

# Special Education and Behavior Pilot Program Application Instructions

## Introduction

[Senate File 2428](#) created a pilot program for one rural school district and one urban school district as defined in the bill to each establish a pilot program to be used to provide educational services, including special education services, to eligible students. This worksheet will help prepare eligible schools to apply for acceptance as the state administered pilot program.

## What is the SF 2428 Pilot Program?

The purpose of the pilot program described in SF 2428, is to serve students whose emotional, social or behavioral needs interfere with the student's ability to be successful in their current educational environment, even with the use of supplementary aids and services. The pilot program will provide educational services, including special education services, to eligible students as determined by the school and relevant decision making teams including the parents/guardian (i.e. the IEP team for students with an IEP).

## Assurances/Agreements

The Local Education Agency (district) accepted as the pilot program assures the Director of the Iowa Department of Education that resources and professional activities are designed to establish a pilot program for eligible students whose emotional, social or behavioral needs interfere with their ability to be successful in the current educational environment, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, until the student is able to successfully return to the student's regular education environment, with or without supports, including but not limited to the general education classroom.

1. An eligible student means:
  - A student whose emotional, social, or behavioral needs interfere with the student's ability to be successful in the regular educational environment, even with the use of supplementary aids and services; including children requiring special education, as defined in Section 256B.2 if the IEP team determines this is the appropriate placement for the student.
  - **Note:** An eligible student shall not be required to attend an attendance center established by a rural school district or an urban school district that is participating in the pilot program if the eligible student's parent or guardian provides notice to the rural school district or urban school district requesting that the eligible student be excused from such attendance.
2. The department, in consultation with the rural school district and urban school district, shall determine:
  - The courses of study and curricula that each district will provide to participating students
  - The instructional facilities each district will use to provide educational services
3. The pilot program will have appropriately licensed and certified teacher(s).
4. The pilot program will follow program standards for the grade(s) served and the full extent of the district's comprehensive education program, including those for grades K-12 (281—12), health services (281—14) and special education (281—41).
5. For students with IEPs, the pilot program will ensure implementation of all services, supports and accommodations identified in the students IEP.

6. The district may enter into a cost-sharing agreement with one or more school districts or area education agencies to provide the pilot program, and shall not enter into an agreement to purchase or hold seats in the pilot program.
7. The pilot program has clear requirements for referral, admission/placement, progress monitoring, and exit that focus on supporting learners to return to the regular education environment.
8. Each student attending/placed in the pilot program has an individualized Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) based on a relevant Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). Each student's BIP will be reviewed at least quarterly and include a reintegration plan to consider the need for transition to less intensive programming.
9. If at any point public agencies suspect a disability, the public agencies request consent for a full and individual evaluation for special education from the parent as required by 281—Chapter 41.
10. Awardees agree to participate in department identified professional development.
11. Awardees will submit required reporting on or before June 1 of each year. See additional reporting information in the reporting section.

## Eligibility Information

The pilot program will include two school districts, one rural and one urban. Eligible applicants include the following:

- Rural school districts as described in chapter 274 located in a county with a population of greater than 17,500 but less than 18,000 and that contains a city with a population of greater than 5,400, but less than 5,500 according to the 2020 federal decennial census
- Urban school district as described in chapter 274 with a total enrollment of at least 7,000 students

**Note:** In supporting all such programs, the Department may utilize this same process to provide intensive technical assistance to local education agencies in developing, launching, and implementing instructionally sound and compliant programs.

## Application

Eligible districts may apply by submitting their application in the grant portal with a deadline of July 30, 2026. Applications will be submitted through the Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA).

Questions regarding the pilot program application can be submitted through CASA. General questions about the application will be accepted through July 15, 2026, and will be used to update the FAQ by July 22, 2026.

Carefully follow the guidelines for uploading documents to CASA. Links to documents **will not** be accepted.

## Application Items

You may wish to complete the narrative sections in Word and then copy and paste them into CASA.

### Introduction

- List the primary district applying for the application.
- Provide a descriptive name of your pilot program.
- Provide a brief summary of what you intend to accomplish with your pilot program.
- What specific behavioral challenges will your pilot program address?
- Summarize the core framework of your behavioral pilot program in 3 sentences or less.

## Contact Information

- Provide contact information for your pilot program contact/representative.

## Applicant Information

- Provide information about the district applying, including how the district meets the eligibility requirements.
- Provide details about the proposed instructional facility including location, infrastructure and transportation plans.
- List the districts, schools and grade levels to be served through this pilot program.

## Assurances

- Does this application have support from building and district leadership? Yes/No
- The district assures that it has read and agrees to all assurances. Yes

## Narrative - Responses limited to a 5000 character limit

1. Provide a comprehensive summary of the proposal including the number of students anticipated being able to serve in the pilot program. Provide a timeline for implementation, monitoring and reporting.
2. Include how the district determines the need for services/placement, including specific data, and how this proposal will address or align with any previous or existing services/programs provided, and any other funding to be used.
3. Discuss how leadership and infrastructure will be built to support the pilot program. How will the required components be met?
4. Discuss how the pilot program will use assessment & data-based decision-making. Describe referral, enrollment and exit criteria or how it will be determined.
5. Discuss how Universal and Supplemental-Intensive tiers of services and supports will be met.
6. List the specific evidence-based interventions or models to be utilized in the pilot program.
7. Describe how administration will ensure IEP services and supports, including related services, will be provided to students with IEPs.
8. Describe what success will look like at the end of this pilot program, and how success will measure student behavioral progress.
9. Describe a sustainability plan.

## Collaborations/Partnerships

1. Are you collaborating/partnering with other districts to create a consortium? Yes/No
  - a. If so, provide documentation outlining the roles and responsibilities of their collaboration, including how the resident districts will continue their general supervision responsibilities. Upload as a **PDF**.
2. Are you collaborating/partnering with external agencies to support your pilot program? Yes/No
  - a. If so, provide a letter from each collaborating agency or organization outlining the roles and responsibilities of their collaboration. Upload as a **PDF**.

## Pilot Program Costs

Provide a budget detail of your pilot program including proposed expenditures and a justification/narrative for each expenditure.

### Account Objects 100-299

**Employee Salaries/Benefits:** Teacher, substitutes, paraeducator salaries

Specific expenditure	Budget Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

### Account Objects 300-399

**Purchased Services:** Professional educational provider/services, professional employee training and development services, curriculum identified, staff workshop and conference registration fees

Specific expenditure	Budget Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

### Account Objects 500-599

**Other Purchased Services:** Staff travel, printing and binding, inter-agency contracts, outreach materials/efforts

Specific expenditure	Budget Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

### Account Objects 600-699

**Supplies:** Office/instructional supplies, books, guides

Specific expenditure	Budget Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**Account Objects 700-799**

**Property:** Equipment, furniture, computers

Specific expenditure	Budget Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**Account Objects 900-999**

**Other Items:**

Specific expenditure	Budget Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

Subtotals	Budget Amount
Account Objects 100-299	
Account Objects 300-399	
Account Objects 500-599	
Account Objects 600-699	
Account Objects 700-799	
Account Objects 900-999	
Adequacy of Resources	
<b>Total</b>	

**Budget Narrative**

Provide a budget narrative of your pilot program explaining the proposed expenditures.

## Award Information

### Selection Criteria

Applicants will be awarded based on competitive selection criteria. Each awardee must implement a program that builds required components.

### Reporting

The following reporting measures will be submitted to the department on or before June 1 of each year.

- The number of eligible students who participated in the pilot program during the current school year.
- Information related to the academic performance of eligible students who participated in the pilot program during the current school year.
- Feedback from eligible students who participated in the pilot program during the current school year related to the effectiveness of the pilot program.
- Feedback from the parents or guardians of eligible students who participated in the pilot program.
- Feedback from teachers who provided educational services to eligible students who participated in the pilot program during the current school year.
- Challenges associated with operating the pilot program.
- Recommendations related to how to improve the pilot program.
- Department determined reporting.

## Application Review and Scoring – See [Full Scoring Rubric](#)

The Department will evaluate and score each district applicant against the following competitive criteria:

Area	Description	Points
<b>Significance</b>	Extent to which the applicant district has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly identified the specific issues or challenges to be addressed</li> <li>• clearly identified the magnitude of need</li> <li>• demonstrated a likelihood that the pilot program will result in systemic change</li> <li>• outlined the need for services/placement and alignment with previous or existing services/programs</li> </ul>	12 points
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>	Extent to which the applicant district's outlined plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated how leadership and infrastructure will be built to support the pilot program</li> <li>• identified how the universal tier will be met</li> <li>• identified how supplemental-intensive tiers will be met</li> <li>• identified evidence-based interventions or models to be used</li> <li>• outlined criteria for classroom referral, admission, monitoring, and exit, including comprehensive reintegration plans with embedded professional learning and coaching</li> </ul>	15 points
<b>Quality of the Program Evaluation</b>	Extent to which the applicant district's outlined evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses assessment and data-based decision-making</li> <li>• described the referral, enrollment and exit criteria and how it will be determined</li> <li>• outlined how it will be ensured that IEP services and supports, including related services, will be provided to students with IEPs</li> <li>• demonstrated what success will look like for the pilot program</li> <li>• described how progress of student behaviors will be measured</li> </ul>	15 points
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>	Extent to which the applicant district has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated relevance and commitment of leadership in the proposed program to the implementation and success</li> <li>• provided a budget that is adequate to support the pilot program and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the pilot program</li> <li>• outlined sustainability of the pilot program past the repeal date of July 1, 2031</li> </ul>	9 points
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51 points</b>

## Submission in CASA

All applications, with uploaded components, must be submitted through CASA. Please check with the administration for access. We encourage you to have the answers in Word, then cut/paste them into the corresponding location within CASA. Carefully follow the guidelines for uploading documents to CASA. Links to documents will not be accepted.

## Instructions

1. Login to CASA using your EdPortal account login: <https://portal.ed.iowa.gov>
2. Click CASA on the menu.
3. Click on the “Other” folder.
4. Click on SF 2428 Pilot Program
5. Complete the required questions and click Submit.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will the pilot program be considered a Special School?**

It would depend on whether the pilot program serves only students with IEPs. Refer to this flow chart: [Alternative School, Alternative Program, Special Education Separate School, and Special Education Program Decision Tree](#)

### **Will the pilot program create a Therapeutic Classroom?**

No. While the pilot program setting will provide similar support for behavioral health needs, the district will need to determine settings and services that separate the pilot program setting from therapeutic classroom/services. Services in the pilot program setting will not be eligible for Therapeutic Classroom service claims.

### **Who will decide which districts participate in the pilot program?**

The Department will select one rural district and one urban district, based on the definitions within SF2428.

### **Can any student attend the pilot program attendance center?**

No. The students who are enrolled in the pilot program attendance center are limited to learners who either (a) require special education services, or (b) whose emotional, social, or behavioral needs interfere with the student’s ability to be successful in the general education environment, even with the use of supplementary aids and services.

### **Can an eligible student opt out of participation at a pilot program attendance center?**

Yes, if the eligible student’s parent or guardian provides notice to the rural/urban district requesting that the eligible student be excused from such attendance.

### **What are the reporting requirements for pilot programs?**

Participating districts must submit an annual report to the Department by June 1 of each year containing:

- Number of eligible students who participated
- Academic performance data of participants
- Student feedback on program effectiveness
- Parent/guardian feedback on program effectiveness
- Teacher feedback on program effectiveness

- Challenges associated with operating the program
- Recommendations for improvement
- Any other information requested by the Department

The Department will compile these reports and submit them to the General Assembly by June 30 each year.

**When does the pilot program end?**

The pilot program is repealed on July 1, 2031, unless extended by future legislative action.