are implemented to create conditions that enhance student learning.

Learning supports:

- promote core learning and healthy development for all students,
- are proactive to prevent problems and serve as early interventions and supplemental support for targeted groups of students, and
- provide intensive and highly individualized supports for some students.



The Six Content Areas of Learning Supports

The six content areas of Learning Supports form the structure for organizing, understanding, and selecting research-based interventions. The content areas provide a broad unifying framework within which a school - family - community continuum of learning support programs and practices can be organized.

Supports for Instruction foster healthy cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development. Supports for instruction are inherent in the Instructional Decision Making process which uses multiple strategies to provide supplemental and intensive supports to ensure that children and youth have the full benefit of quality instruction.

Family Supports and Involvement promote and enhance the involvement of parents and family members in education.

Community Partnerships promote school partnerships with multiple sectors of the community to build linkages and collaborations for youth development services, opportunities, and supports.

Safe, Healthy and Caring Learning Environments promote school-wide environments that ensure the physical and psychological well-being and safety of all children and youth through positive youth development efforts and proactive planning for management of emergencies, crises and follow - up.

Supports for Transitions enhance the school's ability to address a variety of transition concerns that confront children, youth and their families.

Child/Youth Engagement promotes opportunities for youth to be engaged in and contribute to their communities.