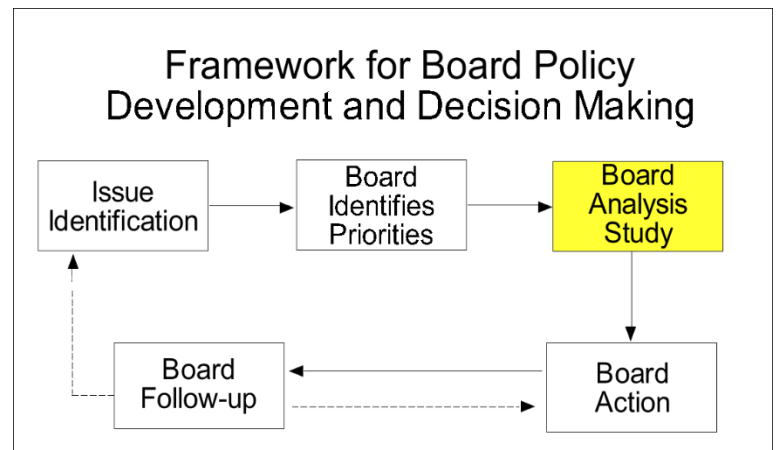


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

May 8, 2025



Agenda Item: 2024 Iowa Teacher of the Year – Year of Service Report

State Board Priority: All

State Board Role/Authority: The State Board promotes effective and educational opportunities for all students in Iowa.

Presenter(s): Ann Mincks, 2024 Iowa Teacher of the Year

Attachment(s): None

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board hear and discuss this information.

Background: The Iowa Teacher of the Year Award was established in 1958 and is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education through an appropriation from the Iowa Legislature. The Iowa Department of Education established the Iowa Regional Teachers of the Year award in 2024 to recognize exceptional teachers, representing all nine education regions of the state, who demonstrate excellence in the classroom and who have made a significant impact on student outcomes and their fellow educators. The nine Regional Teachers of the Year serve as finalists for the Iowa Teacher of the Year award.

The awards provide an opportunity to recognize Iowa teachers across the state who advance student learning through evidence-based instruction, empower students with multiple pathways to postsecondary success, learn

from and invest in fellow educators and serve students in partnership with families.

The Iowa Teacher of the Year serves as an ambassador for the Iowa Department of Education and a representative of and liaison for all Iowa educators.

2024 Iowa TOY Year of Service: Amplify & Advance

Goal 1: Create an Overview of English Learner (EL) Education in Iowa

At the state level, various programs and assessments provide much of the quantitative data about English learners (ELs). There are nearly 40,000 ELs in K-12 schools across the state, making up about 7% of our student population. There are around 130 different languages spoken by students across the state, with Spanish as the largest home language group and Swahili, Arabic, French, and Karen rounding out the top five home languages.

Local Education Agency (LEA) Site Visits

In order to collect some of the qualitative data on ELs, I visited a combination of rural, suburban, and urban LEAs across various regions of the state to collect the stories of students and educators. These sites were chosen based on the following: enrollment and overall percentage of ELs in the district, recipients of federal funds, and number of immigrants and/or migratory students. This information helped to shine a spotlight on both the bright spots and areas in need of support when it comes to serving English learners. The percentages of EL students in each district listed below come from the 2023 Iowa Performance Profiles.

Rural (<3,000)	Suburban (3,000-10,000)	Urban (>10,000)	Additional
Williamsburg 3%	Bettendorf 2%	Davenport 4%	Holy Family Catholic (Dubuque) 1%
Eagle Grove 30%	Ottumwa 23%	Sioux City 23%	School for the Deaf (Council Bluffs) 30%
Columbus Community 24%	College 6%	Iowa City 14%	
Denison 34%	Johnston 9%	Cedar Rapids 10%	
West Liberty 28%	Marshalltown 33%	Ankeny 4%	
Postville 44%	West Des Moines 14%	Waterloo 13%	
Rock Valley 20%	Urbandale 12%	Des Moines 25%	
Storm Lake 44%	Dubuque 5%	Waukee 6%	
Perry 23%	Council Bluffs 7%		

Goal 2: Provide English Learner (EL) Professional Development for Educators

In a 2024 survey of novice teachers and their supervisors, conducted by the University of Iowa College of Education in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education, only around 50% of novice teachers were well prepared or very well prepared for working with English learners. This number isn't just a statistic; it represents real teachers facing real challenges and real students who deserve the best support.

Conferences

Mississippi Bend AEA: Preparing our Multilingual Learners, University of Iowa's BEST Summit, MIDTESOL 2024 Conference, 2024 Iowa Refugee Summit, Emerging Educators Academy 10, Northwestern College Leadership Conference, CCSSO's State Teachers of the Year Virtual Conference: We Teach the Nation, Educators Rising, ISEA Aspiring Educators, ISEA Professional Issues Conference

Higher Education

Iowa State University (4), Briar Cliff University, Luther College, Upper Iowa University, Central College (2), William Penn University, Morningside College, Des Moines Area Community College (2), Waldorf University, Mount Mercy University, St. Ambrose University, Wartburg College

LEA Events & Workshops

Webster City (Morningside Project Connect), Columbus Community, Norwalk, Adel DeSoto Minburn, Des Moines Public Schools

Iowa Department of Education

Visiting Teachers from Spain Program, Statewide Literacy Leadership Team, Title III Network Meetings



Goal 3: Develop a Resource Bank of “Best Practices” for English Learners

The Iowa Department of Education, school districts, and individual buildings across the state of Iowa have an incredible opportunity to reimagine the systems serving English learners. Below is an evidence-based resource that could serve as the framework for those discussions---especially, as districts continue to revisit and revise their Lau plans and utilize federal funds effectively.

Institute of Education Sciences

Factors That Shape Multilingual Learners’ Educational Opportunities and Outcomes Nearly one-quarter of students in K-12 public schools in the United States speak more than one language. (n.d.).

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/west/pdf/2.1.2.2_Infographic2_SystemicFactors_Compressed_FINAL_Approved_508c.pdf



Goal 4: Elevate and Celebrate English Learner Students and Educators

Anniversary of Lau v. Nichols

The year 2024 marked the 50th anniversary of Lau v. Nichols, the landmark Supreme Court decision affirming English learner's right to special language instruction to ensure all students receive the resources needed to succeed. The Iowa Department of Education Communications team highlighted the impact that the landmark case still has today with a feature story on West Des Moines CSD.

Title III Network Educator Nominations

Forty educators from over ten school districts were “**E**levated and **C**elebrated” across the state of Iowa. These nominations highlighted educators for exceptional work and achievements such as: sharing their expertise in policy and law, supporting content-area colleagues as language specialists, moving to bilingual teaching positions via the Teacher and Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship (TPRA) grant,

designing the highest standard of dual language programs, facilitating parent academies, hosting celebrations for the Seal of Biliteracy, and so much more. Some of the words used to describe educators nominated for recognition are below.



Fun Facts

Miles Driven	Audience Members	Social Media Posts	TOY Event Requests
10,414+	5,474+	130+	47+