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EDUCATION

HOUSE FILE 214  
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Passed House, Date \_\_\_\_\_ Passed Senate, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the establishment of a council for voluntary  
2 high standards and assessment development and to the adoption  
3 of voluntary model content standards and assessments by the  
4 state board of education and by schools and school districts,  
5 and providing for related matters.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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HF 214

1 Section 1. Section 256.7, Code 1997, is amended by adding  
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 21. Receive for review, modification, and  
4 adoption, the reports of the council for voluntary high  
5 standards and assessment development submitted under section  
6 280.16A and transmit to area education agencies, schools, and  
7 school districts the voluntary model content standards and  
8 assessments adopted by the state board. The state board shall  
9 advise and assist area education agencies in creating methods  
10 for assisting schools in developing, adopting, and  
11 implementing high content standards and assessments, as  
12 defined in section 280.16. The board shall also evaluate and  
13 identify departmental personnel and resources that may be  
14 reallocated to assist schools and school districts with the  
15 development and implementation of high content standards and  
16 assessments. In addition, the board shall determine the level  
17 of public demand on schools and school district personnel for  
18 a shift to a content standard-driven curriculum and for  
19 accountability of student achievement. The board shall submit  
20 its findings and recommendations relating to voluntary model  
21 content standards and assessments and the level of public  
22 demand relating to a shift to a content standard-driven  
23 curriculum and for accountability of student achievement to  
24 the chairpersons and ranking members of the standing  
25 committees on education of the senate and the house of  
26 representatives, and to the chairpersons and ranking members  
27 of the joint appropriations subcommittee on education by  
28 February 1, 2000. The board shall revise the standards and  
29 procedures prescribed in accordance with subsection 3 as  
30 necessary to acknowledge the voluntary model content standards  
31 adopted pursuant to section 280.16A.

32 Sec. 2. Section 256.9, Code 1997, is amended by adding the  
33 following new subsection:

34 NEW SUBSECTION. 49. Grant, for up to five years,  
35 exemptions from one or more of the minimum education standards

1 contained in section 256.11 and rules adopted by the state  
2 board of education to nonpublic schools or public school  
3 districts who have adopted high content standards and whose  
4 assessments demonstrate to the satisfaction of the director  
5 that the content standards adopted by the nonpublic school or  
6 public school district in accordance with section 280.16  
7 exceed the minimum education standards contained in section  
8 256.11. To receive an exemption under this subsection, a  
9 nonpublic school or public school district shall file a  
10 request with the department that includes all of the  
11 following:

12 a. A description of the content standards adopted by the  
13 nonpublic school or public school district and the curriculum  
14 designed to support the content standards and strengthen and  
15 expand student achievement.

16 b. Identification of the standard or standards for which  
17 the exemption is being sought, including a statement of the  
18 reasons for requesting the exemption from the standard or  
19 standards.

20 c. Identification of a method for periodic demonstration  
21 that student achievement will not be lessened by the granting  
22 of the exemption.

23 The director shall develop a procedure for application for  
24 exemption and receipt, review, and evaluation of nonpublic  
25 school and public school district requests, including but not  
26 limited to development of criteria for the granting or denying  
27 of requests for exemptions and a time line for the submission,  
28 review, and granting or denying of requests for exemption from  
29 one or more standards.

30 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. 280.16 STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT OF  
31 EDUCATION.

32 1. The general assembly recognizes this state's exemplary  
33 educational achievements, but finds and declares that the  
34 state's educational system is capable of higher levels of  
35 educational achievement and challenges the state's department

1 of education, practitioner preparation programs, schools and  
2 school districts, area education agencies, teachers,  
3 administrators, staff, parents, and children to further  
4 improve educational achievement in Iowa by demanding, setting,  
5 and reaching high content standards and implementing  
6 assessments.

7 2. Not later than January 1, 1999, each accredited  
8 nonpublic school and each school district shall hold at least  
9 one public hearing to consider the findings and  
10 recommendations of the voluntary high standards and assessment  
11 development council and to present a plan for and discuss a  
12 shift in school curriculum to a content standards education  
13 program. The board shall publish notice of the time and place  
14 of the public hearing not less than ten nor more than twenty  
15 days before the public hearing in a newspaper of general  
16 circulation in the district. After the public hearing the  
17 board shall also assess the public demand for local school  
18 accountability in reporting progress toward higher levels of  
19 student achievement and performance to the residents of the  
20 district or the families of students enrolled in the nonpublic  
21 school.

22 3. By July 1, 2000, the authorities in charge of each  
23 accredited nonpublic school and the board of directors of each  
24 school district shall consider the findings and  
25 recommendations of the voluntary high standards and assessment  
26 development council, develop and adopt high content standards  
27 for the student achievement goals adopted by the school or  
28 school district in accordance with section 280.18. The  
29 authorities in charge of each accredited nonpublic school and  
30 the board of directors of each school district shall, by July  
31 1, 2001, and each succeeding year, make public a report  
32 documenting the school or school district's progress relating  
33 to student achievement of locally determined content  
34 standards.

35 4. As used in this chapter and section 256.7, subsection

1 21, unless the context otherwise requires, "assessments" means  
2 methods used to test a student's knowledge or ability in  
3 specific academic areas, and "content standard" means the  
4 locally determined minimum level of knowledge and ability each  
5 student shall be expected to attain in a specific academic  
6 area by a certain grade level.

7 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 280.16A VOLUNTARY HIGH STANDARDS  
8 AND ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ESTABLISHED.

9 1. A voluntary high standards and assessment development  
10 council is established consisting of nine members, four of  
11 whom shall be appointed by the governor, two of whom shall be  
12 appointed by the majority leader of the senate, two of whom  
13 shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of  
14 representatives, and the director of the department of  
15 education or the director's designee. Appointments shall  
16 comply with sections 69.16 and 69.16A. Vacancies shall be  
17 filled in the same manner as the appointment of the original  
18 members. Members shall serve without compensation, but shall  
19 receive reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses,  
20 including travel at the state rate, incurred in the  
21 performance of their duties. Payment shall be made from funds  
22 available pursuant to section 2.12; however, members appointed  
23 by the governor shall be paid from funds appropriated to the  
24 office of the governor. Administrative support and staffing  
25 for the council shall be provided by the department of  
26 education. The director of the department of education or the  
27 director's designee shall convene the initial meeting, at  
28 which the council shall elect, for a one-year term, a  
29 chairperson from among its members.

30 2. The council shall schedule and conduct at least five  
31 public hearings, each in a different geographic region of the  
32 state, to hear testimony regarding the expansion of student  
33 achievement goals and the development of voluntary model  
34 content standards and assessments.

35 3. The council shall seek specific recommendations on the

1 expansion of student achievement goals and the development of  
2 voluntary model minimum content standards and assessments from  
3 area education agencies, nonpublic schools and school  
4 districts, educators, parents, students, representatives from  
5 postsecondary institutions, representatives from business and  
6 employee organizations, and community members representative  
7 of the cultural diversity of the state.

8 4. The council shall do all of the following:

9 a. Develop recommendations for the expansion of student  
10 achievement goals adopted in accordance with section 280.18,  
11 which include, but are not limited to, the following areas:  
12 reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, reasoning,  
13 studying, and technological literacy.

14 b. Develop voluntary model minimum content standards for  
15 the student achievement goals adopted by schools and school  
16 districts utilizing the reports filed with the department of  
17 education in accordance with section 280.18.

18 c. Submit a report, by July 1, 1998, containing its  
19 findings and recommendations to the state board of education  
20 for review, modification, and adoption of the recommendations  
21 for the expansion of student achievement goals and the  
22 development of voluntary model content standards based upon  
23 those goals. The state board of education shall adopt  
24 voluntary model content standards by January 1, 1999, and  
25 shall publish and distribute the voluntary model content  
26 standards adopted for use by area education agencies, schools,  
27 and school districts.

28 5. By July 1, 1999, the council shall submit a report  
29 containing its findings and recommendations to the state board  
30 of education for review, modification, and adoption of the  
31 recommendations for the voluntary assessments based upon the  
32 voluntary model content standards adopted by the state board  
33 of education. The state board shall adopt voluntary model  
34 assessments by January 15, 2000, and shall publish and  
35 distribute the voluntary model assessments adopted for use by

1 area education agencies, schools, and school districts.

2 EXPLANATION

3 This bill provides that while the general assembly  
4 recognizes Iowa's exemplary educational achievements, it finds  
5 and declares that its educational system is capable of higher  
6 achievement and challenges educational professionals and other  
7 interested persons in the state to further improve educational  
8 achievement in Iowa by demanding, setting, and reaching high,  
9 clear content standards, and implementing assessments. The  
10 bill also establishes a nine-member council for voluntary high  
11 standards and assessment development to develop  
12 recommendations for the expansion of student achievement  
13 goals, model minimum content standards for those goals, and to  
14 propose assessments.

15 Four members of the council for voluntary high standards  
16 and assessment development shall be appointed by the governor,  
17 four shall be appointed by the leadership of the general  
18 assembly, and the ninth member is the director of the  
19 department of education. Administrative support and staffing  
20 for the council shall be provided by the department of  
21 education. The council shall schedule and conduct at least  
22 five public hearings in different geographic regions of the  
23 state and shall seek specific recommendations on the expansion  
24 of student achievement goals and the development of voluntary  
25 model minimum content standards and assessments from education  
26 professionals, parents, students, community members, and  
27 representatives from business and employee organizations.

28 The bill requires the council to submit, by July 1, 1998, a  
29 report containing its findings and recommendations to the  
30 state board of education for review, modification, and  
31 adoption of its recommendations for the expansion of student  
32 achievement goals and the development of voluntary model  
33 content standards based upon those goals. The state board of  
34 education is directed by the bill to adopt voluntary model  
35 content standards by January 1, 1999, and to publish and

1 distribute the model content standards adopted for use by area  
2 education agencies, schools, and school districts. The board  
3 is also directed to revise, based upon its adoption of  
4 voluntary model content standards, the standards and  
5 procedures it prescribes for the approval of practitioner  
6 preparation programs.

7 By July 1, 1999, the council is directed under the bill to  
8 submit a report containing its findings and recommendations to  
9 the state board of education for review, modification, and  
10 adoption of its recommendations for the assessments based upon  
11 the voluntary model content standards adopted by the state  
12 board of education. The state board shall adopt voluntary  
13 model assessments by January 1, 2000, and to publish and  
14 distribute the voluntary model assessments adopted for use by  
15 area education agencies, schools, and school districts.

16 The bill directs the state board of education to determine  
17 the level of public demand on schools and school district  
18 personnel to shift to a content standard-driven curriculum and  
19 for accountability of student achievement, and further directs  
20 the board to evaluate and identify departmental personnel and  
21 resources that may be relocated to assist schools and school  
22 districts with the adoption of high content standards and  
23 assessments.

24 The board is also to consult with and assist area education  
25 agencies in developing methods for assisting schools in  
26 developing, adopting, and implementing high content standards  
27 and assessments. The board is to submit its findings and  
28 recommendations to the chairpersons and ranking members of the  
29 standing committees on education of the senate and the house  
30 of representatives, and to the chairpersons and ranking  
31 members of the joint appropriations subcommittee on education  
32 by February 1, 2000.

33 The bill requires each accredited nonpublic school and  
34 school district to hold at least one public hearing by January  
35 1, 1999, to consider a shift in school curriculum to a content

1 standards education program and assess the public's demand for  
2 local school accountability in reporting progress toward  
3 higher levels of student achievement and performance. Each  
4 school and school district is directed to adopt high content  
5 standards for their student achievement goals, adopted in  
6 accordance with section 280.18, by July 1, 2000, and by July  
7 1, 2001, and each succeeding year, make public a report  
8 documenting the school or school district's progress relating  
9 to student achievement of locally determined content  
10 standards.

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