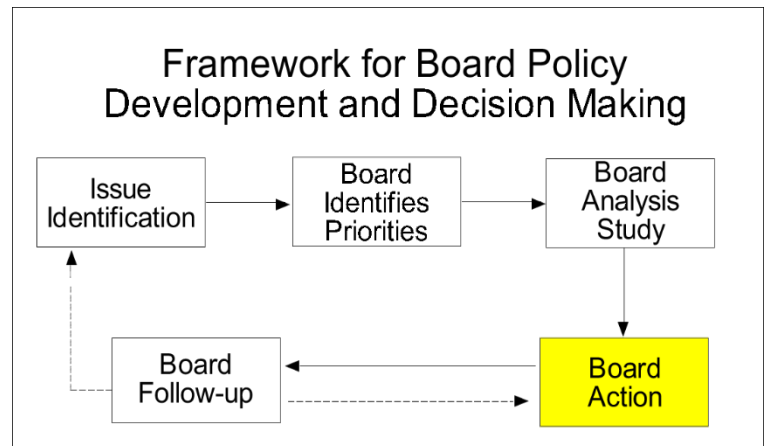


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

May 4, 2023



- Agenda Item:** North Iowa Area Community College
Paraeducator Preparation Program Approval
- State Board Priority:** Improving Teacher and Leader Preparation
- State Board Role/Authority:** Iowa Administrative Code section 281—80 grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and procedures for the approval of programs for individuals who seek a paraeducator certification issued by the Board of Educational Examiners.
- Presenter(s):** Kelly Faga, Consultant
Bureau of School Improvement
- Attachment(s):** One
- Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Iowa State Board approve the North Iowa Area Community College Paraeducator Preparation Program through the next review scheduled for the academic year 2030-2031.
- Background:** North Iowa Area Community College has submitted a request for approval of the paraeducator generalist certification. Upon review of the evidence, it is determined that North Iowa Area Community College has met each of the program standard requirements in IAC 281-80, and has submitted the appropriate curriculum exhibits to meet the Board of Educational Examiners Requirements in IAC 282—24.



North Iowa Area Community College Paraeducator Preparation Programs Report

Board Report Academic Year 2022-2023

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

State Board of Education

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Review Team Members

Dr. Kelly Faga, Iowa Department of Education
Geri McMahon, Iowa Board of Educational Examiners

Recommendation to the Board

Program	Recommendation
Generalist Certificate	Approval

The report includes a selected summary of suggestions for improvements and compliance concerns for each area. A copy of the program application with links to evidence of compliance is maintained in Iowa Department of Education (Department) files and copies are available upon request.

Program Representative(s)

Joe Davis, Division Chair Business, Humanities & Human & Public Services

A Brief History/Overview Shared by the Program

North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) has a long history of over 100 years of providing quality postsecondary educational opportunities to the district and beyond. NIACC's mission is to enrich lives through comprehensive educational opportunities, a commitment to learner success, community engagement and leadership. The paraeducator program was developed to support and enhance the lives of pre-service teachers and individuals seeking paraeducator certification in order to provide pathways for entry into the professions.

The paraeducator curriculum allows individuals to begin their pursuit of postsecondary education with the completion of the three required courses in the first semester. After completing the requirements, individuals can either choose to work as a paraeducator or continue their education and obtain an Associate in Arts degree with an emphasis in education before transferring to a four-year institution.

Program Standards

281—80.9 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.

80.9(1) The unit provides resources and support necessary for the delivery of a quality certification program, including:

- a) A commitment to a work culture, policies and faculty/staff assignments that promote and support best practices in education;
- b) Resources to support a quality hands-on (clinical) experience;
- c) Resources to support professional development opportunities for certified paraeducators and unit faculty;
- d) Resources to support technological and instructional needs to enhance candidate learning; and
- e) A commitment of sufficient administrative, clerical and technical staff to ensure implementation of a quality program.

80.9(2) The unit provides evidence of collaboration with members of the professional community, including the unit's advisory committee comprised of school administrators, classroom teachers, currently employed paraprofessionals and others, to design, deliver and evaluate programs to prepare paraeducators.

80.9(3) When a unit is a part of a college or university, the unit maintains ongoing collaboration with the appropriate departments of the institution, especially regarding content knowledge.

80.9(4) The unit has primary responsibility for all paraeducator preparation programs offered through any delivery model.

80.9(5) The unit has a clearly articulated appeals process for decisions affecting candidates. This process is communicated to all candidates and staff. The unit may use an institution wide appeals process to meet the requirements of this subrule.

80.9(6) The unit's use of staff in teaching roles is purposeful and managed to ensure integrity, quality and continuity of the program(s).

80.9(7) The unit ensures that resources are equitable for all program components, regardless of delivery or location.

Standards Met

The Organizational and Resource Standards have been met by NIACC. NIACC provides student support services including a testing center, professional tutoring, peer tutoring, Math Lab, disability services, FAFSA assistance, veteran's assistance, TRIO Support Services, Student Assistance Program, career counseling, mastery program, Supplemental Instruction, OnTrack Program, PACE support, Student Health Services and a Technology Help desk. The program courses will be offered face-to-face, online, hybrid and flex. All students will have access to the NIACC support system. All courses are managed through the Canvas learning system, therefore all students have access and information about support services.

Compliance Concerns

None.

281—80.10 Diversity Standards

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

80.10(1) The unit provides an environment and experiences to paraeducator candidates to support candidate growth in knowledge, skills and dispositions to help diverse groups of PK-12 students learn.

80.10(2) The unit establishes and maintains a climate that promotes and supports diversity.

80.10(3) The unit's plans, policies and practices document its efforts in establishing and maintaining a diverse staff and paraeducator candidate pool that strives to represent the diverse makeup of the community at large.

80.10(4) In addition to the requirements of rule 281—80.12, the unit shall gather data about its implementation of this rule, use those data to make program improvements and share those data and improvements with the schools and communities it serves.

Standards Met

Through the evaluation of the program application it is clear the Diversity Standards have been met. NIACC has developed a diversity committee, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Alliance (DEI Alliance), which meets once per month. Professional development is presented at the beginning of fall and spring terms. Once or twice per semester, the DEI Alliance provides learning opportunities during campus-wide meeting times, open to faculty, staff and students. These offerings cover training requested by DEI Alliance members and/or student groups on campus. Recently, there has been training on pronouns and other issues posed by the LGBTQIA+ support groups in Iowa community colleges.

Compliance Concerns

None.

281—80.11 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.

80.11(1) The unit documents the alignment of teaching duties for each faculty member with that member's preparation, knowledge, experiences and skills appropriate for training paraeducators to serve in a school setting.

80.11(2) The institution shall hold unit staff accountable for teaching the critical concepts and principles of the discipline.

80.11(3) For the purpose of implementing each of the requirements of this chapter, unit faculty shall maintain ongoing, actual involvement in settings where paraeducators are employed.

Standards Met

NIACC has exceeded the Faculty Standards. Faculty responsible for teaching the paraeducator courses maintain ongoing involvement in authentic school settings. The lead instructor performs student teaching observations in PK-12 locations where paraeducators are employed. These observations last a minimum of one hour and are completed at least eight times a semester.

Compliance Concerns

None.

281—80.12 Program Assessment and Evaluation Standards

The unit's assessment system shall 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.

80.12(1) Each paraeducator candidate's knowledge and skills shall be measured against state certification standards adopted by the board of educational examiners under Iowa Code section 272.12 and the unit's learning outcomes for any certificate for which the unit may recommend the candidate.

80.12(2) Programs shall submit curriculum exhibits for approval by the department.

80.12(3) The unit shall establish a standard of satisfactory performance of paraeducator candidates, which shall comply with the following requirements.

- a) The unit uses measures for candidate assessment that are fair, reliable and valid.
- b) The unit assesses candidates on their demonstration and attainment of unit standards.
- c) The unit uses a variety of assessment measures for assessment of candidates on each unit standard.
- d) The unit provides candidates with formative feedback on their progress toward attainment of unit standards.
- e) The unit assesses content knowledge and its application as candidates work with students, teachers, parents and other professional colleagues in school settings.
- f) The unit assesses candidates at the same level of performance across programs, regardless of the place or manner in which the program is delivered.

80.12(4) The unit shall conduct a survey of graduates and their employers to ensure that its graduates are well prepared for their assigned roles.

80.12(5) The unit shall have a clearly defined, cohesive assessment system and regularly review, analyze and revise its assessment practices.

80.12(6) The unit shall collect and analyze aggregated candidate and program data, use those data to make program improvements and share those data and improvements with stakeholders on a regular basis.

80.12(7) An annual report including a composite of evaluative data collected by the unit shall be submitted to the department by September 30 of each year.

80.12(8) When it publicly reports data, the unit shall comply with all applicable privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

Standard Met

NIACC has developed an assessment system that meets the Assessment and Evaluations Standard. Consistent, reliable and valid assessments are used to measure candidates' performance. Accommodations for assessments are offered to qualified students through the unit's Student Development Office and Student Testing Center. Scoring guidelines, rubrics and exams are used for measuring the candidate's proficiency.

Compliance Concerns

None.

281—80.13 Clinical Practice Standards

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

80.13(1) Paraeducator clinical experiences support learning in the context in which paraeducators will practice.

80.13(2) Paraeducator clinical experiences include the following:

- a) A minimum of ten hours of experience in a state-approved school or educational facility under the supervision of a licensed educator.
- b) Opportunities for paraeducator candidates to observe and be observed by others in the application of skills and knowledge.

Standard Met

NIACC has provided evidence through the program application that they have met the Clinical Standards. All clinical placements in districts are done through the building principal. Students are allowed to contact the building principal and are given the guidelines as to procedures and contact protocol in their handbook. As the evaluator of each building, the principal is the person who approves the placement with a high-quality teacher.

Compliance Concerns

None.