

CHAPTER 65  
PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK EARLY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

**281—65.1(279) Definitions.**

“*At-risk student*” means, for purposes of this chapter, a student in early elementary grades who is eligible for free or reduced price meals.

“*Awardee*” means a public school district designated to receive the at-risk early elementary school award funds for buildings serving early elementary grades with a high percentage of at-risk students.

“*Department*” means the department of education.

“*Early elementary grades*” means kindergarten through grade three.

[ARC 7429C, IAB 12/27/23, effective 1/31/24]

**281—65.2(279) Eligibility identification procedures.** In a year in which funds are made available by the Iowa legislature, the department will grant awards to districts for buildings serving early elementary grades with a high percentage of at-risk students. Using a formula determined by the department and consistent with Iowa Code section 279.51(1)“c,” the department will distribute awards based on the number of early elementary students in the identified buildings serving a high percentage of at-risk students.

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**281—65.3(279) Award acceptance process.** The department will notify eligible districts of the opportunity to be granted an award for a three-year cycle. A district will make formal acceptance using forms issued and procedures established by the department, and by an official with vested authority to approve the acceptance.

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**281—65.4(279) Awardee responsibilities.** Each year, the awardee will complete reports on forms provided by the department, including the following:

1. An initial report, including a proposed budget and expected outcomes.
2. An end-of-the-year report, including total expenditures and a statement of impact on expected outcomes.

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**281—65.5(279) Allowable expenditures.** School districts will provide, at a minimum, the activities set forth in Iowa Code section 279.51(1)“c.” Additional allowable expenditures include salaries and benefits for teachers and paraeducators, and activities and materials to improve academic achievement. These funds are to be used for instruction, activities, and materials that are in addition to the regular school curricula for children participating in these programs, and only to be used in the building for which the award is made. Inappropriate uses of award funding include indirect costs or use charges, operational or maintenance costs, capital expenditures, student transportation other than that which is directly related to the activities and materials described in this rule, or administrative costs. Moneys received are subject to the general provisions described in 281—Chapter 98.

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**281—65.6(279) Evaluation.** The awardee will cooperate with the department and provide requested information to determine how well the outcomes in rule 281—65.4(279) are being met. Statewide leadership teams will review final reports and provide useful feedback about buildings to awardees. This feedback will include information about innovative components to building programs. Buildings demonstrating innovation will be given preference the following grant cycle.

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**281—65.7(279) Budget revisions.** The department may grant approval to an awardee for any revisions in the proposed budget in excess of 10 percent of a line item, provided the revisions do not increase the total amount of the award.

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**281—65.8(279) Termination.**

**65.8(1) *Termination for convenience.*** The award may be terminated, in whole or in part, upon agreement of both parties, concerning the termination conditions, the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. The awardee shall cancel as many outstanding obligations as possible and not incur new obligations for the terminated portion after the effective date of termination.

**65.8(2) *Termination for cause.***

*a.* The award may be terminated, in whole or in part, at any time before the date of completion, whenever the department determines, after notice and an opportunity to be heard, that the awardee has failed to comply substantially with the conditions of the award. The awardee will be notified in writing by the department of the reasons for the termination and the effective date. The awardee shall cancel as many outstanding obligations as possible and not incur new obligations for the terminated portion after the effective date of termination.

*b.* The department will administer the at-risk early elementary school awards contingent upon the availability of state funds. If there is a lack of funds necessary to fulfill the fiscal responsibility of the awards, the awards are to be terminated or renegotiated. The department may terminate or renegotiate an award upon 30 days' notice when there is a reduction of funds by executive order.

**65.8(3) *Responsibility of awardee at termination.*** Within 45 days of the effective date of award termination, the awardee will supply the department with a financial statement detailing all program expenditures up to the effective date of the termination. The awardee will be solely responsible for all expenditures after the effective date of termination.

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**281—65.9(279) Appeals from terminations.** Any awardee aggrieved by a unilateral termination of an award may appeal the decision to the director of the department in writing within 30 days of the decision to terminate.

**65.9(1) *Form of appeal.*** In the notice of appeal, the awardee will give a short and plain statement of the reason for the appeal.

**65.9(2) *Appeal procedures.*** The hearing procedures found at 281—Chapter 6 will apply to appeals of terminated awards. The director will issue a decision within a reasonable time, not to exceed 120 days from the date of hearing.

**65.9(3) *Grounds for reversal.*** Termination of an award under this chapter may be reversed only if the awardee proves the process was conducted outside of statutory authority; violated state or federal law, policy, or rule; did not provide adequate public notice; was altered without adequate public notice; or involved conflict of interest by staff or committee members.

**65.9(4) *Mandatory denial of appeal.*** In lieu of a decision on the merits of an appeal, the director of the department will deny an appeal if the director finds any of the following:

- a.* The appeal is untimely;
- b.* The appellant lacks standing to appeal;
- c.* The appeal is not in the necessary form or is based upon frivolous grounds;
- d.* The appeal is moot because the issues raised in the notice of appeal or at the hearing have been settled by the parties; or
- e.* The termination of the award was beyond the control of the department due to lack of available funds.

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These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 279.51.

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