

Annual Report



iowacollaboration
for**youth**development

State of Iowa
February 1, 2012



Iowa Department of Human Rights

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

Division of Community Action Agencies | Division of Community Advocacy and Services | Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

Offices of

Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs | Deaf Services | Latino Affairs | Native American Affairs | Persons with Disabilities | Status of African Americans | Status of Women

TO: Governor Terry Branstad and
Members of the General Assembly

FROM: San Wong, Chair
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

Date: February 1, 2012

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

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

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

The 2012 Annual Report includes our prioritized issue and goal, data that demonstrates the state's current position, activities and accomplishments that the ICYD Council completed in 2011; emerging activities being implemented in 2012; and recommended actions that will help Iowa achieve the goal – *Increasing Iowa's Graduation Rate to 95% by 2020*. It is with the understanding that several issues (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, and mental health) prevent many youth from graduating from high school, that the ICYD Council agencies work to address these issues as individual agencies and together as a team to maximize efficiency in state government, make the best use of existing resources, and create substantial and lasting positive changes for Iowa's youth.

The ICYD Council recognizes the financial issues facing the State of Iowa, and continues to leverage grant funding and in-kind staff support to implementing many of the recommended actions without any need for increased funding. However, there is a need for resources to build capacity to fulfill some of the prioritized actions that include training youth workers on positive youth development principles and to sustain the use of the Iowa Youth Survey every two years. In addition, as pilot projects are completed (currently funded with grants), there will be the need to expand effective programs to other areas in the state.

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

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Swong".

San Wong, Chair
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

State of Iowa
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

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Chuck Morris, Director, ISU Extension, 4-H Youth Development
Chuck Palmer, Director, Department of Human Services
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Acknowledgments

The ICYD Council thanks all of the staff who contributed to producing this report. A special acknowledgment is extended to the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), who made important contributions in sharing their thoughts, ideas, expertise, and youth voice with us.



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Executive Summary – ICYD Council 2012 Annual Report

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council members are leaders of 10 state agencies with the vision that **“All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood.”** The ICYD Council oversees the activities of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC) and has sought input from these youth leaders in the development of more effective policies, practices, programs, and this Annual Report. SIYAC consists of youth between 14 –21 years of age who reside in Iowa, with the purpose to foster communication with the governor, general assembly, and state and local policymakers regarding programs, policies, and practices affecting youth and families; and to advocate for youth on important issues affecting youth. In 2009, legislation passed formalizing the ICYD Council and SIYAC in Iowa Code Section 216A.140.

In 2010, the ICYD Council prioritized the following youth issue: **By 2020, Iowa will increase the graduation rate from 89% to 95%.** It is with the understanding that several issues (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, and mental health) prevent many youth from graduating from high school, that the ICYD Council agencies work to address these issues as individual agencies and together as a team to maximize efficiency in state government, make the best use of existing resources, and create substantial and lasting positive changes for Iowa’s youth. According to the *2011 Annual Condition of Education Report* the 2009 four-year graduation rate for all students was 87.3%; in 2010 it increased to 88.8%. The five year fixed cohort graduation rate for the graduating class of 2009 was 90.5%. The five year cohort for 2010 will be available next year.

ICYD Council accomplishments in 2011 include the partnership with the Department of Education in the implementation of two federal grants – Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools (IS³) and Iowa State Agencies Supporting Safe Schools (ISAS³). The IS³ project created a measurement system to assess *Conditions for Learning* in the areas of school safety, student engagement and environment. Based on the data, 20 high schools were selected that demonstrate the greatest opportunity for improvement. In 2012, the IS³ schools will implement plans to address each school’s needs.

The Council identified two emerging inter-agency activities to initially address in 2012:

1. Information Sharing / Coordination of services between Schools and the Department of Human Services;
2. Coordination and alignment of “youth-fueled” councils and initiatives that expand opportunities for youth to participate.

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

- Continue utilization of state agency staff time to implement ongoing activities.
- Provide resources to expand practices, policies, and programs to broader areas in the state, as evidence-based practices are developed in the IS³ schools, in the CAPS project, and in other pilot activities.
- Expand opportunities for youth to participate in youth-fueled initiatives.
- Infuse positive youth development (PYD) principles in all youth programming.
- Maintain the use of the Iowa Youth Survey every two years.



I. Overview of ICYD Council and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC)

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

- Purpose, goals, 2011 accomplishments, and emerging activities for 2012,
- Membership of the ICYD Council and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC);
- Progress on achieving the priority youth issue – ***Increasing Iowa’s graduation rate to 95% by 2020***, with data and information on the progress; and
- Recommendations for action in 2012 to the Governor and General Assembly.

In 2009, legislation passed placing the ICYD Council and SIYAC in Iowa Code Section 216A.140. Prior to becoming “formal” councils, both ICYD and SIYAC operated as non-statutory entities. The ICYD began in 1999 as an informal network of state agencies from ten departments serving as a forum to foster improvement in and coordination of state and local youth policy and programs. The ICYD has developed the following Youth Development Result Areas:

- All youth have safe and supportive families, schools, and communities;
- All youth are healthy and socially competent;
- All youth are successful in school;
- All youth are prepared for a productive adulthood.

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

SIYAC was established in 2001 as a vehicle for high school youth to inform state leaders on youth issues and currently consists of 21 youth between 14 –21 years of age who reside in Iowa. The ICYD Council is overseeing the activities of SIYAC and has sought input from these youth leaders in the development of more effective policies, practices, programs, and this Annual Report.

The Department of Human Rights is the lead agency and oversees activities for both the ICYD Council and SIYAC. The agendas and minutes of the meetings are posted on the ICYD website: www.icyd.iowa.gov.



ICYD Council’s Purpose

The ICYD Council’s vision statement, as stated in the legislation is:
“All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood.”

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

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

ICYD Council’s Membership

The ICYD Council’s membership is the director or chief administrator (or their designee) of 10 state agencies and programs that have been participating prior to the legislation. The ICYD Council has the ability to expand membership to include others that will assist the Council in achieving its purpose. In addition to each agency’s director (or designee) serving on the ICYD Council, many of the agencies have additional staff that actively participate in meetings and complete tasks as directed by the ICYD Council on the ICYD Ready by 21 Results Team. Below are the agencies and members of the ICYD Council:

ICYD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Department of Human Rights San Wong, Director	Department of Education Jason E. Glass, Director
ISU Extension, 4-H Youth Development Chuck Morris, Director *Keli Tallman, Youth Development Program	Department of Human Services Chuck Palmer, Director *Wendy Rickman, Administrator - Division of
Commission on Volunteer Service Adam Lounsbury, Executive Director	Iowa Workforce Development Teresa Wahlert, Director
Department of Public Health Dr. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, Director *Kathy Stone, Director, Division of Behavioral Health	Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy Dale Woolery, Interim Director *Becky Swift, Prevention and Education Programs Coordinator
Child Advocacy Board Richard Moore, Director	Early Childhood Iowa Shanell Wagler, Facilitator

*Agency Designee when member is unable to participate

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

SIYAC's Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of SIYAC, as stated in the Iowa Code, is to “foster communication among a group of engaged youth and the governor, general assembly, and state and local policymakers regarding programs, policies, and practices affecting youth and families; and to advocate for youth on important issues affecting youth.

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

SIYAC meets at least quarterly in Des Moines to identify issues affecting youth, discuss community needs, plan for activities, form partnerships to meet those needs, draft positions on youth issues and to communicate those positions with legislators.

Each year, SIYAC presents independent information and recommendations on youth issues associated with the goals of their committees, as well as other pertinent issues impacting the state's young people, to the General Assembly and Governor's Office during the legislative session. In addition to addressing youth issues with the legislature, SIYAC also carries out service projects in their respective communities and on a statewide basis.

SIYAC members serve two-year terms that begin in July of each year. During the 2010-11 school year, SIYAC focused on four issues: Teen Nutrition, Youth Outreach, Substance Abuse, and Life after Graduation. In addition, as other youth issues arose during the legislative session, SIYAC researched the issues and choose to take positions on a number of them.

Notable SIYAC accomplishments during 2011:

- Supported the Student Athlete Health Bill, which is to prevent further injury to student athletes with suspected concussions and other head injuries.
- Produced an Alcohol & Tobacco Audit Toolkit, which is being used by local alcohol and tobacco prevention coalitions.
- Created and distributed nutrition posters for school cafeterias in partnership with the Department of Education's Team Nutrition.
- Began development of a post-graduation readiness program for high school students
- Completed a tree planting service project with Des Moines schools, with the assistance of a grant from the Department of Natural Resources.
- Conducted youth outreach in communities and presentations in schools.

The current 2011-12 SIYAC committees include: Education, Health & Wellness, Environment, and Violence Awareness.

Below are the planned activities for each committee:

1. Education
 - Develop position statements on the proposed education reform blueprint.
 - Examine Achieving Maximum Potential's (AMP) legislative agenda and its implications for all youth.
 - Study the causes of the state's high school graduation rate and create a plan to improve it.
 - Strategize ways to combat the “brain drain” trend among educated young Iowans.



2. Health & Wellness
 - Promote healthy lifestyle choices among our state’s young people.
 - Contribute to the planning and facilitation of the Iowa Department of Education’s “Students Taking Charge” teen health symposium.
 - Learn about the state’s current initiatives addressing youth health.
3. Environment
 - Educate young Iowans about sustainable living and keeping our state green.
 - Research the recycling programs of school districts.
 - Plan a statewide youth outreach campaign addressing environmental concerns.
4. Violence Awareness
 - Investigate current programs addressing bullying and harassment in schools and examining their effectiveness.
 - Understand the impact of bullying behaviors and raising awareness among youth and relevant stakeholders
 Researching the current Safe Schools Law and any proposed legislation

2011-2012 SIYAC Members:

Name	Office Held	City	County
Mimi Barney	Chair, Service Coordination	Bettendorf	Scott
Annika Bergstrom		Iowa City	Johnson
Bradlee Birchansky		Cedar Rapids	Linn
Jacob Bundt		Churdan	Greene
Jeffrey Critchlow	Chair, Legislative Affairs	Carlisle	Warren
Hannah Cross		Riceville	Mitchell
Zack Elsner	Chair, Education Committee	Boone	Boone
Umar Farooq		Ames	Story
Khayree Fitten	Executive Chair of SIYAC	Mt. Pleasant	Henry
Raeann Hanlon		Churdan	Grenne
Skyler Hill-Norby		Alton	Sioux
Eli Kirschbaum	Deputy Chair, Legislative Affairs	Bettendorf	Scott
Lilly Lenning		Fort Dodge	Webster
Jessa Marfal	Chair, Health & Wellness Committee	Des Moines	Polk
Jacob Mayer	Chair, Violence Awareness Committee	Lake City	Calhoun
Blake McGhghy		Keokuk	Lee
Quincy McGee	Vice Chair of SIYAC	Cedar Rapids	Linn
Vanessa Shearer	Secretary	Keokuk	Lee
Zachary Stephenson		Polk City	Polk
Natalie Te Grootenhuis		Hospers	Sioux
Olivia VanAntwerp	Chair, Environment Committee	Cedar Rapids	Linn

II. Prioritized Issue: Increasing Iowa's Graduation Rate

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

During the time the ICYD Council was an informal network, there were many positive things accomplished, including:

- Promoting youth development and community planning on youth issues in communities;
- Providing resources and assistance addressing the needs of youth transitioning to adulthood;
- Creating a results framework for Iowa youth; and
- Providing technical assistance and training on quality youth development practices.

The ICYD Council members have agreed that the focal point for collaborative efforts be a specific and aggressive goal for the state. The ICYD Council has prioritized two of the Youth Development Result Areas: *All Iowa youth are successful in school; and all youth are prepared for a productive adulthood.* Graduation and dropout rates are both included as measures, or indicators, for these result areas. The ICYD Council agreed on the following goal in the first Annual Report, dated February 1, 2010:

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

In addition to this overarching goal, an intermediate goal is: *By 2015, Iowa will decrease the number of annual dropouts by 25%, or 1,100 youth.*

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

The below measures are critical in monitoring progress for all Iowa youth towards the graduation goal:

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

Economic Impact of the Graduation Rate on Iowa's Economy

Iowans can take pride in having one of the highest graduation rates in the nation. The overall graduation rate in 2009 was 87.2%. While Iowa's dropout rate of 2.16% is also low in comparison with other states, the loss of 4,807 students from the graduating class of 2009 damages Iowa's economy. The "costs" of dropping out include decreased personal income and revenues, increased unemployment and welfare burden, and increased risk of incarceration and poor health outcomes. These "costs" affect all of the ICYD partnering state agencies.

A closer look at graduation and dropout rates in Iowa reveals that there are **significant gaps for students enrolled in urban districts, minority students, and students with disabilities.** In order to compete nationally and globally and to overcome current economic challenges, all students in Iowa need to graduate prepared for college, work, and life. What will it take to move Iowa from good to great in graduating Iowa students?

Graduation for “some” is not acceptable in Iowa.

The graduation rate has significant implications for Iowa’s economy. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education:

- More than \$336 million would be added to Iowa’s economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students
- Iowa would save more than \$84.4 million in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- Iowa’s economy would see a combination of savings and revenue of about \$44 million in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5 percent.

According to the Department of Corrections, 53.3% of Iowa inmates are high school dropouts. The Department of Corrections’ *FY 2010 Annual Report* states the average cost of incarceration in 2010 in Iowa was \$31,288. The Department of Education’s *2011 Annual Condition of Education Report*, states the average total per student expenditure for 2009-10 was \$9,455.

Graduation and Dropout Data

The information and data on the graduation and dropout rates is from the Department of Education’s *2011 Annual Condition of Education Report*.

Iowa’s 2009 and 2010 graduating classes are the two groups of students to have a statewide identification number for five years or longer. With this identification system and EASIER data, Iowa can follow the same group of students over several years and implement the first-time freshman cohort rates (students who repeated their freshmen year were not included in the cohort). The four-year cohort graduation rate is calculated for the class of 2010 (or class of 2009) by dividing the number of students in the cohort (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less by the number of first-time 9th graders enrolled in the fall of 2006 (or first-time 9th graders enrolled in the fall of 2005 for class of 2009) minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in.

$$\text{Iowa Four Year Fixed Cohort Graduation Rate} = (\text{FG} + \text{TIG}) / (\text{F} + \text{TI} - \text{TO})$$

For the graduating class of 2010:

- FG = First-time 9th grade students in fall of 2006 and graduated in 2010 or earlier,
- TIG = Students who transferred in grades 9 to 12 and graduate in 2010 or sooner,
- F = First-time 9th grade student in fall of 2006,
- TI = Transferred in the first-time 9th graders’ cohort in grades 9 to 12,
- TO = Transfer out (including emigrates and deceased),

For the graduating class of 2009:

- FG = First-time 9th grade students in fall of 2005 and graduated in 2009 or earlier,
- TIG = Students who transferred in grades 9 to 12 and graduate in 2009 or sooner,
- F = First-time 9th grade student in fall of 2005.

The reasons that students drop out of school or do not graduate on time are many and varied. Some students have negative experiences at school and simply don’t like school in general. Other students have responsibilities that compete with school such as helping to support their

First-time freshmen and transferred-in students include: resident students attending a public school in the district; non-resident students open-enrolled in, whole-grade sharing in, or tuition in; and foreign students on Visa. Those excluded are: home-schooled and nonpublic schooled students; public school student enrolled in another district but taking courses on a part time basis; and foreign exchange students.

Students receiving regular diplomas are included as graduates in the numerator. Early graduates are included to the original cohort.

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who take longer to graduate are included in the denominator not in the numerator for the four year rate.

Although the cohort graduation rates expect students to complete high school in four years, the Iowa Department of Education is reporting extended year graduation rates. The five-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using a similar methodology as the four-year cohort rate. This rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in the cohort (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years or less (by the 2009-2010 school year) by the number of first-time 9th graders enrolled in the fall of 2005 minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in. The five-year cohort rate will maintain the same denominator as the previous year's four-year cohort rate, simply adding students who graduate in the fifth year to the numerator.

Tables 1 and 2 (below) display the four year fixed cohort graduation rates for graduating classes of 2009 and 2010, and the five year fixed cohort graduation rates for graduating class of 2009. The rates listed are for all student group and 11 subgroups. In gender comparison, females had higher graduation rate than males in average. Among the ethnic/race subgroups, White and Asian students had higher graduation rates than other race groups; the students who were eligible for free reduced price lunch and IEP, English Language Learners (ELL), and migrant students had graduation rates lower than all student groups.

Table 1

Iowa Public High School Fixed Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup - Graduating Class 2009 and 2010			
Group	4 Year Rate for Class of 2010		
	Numerator	Denominator	Graduation Rate
All Students	32,104	36,152	88.8%
African American	1,076	1,494	72.0%
American Indian	132	180	73.3%
Asian	600	668	89.8%
Hispanic	1,546	2,021	76.5%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			
Two or More Races	379	438	86.5%
White	28,371	31,349	90.5%
Disability*	3,709	5,252	70.6%
ELL**	701	962	72.9%
Low SES***	9,768	12,383	78.9%
Migrant	139	221	62.9%
Female	16,325	17,999	90.7%
Male	15,779	18,153	86.9%

Table 2

4 Year Rate for Class of 2009			
Group	Numerator	Denominator	Graduation Rate
All Students	31,970	36,640	87.3%
African American	1,112	1,543	72.1%
American Indian	126	185	68.1%
Asian	578	664	87.0%
Hispanic	1,197	1,740	68.8%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			
Two or More Races			
White	28,957	32,484	89.1%
Disability*	3,812	5,424	70.3%
ELL**	597	933	64.0%
Low SES***	9,118	11,810	77.2%
Migrant	153	220	69.5%
Female	16,140	18,099	89.2%
Male	15,830	18,541	85.4%

5 Year Rate for Class of 2009			
Group	Numerator	Denominator	Graduation Rate
All Students	33,146	36,640	90.5%
African American	1,202	1,543	77.9%
American Indian	142	185	76.8%
Asian	605	664	91.1%
Hispanic	1,329	1,740	76.4%
White	29,855	32,484	91.9%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			
Two or More Races			
Disability*	4,359	5,424	80.4%
ELL**	687	933	73.6%
Low SES***	9,844	11,810	83.4%
Migrant	172	220	78.2%
Female	16,647	18,099	92.0%
Male	16,499	18,541	89.0%

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, EASIER files.

Notes: *Disability Status is determined by the presence of an individualized education plan.

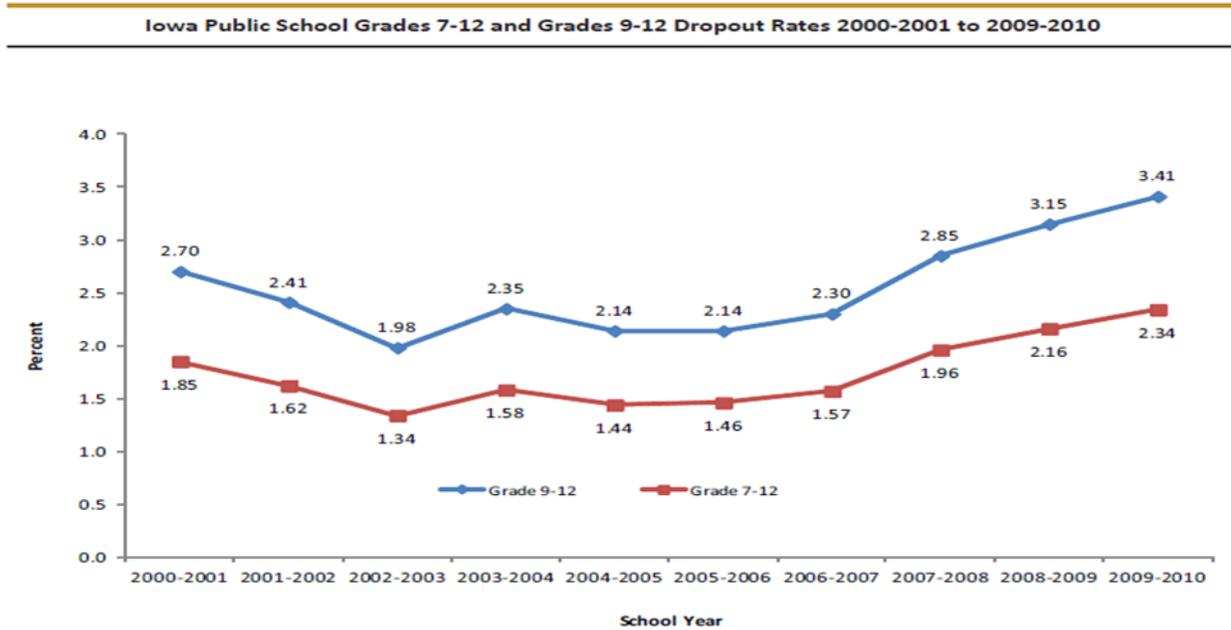
**ELL indicates English Language Learner.

***Low SES is determined by eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

Numbers may be redacted due to small cell size, therefore, the numbers may not sum total.

Figure 1 (below) shows the two statewide trends, the lower line is for grades 7-12 and the upper line is for grades 9-12 dropout rates of Iowa public schools. They are upward dropout trends for both grades 7-12 and grades 9-12 since 2006-2007.

Figure 1



Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Basic Educational Data Survey and EASIER Dropout files.

Figure 2 (below) shows the public school grade 7-12 dropout and enrollment data by race/ethnicity for 2009-2010. With the exception of the Asian group, the dropout rates were higher for minority groups than for the non-minority..

Figure 2

Race/Ethnic Group	Dropout Rate	Total Dropouts	% of Total Dropouts	Total Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
All Minority	4.59%	1,592	30.91%	34,715	15.80%
African American	6.31%	665	12.91%	10,537	4.80%
American Indian	6.15%	76	1.48%	1,235	0.56%
Asian	1.41%	57	1.11%	4,038	1.84%
Hispanic	4.49%	670	13.01%	14,920	6.79%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3.04%	7	0.14%	230	0.10%
Two or More	3.12%	117	2.27%	3,755	1.71%
White	1.92%	3,558	69.09%	184,957	84.20%
State	2.34%	5,150	100.00%	219,672	100.00%

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, EASIER Enrollment and Dropout files.

Note: *Figures may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Barriers to Learning

The reasons that students drop out of school or do not graduate on time are many and varied. Some students have negative experiences at school while other students have responsibilities that compete with school such as helping to support their families. There are also multiple reasons why students leave school. Contributing circumstances are in place long before the actual event of “dropping out.”

Dropping out of school is a process that can begin very early in a child’s life. An example of this would be a child with behavioral challenges in an early childhood program who may experience challenges as they enter school and begin to fall behind both academically and socially. Children who do not acquire the necessary reading skills at the elementary level will continue to “learn to read” as they enter middle school while their peers are “reading to learn”. A student who does not feel accepted by peers in the early years will become socially isolated and by the time they reach high school, will not feel competent or connected and may give up on academics, connect to peers with similar problems, and eventually drop out.

Reasons for dropping out of school can be described as “push” and “pull” effects. Push effects occur within the school such as not liking school, the inability to get along with teachers and/or students, frequent suspensions, not feeling safe at or connected to school or peers, falling behind with school work, and failing grades. Pull effects come from the external environment and include things like needing to work, having a child, influence of peers who have dropped out, and needing to care for family members.

Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 found that school-related push effects were the most frequently reported reasons for dropping out. The High School and Beyond longitudinal study included interviews with nearly 2,000 students who had dropped out of school. When asked for their reason for leaving school, 10% or more of those interviewed identified one these reasons:

- Did not like school (33%)
- Poor grades (33%)
- Were offered a job and chose to work (19%)
- Getting married (18%)
- Could not get along with teachers (15%)
- Had to help support family (11%)
- Pregnancy (11%)
- Expelled or suspended (10%)

The Silent Epidemic report further supports the above findings:

- Nearly 70 percent of dropouts said they were not motivated to work hard, and two-thirds would have worked harder if more had been demanded of them.
- Approximately one-third left for personal reasons and one-third cited “failing in school as a major factor.

By looking beyond these “symptoms” of dropping out and by identifying the root causes, a comprehensive system of integrated quality supports can be developed that will keep students in school until they graduate and prepare them for success after high school. Through the work of this Council and the singular focus of increasing the graduation rate, the agency members will make their respective contributions go further toward developing a healthy, competent workforce for Iowa’s future.

III. Accomplishments in 2011 and Emerging Activities in 2012

The ICYD Council’s activities have been guided by the “Recommended Actions” from the 2010 and the 2011 ICYD Annual Reports. Those five recommended actions are to:

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

Below are ICYD Council accomplishments and emerging ongoing activities that address the broad recommended actions. These include the ICYD Council’s partnership with the Department of Education in the implementation of two federal grants – Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools (IS³) and Iowa State Agencies Supporting Safe Schools (ISAS³).

Focus on underperforming schools and communities

Building on the ICYD Council’s efforts in 2010 that included conducting focus groups in communities with representatives from schools, businesses, community agencies, school boards, mayors, and local government agencies; 47 high schools were invited to participate in the IS³ initiative that will provide support for 20 of the schools demonstrating the highest need to implement a programmatic intervention system to improve conditions for learning.

In 2011, the IS³ initiative completed the following major activities:

- The Iowa Youth Survey was used as the basis for a measurement system to assess *Conditions for Learning* in the areas of school safety, student engagement and environment, resulting in a survey that was administered to students, school staff, and parents of the 47 participating IS³ high schools. Survey reports for students, staff, parents and a crossover report for all audiences were developed and distributed to each participating school. The survey will be administered annually at the funded schools.
- Area Education Agency (AEA) Learning Supports and Data Consultants were hired to support schools in survey administration, data analysis and implementation of a Continuous Improvement Process for Conditions for Learning. AEA Consultants are trained as trainers for Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- The IS³ Index was developed and applied to all schools that participated in the survey. A state-wide workshop was provided to all IS³ participating schools to explain the IS³ Index and begin a process for analyzing data. The data identified the 20 schools that demonstrate the greatest opportunity for improvement. The schools selected to receive funding are:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Armstrong-Ringsted Middle (MS) and High School (HS) | Louisa-Muscatine HS |
| Burlington HS | Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn HS |
| Columbus HS | Oelwein HS |
| Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln HS | Olin JH and HS |
| Davenport Central HS | Ottumwa HS |
| Des Moines East HS | Sioux City West HS |
| Dubuque Senior HS | Waterloo East HS |
| East Greene/Jefferson Grand Junction HS | Waterloo West HS |
| Iowa Valley Junior High (JH) and HS | West Sioux HS |
| Keokuk HS | Winfield-Mt. Union JH and HS |

These schools are currently:

- ◇ forming adult / youth leadership teams,
- ◇ utilizing the Safe School Certification Audit to assess compliance with Iowa Anti-Bullying and Harassment Law, and
- ◇ completing continuum maps to identify strategies being implemented and resources currently available to address conditions for learning.

In addition, in 2012, the IS³ schools will complete and implement their respective plans that will include identifying priority needs, researching evidence-based practices to address the needs, and implementing the plans in the Fall of 2012. The following trainings and workshops will be available to participating schools:

- Youth Adult Partnerships,
- Using Data in Youth Leadership Teams,
- Bullying/Harassment Investigator Training,
- Webinars on Social Media and Cyberbullying, and Engaging Communities in Bullying Prevention.

Assess current state initiatives and maximize existing resources.

The goal of the Iowa State Agencies Supporting Safe Schools (ISAS³) grant is to build the state-wide infrastructure to prevent youth substance use and violence in schools. The ICYD Council serves as the multi-agency team and partners with the Department of Education and the Learning Supports Advisory Team developing a statewide plan to create safe, healthy and caring learning environments. In 2011, criteria have been developed to assist in rating evidence-based practices/strategies to improve outcomes in the area of school safety, engagement and environment.

In 2012, state agencies and other youth-serving agencies across the state will be asked to submit strategies for a Resource Directory that can be used by schools and communities that identifies appropriate supports, services and resources to assist communities in sustaining safe learning environments. Schools participating in the IS³ grant will use this directory to select strategies that will improve outcomes in the areas of school safety, engagement and environment.

In addition, Iowa Youth Survey construct will be completed on the identification of threshold levels for parent and community involvement that correlate with graduation rates. A Continuous Improvement Process Manual for Conditions for Learning will also be developed to be used as a resource. The development of these tools and the implementation of local strategies and interventions will be shared with other communities beyond the IS³ schools.

Investigate research-based approaches and effective strategies

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative's recently published research (2011), *Adolescent Brain – New Research and its Implications for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care*, found that youth gradually transition to adulthood between 18 and 25 years of age. It was also found that adolescence is a time of “use it or lose it” in brain development: When young people are actively engaged in positive relationships and opportunities to contribute, create, and lead, they “use it” to develop skills to become successful adults.



There are five recommendations that come from the research:

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

In 2012, the ICYD Council will consider these recommendations when making decisions affecting youth in foster care and for all youth.

EMERGING ACTIVITIES in 2012

The emerging activities (listed below) incorporate the final two recommended actions:

- ◇ Coordinate across systems to identify and support vulnerable students; and
- ◇ Engage additional stakeholders.

During 2011, ICYD representatives participated in multiple facilitated meetings for the purpose of prioritizing the Council’s work that would lead to improved outcomes in the area of substance abuse and violence prevention which will in turn lead to increases in graduation rates. The result is a plan with three strategies and two major priority areas to be implemented in 2012:

Strategy #1: Bring clarity and cohesiveness to interpretation of policies by removing barriers to communication across agencies and with consumers, thus improving the quality of the relationships between providers and with their consumers.

Strategy #2: Maximize stewardship of limited resources by increasing collaboration across agencies.

Strategy #3: Increase engagement of at-risk students through promotion of voice and choice in their lives.

Priority Area: Information Sharing / Coordination of services between Schools and Department of Human Services.

The Challenge: For children involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems there is insufficient data sharing and coordination between education and child welfare agencies. It is unclear with who educational information can be shared locally (e.g. Department of Human Services, juvenile court services, service providers, foster parents, family members) and at the state level to track educational outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. In addition, as youth in foster care transfer between schools the transitions have additional challenges that include timeliness of transferring records, and losing credit for class work from previous schools.

Collaborative Opportunity: The Department of Education (DE) and Department of Human Services (DHS) are developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU), to be used statewide, between child welfare and education agencies with clear definitions, identifies required training of staff on information sharing requirements, and fully develop electronic

transmission of education records between schools for children in foster care, with the goal of electronic transmission for all students. The recent modification and clarification of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations that protect the privacy of educational records while allowing effective use of the data for research and to evaluate educational programs will assist in the finalization of the MOU.

To complement this work, a federal grant is allowing intensive supports, services, and policy alignment to be implemented in two counties to address this issue. The Collaboration of Agencies for Permanency and Stability (CAPS) project addresses educational stability problems in Woodbury and Pottawattamie Counties. CAPS will serve youth ages 13 and older in the child welfare system. Project partners are the Iowa Department of Human Services, Western Iowa Service Area; Iowa Third and Fourth Judicial District Juvenile Court Services; the Council Bluffs and Sioux City Community School Districts; the Iowa Department of Education; and Siouxland Human Investment Partnership. State agencies, youth, and their families with experience in the system will provide advice to the CAPS project.

The project will provide more seamless educational transitions, increase permanency for system youth, and reduce reentry into the system, CAPS will: (1) raise awareness of education-related issues within the child welfare, education, and legal communities, beginning with a kick-off conference featuring a nationally-recognized expert, (2) create electronic academic records shared across the three systems, and (3) provide Education Advocates to help youth and their families navigate educational systems successfully. An independent evaluation will determine if this project:

- ◇ increases school engagement and academic achievement;
- ◇ reduces transition problems, lost credits, and placement reentries; and
- ◇ streamline work within the child welfare, education, and legal systems.

Priority Area: Coordinate and align “youth-fueled”* councils and initiatives and expand opportunities for youth to participate.

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

- Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP)
- Capitol Girls
- Iowa Youth Congress (IYC)
- ISU Extension, 4-H Youth Development
- State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC)
- Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) and College Leadership Forum (CLF)
- Youth Tobacco Use Prevention Program.

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

*Youth-Fueled – Youth participation contribute to achieving the goals of the initiative. In some instances the youth lead, for other initiatives youth are active participants. All of youth-fueled initiatives are conducted ‘with’ youth, not ‘to’ or ‘for’ youth.

Collaborative Opportunity: The Department of Human Rights (DHR) will lead the coordination effort of the multiple agencies and organizations that have and support state-level youth-fueled councils and initiatives to effectively:

- ◇ develop communication strategies to identify and connect state-level youth initiatives;
- ◇ provide multiple opportunities for youth to participate in youth-fueled initiatives at local, regional, and state levels;
- ◇ utilize quality youth leadership training materials to prepare youth to serve on youth councils and initiatives (local, regional, and state levels); and
- ◇ provide positive youth development training for youth workers.

The goal is to coordinate and align activities of the initiatives, enhance the number and promote the variety of opportunities for youth to participate, and expand the pool of youth interested in participating on state and local level youth-fueled councils and initiatives.

IV. Recommended Actions in 2012

Achieving a 95 percent graduation rate by 2020 is an ambitious target. The ICYD Council is committed to concentrating its attention on and monitoring progress toward this goal, but reaching it will require continued, concerted, coordinated efforts by policymakers, education systems, and multiple state and community partners. The Council's work (see *Accomplishments in 2011 and Emerging Activities in 2012* section) will be refined and also expanded into specific action steps to accomplish the goal by 2020. To maintain focus on these efforts, the ICYD Council will continue to utilize the following five broad areas:

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

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

- Continue utilization of state agency staff time to implement the emerging issues and other activities as determined by the ICYD Council.
- Provide resources to expand practices and programs to broader areas in the state, as evidence-based practices are developed in the IS³ schools, in the CAPS project, and in other pilot activities.
- Expand opportunities for youth to participate in youth-fueled initiatives.
- Infuse positive youth development (PYD) principles in all youth programming, which includes PYD trainings for youth workers and establishing policies to include PYD principles in all state-funded youth initiatives.
- Maintain the use of the Iowa Youth Survey every two years. The survey results are valuable to state agencies and communities in assessing self-reported youth behaviors and perceptions.



