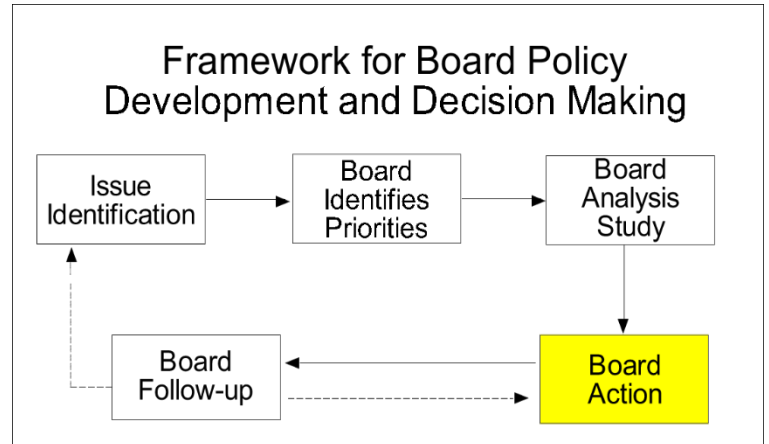


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

March 20, 2025



Agenda Item: Central Rivers Area Education Agency (AEA) Budget Review

State Board Priority: All

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code 273.3(12) requires the State Board to review the proposed budget of each area education agency (AEA) and either grant approval or return the budget without approval with comments of the State Board included. An unapproved budget shall be resubmitted to the State Board for final approval.

Presenter(s): Kassandra Cline, Chief
Bureau of School Business Operations

Stan Rheingans, Chief Administrator
Central Rivers AEA

Jennifer Coombes, Chief Financial Officer
Central Rivers AEA

Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the Central Rivers AEA budget as presented.

Background: Iowa Code 273.3(12) requires the State Board review the proposed budget of each AEA and either grant approval or return the budget without approval with comments by May 1. An unapproved budget shall be resubmitted to the State Board for final approval not later than May 15.



FY26 Central Rivers AEA Budget Request & Report

Submitted by: Stan Rheingans, Central Rivers AEA Chief Administrator & Jennifer Coombes, Central Rivers AEA Chief Financial Officer

Due: February 28, 2025

Executive Summary.....	1
AEA Overview.....	1
Served.....	1
Districts.....	1
Students.....	2
Teachers.....	3
Others Served.....	3
Programs.....	4
Location.....	5
Capital Assets.....	7
Staff.....	8
Organizational Chart.....	8
BEDS Position Codes.....	8
FY25 to FY26 Staff Changes.....	9
Special Education Support Services Program.....	9
Educational Services Program.....	10
Media Services Program.....	10
Administrative Expenditures.....	11
Administrative Staff by FTE.....	11
Total Administrative Expenditures: FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed...	13
Total Administrative Expenditures: Reduction.....	15
Services.....	15
Centralized Services.....	16
Centers of Excellence.....	17

Fiscal Detail.....	19
General Fund Balance: FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed.....	19
Three-Year Comparison for Budgeted Funds: FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed.....	20

Executive Summary

[Insert a high-level overview of the information contained in the report.]

The report outlines the financial and operational overview of Central Rivers AEA for the fiscal years FY24 to FY26, providing insight into the services, expenditures, staff, and various operational aspects of the organization.

Key highlights include a detailed breakdown of the AEA's served districts, students, teachers, and other stakeholders, as well as a review of capital assets, staffing changes, and administrative expenditures. The report also includes comparisons of budgeted funds over a three-year period and projections for FY26, with an emphasis on administrative cost reductions and service offerings.

AEA Overview

Served

[Enter a summary description of the different groups (e.g., districts, students, teachers, and others) served by the AEA.]

Central Rivers AEA partners with public and accredited non-public schools across our region to provide comprehensive educational programs and direct services for over 68,000 students from birth to age 21. These services include evaluations, assessments, and therapies for both general and special education, as well as Early ACCESS for early intervention in infants and toddlers. Teachers benefit from specialized professional development, consultation, and coaching, while district administrators, superintendents, curriculum directors, and other education professionals receive tailored support through structured learning, implementation, and sustainability phases. This integrated approach ensures that all stakeholders are equipped with the tools and guidance necessary to enhance educational outcomes.

[Enter information about the districts served by the AEA. Identify any districts served that are located outside the AEA. Also identify any districts that are not served by the AEA but that are located within the AEA.]

Public Districts (53)

AGWSR	Forest City	North Butler
Alden	GHV	North Iowa
Aplington-Parkersburg	Gladbrook-Reinbeck	North Tama
BCLUW	GMG	Northwood-Kensett
Belmond-Klemme	Grinnell-Newburg	Osage
BGM	Grundy Center	RRMR
CAL	Hampton-Dumont	South Tama
Cedar Falls	Hubbard-Radcliffe	St. Ansgar
Central Springs	Hudson	Sumner-Fredericksburg
Charles City	Independence	Tripoli
Clarksville	Iowa Falls	Union
Clear Lake	Janesville	Wapsie-Valley

Denver
Dike-New Hartford
Dukerton
East Buchanan
East Marshall
Eldora-New Providence

Jesup
Lake Mills
Marshalltown
Mason City
Montezuma
Nashua-Plainfield

Waterloo
Waverly-Shell Rock
West Fork
West Hancock
West Marshall

Accredited Non-Publics (27)

Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotta Middle School
Central Iowa Christian School
Clear Lake Classical School
Columbus Catholic High School
Community Lutheran School
Don Bosco High School
Don Bosco Immaculate Conception
Immaculate Conception School
Liberty Christian School
Lighthouse Christian Academy
Marshalltown Christian School
Newman Catholic Elementary School
Newman Catholic High School
North Iowa Christian

Royal Legacy Christian Academy
Saint Edward Elementary School
St. Athanasius School
St. Francis Catholic School
St. John Elementary School
St. Patrick School
St. Paul's Lutheran School
St. Paul's Lutheran School
Timothy Christian School
Valley Lutheran School
Waterloo Christian Elem School
Waterloo Christian Middle School
Waterloo Christian High School

Charter Schools (1)

Choice Charter School

Students

[Enter information about the students who are served by the AEA.]

Central Rivers AEA partners with public and accredited non-public schools to provide educational programs, services and resources designed to support quality education and improve learning outcomes for all children ages birth-21. Agency services support more than 68,000 students in schools across an 18-county region. This area includes: Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hardin, Hancock, Marshall, Mitchell, Poweshiek, Tama, Winnebago, Worth, and Wright.

Central Rivers AEA serves children in general education and special education. Some services are evaluation and assessment and some are direct services (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language services).

Early ACCESS is Iowa's early intervention system (IDEA Part C) for infants and toddlers under three years old who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay typical development. Families and Early ACCESS staff work together to identify, coordinate and provide needed services and resources that help families assist their infants and toddlers in their growth and development.

The agency operates three facilities located in Cedar Falls, Clear Lake, and Marshalltown. However, nearly 80% of agency staff are assigned to specific schools as part of a regional team to serve students. They work directly with children and educators as an integral part of the local school staff. Others serve schools on a consultant or itinerant basis, offering courses or workshops, or link schools with other individuals, agencies or materials that meet their needs.

Teachers

[Enter information about the teachers who are served by the AEA.]

Central Rivers AEA supports over 5,000 educators with both general and special education services. Special education teachers receive support from building-based AEA staff (e.g., school social workers, school psychologists and special education consultants).

Through Educational and Media/Technology Services, teachers may access AEA content experts to support teaching and learning in classrooms. Those content experts design, deliver and support professional learning for teachers who engage in offerings from the AEA. Additionally both physical and digital resources are available to support classroom instruction.

From specialized professional learning to personalized consultation and coaching, AEAs ensure that districts receive the tailored support they need to meet their diverse needs.

Learning Support

In the learning phase, services focus on equipping educators with the knowledge, skills and strategies necessary to enhance their teaching practices and improve student outcomes.

Implementation Support

In the implementation phase, services focus on putting educational plans and strategies into action.

Sustainability Support

In the sustainability phase, services aim to maintain and build upon the progress achieved during implementation.

Others Served

[Enter information about others who are served by the AEA.]

- Administrators
- Curriculum Directors
- Head Start Programs
- Paraeducators
- Principals
- Special Education Directors
- Substitute Teachers
- Superintendents

Programs

[Highlight the general programs offered by the AEA as well as the programs offered that differentiate this AEA from others.]

Central Rivers AEA grounds its services to districts in the [Iowa's AEAs Portfolio of Services](#) (to be revised after the Department of Education Professional Development approvals).

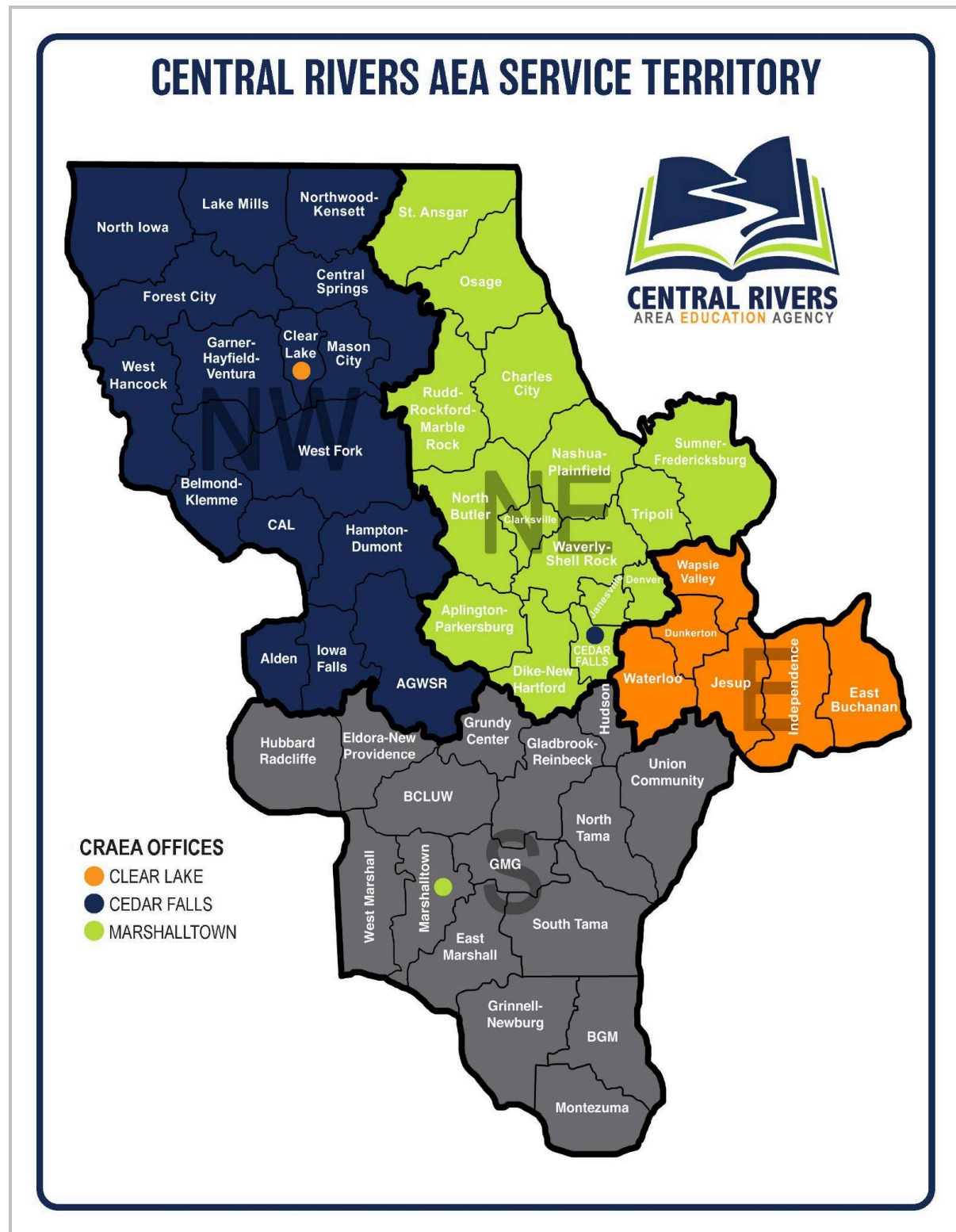
Services Unique to Central Rivers AEA

[Highlight the general programs offered by the AEA as well as the programs offered that differentiate this AEA from others.]

- **Facility Rental Services**
Rooms at Central Rivers AEA are available for use by educational or community organizations and include large conference rooms and smaller meeting rooms in Cedar Falls, Clear Lake, and Marshalltown.
- **INspired Leadership Services**
At Central Rivers AEA, we believe that executive leadership coaching and core energy training can make a tremendous difference for leaders in both their personal lives and in their professional roles. We provide certified leadership coaching, two-day workshops for school leaders, online individualized assessments, and individual executive coaching to district leaders.
- **School Communication Support**
Effective school communication and parent engagement is more than social media posts and newsletters. Our director of communications will work with district leaders to identify specific goals and customize services to meet district needs and involve stakeholders.
- **Social Studies Support**
Social Studies provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to help make a positive impact on the future. Central Rivers AEA is dedicated to providing educators with the most current, research-based resources. Effective social studies involves asking deep questions, using diverse sources for informed answers, thinking creatively, factual evidence, communication, and building skills for college, career and civic life.
- **Shared Curriculum Coordinator**
The Shared Curriculum Director is a member of the administrative team and is not solely responsible for the school improvement efforts. School districts have an obligation to ensure teachers are implementing agreed-upon improvement initiatives with fidelity. This position provides support for district efforts to ensure increases in student achievement for all learners in the general education context.
- **Shared Special Education Director**
The Shared Special Education Director is a member of the administrative team and is not solely responsible for the special education program. School districts have an obligation to ensure teachers are implementing IEPs as expected in IDEA. This position provides support for district efforts to ensure compliance and positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
- **Career-Connected Learning**
Career Connected learning offerings include a menu of services related to internships, work experiences, career exploration and more.

Location

[Insert a map of the AEA, map of the AEA building locations, and provide a narrative surrounding each.]



Central Rivers Area Education Agency Facilities:

- **1521 Technology Parkway, Cedar Falls, Iowa (Main Office)**
 - Conference rooms used for hosting professional development events for agency staff and the educators we serve. By reservation, many outside entities use these rooms outside of agency office hours.
 - Drop-in work space for agency stakeholders.
 - Monthly board meetings are held at this facility.
 - Administrative offices including Human Resources, Business, and Technology and those serving surrounding districts.
 - Offices for ACHIEVE data leads/data techs.
 - Staff distribution center (early ACCESS equipment and special education assessment materials).
 - Creative Services - Includes a large area for printing (small and large format), graphic design, laminating, cutting, etc.
 - Professional Learning Office.
 - Technology Help Desk.
 - Staff offices and workspaces- many areas are available for staff to work independently or collaboratively. Large monitors and small meeting rooms available for teams to use.
 - Hearing Booth.
 - SLP Services Room.

- **9184 265th Street, Suite B, Clear Lake, Iowa**
 - Conference rooms used for hosting professional development events for agency staff and the educators we serve. By reservation, outside entities may use these rooms outside of agency office hours.
 - Drop-in work space for agency stakeholders.
 - Administrative offices for our administrators who serve our northern districts and have their office assigned to this facility for proximity.
 - Warehouse- This space is used for storage for special ed equipment, including OT/PT equipment, etc.
 - Staff work spaces- The entire facility is designed for individual and small teams to work either in small rooms or individually in workstations.
 - Hearing Booth.

- **909 South 12th Street, Marshalltown, IA**
 - Conference rooms- used for hosting professional development events for agency staff and the educators we serve. By reservation, outside entities may use these rooms outside of agency office hours.
 - Drop-in work space for agency stakeholders.
 - Administrative offices for our administrators who serve our southern districts and have their office assigned to this facility for proximity.
 - Media library - physical collection that includes professional books as well as book sets that can be checked out by districts.

- Staff work spaces- The entire facility is designed for individual and small teams to work either in small rooms or individually in workstations.
 - Creative Services - Graphic Design and laminating.
 - Hearing Booth.
 - Swimming Pool. (Note that costs associated with the pool are underwritten by a community foundation. Pool was originally installed in the building before Central Rivers AEA took ownership and is specially designed for therapeutic purposes for those children and adults with disabilities.)
- **River Hills School, 2700 Grand Blvd, Cedar Falls**
River Hills School is a publicly sponsored special school for students with moderate, severe, and profound developmental disabilities. The school serves students from kindergarten through age 21.

Approximately 88 students from 30 local school districts within Central Rivers AEA attend River Hills School. There are 22 classrooms, each staffed by a licensed special education teacher and a paraprofessional. Typical class sizes range from three to six students.

The unique setting is staffed by Central Rivers AEA professionals with expertise in working with students with developmental disabilities. This expertise allows us to focus on the use of current and innovative instructional strategies while incorporating the latest technology into instruction.

Capital Assets

[Provide a summary description of the AEA's capital assets.]

- Properties/Offices
 - 1521 Technology Parkway, Cedar Falls - Main office
 - 9184 B 265th Street, Clear Lake (structure owned by the agency, land leased from the Mason City Airport Commission) - Regional Office
 - 909 South 12th Street, Marshalltown - Regional Office
 - 2700 Grand, Cedar Falls - River Hills School
- Vehicles, including (6) Media delivery vans, (4) maintenance pickups with plow, snow blower, sweeper, and lawn care tractors and equipment.
- Print Shop equipment, including black and white and color printers, laminators, and finishing equipment (bindery), etc.
- Media Kits and equipment, including iPads, robots, OT/PT equipment, reality welding systems, RFID equipment, 3D printers, cameras, computers, planetarium, etc.
- Technology and equipment, including laptops, firewalls, switches, projectors, screens, TVs, hearing booths, audiology equipment, copy machines, printers, etc.

Staff

Iowa's AEAs are committed to employing highly qualified staff who offer and provide services and supports to students, educators, districts and families. AEAs are working as a statewide system to ensure all those we serve have access to our unified [Portfolio of Services](#) (to be revised after the Department of Education Professional Development approvals), regardless of the location of their district or the AEA in which they reside.

Organizational Chart

[Insert an organizational chart and enter a related narrative.]

Central Rivers Area Education Agency is committed to meeting the mandated 30% reduction in administrative expenditures by July 1, 2026, as required by House File 2612. Our agency has implemented strategic cost-cutting measures and streamlined operations to ensure compliance while working hard to attempt to maintain high-quality service delivery to our stakeholders.

This [organizational chart](#) provides an overview of our agency leadership for 2025-26.

BEDS Position Codes

[Complete the table below and enter a narrative related to variances for staff.]

Central Rivers AEA's staffing reflects the reduction in revenues. The agency is budgeting a reduction of \$ 3.4 million in the General Fund for FY26. Revenues are down \$ 8.5 million when compared to FY24.

Table Name: AEA BEDS Position Codes - All Staff

Position Name	Position Code	FY25 FTE Count	FY26 FTE Count	Variance
AEA Chief Administrator	510	.50	.50	
School Business Official	612	.50	.50	
Operations and Maintenance	181	6.5	6.0	-.50
Principal	513	1.0	1.0	
Special Education Director	515	5.10	5.10	
AEA Regional/Zone Coordinator	533	8.0	7.0	-1.0
Other Administrator	550	4.0	4.0	
Juvenile Home Teacher	746	2.00	2.0	
Special Education Consultant	616	59.90	64.90	+5.0
Content/Curriculum Consultant	618	19.20	14.40	-4.8
Social Worker	624	15.45	15.45	
Director/Coordinator/Department Head	633	13.80	13.80	
Special Ed Support	660	154.45	169.45	+15.0
Nurse	698	1.0	1.0	
Itinerant Teacher	731	6.60	6.60	

Early Childhood Sp Ed Teacher	736	15.0	14.5	-.50
Early Childhood Reg Ed Teacher	737	3.0	3.0	
Special Education Teacher	745	40.40	40.40	
Paraprofessionals/Aides	101	50.86	50.86	
Library Media Associate	104	4.0	4.0	
Student Support	106	24.8	24.8	
Other Support	107	5.0	5.0	
Board Secretary	112	1.0	1.0	
Technology	121	8.0	8.0	
Records Transfer Staff	130	1.5	1.5	
School Business Officials - Other	133	2.0	2.0	
Other Professional	137	3.85	3.85	
AEA Supervisors/Managers	138	1.0	1.0	
Supervisor - Non-Licensed	139	1.0	1.0	
Technology Support	141	5.0	5.0	
Other Technical	142	2.0	2.0	
District Wide Administrative Support	152	12.50	11.0	-1.50
School Administrative Support	153	1.0	1.0	
Operations Director	168	1.0	1.0	
Regular Education Teacher	728	6.0	6.0	

FY25 to FY26 Staff Changes

Staff changes from FY25 to FY26 are detailed below for each position in the following programs: Special Education Support Services, Educational Services, and Media Services.

Special Education Support Services Program

[Complete the table below and enter a narrative related to variances for staff in the special education support services program.]

It is important to highlight that staffing levels in Special Education saw a reduction from the 2023-2024 to the 2024-2025 academic year, attributed primarily to challenges in recruiting sufficiently qualified candidates. We are actively seeking to fill vacancies left by employees who have resigned or retired this year. While it is our goal to restore the previously reduced staffing levels, given the existing circumstances, we acknowledge the challenges in our ability to reinstate the prior levels of staffing.

Table Name: AEA BEDS Position Codes - Special Education Support Services Program

Position Name	Position Code	FY25 FTE Count	FY26 FTE Count	Variance
AEA Regional/Zone Coordinator	533	6.48	5.67	-.81
Director/Coordinator/Department Head	633	1.95	1.95	
District Wide Administrative Support	152	5.16	4.93	-.23
Early Childhood Sp Ed Teacher	736	15.0	14.5	-.50
Itinerant Teacher	731	6.6	6.6	
Nurse	698	1.0	1.0	

Operations and Maintenance	181	2.0	2.0	
Operations Director	168	1.0	1.0	
Other Administrator	550	1.0	1.0	
Other Professional	137	3.85	3.85	
Other Support	107	4.0	4.0	
Other Technical	142	2.0	2.0	
Paraprofessionals/Aides	101	43.86	43.86	
Principal	513	1.0	1.0	
Records Transfer Staff	130	1.5	1.5	
School Administrative Support	153	1.0	1.0	
Social Worker	624	15.48	15.48	
Special Ed Support	660	154.44	169.44	+15.0
Special Education Consultant	616	59.9	64.90	+5.0
Special Education Director	515	5.1	5.1	
Special Education Teacher	745	40.4	40.4	
Student Support	106	24.8	24.8	

Educational Services Program

[Complete the table below and enter a narrative related to variances for staff in the educational services program.]

Table Name: AEA BEDS Position Codes - Educational Services Program

Position Name	Position Code	FY25 FTE Count	FY26 FTE Count	Variance
Content/Curriculum Consultant	618	19.20	14.40	-4.8
AEA Regional/Zone Coordinator	553	.88	.77	-.11
Director/Coordinator/Department Head	633	9.4	9.4	
District Wide Administrative Support	152	12.5	12.23	-.27
Early Childhood Reg Ed Teacher	736	3.0	3.0	
Other Administrator	550	1.0	1.0	
Regular Education Teacher	728	6.0	6.0	
Technology	121	.10	.10	

Staffing levels for Educational Services have decreased by 5.18 full-time equivalents (FTEs) from the 2024-2025 to the 2025-2026 school year. This reduction stems from a series of resignations and retirements. Additionally, given diminished funding, we will not be replacing these positions. Some staff members who hold special education certifications will be reassigned to backfill vacancies in that area.

Media Services Program

[Complete the table below and enter a narrative related to variances for staff in the media services program.]

Table Name: AEA BEDS Position Codes - Media Services Program

Position Name	Position Code	FY25 FTE Count	FY26 FTE Count	Variance
Director/Coordinator/Department Head	633	1.0	1.0	
AEA Regional/Zone Coordinator	553	.64	.56	-.08
Library Media Associate	104	4.0	4.0	
Other Support	107	1.0	1.0	

Staffing levels from the 2024-2025 school year to the 2025-2026 school year are currently under review while we analyze customer demand. Additional adjustment may be needed after a full assessment of requests by school districts has been completed and FTE can be matched to need.

Administrative Expenditures

Administrative expenditures include costs related to administration and administrators, as defined by HF2612 Sec.17 (Iowa Acts 2024), which includes chief administrators, directors and department heads, regional administrators, regional and zone coordinators, district coordinators, and human resources and personnel managers. This section includes FY24 actual, FY25 re-estimated, and FY26 proposed administrative staff levels and administrative expenditures.

Administrative Staff by FTE

[Complete the table below and enter a narrative related to variances.]

Central Rivers Area Education Agency (CRAEA) has actively worked to meet the 30% reduction in administrative expenditures mandated by July 1, 2026, as stipulated in House File 2612, Section 17. Significant cost reductions have been achieved by cutting salaries and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in administrative roles from FY2024 to FY2025.

In FY24, CRAEA's administrative costs totaled \$4,494,044, supported by 21.75 FTEs. By FY2025, expenditures dropped to \$3,341,540, and FTEs decreased to 16.0, representing a 25.65% reduction in compensation and a 26.44% reduction in FTEs. Projections for FY2026 anticipate expenses of \$3,080,038 with 14.5 FTEs; a reduction since FY24 in compensation of 31.46% and FTE 33.33%.

Efforts to achieve these reductions include shared administrative roles with Keystone AEA, collaborative financial management with Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency, strategic non-refilling of vacancies, and generating additional revenue by contracting services externally. Currently Central Rivers AEA is sharing the positions of Chief Administrator (.50 FTE), Executive Director of Special Education (.50 FTE) and Executive Director of Educational Services (.50 FTE) with Keystone AEA. The agency is also sharing a Chief Financial Officer (.50 FTE) with Mississippi Bend AEA. The Executive Director of Educational Services serves as a .50 FTE for Central Rivers as we currently have a Director of Media, whereas, this position at Keystone is split between Media and General Education at a .25 FTE respectively.

The agency remains focused on innovative strategies to meet the required expenditure targets by the FY26 deadline.

Table Name: AEA Administrative Staff by FTE

Administrative Staff	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimat ed	FY26 Proposed	FY24-FY26 Variance Amount	FY24-FY26 Variance Percent
Chief Administrator	1.0	.5	.5	-.5	-50%
Directors and Department Heads	7.0	6.0	5.5	-1.5	-21%
Regional Administrators	12.0	8.0	7.0	-4.0	-42%
Regional and Zone Coordinators					
District Coordinators					
Human Resources	1.0	1.0	1.0		
Other Administrative Positions	.75	.5	.5	-.25	-33%
Total FTE	21.75	16.0	14.50	-7.83	-33.33%

Total Administrative Expenditures: FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed

Total administrative expenditures, detailed below by administration and administrative staff, are required to be reduced by at least thirty percent by July 1, 2026.

[Complete the table below and enter the related narrative.]

Table Name: Administrative Expenditures – Administration and Administrative Staff FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed

Expenditures: Administration	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed	FY24 to FY26 Reduction Amount	FY24 to FY26 Reduction Percent
General Administration (Func. 2300-2399)	243,001	97,811	177,762		
School Administration (Func. 2400-2499)	955,970	495,135	302,064		
Business & Central Administration (Func. 2500-2519, 2540-2599)	1,856,795	1,717,270	1,598,543		
Purchasing, Distributing, Printing (Func. 2520-2539)	771,003	851,597	674,775		
Sub-total Expenditures: Administration	3,826,769	3,161,813	2,753,144		
Revenue: Administration					
General Administration					
School Administration					
Business & Central Administration	471,073	505,000	562,000		
Purchasing, Distributing, Printing					
Sub-total Revenue: Administration	471,071	505,000	562,000		
Net Administration Expense					
General Administration	243,001	97,811	177,762	-65,239	-27%
School Administration	955,970	495,135	302,064	-653,906	-68%
Business & Central Administration	1,385,722	1,212,270	1,036,543	-349,179	-25%
Purchasing, Distributing, Printing	771,003	851,597	674,775	-96,228	-12%
Net Total Expenditures: Administration	3,355,696	2,656,813	2,191,144	-1,164,552	-35%

Expenditures: Administrative Staff (Obj. 100-299)	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed	FY24 to FY26 Reduction Amount	FY24 to FY26 Reduction Percent
Step One: Enter expenditures for administrative staff, including objects 100-299.					
Chief Administrator	313,324	149,031	149,031		
Directors and Department Heads	1,368,366	1,173,400	1,099,414		
Regional Administrators	2,391,160	1,635,868	1,445,699		
Regional and Zone Coordinators					
District Coordinators					
Human Resources	259,836	265,274	267,927		
Other Administrative Positions	161,358	117,967	117,967		
Sub-total Expenditures: Administration	4,494,044	3,341,540	3,080,038		
Step Two: Enter revenue received from sharing agreements for each function.					
Chief Administrator					
Directors and Department Heads					
Regional Administrators					
Regional and Zone Coordinators					
District Coordinators					
Human Resources					
Other Administrative Positions					
Sub-total Revenue from Sharing					
Step Three: Enter total expenditures for administrative staff (original administrative staff expenditures less revenue received from sharing agreements).					
Chief Administrator	313,324	149,031	149,031	-164,293	-52%
Directors and Department Heads	1,368,366	1,173,400	1,099,414	-268,952	-20%
Regional Administrators	2,391,160	1,635,868	1,445,699	-945,461	-40%
Regional and Zone Coordinators					
District Coordinators					
Human Resources	259,836	265,274	267,927	8,091	3%
Other Administrative Positions	161,358	117,967	117,967	-43,391	-27%
Total Administrative Staff Expenditures	4,494,044	3,341,540	3,080,038	-1,414,006	-31.5%

	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed	FY24 to FY26 Reduction Amount	FY24 to FY26 Reducti on Percent
Total Administrative Expenditures					
Total Expenditures: Administration	3,355,696	2,656,813	2,191,144	-1,164,552	-34.7%
Total Expenditures: Administrative Staff	4,494,044	3,341,540	3,080,038	-1,414,006	-31.5%
Total Administrative Expenditures	7,849,740	5,998,353	5,271,182	-2,578,558	-32.8%

Total Administrative Expenditures: Reduction

[Provide narrative for progress made toward administrative expenditure reduction.]

Significant expenditure reductions were achieved across various administrative functions. An overall reduction in administrative expenditures was 34.7% and administrative staffing costs of 31.5%. from FY24 to FY26.

Total administrative staff expenditures decreased from \$4,494,044 in FY24 to \$3,080,038 in FY26, a 31.5% reduction. The reduction is a result of sharing four cabinet positions, three positions with Keystone AEA and one with Mississippi Bend AEA. Chief Administrator, Executive Director of Special Education and Executive Director of Educational Services are shared as a .50 FTE each with Keystone AEA and Chief Financial Officer is shared as a .50 FTE with Mississippi Bend AEA. Notable reductions also include a decrease in Regional Administrator costs by 39.5% since FY24.

Revenue changes also occurred, particularly with an increase in Business & Central Administration, reflecting efforts to enhance revenue generation.

Services

[Insert a table and a narrative description of services provided, the recipients of those services, and associated cost to the entity purchasing the service (e.g., rates, fee schedule), if applicable, and the cost to the AEA to provide the service.]

This [annual report](#) provides an overview of the services provided to school districts, the costs associated with the services provided, and the Agency's costs to provide the services.

Centralized Services

[Include a narrative to describe the AEA's centralized services, which are defined for this purpose as staff and services that are centralized and shared with other AEAs.]

This list of centralized services demonstrates Central Rivers AEA's efforts to support increased and improved statewide consistency and efficiency in practices. This list is not exhaustive of services being considered for efficiency, rather includes the services we are currently engaged in sharing with one or more agencies.

Centralized Services	Collaborating Agencies	
ACHIEVE Logistics Data Techs	Central Rivers	Keystone
ACHIEVE Logistics Facilitator	Central Rivers	Keystone
Shared Audiologists	Central Rivers	Keystone
Chief Administrator	Central Rivers	Keystone
Shared Chief Financial Officer	Central Rivers	Mississippi Bend
Educational Services Administrator	Central Rivers	Keystone
IT Quadrant	Central Rivers	Keystone
Media Quadrant	Central Rivers	Keystone
Secondary Transition Consultant	Central Rivers	Prairie Lakes
Shared Assistive Tech Team	Central Rivers	Keystone
Special Education Administrator	Central Rivers	Keystone
Regionalized Technology Services	Heartland/Green Hills, Keystone/Central Rivers, Grant Wood/MBAEA/Great Prairie, Northwest/Prairie Lakes	Systemwide
Teacher Librarian Network	Central Rivers	Systemwide
Tech Network	Heartland, Northwest, Central Rivers, Grant Wood	Systemwide

Sharing of Educational Services Computer Science Expertise	Central Rivers AEA	Keystone
Sharing of Educational Services Science Expertise	Central Rivers AEA	Keystone
Sharing of Educational Services Math Expertise	Central Rivers AEA	Keystone
Creative Services - establishment of a Statewide Printing/Graphic Design/Production Collaborative (SPC)	Systemwide	Systemwide
* Science Consulting - Investigating on statewide efficiency	To Be Determined	Systemwide
Director of Professional Learning	Central Rivers AEA	.5 Shared with AEA System
* HR Supports across AEAs - Investigating on statewide efficiency	To Be Determined	Systemwide
* SBO Supports across AEAs - Investigating on statewide efficiency	To Be Determined	Systemwide
* Paraprofessional PD Development - Investigating on statewide efficiency	To Be Determined	Systemwide
* Assistive Technology Support	To Be Determined	Systemwide
* Medicaid Billing	To Be Determined	Systemwide
* IEP Weighting	To Be Determined	Systemwide

Centers of Excellence

[Include a narrative to describe the AEA's centers of excellence, which are defined for this purpose as content expertise and capacity in a targeted special education service area with statewide impact.]

Iowa AEAs are committed to collaborate with each other as a statewide system to establish additional Centers of Excellence, which will bring additional efficiencies and effectiveness to the system.

Center of Excellence (CoE)	Lead AEA	Partnering AEAs	Implementation Date
Recruitment, Retainment, Onboarding, Mentoring & Professional Learning for AEA Special Education Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iowa AEA School Psychologist 	Heartland AEA	Systemwide	July 1, 2025
Iowa AEA Early ACCESS	Keystone/Central Rivers AEA	Systemwide	July 1, 2025
Assistive Technology Support for Learners with Disabilities	Green Hills AEA/Heartland AEA	Systemwide	July 1, 2026
Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap for Learners with Disabilities	Mississippi Bend AEA	Systemwide	July 1, 2026
Explicit Instruction Practices for Learners with Disabilities	Prairie Lakes AEA	Systemwide	January 1, 2026
Assessment, Linkages, and Instructional Programming Practices for Successful Post-Secondary Transition for Learners with Disabilities	Grant Wood AEA	Systemwide	July 1, 2026
Instruction for Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities	Northwest AEA	Systemwide	July 1, 2026
Language and Literacy for Learners with Disabilities	Great Prairie AEA	Systemwide	January 1, 2026

Statewide Early ACCESS Implementation Plan

Centers of Excellence are statewide initiatives to establish consistent and high-quality practices for AEA staff through content expertise and capacity in a targeted special education service area.

Keystone AEA/Central Rivers AEA will serve as the Center of Excellence and develop a team of internal (and potentially external) experts to develop and provide professional learning, technical assistance, and other recommendations.

- Efforts are focused on evidence-based instructional strategies to improve child outcomes as measured by Early Childhood Outcome data and IFSP outcome progress.
- Efforts can include setting best practices, professional learning, technical assistance, data analysis, feedback and self-study based on needs of individual AEAs to align statewide.
- Each AEA will identify an implementation point person who will work with the CoE to arrange for professional learning, establish the implementation supports necessary for fidelity, and monitor progress towards improved outcomes, etc.
- Collaboration with the DE will be essential to ensure professional learning aligns with identified priorities and needs.

Fiscal Detail

[Enter narrative of information provided in the section.]

For FY26 Central Rivers AEA is budgeting a revenue reduction of approximately \$3.4 million in General Fund revenues. Over the two years since FY24, Central Rivers AEA's revenues have decreased by approximately \$8.5 million. As a result of the revenue reductions, Central Rivers AEA has reduced administrative staff from 21.75 FTE to 14.5 FTE (33.3%). Central Rivers AEA is experiencing the same inflationary pressure other Iowa governmental agencies are experiencing. Central Rivers AEA has been cost-conscious and diligent in our efforts to reduce non-salary expenditures wherever possible.

General Fund Balance: FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed

[Include narrative to explain fund balance type (e.g., non-spendable, restricted, committed) reflected in the table below, including reasons for purposeful balances and plans for use.]

Central Rivers AEA's non-spendable fund balance relates to inventory and prepaid expenditures at the end of FY24. The Agency has fund balances restricted for TSS, TQ professional development, media resources and various restricted grants. Committed balances reflect funds committed for debt service and building repairs and infrastructure.

Table Name: General Fund Balance Detail FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed

General Fund Balance Detail	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed
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Non-Spendable Fund Balance, Special Education Support Services	100,552	100,000	100,000
Non-Spendable Fund Balance, Other	176,153	200,000	200,000
Restricted Fund Balance, Special Education Support Services	199,377	200,000	200,000
Restricted Fund Balance, Other	734,760	800,000	800,000
Committed Fund Balance, Special Education Support Services	4,388,475	4,388,475	4,388,475
Committed Fund Balance, Other	979,813	979,813	979,813
Assigned Fund Balance, Special Education Support Services	397,319	350,000	350,000
Assigned Fund Balance, Other	138,372	100,000	100,000
Unassigned Fund Balance, Special Education Support Services	635,107	0	0
Unassigned Fund Balance, Other	11,224,527	12,326,249	10,666,719
Total General Fund Balance	18,974,455	19,444,537	17,785,007

Three-Year Comparison for Budgeted Funds: FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed

[Include narrative of the budget detail. Summarize the FY26 proposed budget assumptions mentioned earlier in the report (e.g., districts served, programs offered). Explain the assumptions used to estimate revenues and expenditures. Additionally, include any assumptions used to generate the budget that were not already covered in the report narrative above (e.g., types of contracts for services, programs, sharing agreements, capital purchases).]

Central Rivers AEA's FY26 budget is based on a 0% SSA increase and the continuation of the \$32.5 million cut to the AEA's. We anticipate receiving 90% of the special education funding flowing to the districts. Central Rivers AEA does not anticipate an increase to the IDEA federal grants, Title I and Title III grants. Approximately 79% of Central Rivers AEA's budgeted FY26 expenditures are related to Student Support Services and Instructional Staff Support Services. Approximately 6% of our expenditures support instruction at shelter homes and youth detention centers. Central Rivers AEA is budgeting \$3.1 million (5%) for Other Financing Uses which is the Part B flow-through funds passed to the districts. Central Rivers AEA currently has outstanding certificates of participation in which the annual debt service is reflected.

The budget includes **revenue** received from: the State (controlled funding, property taxes, and grants), Federal grants, interest income, professional development, services provided to public school districts and non-public schools, shared positions, as well as other services provided to other community partners and preschools.

Student Support Services include: speech-language pathologists, school social workers, school psychologists, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, physical therapists, interpreters, itinerant hearing staff, audiologists, contracted itinerant vision services, and contracted orientation & mobility services. Salaries/benefits, travel expenses, supplies, professional leave, equipment, and software are some of the expenses included in this area for them.

Instructional Staff Support Services include school improvement facilitators, professional development providers, early childhood consultants, and special education consultants. salaries/benefits, travel expenses, supplies, professional leave, equipment, and software are some of the expenses included in this area for them. Media library materials, professional development expenses, some technology equipment and tech repairs, in-state and out of state travel and registration fees for non-management staff are also included here.

General Administration expenses include chief administrator, directors (educational services, van delivery, and special education), shared special education directors with schools, and the IDEA logistics facilitator. Salaries/benefits, travel expenses, supplies, memberships, equipment, and software are some of the expenses included in this area for them. Also included in this section are legal fees, audit fees, Iowa Association of Area Education Agencies chargeback fees, liability insurance, linebacker insurance, phone expenses, superintendent meeting expenses, and board travel expenses.

School Administration expenses include regional administrators, assistant regional administrators, office assistants, and shared special education facilitators. Salaries/benefits, travel expenses, supplies, memberships, equipment, and software are some of the expenses included in this area for them. Also included in this section are office supplies, postage, phone expenses, furniture, and general supplies for staff and offices.

Business and Central Support expenses include business manager, associate business manager, payroll and benefits specialist, financial clerks, human resources associate, computer center staff, and board

secretary. Salaries/benefits, travel expenses, supplies, memberships, equipment, and software are some of the expenses included in this area for them. Also included in this section are supplies, phone expenses, fees for FSA accounts, conference center supplies, postage, Medicaid processing fees, advertising, registration fees, Iowa Principal Leadership Academy (IPLA) trainer fees, and in-state travel and registration fees for management and business office staff.

Purchasing, Distributing, Printing, Publishing, Duplicating expenses include van drivers and print shop employees. Salaries/benefits, supplies, equipment, and software are some of the expenses included in this area for them.

Student Transportation is for taxi transportation of early childhood children/parents to an office (if needed.)

Non Instructional Programs was for the Family Educator Partnership grant, which is no longer available after FY24.

Debt Service and Interfund Transfers Out was for leases established and paid to public schools and to a public library for office space.

Other Financing Uses is the IDEA Part B Flow-through money. The AEA collects, reviews, and summarizes the district applications and reports, and sends the summary report to the Department of Education for approval. The AEA forwards the payments to the public school districts once the money is received.

Table Name: Resources, Expenditures & Financing Uses, and Funds Balance FY24 Actual, FY25 Re-Estimated, and FY26 Proposed

Resources: Revenues, Other Financing Sources, and Beginning Funds Balance	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed
Taxes (Controlled Funding)	13,805,180	8,960,771	5,716,221
Tuition/Transportation	164,101	143,529	143,529
Earnings on Investments	1,043,968	1,000,000	1,000,000

Nutrition Program Sales	0	0	0
Student Activities & Sales	0	0	0
Other Revenues from Local Sources	8,902,222	9,193,362	11,732,337
Intermediate Revenues	0	0	0
State Aid (Controlled Funding)	14,530,254	14,816,161	12,654,788
Juvenile Home Tuition Aid	1,618,431	1,546,446	1,576,917
Other State Revenues	3,830,045	3,599,289	3,597,427
IDEA Federal Grant	17,961,741	17,141,679	17,141,679
Other Federal Revenues	685,683	535,382	535,382
Long-Term Debt Proceeds	0	0	0
Interfund Transfers In	543,843	974,099	492,454
Proceeds of Fixed Asset Dispositions	5,660	0	0
Other Financing Sources	0	0	0
Beginning Funds Balance	17,964,899	18,974,455	19,444,537
Total Resources	81,056,025	76,885,173	74,035,271
Expenditures & Other Financing Uses	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed
Instruction	9,689,605	9,503,440	9,517,107
Student Support Services	21,322,748	21,406,677	20,553,167
Instructional Staff Support Services	15,566,764	11,731,546	13,827,563

General Administration	1,837,553	1,365,550	1,372,957
School Administration	4,205,741	2,478,370	2,038,068
Business & Central Support	1,815,937	2,305,069	2,191,032
Purchasing, Distributing, Printing, Duplicating	774,889	851,597	674,775
Plant Operations & Maintenance	1,758,671	1,801,244	1,677,672
Student Transportation	4,210	5,264	5,264
Other Support Services	710,114	734,201	750,007
Non-Instructional Programs	155,307	0	0
Facilities Acquisition & Construction	178,865	658,037	0
Debt Service	506,472	492,454	492,454
Interfund Transfers Out	543,843	1,006,009	49,020
Other Financing Uses	3,010,852	3,101,178	3,101,178
Total Expenditures & Other Financing Uses	62,081,570	57,440,636	56,250,264
Funds Balance	FY24 Actual	FY25 Re-Estimated	FY26 Proposed
Total Resources	81,056,025	76,885,173	74,035,271
Total Expenditures & Other Financing Uses	62,081,570	57,440,636	56,250,264
Ending Funds Balance	18,974,455	19,444,537	17,785,007

Additional FY26 Budget Assumptions

[Please insert narrative on additional assumptions informed by potential opportunities and challenges not otherwise detailed in the report.]

The general financial health of our agency remains strong due in large part to rapid innovation around general education services that meet district needs in a fee for service environment. This is evidenced by a positive response by school districts to purchase these services. When coupled with a strategic effort to reduce the investment of resources in services that do not show long term viability, Central Rivers AEA is on a trajectory toward budgetary sustainability.

Our FY26 budget projections show the agency leaning into approximately 9% of our fund balance; however, this figure serves primarily as a placeholder and is indicative of our intention to expand Special Education staffing. We are actively seeking to fill nearly 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions left open by retirements and resignations spanning over the last two fiscal years.