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**From:** Buck, Brad [ED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 12, 2013 9:15 AM  
**To:** ED >All Grimes DE Staff [ED]  
**Subject:** State Government Efficiency Review Committee

Good morning,

Thank you for all of the work that you are doing on a daily basis to help the educational system in our state. At the end of the day, our work on so many issues has the opportunity to change the lives of Iowa children. While we have been tasked with many assignments by the Iowa General Assembly, our agency is stepping up to the plate to meet those challenges head on. I sincerely appreciate the work that we are doing throughout this building to help change lives for the better in our state.

Recently, I was assigned a task from the legislative State Government Efficiency Review Committee, which requested that our agency join all other state agencies in providing ideas on how to achieve the goal of, “improving efficiency, modernizing processes, eliminating duplication and outdated practices, reducing costs, and increasing accountability.” In other words, the task of this committee is to find ideas on how to “reduce costs and increase efficiency in state government.” You may submit your ideas to the public internet site <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/APPS/Feedback/ResponseForm.aspx?qid=2> and/or submit them to Kathy Petosa, who will compile them and forward them to the Legislative Services Agency. If you could submit them by Wednesday, December 18, that would be ideal but they will continue to receive comment beyond that, as well.

This is not the same request you received earlier this year in regards to reporting requirements. That was for a separate legislative directive that we received. In this request, all ideas in terms of efficiency, not just reporting, are eligible to be submitted. All state agencies are receiving this request, not just our Department as was the case in the earlier item.

You are under no obligation to participate but if you have ideas that would help our state government operate better, which would help our core educational mission excel and help the Iowa taxpayer, I would encourage you to share those thoughts. While there are many state agencies providing valuable services in our state, our role of helping produce the best educational system we can is as important as any that our state government performs. For all Iowans, it is important that our agency perform at maximum efficiency so that we can use our limited resources to maximum public benefit.

Thanks for your attention to this important topic. Beyond this legislative request, I am always open minded to ideas on how we can best perform our duties. If you have a great idea in the future, please don't hesitate to let me know how we can be the best state agency in Iowa.

I look forward to our agency providing strong participation in this effort. No idea is too big or small in helping this committee do their work.

Respectfully,

Brad

**From:** Flansburg, Jim [ED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 12, 2013 9:26 AM  
**To:** Petosa, Kathy [ED]  
**Subject:** FW: State Government Efficiency Review Committee

Kathy, I have some thoughts on this:

1. I think there's an opportunity in trimming our travel. All too often, I hear of several consultants attending the same conference. Is that really necessary? In my mind, if there's more than one going to a particular conference, attendance really needs to be justified (too many critically important sessions will be missed if only one person goes, everyone attending are presenters, etc.).
2. I think the number of administrative assistants should be scrutinized. Please note: I am NOT suggesting anyone be laid off. But the workload of each really needs to be examined, particularly on the third floor. I think consultants have the administrative assistants do silly work that the consultants can readily do themselves (and would not slow down their work).
3. In-state car travel: Each trip needs to be examined with a question: Can the work be done by phone without sacrificing quality?

**Jim Flansburg**  
Interagency Liaison  
Iowa Department of Education

**From:** Mitchell, Angela [ED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 16, 2013 7:26 AM  
**To:** Petosa, Kathy [ED]  
**Subject:** State efficiency response

1. We need to know what other areas of the DE are responsible for so we know if we are duplicating services or asking schools for the same information 2 or 3 times for various departments; would help to know what various areas do so we have an understanding of the big picture and have names and faces as contacts when we need assistance or information about something outside our specialty areas;
- 2)we need to stress customer service; basic things like greeting people, asking if they need help, thanking schools for contacting us with their questions; in general, being more personable;
- 3)Director Buck has scheduled a time for the DE to meet at DMACC Ankeny, to bring us all together which is a wonderful start to dialogue about what we do and how we do it; I think this is a wonderful idea; I hope it is successful and will continue on a regular basis;
- 4)allow flexibility is getting the work done, whether on site at the DE or off-site working from home;
- 5)empower employees to be creative, problem solving employees who take pride and ownership in their work areas/departments;
- 6) evaluate if support positions in each department are able to fully support the bureau; for example, we have a tech person in our area who is right here, but we have to call the tech support desk first, and our tech person is often not "allowed" to help with our issues until the help desk allow it;
- 7) happy employees are productive and loyal employees who want to stay; pay and benefits should continue to be evaluated to see if they are in line with positions at schools so we attract the very best people who want to work here; small things like a pleasant lunch area, employee wellness opportunities like an employee fitness center, even childcare centers would help staff wellness and sense of well being, resulting in happier, healthier, more productive employees;
- 8) turning in every little receipt while in travel status takes a lot of time; consider changing to another system, perhaps a "per day" allotment and do away with receipts.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute feedback.

*Angela Mitchell*

Consultant, School Meals Program  
Iowa Department of Education  
Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services

**From:** Holz, Robin [ED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 16, 2013 9:45 AM  
**To:** Petosa, Kathy [ED]  
**Subject:** State Government Efficiency Review Committee

Kathy,

This message is in response to Brad's request for ideas on how to achieve the goal of, "improving efficiency, modernizing processes, eliminating duplication and outdated practices, reducing costs, and increasing accountability."

The Child and Adult Care Food Program operations could be dramatically streamlined by providing for DHS and DE computers to automatically share information regarding the licensure of child care centers and registration of home providers. Licensure and registration are requirements for participation on the CACFP. A lot of labor is spent collecting documentation of licensure/registration and manual data entry. I worked in the Minnesota Department of Education over 10 years ago and they had a system for automating this data transfer years ago. We have had discussions with DHS but haven't been able to make it happen.

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