

## CHAPTER 1159

### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS — COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDED REVISIONS

*H.F. 2545*

**AN ACT** relating to education, including by requiring the director of the department of education to review the state's high school graduation requirements, core curriculum, core content standards, and educational standards, requiring the state board of education to review and revise the state's social studies standards, requiring that the social studies instruction provided to students enrolled in school districts and accredited nonpublic schools in grades seven and eight include instruction related to civics, and including effective date provisions.

*Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:*

#### DIVISION I

#### STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION — COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Section 1. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF IOWA EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS — RECOMMENDED REVISIONS.

1. The director of the department of education shall conduct a comprehensive review of the high school graduation requirements and core curriculum established pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), the core content standards established pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 28](#), and the educational standards established in [section 256.11](#). The comprehensive review shall be designed to generate recommendations for policy changes to be included in the reports required under subsection 4. The recommendations for policy changes shall include all of the following:

a. A plan to regularly review and revise the core content standards focused on English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, with a focus on United States history, western civilization, and civics.

b. A plan to make Iowa's educational standards the best in the nation.

c. Input from relevant stakeholders, including parents and teachers.

d. A plan to increase the quality of the instructional curriculum.

e. A plan to maximize local flexibility in graduation requirements and course offerings while maintaining a goal that all high school graduates have necessary skills at graduation.

f. Identification of opportunities to equip high school graduates with sufficient knowledge of civics and United States history, including the principles reflected in the Constitution of the United States, so that high school graduates are capable of discharging the responsibilities associated with United States citizenship.

g. A statewide literacy plan to increase student proficiency using systematic and sequential approaches to teaching phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension. The statewide literacy plan shall address standards for practitioner preparation programs established under [section 256.16](#) that promote evidence-based reading instruction and practical application that are direct, systematic, explicit, responsive, and that consist of phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension. Such standards shall not include instruction or practical application that is designed to teach students using the instructional model commonly known as the three-cueing system.

2. The director of the department of education shall ensure that the core curriculum established pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), the core content standards established pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 28](#), and the educational standards established in [section 256.11](#), comply with [section 279.74](#).

3. The comprehensive review described in subsection 1 shall include all of the following:

a. Providing the opportunity for the public and interested stakeholders to provide comments related to the comprehensive review, including comments related to each graduation requirement, core content standard, and educational requirement by grade level, at each committee meeting convened pursuant to this subsection.

b. Collecting and considering the comments provided pursuant to paragraph “a”.

c. (1) Convening committees to assist in the comprehensive review and provide recommendations related to the subject areas in the educational standards established in [section 256.11](#).

(2) The director of the department of education shall determine the membership of each committee; provided, however, that each committee shall include four members of the general assembly with one member designated by each of the following: the president of the senate, the minority leader of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the minority leader of the house of representatives. A legislative member serves in an ex officio, nonvoting capacity.

4. a. The director of the department of education shall submit an initial report, including initial findings and recommendations for policy changes, to the governor and the general assembly on or before December 31, 2024.

b. The director of the department of education shall submit a final report, including findings and recommendations for policy changes, to the governor and the general assembly on or before July 1, 2025.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

#### DIVISION II STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION — CORE CURRICULUM

Sec. 3. [Section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph a, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2024, is amended to read as follows:

Adopt ~~rules that establish~~ a core curriculum and adopt rules that establish high school graduation requirements for all students in school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that include at a minimum satisfactory completion of four years of English and language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social studies.

Sec. 4. [Section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph a, subparagraph (3), Code 2024, is amended to read as follows:

(3) The ~~rules establishing~~ a core curriculum shall address the core content standards in [subsection 28](#) and the skills and knowledge students need to be successful in the twenty-first century. The core curriculum shall include social studies and twenty-first century learning skills which include but are not limited to civic literacy, health literacy, financial literacy, family life and consumer sciences, and employability skills; and shall address the curricular needs of students in kindergarten through grade twelve in those areas. The state board shall further define the twenty-first century learning skills components ~~by rule~~.

Sec. 5. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION — RULES ESTABLISHING A CORE CURRICULUM. Rules adopted by the state board of education on or before the effective date of this division of this Act relating to the core curriculum shall remain effective until modified or rescinded by action of the state board of education.

#### DIVISION III STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION — SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

Sec. 6. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION — REVIEW AND REVISION OF SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS.

1. The state board of education shall complete a review and revision of the state social studies standards contained in the core content standards established pursuant to [section 256.7, subsection 28](#), with a focus on United States history, government, founding philosophies and principles, important historical figures, western civilization, and civics. At a minimum, the revised social studies standards shall include instruction related to all of the following topics in grade one through grade twelve, in such a manner that is both relevant and appropriate for the age of the student receiving instruction:

a. The United States federal and republican form of government, including the branches and structure of the United States federal government, the division of power between branches of government and between federal and state governments, a comparison to alternative forms of government, and the crimes against humanity that have occurred under communist regimes since 1917.

b. The rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States and the state of Iowa, including civic virtues displayed in the lives of exemplary Americans.

c. The history of the United States and the state of Iowa, including all of the following:

(1) The political, diplomatic, and military history of the United States, including exemplary Americans important to such events, beginning with the discovery of the western hemisphere through the present, including but not limited to the founding fathers, the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and the War on Terrorism, including the attacks on September 11, 2001.

(2) The founding of Iowa, and famous Iowans and their involvement in important events in history.

(3) The secular and religious ideals and institutions of liberty, including political, religious, economic, social, and cultural liberty, in western civilization, the United States, and the state of Iowa.

d. Exemplary figures and important events in western civilization, the United States, and the state of Iowa, including but not limited to the history of ancient Israel, the free Greek city-states, the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, medieval Europe, Columbus and the Age of Discovery, World War I, World War II and instruction related to the Holocaust, and the Cold War.

e. Important historical and founding documents to the United States and the state of Iowa, including but not limited to the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the amendments to the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the Emancipation Proclamation.

2. The director of the department of education, or the director's designee, shall present the revised social studies standards to the state board of education for adoption on or before December 31, 2025.

#### DIVISION IV EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT

Sec. 7. [Section 256.11, subsection 4](#), Code 2024, is amended to read as follows:

4. The following shall be taught in grades seven and eight: English-language arts; social studies, including instruction related to civics; mathematics; science; health; age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development; career exploration and development; physical education; music; and visual art. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards established under [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph "a", subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade level commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023. Career exploration and development shall be designed so that students are appropriately prepared to create an individual career and academic plan pursuant to [section 279.61](#), incorporate foundational career and technical education concepts aligned with the six career and technical education service areas as defined in [subsection 5](#), paragraph "h", incorporate relevant twenty-first century skills to facilitate career readiness, and introduce students to career opportunities within the local community and across this state. The health curriculum shall include age-appropriate and research-based information regarding the characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the program in grades seven and eight. However, [this subsection](#) shall not apply to the teaching of career exploration and development in nonpublic schools.

Approved May 15, 2024