

Individual Career and Academic Plan Overview

Overview

The Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP), as outlined in [HF 2392](#), beginning in 2016 and updated in 2022, requires each school district to ensure each student reviews and revises an ICAP each year beginning in 8th grade and continuing until graduation. ICAP is a series of high-quality, career-related activities and experiences that provide a platform for students to engage in the development of self-reflection, career research and exploration of postsecondary opportunities, and apply and align their learning with their personal paths and goals.

Minimum ICAP Requirements

The plan shall be developed to achieve, at minimum, the following:

- (1) Prepare the student for successful completion of the core curriculum developed by the state board of education pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 26, by the time the student graduates from high school.
- (2) Identify the coursework and work-based learning needed in grades nine through twelve to support the student's postsecondary education and career options.
- (3) Prepare the student to successfully complete, prior to graduation and following a timeline included in the plan, the essential components of a career information and decision-making system that meets standards adopted by the state board of education in accordance with subsection 4.
- (4) Prior to graduation, advise the student how to successfully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The student's parent or guardian shall sign the student's career and academic plan, and the signed plan shall be included in the student's cumulative records.

District Career and Academic Plan

Each school district in Iowa is required to have an established district career and academic plan (DCAP) that details how the district will provide support for each student's work surrounding their ICAP. The DCAP is reviewed, revised and updated internally on a regular basis to ensure ICAP is implemented by the established DCAP planning team.

At a minimum, the DCAP shall include the following components:

- The activities to be undertaken in each grade level (8-12) to achieve the ICAP requirements;
- Integration of the district plan with the district's comprehensive school improvement plan and school counseling program plan;
- The designation of a team of educational practitioners to establish, implement, review, coordinate activities and regularly consult with representatives of employers, state and local workforce agencies, higher education institutions and postsecondary training programs to ensure activities are relevant and aligned with the labor and workforce needs of the region and state and
- Outlined integration of a state-approved career information system (CIS) in the student ICAP.

Established District Team

Each school district in Iowa is required to have an established district team that develops and implements the DCAP. The established district team is designated by the superintendent and includes, but is not limited to: a school administrator, school counselor(s), teachers, including career and technical education teachers and individuals responsible for coordination of work-based learning activities.

The district team is responsible for the following:

- (1) Fully implementing the district plan to include coordination of ICAP activities that embed the ICAP essential components into classroom instruction and additional identified areas of student learning throughout the school district's educational program.
- (2) Annually reviewing and revising the district plan, and presenting to the school board revisions and updates to the district plan as necessary.
- (3) Coordinating and implementing the district-selected, state-approved, CIS into the DCAP to support the individual student planning process.

A list of approved CIS that meet established guidelines can be found on the Iowa Department of Education's (Department) [Career and Academic Planning](#) site.

A district team that chooses to not implement a state-approved CIS, but uses a state-established supplemental CIS, must outline within the DCAP the tools and resources utilized to meet the ICAP requirements supported by an approved CIS.

Yearly Collection and Evaluation of DCAP

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year and all subsequent school years, the district plan will be required to be submitted to the Regional Planning Partnership (RPP). As stated in [Iowa Administrative Code 281-46.10\(4b\)](#), one of the required duties of RPPs is to collect and review all career and academic plans required under 218-Chapter 49. The deadline for yearly submission will be established by the individual RPP, and the process for collection and evaluation will be determined by the RPP with support from the Department.

Districts that fail to submit their DCAP, or submit a DCAP that is not in "substantial compliance" of the outlined requirements of ICAP, are subject to additional monitoring established for districts under 281-Chapter 12. Furthermore, districts that fail to submit a DCAP or provide a poor plan for supporting ICAP are required to submit an action plan that outlines the steps that will be taken to take corrective action to meet ICAP requirements and DCAP submission requirements.

DCAP Collection and Reporting

- The board of directors of each school district shall report annually to each student enrolled in grades nine through twelve, and if the student is under the age of eighteen, to each student's parent or guardian, the student's progress toward meeting the goal of successfully completing the core curriculum and high school graduation requirements adopted by the state board of education pursuant to section [256.7 subsection 26](#) and towards achieving the goals of each student's career and academic plan.
- The district will collect and maintain evidence of completed individual student ICAP requirements. The evidence must be stored in the student's cumulative record as outlined in [281.12.3\(4\)](#) which does allow for electronic storage.
- Iowa Code section [279.61\(5\)](#), was amended effective July 1, 2023 and eliminated the required ICAP utilization data reporting to the Department as part of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. The change did not eliminate the requirement for the district to report ICAP utilization and implementation to their community. The [DCAP Template](#) provides additional clarification related to community reporting through the Annual Review of the Board of Directors.