

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

September 12, 2025

Agenda Item:	Rules – Notice of Intended Action – Chapters 12, 79, & 80 (Amend)
State Board Priority:	Goal 4
State Board Role/Authority:	This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 256.16.
Presenter(s):	Thomas A. Mayes General Counsel
Attachment(s):	One
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the State Board of Education give notice of its intent to amend chapters 12, 79, and 80.
Background:	This proposed rulemaking updates the State Board of Education's rules concerning school accreditation and practitioner preparation approval to comply with 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT[281]

Notice of Intended Action

The State Board of Education hereby proposes to amend Chapter 12, “General Accreditation Standards,” Chapter 79, “Standards for Practitioner and Administrator Preparation Programs,” and Chapter 80, “Standards for Paraeducator Preparation Programs,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 256.16.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

Purpose and Summary

This proposed rulemaking updates the State Board of Education’s rules concerning school accreditation and practitioner preparation approval to comply with 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the state of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

No waivers are permitted to 281—Chapter 79. Iowa Code § 256.7(3)(b).

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the State Board for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 281—Chapter 4.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit comments concerning this proposed rulemaking. Written comments in response to this rulemaking must be received by the State Board no later than 4:30 p.m. on October 21, 2025. Comments should be directed to:

Thomas A. Mayes, General Counsel
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.281.8661
Email: thomas.mayes@iowa.gov

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

October 21, 2025
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
Room B-50, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa
Or by video conference at <https://meet.google.com/rhd-dnga-ziy>
Telephone access to the video conference: +1 385-645-7961 PIN: 403 190 939#

Persons who wish to make oral comments at the public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend the hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the State Board and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its regular monthly meeting or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Amend subrule 12.3(6) as follows:

12.3(6) *Student responsibility and discipline.* The board will adopt student responsibility and discipline policies as required by Iowa Code section 279.8. The board will involve parents, students, instructional and noninstructional professional staff, and community members in the development and revision of those policies where practicable or unless specific policy is mandated by legislation. The policies will relate to the educational purposes of the school or school district. The policies will include the following: attendance; use of tobacco; the use or possession of alcoholic beverages or any controlled substance; harassment of or by students and staff as detailed in subrule 12.3(13); violent, destructive, and seriously disruptive behavior; suspension, expulsion, emergency removal, weapons, and physical restraint; out-of-school behavior; participation in extracurricular activities; academic progress; and citizenship.

The policies will ensure due process rights for students and parents, including consideration for students who have been identified as requiring special education programs and services.

The board will also consider the potential, disparate impact of the policies on students because of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation as defined in Iowa Code section 216.2,

~~gender identity as defined in Iowa Code section 216.2~~, disability, religion, creed, or socioeconomic status.

The board will publicize its support of these policies, its support of the staff in enforcing them, and the staff's accountability for implementing them.

ITEM 2. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **12.3(14)“e”**:

e. “Gender identity” has the meaning given in Iowa Code section 279.78(1)“a” as amended by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

ITEM 3. Amend subrule 12.3(15) as follows:

12.3(15) *Compliance with Iowa Code section 279.80.*

a. A school district shall not provide any program, curriculum, test, survey, questionnaire, promotion, or instruction relating to gender ~~identity~~theory or sexual orientation to students in kindergarten through grade six.

b. “Gender ~~identity~~theory” and “sexual orientation” have the same meanings as those given in Iowa Code section ~~216.2~~ 279.80(1) as amended by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418.

c. In monitoring and enforcing this subrule, the department will not conclude that a neutral statement regarding sexual orientation or gender ~~identity~~theory violates Iowa Code section 279.80 as amended by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 418, or this subrule.

ITEM 4. Amend rule **281—79.2(256)**, definition of “Diverse groups,” as follows:

“*Diverse groups*” means one or more groups of individuals possessing certain traits or characteristics, including age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, ~~gender identity~~, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status.

ITEM 5. Amend rule **281—80.1(272)**, definition of “Diverse groups,” as follows:

“Diverse groups” means one or more groups of individuals possessing certain traits or characteristics, including but not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, ~~gender identity~~, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.