

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

February 12, 2026

Agenda Item: Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency (AEA) Accreditation Progress Report

State Board Goal: Goal 2

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code section 273.10 and Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-72 requires the Iowa Department of Education to conduct an accreditation process for AEAs and for the State Board to review progress as specified for conditionally accredited agencies.

Presenter(s): Angelisa Fynaardt, Administrator
Special Education Division

Dan Mart, Chief Administrator
Prairie Lakes AEA

Kris Ahrens, Administrator of Student and Family Services
Prairie Lakes AEA

Tabitha DeMey, Facilitator of Educational and Media Services
Prairie Lakes AEA

Attachment(s): Two

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

Background: On July 16, 2025, the State Board granted Prairie Lakes AEA conditional accreditation. Prairie Lakes AEA is required to provide quarterly updates of progress towards required and recommended actions to the State Board.

Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency

Standard Area(s)	Required Actions *copy and paste the required actions below*	Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible	Aug Status	Sept Status	Oct Status	Nov Status	Dec Status	Jan Status
SE Services/Supports	Identify an administrator (or team) and ensure the leadership has the expertise and authority to perform the assigned duties which include compliance with IDEA Part C and Part B and federal and state requirements for general education programs and services, as well as general supervision. Implement an effective system of communication and feedback loops to ensure responsibilities have been addressed. Communicate role expectations with internal and external personnel.	1-Identify the admin team.	Dan Mart Kris Ahrens	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		2-Review/revise roles and responsibilities.	Dan Mart Kris Ahrens	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing
		3-Host principal networks/Sped leadership networks monthly. (external)	Kris Ahrens	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		4-Provide a general Supervision workshop. (external)	Kris Ahrens & RAs	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		5-Modify the structure and focus of leadership meetings. (internal)	Dan Mart/Kris Ahrens	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		6-Modify department meeting structure to ensure consistent training & communication for Part B & Part C. (internal)	Kris Ahrens	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Progressing
		7-Complete Child Find training with all staff. (internal)	Kris Ahrens	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed
		8-Ensure Agency learning slide decks contain speaker notes for consistent messaging.	Kris Ahrens & RAs	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		9 - Review progress monitoring data, & timelines to ensure general supervision requirements are met.	Kris Ahrens & RAs	Not Started	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		10-Develop and distribute a survey of staff regarding communication effectiveness and needs.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed
		11-Identify the changes to address the needs identified from the staff survey results.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing
		12-Develop a plan to address the needs.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing
		13-Develop an evaluation plan.	System Leadership Team	Not Started					

Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency

Standard Area(s)	Required Actions *copy and paste the required actions below*	Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible	Aug Status	Sept Status	Oct Status	Nov Status	Dec Status	Jan Status
SE Services/Supports	Restructure and clarify the purpose of Lakes Partnership School. Appoint a qualified team to oversee the placement process of students and ensure escheduled, frequent reviews of exisiting placements. A written agreement should include clear expectations for district involvement, conditions for reintegration and a timeline for review upon student placement into program. Appoint a qualified administrative designee who can serve the necessary function and communicate it to staff. Design a professional learning calendar and plan for staff who serve at Lakes Partnership School.	1-Appoint Administrative oversight.	Dan Mart	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		2-Appoint a qualified administrative designee who can serve the necessary function and communicate it to staff.	Dan Mart/Kris Ahrens	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		3-Consistently implement placement procedures per handbook.	Chris Wells/Kris Ahrens	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Near Compl...
		4-Consistently implement transition procedures back to the district per handbook.	Chris Wells/Kris Ahrens	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Near Comp...	Completed
		5-Develop and distribute a survey to districts regarding placement and transition procedures.	Dan Mart, Kris Ahrens, & Chris Wells	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing
		6-Identify the changes to address the needs identified from the district survey results.	Dan Mart, Kris Ahrens, & Chris Wells	Not Started	Not Started				
		7-Develop a plan to address the needs.	Dan Mart, Kris Ahrens, & Chris Wells	Not Started	Not Started				
		8-Develop an evaluation plan.	Dan Mart, Kris Ahrens, & Chris Wells	Not Started	Not Started				
		9-Provide professional learning for LPS staff.	Chris Wells	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed
		10-Evaluate the impact of professional learning for LPS staff.	Chris Wells	Not Started	Not Started				
Standard Area(s)	Required Actions *copy and paste the required actions below*	Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible	Aug Status	Sept Status	Oct Status	Nov Status	Dec Status	Jan Status
SE Services/Supports	Provide Child Find training for staff who complete evaluations for preschool-aged children. The training needs to include content on placement decisions, emphasizing that determination is being made for special education eligibility and not for preschool or a specific placement or location.	1-Collaborate with DE staff regarding specific concerns around Child Find for preschoolers.	Kris Ahrens, Jenniver Sammons, Chris Wells	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Progressing	Completed	Completed
		2 - Collaborate with AEA Statewide team to create a preschool training package that supplements the Statewide Child Find Training.	Kris Ahrens & AEA SE Administrators	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed
		3-Provide specific preschool and c to b evaluation training	Kris Ahrens & Jennifer Sammons	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed
		4-All staff complete the AEA Evaluation Report Self Reflection tool by Nov 7 (Pre).	Kris Ahrens & RAs	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed
		5-Admin review a sample of evaluation reports from each staff member (pre).	Kris Ahrens & RAs	Not Started	Progressing				
		6-All staff complete the AEA Evaluation Report Self Reflection tool by May 15 (post).	KrisAhrens & RAs	Not Started	Not Started				
		7-Admin review a sample of evaluation reports from each staff member.	Kris Ahrens & RAs	Not Started	Not Started				

Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency

Standard Area(s)	Required Actions *copy and paste the required actions below*	Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible	Aug Status	Sept Status	Oct Status	Nov Status	Dec Status	Jan Status
Compliance	The AEA Corrective Action Plan and documentation of corrections of individual noncompliance citations in IDEA Part C must be submitted to the Iowa Department of Education (Department).	1-The AEA Corrective Action Plan and documentation of corrections of individual noncompliance citations in IDEA Part C must be submitted.	Kris Ahrens	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		2-Implement EA monthly team meetings & collaboration to monitor C to B transitions.	Kris Ahrens & RAS	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed
		3-Established monthly technical assistance virtual meetings.	Kris Ahrens & RAS	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed
		4-Evaluate effectiveness of Early Access meetings and technical assistance. (Jan)	Kris Ahrens & RAS	Not Started	Progressing				
		5-Evaluate effectiveness of Early Access meetings and technical assistance. (EOY)	Kris Ahrens & RAS	Not Started					
Standard Area(s)	Required Actions *copy and paste the required actions below*	Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible	Aug Status	Sept Status	Oct Status	Nov Status	Dec Status	Jan Status
Program Evaluation	Formalize processes for program evaluation and create an agency specific continous improvement plan which aligns to the State Board of Education goals. The plan should be created by a represenative leadership team. The process should be facilitated by outside experts assigned by the Department.	1-Establish system leadership team membership and meeting dates.	Dan Mart & Admin Team	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
		2-Complete the needs assessment data analysis process.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing
		3-Write the needs assessment summary statements.	Dan Mart & Admin Team	Not Started	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Progressing	Progressing
		4-Complete an agency customer service survey.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Not Started	Progressing	Completed	Completed	Completed
		5-Identify agency services aligned to identified needs and AEA accreditation areas.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Progressing				
		6-Write or update the agency action plan, including the evaluation of implementation and outcomes.	System Leadership Team	Not Started					
		7-Write the agency internal and external professional development plan.	System Leadership Team	Not Started	Progressing				
		8-Write the plan for the provision of management services.	Dan	Not Started					
		9-Update CIP to reflect the new plan.	System Leadership Team	Not Started					

Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency

Standard Area(s)	Person Responsible	Recommended Actions <i>*copy and paste the recommended actions below*</i>	Status
School and Comm Planning	Dan Mart	Establish collaborative teams to support school-community planning, leverage data tools to identify short-term priorities while maintaining focus on a long-term vision for continuous improvement and formalize processes.	Will be addressed in 26-27
	Dan Mart	Partner with the Department and AEAs to define and implement consistent school-community planning processes and procedures.	Partially completed
Professional Development	Kris Ahrens	Develop a systemic plan to ensure the agency's capacity to train IDEA-DA SDI packages and support coaching.	Partially completed
	Tabitha DeMey	Strengthen professional learning for staff by embedding implementation science practices.	Partially completed
Curriculum Instruction and Assessment	Tabitha DeMey	Consider improvements to support districts in curriculum adoption, such as using protocols and implementation science to support implementation and sustainability.	Completed
	Tabitha DeMey	Increase communication to districts about the support and resources available for 504 and TAG planning.	Partially completed
Technology	Kris Ahrens	Continue to provide professional learning on the role AT plays in providing access to a FAPE for learners.	Completed
Learning Environment	Tabitha DeMey	Consider how to offer support for all students, even if a district doesn't implement a certain model.	Partially completed
	Tabitha DeMey	Build capacity of AEA staff and remain flexible with districts that request professional learning supporting positive learning environments.	Partially completed
Compliance	Kris Ahrens & Jennifer Sammons	Monitor implementation of the agency's Part C Early ACCESS Services plan.	Partially completed
	Admin Team	Develop a standard communication process to share updates with all staff and across all districts.	Partially completed
	Kris Ahrens	Review and refine current general supervision procedures and ensure consistent application across all groups.	Partially completed
Program Evaluation		<i>none</i>	
SE Services/Supports	Kris Ahrens & Tabitha DeMey	Clarify for staff and district partners AEA involvement in the districts' process of establishing a MTSS.	Partially completed
	Kris Ahrens	Provide professional learning and on-going coaching for staff to build their understanding of all possibilities of how to process a referral, including post-referral screening, for Early ACCESS services.	Partially completed
Management Services	Dan Mart & Tabitha	Implement a regular review of service delivery, gather input and assess internal capacity to meet needs	Partially completed
Media Services	Dan Mart	Sustain the agreement with Northwest AEA for media services.	Completed