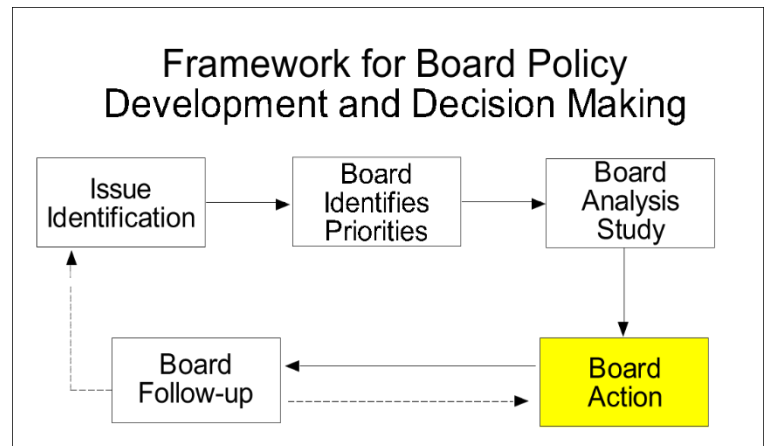


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 16, 2022



- Agenda Item:** Iowa Western 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, Program Consultant
Bureau of School Improvement
- Attachment(s):** One
- Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board approve the Iowa Western Community College Paraeducator Preparation Program through the next review scheduled for the 2027-2028 academic year.
- Background:** Iowa Western Community College has submitted a request for approval of the generalist. Upon review of the evidence, it is determined that Iowa Western 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.



Iowa Western Community College Paraeducator Preparation Programs Report

Board Report – 2027-2028

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

Ms. 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 department files and copies are available upon request.

Program Representative(s)

Tammy Leehy

Matthew Mancuso

A Brief History/Overview Shared by the Program

The Iowa Western Community College Paraeducator Generalist Certificate Course was originated in 2014. The course is a 90-hour program developed to train individuals to work under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel in the classroom setting. The training includes six competencies defined by the Board of Educational Examiners to cover the vital skills needed for a paraeducator to be successful in the classroom. Students completing the course with an 80% or higher can earn Iowa Western credit for the course EDU 210 Foundations of Education and may go on to earn an associate degree in education.

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

Iowa Western Community College has met the organizational and resources standard by providing resources to support a quality hands-on (clinical) experience. Students enrolled in the education degree program complete a one-credit course that requires a 50-hour classroom experience in a PK-12 setting. During the experience, students observe and assist the classroom teacher in assigned duties. Students complete written reflections on their experiences that demonstrate understanding of the profession.

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 a review of the report, it is evident that Iowa Western Community College has met the diversity standard. The unit provides an environment and experiences to paraeducator students to support candidate's growth in knowledge, skills and dispositions to help diverse groups of PK-12 students learn. Credit courses embed topics of diversity throughout all coursework. Faculty ensures students understand their role in meeting diverse learner needs in all PK-12 settings. EDU 210 Foundations of Education discusses topics related to gender, disabilities and ethnicity throughout the course. EDU 245 Exceptional Learner course discusses physical exceptionalities, cognitive exceptionalities, emotional needs and giftedness.

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

Iowa Western Community College has met the faculty standard. Unit faculty maintain ongoing, actual involvement in settings where paraeducators are employed. Faculty are involved in PK-12 classrooms through multiple experiences in a variety of settings. Faculty are in schools facilitating IWCC student experiences with reading buddy projects and internships. Several faculty who teach the coursework online or in the evenings, teach in a PK-12 setting during the academic year.

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

Through a review of the report, it is evident that Iowa Western Community College has met the assessment and evaluation standard. Iowa Western Community College paraeducator coursework utilizes a variety of assessments conducted by faculty who have been trained in creating rigorous and valid assessments. Full-time faculty work with adjuncts to ensure the use of rigorous, valid content is carried out across all coursework.

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

Iowa Western Community College has provided evidence that they have met the clinical practice standard through a review of the application. In addition to students' clinical experience the students also enrolled in EDU 219 completing 50 hours of observation in a PK-12 classroom setting that is supervised by a licensed teacher. The teacher provides ongoing feedback informally and formally at the end of the experience.

Compliance Concerns

None.