

# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

April 16, 2026

**Agenda Item:** Eastern Iowa Community College Paraeducator Preparation Program Approval

**State Board Goal:** Goal 3

**State Board Role/Authority:** The State Board of Education sets standards and approves practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. Iowa Code section 257.7(3) and Iowa Administrative Code 281-80.

**Presenter(s):** Lindsay Harrison, Education Program Consultant  
Division of Teacher Quality and Innovation

Kasey Lueders Jennings, Department Chair of Education/Early Childhood Education Department and Education Instructor

Emily Gaskill, Education Instructor and Education Practicum Coordinator

**Attachment(s):** One

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board award full approval to Eastern Iowa Community College's Paraeducator preparation program through the next review scheduled for the 2031-2032 academic year.

**Background:** Eastern Iowa Community College has provided evidence that all areas are in compliance with Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-80. This program will provide a pathway for those who are working toward teacher licensure to earn a Paraeducator Certificate. By adding this program, it addresses a workforce need in Eastern Iowa.



# **Educator Preparation Program Approval Report**

Eastern Iowa Community College

Review Year: 2025

Presented to the Iowa State Board of Education:  
April 16, 2026

**BEUARU LOGO HERE, DO NOT SCALE  
LARGER, DISTORT OR SHRINK  
LOGO. LOGO SHOULD COVER THIS  
GRAYED OUT AREA**

State of Iowa

**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

## **State Board of Education**

John Robbins, *Iowa Falls*  
Brooke Axiotis, *Des Moines*  
Todd Abrahamson, *Arnolds Park*  
Cassandra Halls, *Carlisle*  
Brian Kane, *Dubuque*  
Mary Meisterling, *Cedar Rapids*  
Beth Townsend, *Director, Iowa Workforce Development*  
Grace Bechtel, *Student Member, Lake Mills*

### **Administration**

McKenzie Snow, Director and Executive Officer of the  
State Board of Education

### **Division of Teacher Quality and Innovation**

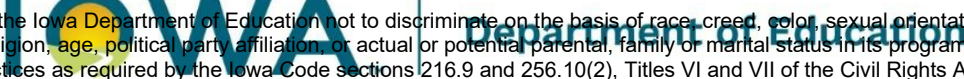
Jay Pennington, Administrator

### **Office of Educator Quality**

Lindsay Harrison, Education Program Consultant

### **Bureau of Educational Examiners**

Geri McMahon, Education Program Consultant

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number: 515-281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building, 1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80204-3582, telephone number: 303-844-5695, TDD number: 800-877-8339, email: OCR.Denver@ed.gov

**Contents**

- Department of Education** ..... 2
  - State Board of Education**..... 2
    - Administration** ..... 2
      - Review Team Members ..... 4
      - Recommendation to the Board ..... 4
    - Program..... 4
    - Recommendation..... 4
  - Paraeducator Generalist Preparation Program ..... 4
  - Approval ..... 4
    - Eastern Iowa Community College Program Representatives ..... 4
    - Overview ..... 5
    - 281—80.8 Organizational and Resources Standards ..... 6
    - 281—80.9 Diversity Standards ..... 6
    - 281—80.10 Faculty Standards ..... 7
    - 281—80.11 Program Assessment and Evaluation Standards ..... 7
    - 281—80.12 Clinical Practice Standards ..... 8
    - Curriculum Reviewed ..... 8
    - Correlations with Previous Review ..... 8

## Review Team Members

Dr. Lindsay Harrison, Division of Educator Quality and Innovation

Ms. Geri McMahon, Iowa Board of Educational Examiners

## Recommendation to the Board

Program	Recommendation
Paraeducator Generalist Preparation Program	Approval

## Eastern Iowa Community College Program Representatives

Ms. Kasey Lueders Jennings, Department Chair of Education/Early Childhood Education Department and Education Instructor

Mrs. Emily Gaskill, Education Instructor and Education Practicum Coordinator

## Overview

Eastern Iowa Community College (EICC) proposes a paraeducator preparation program as a pathway that enables future teacher candidates to earn a Paraeducator Certificate while working toward eligibility for an Initial Teaching License. The curriculum is designed to prepare students both for immediate work as paraeducators and for their future roles as licensed teachers who will collaborate with paraeducators in the classroom.

The paraeducator program will be intentionally embedded within the teacher education program at EICC. EICC serves two primary student populations: (1) high school juniors and seniors enrolled in the Teacher Preparation Career Academy and (2) education transfer majors pursuing an AA degree at EICC. For both groups, the goal is the same—to provide a stackable credential that allows students to earn income in the field of education while gaining valuable experience and continuing their pathway toward becoming licensed teachers.

1. The Teacher Preparation Career Academy is a two-year program that begins in the fall of a student's junior year of high school. Students who complete all four semesters during their junior and senior years will be eligible to earn their paraeducator certification upon high school graduation. This will allow them to begin working as a paraeducator immediately, providing steady income as they continue their education, or offer flexibility should they choose to take a gap year while exploring career options.
2. For full-time college students at EICC, education majors will be able to earn the paraeducator certification in as little as one year. All students who complete the required coursework (EDU 213 and EDU 245) will be eligible to apply for paraeducator certification, though application for certification will be optional.

*EICC believes adding this program addresses a critical workforce need in Eastern Iowa, while providing students with opportunities to earn steady income as they progress through their teacher education pathway.*

**Collaborations:** EICC works with multiple partner high school districts to support Career Academy participation in education and other fields. Counselors and concurrent enrollment advisors are assigned to specific schools — including districts such as Calamus-Wheatland, DeWitt Central, Camanche, Northeast, Bellevue, Maquoketa, Clinton, Easton Valley, Muscatine, North Scott, Columbus Junction, Louisa-Muscatine, Wilton, and West Liberty — to help students navigate enrollment and coursework. All academy classes are offered on one of EICC's campuses. Academies are currently running at the Clinton and Muscatine campuses.

**The program's goals are twofold:** to provide future teachers with valuable classroom experience through paraeducator roles and to meet local districts' growing need for part-time and substitute paraeducators. Additionally, the paraeducator preparation program supports EICC's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education that meets the workforce and community needs. By combining academic preparation with practicum experiences, the program enhances teacher candidate readiness and supports local school districts by creating a pipeline of well-prepared paraeducators.

Since the Teacher Preparation Academy is just in its second year, there have been no graduates at this time. Here are the numbers of students completing both EDU 213 and EDU 245:

AY18	AY19	AY20	AY21	AY22	AY23	AY24	AY25
21	23	21	16	29	24	32	57

## 281—80.8 Organizational and Resources Standards

*“Organization and resources shall adequately support the preparation of paraeducator candidates to enable them to meet state standards in accordance with the provisions of this rule.”*

Since the program is new, the review team worked with EICC to establish documented roles for program oversight. EICC provides comprehensive resources and support to ensure a high-quality paraeducator certification program, including both hands-on practicum experiences and technological/instructional support.

EICC has an existing advisory committee to give feedback and a strong plan for how the paraeducator program will use this group for connection to the education community. The unit offers courses in multiple modalities at multiple locations with a strong plan for consistency with standardized syllabi and shared course shells in the learning management system. Regular meetings will coordinate consistency, with leadership reviewing syllabi and artifacts to confirm quality.

Detailed orientation processes help get students acclimated to EICC and other resources ensure their success. For example, tutoring resources are available and the Education Department employs a Practicum Coordinator to assist students in planning and completing observation hours, accessing transportation, and applying for childcare assistance when needed. Additionally, students may access the EICC Clothing Closet for professional attire and request bus passes from the EICC Foundation if transportation to practicum sites is a barrier.

The college gives strong effort to foster an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and empowered to succeed.

## 281—80.9 Diversity Standards

*“The unit shall ensure that the paraeducator preparation program meets the following diversity standards.”*

EICC ensures its paraeducator preparation program is welcoming and reflective of the communities it serves by using thoughtful recruitment practices, partnering with local schools and organizations, and maintaining policies that support fair access for all candidates. Through student-centered supports, such as advising, tutoring, mental health resources, flexible scheduling, and professional learning for faculty, EICC provides an environment where paraeducator candidates can thrive.

## 281—80.10 Faculty Standards

*“Unit staff qualifications and performance shall facilitate the unit’s role in the preparation of a professional paraeducator in accordance with the provisions of this rule.”*

EICC holds faculty accountable for teaching the critical concepts and principles of their disciplines through a structured evaluation process, including classroom observations, pre- and post-observation meetings, and professional development planning. EDU faculty also engage regularly with PK-12 teachers and administrators through practicum placements and student teaching supervision, ensuring alignment between college instruction and real-world classroom practice.

EICC instructors are former, or current, PK-12 teachers who have worked extensively with paraeducators. The college’s education department coordinator serves as a faculty liaison for those in high school concurrent classes, visiting schools, discussing curriculum, providing professional development, and evaluating instructors. There is a process for determining appropriate qualifications for instructors.

## 281—80.11 Program Assessment and Evaluation Standards

*“The unit’s assessment system will appropriately monitor individual candidate performance and use that data in concert with other program information to improve the unit and its programs in accordance with the provisions of this rule.”*

The Education Department utilizes Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to ensure candidates meet standards set forth by the department. The PLOs for the Education Department are as follows:

### Education PLO

1. Demonstrate professional and ethical practices appropriate to working in PK-12 educational settings.
2. Support student learning in inclusive classrooms by addressing individual learning needs through developmentally appropriate practices.
3. Collaborate effectively with classroom teachers, paraeducators, and school staff to support instruction, classroom management, and student success.
4. Apply foundational instructional strategies and behavior supports under the direction of a classroom teacher.
5. Communicate effectively with students, families, and colleagues using professional oral, written, and digital skills.
6. Reflect on professional roles and responsibilities to support continued growth as a paraeducator and/or future licensed teacher.

The EICC Education Department has established a clear system for evaluating satisfactory performance during practicum placements. Paraeducator candidates receive two evaluations from their cooperating teachers.

Because the program is new, the review team asked EICC questions to help them develop a process for conducting surveys in accordance with requirement 80.11(4). Graduate surveys will be sent six to 12 months after program completion to gather feedback once graduates have entered the workforce or continued their education. When applicable, employer surveys will be sent to school administrators or supervising teachers who are familiar with the graduate's performance as a paraeducator.

EICC has established clear standards of satisfactory performance for paraeducator candidates to ensure they demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to support effective classroom instruction. These standards are assessed through structured practicum experiences, course evaluations, and reflective practice.

## **281—80.12 Clinical Practice Standards**

*“The unit and its school partners will provide clinical experience opportunities that assist candidates in becoming successful paraeducators in accordance with the provisions of this rule.”*

Paraeducator candidates at EICC complete structured clinical experiences that include opportunities to both observe and be observed in classroom settings.

EICC exceeds the standard requiring a minimum of ten hours of experience in a state-approved school or educational facility under the supervision of a licensed educator. Candidates complete a total of 65 hours of clinical observation in K–12 settings. This includes 40 hours in the first course in a general education classroom and 25 hours in the second course in either a special education setting or a general education classroom. Within the 25 hours, candidates complete 10 hours specifically observing a paraeducator and document reflections on their role and responsibilities.

The review team worked with the institution to make sure there was clarity on the required paraeducator observation. There was also some work on the policy related to the process for verifying that cooperating educators hold appropriate credentials.

## **Curriculum Reviewed**

Curriculum for paraeducator preparation Generalist was submitted according to Chapter 24 to the Bureau of Educational Examiners (BoEE), and was reviewed and approved by BoEE consultants. An extensive number of assignments, tests, reflections, case studies, and activities were provided to show specific alignment to each of the standards

## **Correlations with Previous Review**

This is an initial application.