

# Iowa Core Curriculum

## Annual Report

*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 14<sup>th</sup> St  
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

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**Introduction.** The Iowa Core Curriculum is a set of essential concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21st century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills) that all Iowa students must know by the time they graduate from high school.

The Iowa Core Curriculum expands on the Iowa Core Content Standards — enacted by the Iowa legislature in 2007 — by providing more detailed expectations.

To help teachers implement the Iowa Core Curriculum, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) and Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) are working together to offer assistance to school districts. This assistance is required because implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum is not a simple check list; it fundamentally addresses the content taught, the instruction of the content, and types of assessment.

Therefore, the Iowa Core Curriculum not only describes what students must master, but it helps teachers determine effective instruction through statewide and AEA-level professional development opportunities.

The vision of the Iowa Core Curriculum is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing a world-class curriculum. It is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and citizenship.

The Iowa Core Curriculum identifies Iowa as a state that values high expectations for all students and all educators and maximizes the effectiveness of the existing statewide standards and assessment system, which complies with No Child Left Behind. Rather than spending precious resources on developing a new set of standards and statewide test for accountability, funds will expand professional development, technical assistance and support for improved achievement.

When implemented with fidelity, it has the capacity to positively impact Iowa's economic base by better preparing students for postsecondary education and more skilled employees for the workplace. Its emphasis on authentic learning provides Iowa with citizens better prepared to address the complexities of life in the 21st century.

The Iowa Core Curriculum is not an effort to make all Iowa schools teach the same lesson plans on the same days, use the same textbooks, replace the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Iowa Test of Educational Development, or to promote a costly new battery of tests. The Iowa Core Curriculum does not subvert the creative contributions of Iowa's talented teaching professionals nor does it divert money from other relevant and important education needs.

**Legislative Foundation.** Senate File 245 (May 2005) and Senate File 588 (May 2007) established the voluntary Model Core Curriculum in kindergarten through grade 12 in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills. The 2008 Legislature proposed that the Iowa Core Curriculum be fully implemented by all Iowa schools — public and accredited nonpublic. The Governor signed Senate File 2216 into law May 1, 2008, which requires the full implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum — in high schools by 2012-2013 and in K-8 by 2014-2015. Implementation plans are required for high schools by July 1, 2010 and by K-8 schools by July 1, 2012. The Department is encouraging K-12 school systems to develop a K-12 implementation by July 1, 2009.

**Current Status.** The Department is working with Iowa’s AEAs to support the roll-out of the Iowa Core Curriculum to local school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. Funds provided by the Legislature in 2008 have allowed the Department and AEAs to establish a network of individuals who provide ongoing support and professional development to schools. The network has 47 members: 40 AEA representatives and seven representatives from local school districts. In addition, the network includes 16 representatives from the Department.

Full implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum is a complicated, multi-year process. The first year focuses on developing local leadership teams that will examine district curriculum to assess existing alignment of local standards, benchmarks, and curriculum with the Iowa Core Curriculum. The Department and AEAs have been providing professional development opportunities for school leaders on the skills they will need to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum. This will continue through 2009 as Iowa school districts develop plans to be certain that all students — no matter their career path — will have mastered the Iowa Core Curriculum’s essential concepts and skills.

This summer (2009) implementation support begins for teachers. Schools will be grouped into cadres and the start date for full staff involvement will be staggered for each cadre throughout the year and a half. Professional development opportunities will be designed and provided to promote quality teaching with high student expectations in science, math, and literacy curriculum. It will be a collaborative effort of AEAs, the Department, and local schools.

In addition to implementation activities, teams of stakeholders have identified the remaining skills and concepts for grades K-8 in social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. These teams represent teachers, administrators, AEA staff, key education associations, and businesses. These components are scheduled for State Board of Education discussion in February.

The Department has already revised its school district accreditation process to begin including elements of the required implementation.

2008-2009	2009-2013	2014-2015 and beyond
Leadership Development	Planning and Implementation	Full Implementation

Of the \$2,192,351, allocated by the Iowa Legislature for the Iowa Core Curriculum, \$1.6 million has been distributed to the AEAs to support 16.5 full-time equivalent positions and 12 percent of the funds is used for professional resources, printing, personnel travel expenses, and professional development expenses. Additionally, AEAs are contributing staff time and resources beyond the funds to accommodate local school needs and development efforts.

The balance (\$592,351) is committed to the continued development of the Iowa Core Curriculum.

Efforts include:

- 1) development of essential concepts and skills sets for kindergarten through eighth grade social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- 2) development of example instructional units for kindergarten through eighth grade literacy, science, and mathematics; and grades nine through 12 social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- 3) development of example instructional units illustrating the integration of mathematics, literacy, and science into the fine arts;

- 4) development of processes and protocol tools needed to support school implementation; and
- 5) preparation of unique professional development materials.

**Student Benefit.** The Iowa Core Curriculum works to ensure that students will grasp complex ideas through a focus on essential topics. By focusing on *what* is being taught as well as *how* to teach, the Iowa Core Curriculum provides high expectations for quality student work. It moves students beyond just knowing content to deeper thinking, understanding, problem solving, and inquiry. These are the teaching methods that are used in countries that are outpacing the United States.

The Iowa Core Curriculum enhances student engagement by involving students in interesting, relevant learning experiences that are motivating and lead to positive outcomes. Students will leave school equipped to succeed regardless of their postsecondary plans.

For more information, please visit

[http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=674&Itemid=1249](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=674&Itemid=1249).