



Reorganization Plan



December 2020



Board of Directors

Name	Director District	Districts	Term Ends
Lora Wolff	1	Central Lee, Keokuk, and Van Buren	2023
Melissa Ballard	2	Albia, Chariton, Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont, Moravia, and Wayne	2021
Patricia Miletich	3	Keota, North Mahaska, Oskaloosa, Sigourney, and Tri-County	2023
Matt Greiner	4	Cardinal, Centerville, Davis County, Moulton-Udell, Seymour, and that portion of Green Twp. Pct. & Adams Twp. Pct contained in the Ottumwa School District	2023
Cindy Kurtz-Hopkins	5	That portion of Dahlonga Twp. Pct., Agency Twp. Pct., Keokuk Twp. Pct., and Ottumwa Pcts. 1-10 contained in the Ottumwa School District	2023
Margaret Kelly	6	Fairfield, Fremont, Pekin, WACO, Winfield-Mt. Union, and that portion of Highland Twp. Pct., Richland Twp. Pct., & Center Twp. Pct. Contained in the Ottumwa School District	2021
Janet Smith	7	Mediapolis, Morning Sun, Mount Pleasant, New London, and Wapello	2021
Rhonda Frevert	8	That portion of Burlington 1 & Tama Pct. And Burlington Pcts. 2-12, contained in the Burlington School District	2023
Victoria Stephenson	9	Danville, Fort Madison, West Burlington, that portion of West Burlington Twp. Pct., Union Concordia Pct. & Flint River Middletown Pct. Contained in the Burlington School District.	2021

Secretary to the Board

Jennifer Woodley

Administrator

Dr. Cindy Yelick



Preface

Iowa Code Section 275.3, second sentence, states, “The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory.”

The purposes of this publication are to comply with those mandates relative to reorganization planning, to provide assistance to the officials and citizens of school districts contemplating school district reorganization, and to assist the AEA board of directors in the event it is presented with a reorganization petition.

The plan is intended to provide general guidance to the AEA board of directors as it acts upon reorganization petitions, and the provisions of the plan are not expected to be binding upon the AEA board. The board reserves the right to base its future actions upon conditions as it develops and upon new information, as it becomes available.

Public Hearing/Plan	Date
Public hearing on revision of plan	Not required
Revision of plan reviewed by Great Prairie AEA Board of Directors	December 2020
Revision of plan adopted by Great Prairie AEA Board of Directors	December 2020
Revision of plan transmitted to the Department of Education	December 2020



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Chapter One

Code Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to assist those who read and use this publication by summarizing the provisions of Chapter 275 of the Iowa Code that relates to the mandated AEA reorganization plans. However, it is not intended for reading of this narrative to take the place of direct examination of the Code or consultation with an attorney. The first part of this chapter offers general background about the contents of Chapter 275, and the next three sections summarize portions of Chapter 275 that most specifically relate to AEA reorganization plans. The fifth section lists the titles of the sections of Chapter 275 that most directly address the reorganization plan.

General Background

Chapter 275 of the Iowa Code, along with a few minor references in other chapters, addresses the topic of school district reorganization. The terms of reorganization, consolidation and merger seem to be used interchangeably; although reorganization is in the Code chapter title and is the most common. The word reorganization is used in this publication.

On July 1, 1975, 15 AEAs replaced the county boards of education, and they inherited the school district reorganization governance role; AEA responsibilities can be placed into two broad categories. The first includes the area reorganization plan, and the second is the governance of the petition process. It is important to note that the AEAs have no responsibility for initiating the reorganization process, or in any way causing a reorganization. The decision to start a reorganization effort through a petition is a decision of the local district residents. The eventual reorganization election decision is also within the realm of local district voters. The AEA's role in the reorganization process is to govern the activities that take place from the submission of the reorganization petition through the reorganization election. The AEA has some post- reorganization responsibilities, but they are "housekeeping" in nature.

The Code contains three general methods for school districts to change their boundary lines. The first and most predominate method is the petition process in Chapter 275. The others are the dissolution method listed in Code Sections 275.51 through 275.56, and the concurrent action method of changing boundaries as cited in Section 274.37. The AEA has no authority for dissolution, but concurrent action by two local school boards to change their boundaries may be disapproved by the respective AEA board or boards of directors.

Chapter 275 can be categorized into two broad areas, plus numerous lesser topics. The first is the AEA reorganization planning component, and the second is the reorganization petition process. Among the other topics in the chapter are the school dissolution process, school redistricting following decennial census and changes in director district boundaries and numbers. This publication is limited to AEA reorganization planning.

Three general concepts come together as the AEAs develop and use their reorganization plans:

1. Chapter 275 begins with the mandate that AEAs develop reorganization plans. Such plans must be developed whether or not any school districts expect to reorganize or could potentially reorganize.
2. School districts initiate the reorganization effort through the petition process. The petitions may be based

upon the AEA reorganization plans, or they may be different than the plans. If they are different, the petitions must request the AEA to change its plans.

3. When the AEA receives a petition, it must compare the petition to the plans. If the petition does not comply with the plans, the AEA board of directors will conduct further surveys.

The terms “plans, surveys and studies” are used throughout Chapter 275. There seems to be little distinction among them. This publication uses the terms that are associated with the concepts being described.

Summary of Plan Development

- A. The AEA will develop detailed studies and surveys.
- B. The surveys and studies will be of the school districts within the AEA and all adjacent territory.
- C. The plans will be revised periodically to reflect reorganization that may have taken place.
- D. The scope of the studies and surveys should include:
 - a. the adequacy of the educational program
 - b. pupil enrollment
 - c. property valuation
 - d. existing buildings and equipment
 - e. natural community areas
 - f. road conditions
 - g. transportation
 - h. economic factors
 - i. individual attention given to the needs of students
 - j. opportunity of students to participate in a wide variety of activities
 - k. other matters that may bear on educational programs meeting minimum standards required by law
- E. The plans will also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the AEA into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in Section 275.3. Section 275.3 lists 300 students as the minimum size for the formation of a new district. That 300-student enrollment is incorporated into this planning provision, and it requires the AEA board of directors to suggest alternate plans for those districts under the 300-student level.
- F. The plan may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs as an alternative to school reorganization.
- G. In developing studies and surveys, the AEA board of directors:
 - a. will consult with school officials and other citizens,
 - b. from time to time, hold public hearings,
 - c. may employ research and other assistance to properly carry on its survey,
 - d. will consult with the Director of the Iowa Department of Education,
 - e. may request assistance from the Director of the Iowa Department of Education and
 - f. will adopt and transmit completed plans to the Director of the Iowa Department of Education.

Summary of Petition Conforming to Plans

1. A reorganization petition will contain a description of the area included in the proposed district.
2. The description will conform to the AEA reorganization plan, or the petition will request the plan to be changed.
3. It is also required that the provisions relating to studies, surveys, hearings and adoption of plans will constitute a mandatory prerequisite to the effectuation of any proposal for district boundary change. It will be the mandatory duty of an AEA board of directors to dismiss the petition if the above provisions are not complied with fully.

Summary of Changing Plans

1. Following the receipt of a petition, the AEA board of directors shall review its plans and determine whether the petition conforms with the plan.
2. If the plan does not conform with the petition, the board of directors shall conduct further surveys.
3. If the petitions are being considered at a hearing conducted by a joint board of more than one AEA, the joint board will determine if the petition conforms to the plans.
4. If the petition requests a change of plans, the joint board of directors will determine whether a change should be made in any or all of the plans of the AEAs affected by the petition.

Portions of Chapter 275 That Most Directly Relate to AEA Reorganization Plans

Section	Title
275.1	Definitions —declaration of policy — surveys
275.2	Scope of surveys
275.3	Minimum size
275.4	Studies, surveys and plans
275.5	Proposals for merger or consolidation
275.7	Budget
275.8	Cooperation of department of education — planning joint districts
275.9	Methods of effectuating reorganization plans
275.12	Petition — method of election (Section 1)
275.16	Hearing when the territory is in different area education agencies

Chapter Two

Records of Great Prairie Area Education Agency Reorganization Plans and Activities

As noted in the preceding chapter, the development of area education agency reorganization plans, the revision of the plans, and the use of the plans during the reorganization petition process, all require certain actions to be taken by the AEAs and their boards of directors. The purpose of this chapter is to maintain a set of records that chronicles such actions by Great Prairie AEA¹.

The records are in the form of a set of tables that may be revised as actions are taken and conditions change.

Table 2-01	Adoption of Plans and Revisions of Plans
Table 2-02	Approval of Changes
Table 2-03	Transmittal of Plans to the Director of the Department of Education
Table 2-04	Further Surveys
Table 2-05	Assistance from the Director of the Department of Education
Table 2-06	Public Hearings
Table 2-07	Passed Reorganization Elections
Table 2-08	Dismissed Reorganization Petitions and Failed Reorganization Elections
Table 2-09	Certification of Dissolution Commissions
Table 2-10	Boundary Lines Changed by Concurrent Action
Table 2-11	Joint Board Actions

¹ Records of the original AEAs 15 and 16 are listed where appropriate. Such references may be deleted as deemed appropriate when revisions to the Great Prairie AEA plan are approved.

Table 2-01: Record of Adoption of Plans and Revisions of Plans

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.1, unnumbered paragraph 2: "...The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory."

Record of Adoption: Great Prairie AEA

Date	Notes
July 2007	Original Plan
May 2012	First Revision
December 2020	Second Revision

Record of Adoption: AEA 15

Date	Notes
September 1980	Original Plan
July 1986	First Revision
December 1992	Second Revision
October 1999	Third Revision
March 2006	Fourth Revision

Record of Adoption: AEA 16

Date	Notes
1980	Original Plan
August 1985	First Revision
November 1998	Second Revision
March 2006	Third Revision

Table 2-02: Record of Approval of Changes

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.12(1): “A petition describing the boundaries, or accurately describing the area included therein by legal descriptions, of the proposed district, which boundaries or area described shall conform to plans developed or the petition shall request change of the plan, shall be filed with the area education agency administrator of the area education agency in which the greatest number of registered voters reside.”

Record of Changes: Great Prairie AEA

Date	Notes
July 1, 2011	Wayne Lineville-Clio New District: Wayne CSD
July 1, 2012	Eddyville-Blakesburg Fremont New District: Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD
July 1, 2018	Harmony Van Buren New District: Van Buren County CSD

Record of Changes: AEA 15

Date	Notes
July 1, 1994	Eddyville-Blakesburg New District: Eddyville-Blakesburg CSD
July 1, 2004	Van Buren Fox Valley New District: Van Buren CSD

Record of Changes: AEA 16

Date	Notes
None	

Table 2-03: Record of Transmittal of Plans to the Director of the Department of Education

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 3: “Completed plans shall be transmitted by the area education agency board to the director of the department of education.”

Record of Transmittal: Great Prairie AEA

Date	Notes
2007	Original Plan
2012	First Revision
2020/21	Second Revision

Record of Transmittal: AEA 15

Date	Notes
September 1980	Original Plan
July 1986	First Revision
December 1992	Second Revision
October 1999	Third Revision
March 2006	Fourth Revision

Record of Transmittal: AEA 16

Date	Notes
1980	Original Plan
August 1985	First Revision
November 1998	Second Revision
March 2006	Third Revision

Table 2-04: Record of Further Surveys

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.5: “Following receipt of a petition pursuant to section 275.12, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plans which had been adopted by the board. If the petition does not comply with the plans which had been adopted by the board, the board shall conduct further surveys pursuant to section 275.4 prior to the date set for the hearing upon the petition. If further surveys have been conducted by the board, the board shall present the results of the further surveys at the hearing upon the petition.”

Record of Further Surveys: Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Districts Included in Surveys	Surveys Conducted by

Record of Further Surveys: AEA 15

Dates	Districts Included in Surveys	Surveys Conducted by
1996	Russell (Consultation)	Department of Education

Record of Further Surveys: AEA 16

Dates	Districts Included in Surveys	Surveys Conducted by
1988	WACO, Winfield-Mt. Union	Department of Education
1989	Mediapolis, Morning Sun, Wapello, Winfield-Mt. Union	Department of Education
1994	Mount Pleasant, New London, Winfield-Mt. Union	Department of Education
2003	WACO, Winfield-Mt. Union, New Long, Morning Sun	Guy Ghan Consulting
2005	New London, Morning Sun, Winfield-Mt. Union	Guy Ghan Consulting

Table 2-05: Record of Assistance from the Director of the Department of Education

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 2: “In addition, the area education agency board shall consult with the director of the department of education in the development of surveys and plans. The director of the department of education shall provide assistance to the area education agency boards as requested and shall advise the area education agency boards concerning plans of contiguous area education agencies and the reorganization policies adopted by the state board of education.”

Record of Assistance and Consultation: Great Prairie AEA

Dates of Consultation	Notes
May 2006, plus other assistance	

Record of Assistance and Consultation: AEA 15

Dates of Consultation	Notes
August 1999	Consultation regarding revision
March 2006	Consultation regarding revision

Record of Assistance and Consultation: AEA 16

Dates of Consultation	Notes
May-June 1998	Consultation regarding second revision
January 2006	Consultation regarding third revision

Table 2-06: Record of Public Hearings

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 1: “In developing studies and surveys the area education agency board shall consult with the officials of school districts in the area and other citizens, and shall from time to time hold public hearings, and may employ such research and other assistance as it may determine reasonably necessary in order to properly carry on its survey and prepare definite plans of reorganization.”

Section 275.5: “Following receipt of a petition pursuant to section 275.12, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plans which had been adopted by the board. If the petition does not comply with the plans which had been adopted by the board, the board shall conduct further surveys pursuant to section 275.4 prior to the date set for the hearing upon the petition. If further surveys have been conducted by the board, the board shall present the results of the further surveys at the hearing upon the petition.”

Record of Hearings (275.4--Plan): Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Locations	Notes
May 2012	Ottumwa, Iowa	Revision of Great Prairie AEA reorganization plan
November 2017	Keosauqua, Iowa	Approval of Harmony and Van Buren Reorganization Plan

Record of Hearings (275.5--Petition): Great Prairie AEA

Dates	Locations	Notes
October 2007	Winfield, Iowa	Reorganization Hearing of Winfield-Mt. Union and Morning Sun
September 2010	Corydon, Iowa	Reorganization Hearing of Wayne and Lineville-Clio
June 2011	Eddyville, Iowa	Reorganization Hearing of Eddyville-Blakesburg and Fremont

Record of Hearings (275.4—Plan): AEA 15

Dates	Locations	Notes
October 1999	Ottumwa, Iowa	Revision of AEA 15 reorganization plan
March 2006	Ottumwa, Iowa	Revision of AEA 15 reorganization plan

Record of Hearings (275.4—Plan): AEA 16

Dates	Locations	Notes
November 1998	Burlington, Iowa	Revision of AEA 16 reorganization plan
March 2006	Burlington, Iowa	Revision of AEA 16 reorganization plan

Table 2-07: Record of Passed Reorganization Elections

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.18, paragraph 1: “When the boundaries of the territory to be included in a proposed school corporation and the number and method of the election of the school directors of the proposed school corporation have been determined as provided in this chapter, the area education agency administrator with whom the petition is filed shall give written notice of the election to the county commissioner of elections of the county in the proposed school corporation which has the greatest taxable base. The question shall be submitted to the voters at an election held on a date specified in section 39.2, subsection 4, paragraph “c” in the calendar year prior to the calendar year in which the reorganization will take effect.”

Section 39.2, subsection 4(c): “For a school district or merged area, in the odd-numbered year, the first Tuesday in February, the first Tuesday in April, the last Tuesday in June, or the second Tuesday in September. For a school district or merged area, in the even-numbered year, the first Tuesday in February, the first Tuesday in April, the second Tuesday in September, or the first Tuesday in December.”

Section 275.20: “The voters shall vote separately in each existing school district affected and voters residing in the entire existing district are eligible to vote upon the proposition to create a new school corporation and the proposition to levy the voter-approved physical plant and equipment levy under section 298.2, if the petition included a provision for a vote to authorize the levy. If a proposition receives a majority of the votes cast in each of at least seventy-five percent of the districts, and also a majority of the total number of votes cast in all of the districts, the proposition is carried.”

Section 275.24: “When a school district is enlarged, reorganized, or changes its boundary pursuant to sections 275.12 to 275.22, the change shall take effect on July 1 following the date of the reorganization election held pursuant to section 275.18.”

Section 275.27: “School districts created or enlarged under this chapter are community school districts and are part of the area education agency in which the greatest number of registered voters of the district reside at the time of the special election called for in section 275.18, and sections of the Code applicable to the common schools generally are applicable to these districts in addition to the powers and privileges conferred by this chapter. If a school district, created or enlarged under this chapter and assigned to an area education agency under this section, can demonstrate that students in the district were utilizing a service or program prior to the formation of the new or enlarged district that is unavailable from the area education agency to which the new or enlarged district is assigned, the district may be reassigned to the area education agency which formerly provided the service or program, upon an affirmative majority vote of the boards of the affected area education agencies to permit the change.”

Record of Passed Elections: Great Prairie AEA

Effective Date	Original Districts & AEA	New District & AEA
July 1, 2011	Wayne (GPAEA) Lineville-Clio (GPAEA)	Wayne CSD (GPAEA)
July 1, 2012	Eddyville-Blakesburg (GPAEA) Fremont (GPAEA)	Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD (GPAEA)
July 1, 2018	Harmony (GPAEA) Van Buren (GPAEA)	Van Buren County CSD (GPAEA)

Record of Passed Elections: AEA 15

Effective Date	Original Districts & AEA	New District & AEA
July 1, 1994	Eddyville (GPAEA) Blakesburg (GPAEA)	Eddyville-Blakesburg CSD (GPAEA)
July 1, 2004	Van Buren (GPAEA) Fox Valley (GPAEA)	Van Buren CSD (GPAEA)

Table 2-08: Record of Dismissed Reorganization Petitions and Failed Reorganization Elections

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.15(1): “At the hearing, which shall be held within ten days of the final date set for filing objections, interested parties, both petitioners and objectors, may present evidence and arguments, and the area education agency board shall review the matter on its merits and within ten days after the conclusion of any hearing, shall rule on the objections and shall enter an order fixing the boundaries for the proposed school corporation as will in its judgment be for the best interests of all parties concerned, having due regard for the welfare of adjoining districts, or dismiss the petition.”

Section 275.17: “If an area education agency board does not approve the change in boundaries of school districts in accordance with a petition, a petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for a period of six months following the date of the hearing or the vote of the board, whichever is later.”

Section 275.22: “...If the majority of votes cast is opposed to the proposition, a new petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for at least six months from the date of the election...”

Record of Failed Elections: Great Prairie AEA

Election Date	Original Districts	AEA
October 2007	Winfield-Mt. Union Morning Sun	Great Prairie AEA

Record of Failed Elections: AEA 15

Election Date	Original Districts	AEA
February 1989	Hedrick Pekin	AEA 15
March 1993	Blakesburg Eddyville	AEA 15

Record of Dismissed Petitions: AEA 16

Election Date	Original Districts	AEA
July 1988	Winfield-Mt. Union WACO	AEA 16

Table 2-09: Record of Certification of Dissolution Commissions

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.51, unnumbered paragraph 4: “The board of the school district shall certify to the area education agency board that a commission has been formed, the names and addresses of commission members, and that the commission members represent the various geographic areas and socioeconomic factors present in the district.”

Section 275.53(1): “The commission shall send a copy of its dissolution proposal or shall inform the board that it cannot agree upon a dissolution proposal not later than one year following the date of the organizational meeting of the commission. The commission shall also send a copy of the dissolution proposal to the boards of directors of all school districts to which area of the affected school district will be attached. If the board of a district to which area of the affected school district will be attached objects to the attachment, within ten days following receipt of the dissolution proposal the board shall send its objections in writing to the commission. The commission may consider the objections and may modify the dissolution proposal. If the dissolution proposal is modified, the commission shall notify the boards of directors of all school districts to which area of the affected school district will be attached.”

Section 275.55(3): “The proposition shall be adopted if a majority of the electors voting on the proposition approve its adoption.”

Certification of Commission: Great Prairie AEA

Date	District/AEA
June 2008	Russell Accreditation Revoked by Department of Education

Failure of Commission to Agree: Great Prairie AEA

Date	District/AEA
None	

Approval by Electors: Great Prairie AEA

Date	District/AEA
None	

Failure of Electors to Approve: Great Prairie AEA

Date	District/AEA
None	

Certification of Commission: AEs 15 & 16

Date	District/AEA
February 1982	WACO (AEA 16)

Failure of Commission to Agree: AEs 15 & 16

Date	District/AEA
February 1983	WACO (AEA 16)

Approval by Electors: AEs 15 & 16

Date	District/AEA
None	

Failure of Electors to Approve: AEs 15 & 16

Date	District/AEA
None	

Table 2-10: Record of Boundary Line Changes by Concurrent Action

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 274.37, unnumbered paragraph 1: “The boundary lines of contiguous school corporations may be changed by the concurrent action of the respective boards of directors at their regular meetings in July, or at special meetings called for that purpose. Such concurrent action shall be subject to the approval of the area education agency board but such concurrent action shall stand approved if the said board does not disapprove such concurrent action within thirty days following receipt of notice thereof. The corporation from which territory is detached shall, after the change, contain not less than four government sections of land.”

Section 275.22: “...If territory is excluded from the reorganized district, action pursuant to section 274.37 shall be taken prior to the effective date of reorganization...”

Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: Great Prairie AEA

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
June 2011	Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont	Oskaloosa
September 2010	Wayne	Central Decatur Morman Trail

Other Concurrent Action: Great Prairie AEA

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
None		

Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: AEA 15

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
July 1994	Eddyville-Blakesburg	Ottumwa

Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: AEA 16

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
None		

Other Concurrent Action: AEs 15 & 16

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
None		

Table 2-11: Record of Joint Board Actions

Since July 1, 2003

Iowa Code Section 275.8(3): “Planning of joint districts shall be conducted in the same manner as planning for single districts, except as provided in this section. Studies and surveys relating to the planning of joint districts shall be filed with the area education agency in which one of the districts is located which has the greatest taxable property base. In the case of controversy over the planning of joint districts, the matter shall be submitted to the director of the department of education. Judicial review of the director’s decision may be sought in accordance with the terms of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, chapter 17A. Notwithstanding the terms of that Act, petitions for judicial review must be filed within thirty days after the decision of the director.”

Section 275.16(1): “If the territory described in the petition for the proposed corporation lies in more than one area education agency, the agency administrator with whom the petition is filed shall fix the time and place for a hearing and call a joint meeting of the members of all the agency boards in which territory of the proposed school corporation lies, to act as a single board for the hearing of the objections, and a majority of members of each of the agency boards of the different agencies in which any part of the proposed corporation lies, constitutes a quorum. The president of the board of directors of the area education agency in which the petition has been filed, or a member of the board designated by the president, shall preside at the joint meeting. The joint boards acting as a single board shall determine whether the petition conforms to plans or, if the petition requests a change in plans, whether a change should be made, and may change the plans of any or all the area education agency boards affected by the petition. The joint board shall determine and fix boundaries for the proposed corporation as provided in section 275.15 or dismiss the petition. The joint board may continue the hearing as provided in section 275.15.”

Actions of Joint Boards: Great Prairie AEA

Effective Dates	AEA	Districts	Joint Board Action
June 2008	GPAEA	Russell was dissolved and assigned to Chariton	Action was taken by the State Board of Education

Actions of Joint Boards: AEA 15

Effective Dates	AEA	Districts	Joint Board Action
July 1991	AEA 15	Hedrick was dissolved and assigned to Pekin, Fremont, and Ottumwa	Action was taken by the State Board of Education

Actions of Joint Boards: AEA 16

Effective Dates	AEA	Districts	Joint Board Action
None			

Chapter Three

Suggested Alternate Plans

Iowa Code Section 275.2: "...The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in section 275.3 and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under section 28E.9, 256.13, 280.15, 282.7, or 282.10 as an alternative to school reorganization."

Section 275.3: "No new school district shall be planned by an area education agency board nor shall any proposal for creation or enlargement of any school district be approved by an area education agency board or submitted to electors unless there reside within the proposed limits of such district at least three hundred persons of school age who were enrolled in public schools in the preceding school year. Provided, however, that the director of the department of education shall have authority to grant permission to an area education agency board to approve the formation or enlargement of a school district containing a lower school enrollment than required in this section on the written request of such area education agency board if such request is accompanied by evidence tending to show that sparsity of population, natural barriers or other good reason makes it impracticable to meet the school enrollment requirement."

Table 3-01	District Certified Enrollment in Great Prairie AEA
Table 3- 02	List of Alternate Whole-Grade Sharing Plans
Table 3- 03	Overview of Plans
Table 3- 04	Projected Enrollments—Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment
Table 3- 05	Open Enrollment Out—Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment

Table 3-01: List of Districts in Great Prairie AEA

Certified Enrollment, 2012-2019

Listed Alphabetically

District	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Albia	1,182.8	1,182.6	1,201.9	1,206.9	1,215.8	1,182.8	1,163.4	1,151.1
Burlington	4,655.9	4,636.5	4,593.9	4,457.5	4,422.7	4,263.3	4,137.4	4,085.6
Cardinal	590.4	601.0	556.2	562.5	567.9	573.7	570.9	588.7
Centerville	1,382.9	1,370.0	1,362.8	1,335.2	1,335.9	1,376.4	1,374.8	1,359.0
Central Lee	832.6	802.8	824.0	786.1	787.4	766.7	764.0	760.0
Chariton	1,361.1	1,343.6	1,360.5	1,298.8	1,281.6	1,240.5	1,275.8	1,255.9
Danville	483.0	485.2	495.2	511.5	508.3	513.5	508.4	507.6
Davis County	1,195.7	1,182.0	1,169.5	1,175.9	1,182.5	1,137.6	1,153.8	1,167.1
Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont	886.0	857.1	866.0	879.3	886.9	875.9	891.2	869.6
Fairfield	1,694.6	1,660.2	1,657.7	1,670.2	1,636.6	1,591.5	1,621.7	1,607.5
Fort Madison	2,268.2	2,226.3	2,255.4	2,213.3	2,141.4	2,143.6	2,109.3	2,092.8
Keokuk	1,996.9	1,969.4	1,963.7	1,911.5	1,913.8	1,909.7	1,875.0	1,918.7
Keota	341.8	345.8	338.9	321.9	349.0	341.3	332.6	356.7
Mediapolis	754.3	737.0	756.4	762.2	780.9	790.8	807.6	811.6
Moravia	340.5	352.9	346.9	339.5	330.4	344.4	351.0	341.4
Morning Sun	220.1	221.0	222.0	213.2	213.4	209.2	205.6	209.0
Moulton - Udell	224.0	231.9	212.4	222.9	222.5	209.9	219.3	208.5
Mount Pleasant	2,028.7	1,964.9	1,990.1	1,992.3	1,970.2	1,933.3	1,922.0	1,902.8
New London	521.7	525.7	490.9	498.6	492.3	501.6	495.2	494.1
North Mahaska	535.4	492.6	480.0	486.8	509.5	468.3	450.1	488.7
Oskaloosa	2,388.0	2,423.1	2,460.6	2,371.5	2,365.2	2,361.3	2,328.5	2,272.7
Ottumwa	4,531.2	4,577.4	4,597.9	4,622.9	4,643.2	4,612.2	4,655.1	4,762.6
Pekin	630.8	624.0	636.9	638.2	615.5	600.1	598.3	610.5
Seymour	237.4	263.8	271.6	297.7	299.6	280.1	274.0	266.8
Sigourney	530.0	532.9	544.0	529.6	537.1	548.6	554.5	552.0
Tri County	271.0	260.0	258.0	265.1	283.0	275.4	285.8	280.8
Van Buren	628.4	631.8	631.1	631.1	624.0	637.5	999.2	949.9
WACO	498.0	481.5	483.9	467.8	481.2	479.9	482.1	489.8
Wapello	726.4	687.0	679.0	668.2	646.0	618.2	619.1	573.0
Wayne	558.9	534.9	522.3	548.8	573.0	575.6	572.3	589.0
West Burlington	483.9	481.1	465.5	472.3	445.8	465.2	473.3	458.4
Winfield-Mt Union	375.0	377.7	369.2	358.1	355.5	339.3	321.3	308.1
Totals	35,715.6	35,412.2	35,409.9	35,081.4	34,964.3	34,513.7	34,392.6	34,290.0
Non Public	1,200.0	1,166.0	1,169.0	1,130.0	1,151.0	1,281.0	1,235.0	1,054.0

Listed According to Certified Enrollment

District	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Moulton - Udell	224.0	231.9	212.4	222.9	222.5	209.9	219.3	208.5
Morning Sun	220.1	221.0	222.0	213.2	213.4	209.2	205.6	209.0
Seymour	237.4	263.8	271.6	297.7	299.6	280.1	274.0	266.8
Tri County	271.0	260.0	258.0	265.1	283.0	275.4	285.8	280.8
Winfield-Mt Union	375.0	377.7	369.2	358.1	355.5	339.3	321.3	308.1
Moravia	340.5	352.9	346.9	339.5	330.4	344.4	351.0	341.4
Keota	341.8	345.8	338.9	321.9	349.0	341.3	332.6	356.7
West Burlington	483.9	481.1	465.5	472.3	445.8	465.2	473.3	458.4
North Mahaska	535.4	492.6	480.0	486.8	509.5	468.3	450.1	488.7
WACO	498.0	481.5	483.9	467.8	481.2	479.9	482.1	489.8
New London	521.7	525.7	490.9	498.6	492.3	501.6	495.2	494.1
Danville	483.0	485.2	495.2	511.5	508.3	513.5	508.4	507.6
Sigourney	530.0	532.9	544.0	529.6	537.1	548.6	554.5	552.0
Wapello	726.4	687.0	679.0	668.2	646.0	618.2	619.1	573.0
Cardinal	590.4	601.0	556.2	562.5	567.9	573.7	570.9	588.7
Wayne	558.9	534.9	522.3	548.8	573.0	575.6	572.3	589.0
Pekin	630.8	624.0	636.9	638.2	615.5	600.1	598.3	610.5
Central Lee	832.6	802.8	824.0	786.1	787.4	766.7	764.0	760.0
Mediapolis	754.3	737.0	756.4	762.2	780.9	790.8	807.6	811.6
Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont	886.0	857.1	866.0	879.3	886.9	875.9	891.2	869.6
Van Buren	628.4	631.8	631.1	631.1	624.0	637.5	999.2	949.9
Albia	1,182.8	1,182.6	1,201.9	1,206.9	1,215.8	1,182.8	1,163.4	1,151.1
Davis County	1,195.7	1,182.0	1,169.5	1,175.9	1,182.5	1,137.6	1,153.8	1,167.1
Chariton	1,361.1	1,343.6	1,360.5	1,298.8	1,281.6	1,240.5	1,275.8	1,255.9
Centerville	1,382.9	1,370.0	1,362.8	1,335.2	1,335.9	1,376.4	1,374.8	1,359.0
Fairfield	1,694.6	1,660.2	1,657.7	1,670.2	1,636.6	1,591.5	1,621.7	1,607.5
Mount Pleasant	2,028.7	1,964.9	1,990.1	1,992.3	1,970.2	1,933.3	1,922.0	1,902.8
Keokuk	1,996.9	1,969.4	1,963.7	1,911.5	1,913.8	1,909.7	1,875.0	1,918.7
Fort Madison	2,268.2	2,226.3	2,255.4	2,213.3	2,141.4	2,143.6	2,109.3	2,092.8
Oskaloosa	2,388.0	2,423.1	2,460.6	2,371.5	2,365.2	2,361.3	2,328.5	2,272.7
Burlington	4,655.9	4,636.5	4,593.9	4,457.5	4,422.7	4,263.3	4,137.4	4,085.6
Ottumwa	4,531.2	4,577.4	4,597.9	4,622.9	4,643.2	4,612.2	4,655.1	4,762.6
Totals	35,715.6	35,412.2	35,409.9	35,081.4	34,964.3	34,513.7	34,392.6	34,290.0
Non Public	1,200.0	1,166.0	1,169.0	1,130.0	1,151.0	1,281.0	1,235.0	1,054.0

Table 3-02: Alternate Whole-Grade Sharing Plans

AEA	School District	First Year	Grade Levels Receiving	Grade Levels Sending	Partner School Districts
GPAEA	Morning Sun	1990-91	None	7-12	Mediapolis Winfield-Mt. Union Wapello

Table 3-03: Suggested Alternate Plans

Iowa Code section 275.2, 2003, in part, requires that, “The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in section 275.3 and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under section 28E.9, 256.13, 280.15, 282.7, or 282.10 as an alternative to school reorganization.” The minimum number listed in Section 275.3 is 300.

Great Prairie AEA currently has four (4) districts below an enrollment of 300:

District	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Moulton - Udell	224.0	231.9	212.4	222.9	222.5	209.9	219.3	208.5
Morning Sun	220.1	221.0	222.0	213.2	213.4	209.2	205.6	209.0
Seymour	237.4	263.8	271.6	297.7	299.6	280.1	274.0	266.8
Tri County	271.0	260.0	258.0	265.1	283.0	275.4	285.8	280.8

Districts with Less than 300 Enrollment GPAEA

The purposes of the overview section of this plan are to comply with the mandate relative to enrollment size as stated in Iowa Code section 275.2, 2003, to provide assistance to the officials and citizens of school districts contemplating school district reorganization, and to assist the area education agency board of directors in the event it is presented a reorganization petition.

This section of the plan lists principles that the AEA board of directors will consider as it acts upon reorganization petitions presented to it and as it enters the order “fixing boundary lines.” **These principles will apply to petitions presented by districts with less than 300 students, and they will apply to districts with more than 300 students that may be included in a reorganization petition.**

A. Overriding reorganization principles

As the Great Prairie Area Education Agency board of directors works with the reorganization process it embraces three overriding principles:

1. School district reorganization is a local issue. The decision to begin the process by circulating a petition is the sole responsibility of the district’s citizens and elected officials. The ultimate decision to vote for or against a reorganization proposal is within the realm of the registered voters of the districts involved.
2. The Code of Iowa, specifically Chapter 275, requires the area education agency and its board of directors to assume stated responsibilities and authorities. In general terms, those mandates relate to the development of the area education agency reorganization plan; relate to the governance of the petition process from the time the administrator is presented with such petition, to the AEA board of directors’ order to approve or disapprove an election; and relate to several other narrower responsibilities, such as the acceptance of a certification that a dissolution commission has been formed. The area education agency and its board of directors will be limited to those actions required by the Code, and to

assistance that is specifically requested by the local districts which will not be in potential conflict with the mandates of the petition process.

3. The board of directors views the merger of school districts as the union of public business entities. The AEA encourages the local residents and boards of directors to determine if reorganization will result in improved services and programs, an enhancement in the efficiency and economical operations of the district or districts, and an increase in the value of the district or districts as assets to the residents of the communities and territories they serve. As required by Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa, Great Prairie Area Education Agency “shall, insofar as possible, authorize submission of proposals to the electors as they are developed and approved.”

B. Petition and boundary line principles

When acting upon reorganization petitions that may be presented to it, the area education agency board shall consider the following principles. These tenets are not stated in order of importance, and other factors may be considered.

1. The GPAEA board encourages the local boards of directors to:
 - thoroughly study the reorganization conditions before submitting a proposal to the AEA;
 - involve the community in the study and decision-making process through the formation of citizens committees, open forums for the purpose of disseminating information, and group and personal contacts for obtaining citizen input; and
 - explore all options connected with the possible reorganization.
2. Reorganization studies and surveys shall be comprehensive, and they shall help determine whether the proposed district:
 - will have reasonable long-term stability;
 - will be able to comfortably meet the minimum educational standards required by the State of Iowa;
 - will be able to operate in an economical and efficient manner;
 - will have adequate facilities for the combined student body or have a plan for the development of adequate facilities;
 - will form a reasonable geographic entity considering the outline of the territory, and the locations of the students, the municipalities, and the school structures;
 - has demonstrated the compatibility of the existing individual units through sharing agreements and other forms of cooperation; and
 - will satisfy the “matters” expressed in Iowa Code section 275.2, 2003.
3. When acting upon objections that request property to be removed from a proposed reorganization, the area education agency board will adhere to the mandates of Iowa Code section 275.15, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003. As it rules upon the exclusion of territory, the decisions of the board, “shall represent a balance between the rights of the objectors and the welfare of the reorganized district.”

The GPAEA board of directors recognizes that each reorganization petition situation is unique. At the deliberation upon the petition, the board will first examine the petition according to the principles established in this plan. However, the board reserves the right to add to those principles or detract from them as is warranted by each circumstance.

C. Statewide and AEA conditions

This section briefly summarizes a few conditions about the districts within GPAEA and within Iowa. These conditions form the context in which school districts consider, plan, and implement reorganizations.

As noted in Table 3-03.1 the total enrollments for the AEA have steadily declined over the past 7 years.

Table 3-03.1
Enrollment History

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Public	35,715.6	35,412.2	35,409.9	35,081.4	34,964.3	34,513.7	34,392.6	34,290.0
Public % Change	0.23%	(0.85%)	(0.01%)	(0.93%)	(0.33%)	(1.29%)	(0.35%)	(0.30%)
Non Public	1,200.0	1,166.0	1,169.0	1,130.0	1,151.0	1,281.0	1,235.0	1,054.0
Non Public % Change	2.30%	(2.83%)	0.26%	(3.34%)	1.86%	11.29%	(3.59%)	(14.66%)

Table 03-03.2, which traces the number of districts since 1975 points out that AEAs 15 and 16 combined, declined at a rate close to the state average.

Table 3-03.2
Number School Districts

Year	15	16	Total/GPAEA
1975-76	26	13	39
2011-2012			34
2019			32

The continuing statewide enrollment decline, particularly in rural areas; the state’s poor economic conditions; and the increased expectations of schools are all characteristics that are similar to those of the early 1980s—the underlying causes for a large number of mergers between 1985 and 1995. Individuals who have extensively worked with school district reorganization on a statewide basis are of the opinion that Iowans should expect another approximate 10-year epoch of school merger. They point toward more of the simple pairing of two districts, as has been the case across the state and in GPAEA. However, geographic and other factors indicate that many districts may not have single suitable partners for the pairing process. The opinion is that this may give rise to new partnership ideas—such as regional high schools. However, there is some thought that these ventures may be very difficult to form. The consensus seems to be that dissolution may be the only solution for some districts.

D. Suggestions for AEA districts

The Board of Directors of Great Prairie AEA offers the following suggestions to local boards of directors as they consider merger possibilities:

- Take the time to thoroughly study any type of consolidation plan. Engage the services of the Department of Education or other consultants to conduct reorganization feasibility studies. Form and work with local citizen committees.
- When selecting partner districts look for eventual long-term stability. If practicable, enter into whole-grade sharing before taking the more drastic actions of reorganization or dissolution. With rare exception, the districts that joined between 1985 and 1995 engaged in whole-grade sharing before reorganizing.
- Meet with groups of neighboring districts to examine regional possibilities.
- When geographical patterns and open enrollment configurations indicate that there is no single partner that meets the needs of a broad base of resident students, the local board is encouraged to study the dissolution possibility.

E. Suggested alternate plans

As of the date of the approval of this plan, there are four (4) districts in Great Prairie AEA that have certified enrollments less than 300. The suggested alternate plans are listed below. The districts under 300 enrollment are presented in alphabetical order. The alternate options are not listed in any priority.

1. Moulton-Udell (2019 - Certified Enrollment: 208.5)
If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it: Reorganize with the Centerville, Davis County, or Moravia District.
2. Morning Sun (2019 - Certified Enrollment: 209.0)
If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it: Reorganize with the Mediapolis, Wapello, or Winfield-Mt. Union District.
3. Seymour (2019 - Certified Enrollment: 266.8)
If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it: Reorganize with the Wayne or Centerville District.
4. Tri County (2019 - Certified Enrollment: 280.8)
If the district were to consider reorganizing, GPAEA suggests it: Reorganize with Sigourney or North Mahaska District.

Petitions filed by any of the above-listed districts, by other districts in GPAEA, or by a district in GPAEA jointly with a district in a contiguous area education agency, shall be presented and written in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Iowa. If necessary, such petition shall request a change in the AEA's reorganization plan, and the request will be considered at the hearing on the petition.



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Great Prairie Area Education Agency works as an educational partner with public and accredited, nonpublic schools to help students, school staff, parents and communities. Great Prairie AEA provides professional development and leadership to promote school improvement, a variety of instructional services, special education support services, and technology and media services. It is the policy of the Great Prairie Education Agency not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact Greg Manske, 3601 West Avenue, Burlington, IA 52601, (319) 753-6561 x1217, greg.manske@gpaea.org (employment practices) or Dr. Angelisa Fynaardt, 2814 N. Court Road, Ottumwa, IA 52501, (641) 682-8591 x5311, angelisa.fynaardt@gpaea.org (educational programs).