

Guidelines for Serving At-Risk Students

A publication to assist school districts
in the development of local plans required by the
Iowa Standard for At-Risk Students

Department of Education
Teaching and Learning Services

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Introduction

The “No Child Left Behind” bill established a goal for all schools nationwide to have all students in their community maximize their potential. During the past decade, many schools in the name of excellence, have increased standards for grade level achievement and high school graduation. Concurrently, changes in family structure, social environment, and economics have negatively affected various student populations. All of these changes have interfered with some students having opportunities to acquire the related behaviors necessary for school success and contributed to the lower achievement level of certain students. Students at all levels of the educational spectrum needed accommodations to maximize potential.

In 1988 Iowa adopted a standard to guide public education agencies in developing a plan to accommodate students who need additional help to succeed. The standard requires a linkage of local, state, and federal resources within each local education agency (LEA) to provide needed services. As well, resources from within and outside of education have to be combined to accommodate student needs implied within the standard.

The Department of Education expects that the planning and implementation of services in the standard will be approached positively, eliminating as much as possible the creation of a new label (at-risk). At some point in every student's school experience some special assistance will be needed. This special assistance varies in the type of service needed and the degree to which it is needed. Therefore, a total system of support for all students should be planned at the local level and the standard satisfied by providing an emphasis on assisting those students who are not succeeding, not continuing in school, or not being productive upon completion of school.

In today's educational world there are many issues for which the school has no control but that cause our children to achieve well below their potential as mentioned above. In 2003, the Iowa Department of Education created a process to assist LEAs in identifying and addressing the academic/behavioral needs of all students: Instructional Decision Making (IDM). If LEAs choose to implement the IDM process, they will begin to address both academic and behavioral issues that interfere with student achievement. The result of using the IDM process can be the development of a system of supports addressing underachievement in our students by concentrating on curriculum, instruction and assessments through core, supplemental and intensive assistance for academics and/or behavioral issues. The Iowa Department of Education recognizes other models as well in addressing student needs. Local education agencies have the flexibility for local innovations.

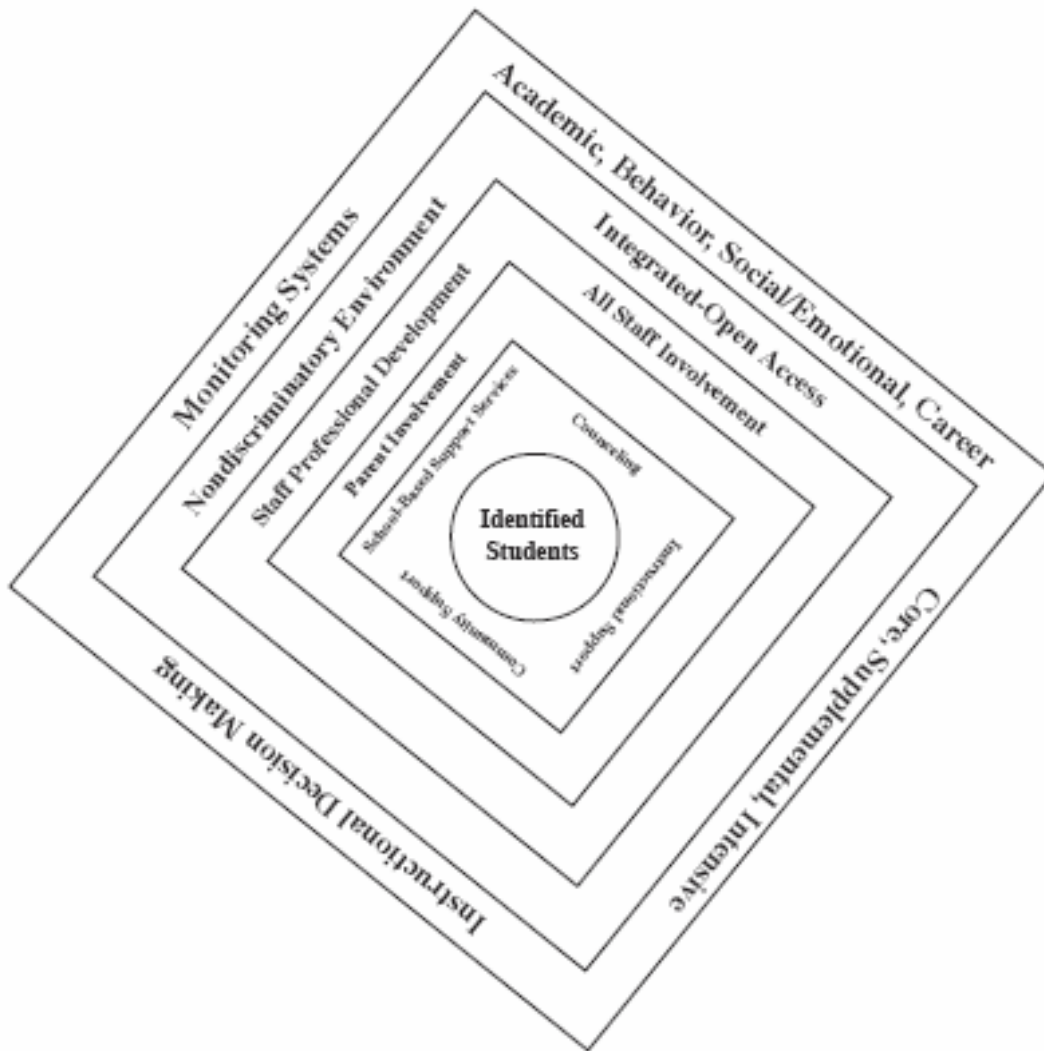
Provisions for At-Risk Students — The Iowa Standard

12.5(13) Provisions for at-risk students. Each school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan the following provisions for meeting the needs of at-risk students: valid and systematic procedures and criteria to identify at-risk students throughout the school district's school-age population, determination of appropriate ongoing educational strategies for alternative options education programs as required in Iowa Code section 280.19A, and review and evaluation of the effectiveness of provisions for at-risk students. This subrule does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools.

Each school district using additional allowable growth for provisions for at-risk students shall incorporate educational program goals for at-risk students into its comprehensive school improvement plan. Provisions for at-risk students shall align with the student learning goals and content standards established by the school district or by school districts participating in a consortium. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall also include objectives, activities, cooperative arrangements with other service agencies and service groups, and strategies for parental involvement to meet the needs of at-risk children. The incorporation of these requirements into a school district's comprehensive school improvement plan shall serve as the annual application for additional allowable growth designated in Iowa Code section 257.38.

A Diagram of the At-Risk Standard

The diagram that follows provides a pictorial representation of Iowa's standard for at-risk students. It is presented to assist persons to visualize the standard in its totality and how each of nine components might be sequentially organized for local planning. The visualization starts at the center and moves outward encompassing nine components. Local plans could be organized and sequenced accordingly.



Checklist to Guide Local Plans

The standard for at-risk students depicted in the previous diagram includes nine components which may be included at each educational level (K-12) within local education agencies. The nine components are:

1. Strategies for identification of at-risk students;
2. Special instructional assistance;
3. School-based support services (food and nutrition, health, psychological, social, speech, etc.);
4. Appropriate counseling services;
5. Coordination with community-based support services;
6. Strategies for involving parents;
7. Professional development for all school personnel;
8. Compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination legislation; and
9. Provisions for monitoring behavioral, social, and academic improvements.

IDM is a process that LEAs can implement to address the nine components of the standards. The information gathered through the IDM process could assist the LEA in addressing data collection and reporting. IDM is not another thing for schools to “do”, but rather the vehicle to address the At-Risk Standard and its nine components. The LEA plan to address this standard can be blended into a broad-based plan that incorporates other new standards, such as counseling. In fact, the diagram and structure of the standard could be easily related to planning for all students. Whatever approach is used, the emphasis on the nine planning components should not be lost in the process.

All local plans should include a system for the identification of students, a system to make recommendations for support, and a system for carrying out the recommendations to the extent possible given the resources available. IDM can be this system that can help LEAs develop their plans for meeting the needs of all students.

CSIP (Comprehensive School Improvement Plan): Local school districts must address the at-risk standard in their comprehensive school improvement plan. Districts may maintain a separate plan for at-risk students for purposes of planning and implementation. All staff should be aware of the plan for at-risk students and related responsibilities. State monitoring of the CSIP is based on the standards for at-risk.

Local plans should acknowledge that change will occur and some flexibility will be needed to change local plans. Local practitioners should expect challenges but feel free to experiment and try different approaches and strategies. IDM affords the school a process to address the changes in the educational domain. There is a continual analysis of the data to support LEAs in making instructional decisions in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment to meet the ever changing needs of their students.

Continuous updating of the plan is expected. Therefore, long range planning beyond three years is encouraged, and the Department of Education anticipates changes in the plan as to what and how services are provided. Local plans do not have to be filed with the Department of Education but must be kept locally for review. Although the standard requires a plan for K-12, local districts are encouraged to expand plans to include pre-kindergarten to grade 14. For those LEAs who implement IDM, the plan should be frequently updated.

A process for local action could be as follows:

1. Identify team members to address the standard. Teams from different buildings could be utilized to provide input into a district-wide system. All levels of education should be represented, with an administrator being a member of each team.
2. Prepare a plan to address the standard. This plan could be generated by the IDM process.
3. Approve the plan by local board action.
4. Establish procedures such as district wide meetings, building level meetings, and brainstorming techniques to involve all staff in planning activities and implementation strategies.
5. Complete an analysis of existing services, practices, and procedures to accommodate student needs. Include an analysis of existing policies and practices that may be contributing to student failure. This is inherent in the IDM process.
6. Identify goals and objectives for implementing all components of the standard.
7. Establish an implementation timeline of no more than three years to address all requirements of the standard.
8. Incorporate goals and timelines into a management plan for local use.
9. Review, monitor, and continue the process. Also inherent in the IDM process.

The checklist that follows can be used to guide local planning and/or identify priorities for a local management plan. It is consistent with the at-risk standard but expands the levels to preschool through grade 14, with emphasis on measurable outcomes. Following the IDM process will facilitate the completion of many of the checklist items.

- A system exists at all education levels (pre-K through 14) to identify those who need additional assistance to succeed.
 - not expected to succeed (preschool)
 - not succeeding (elementary - senior high)
 - dropouts (grades 7-12)
 - unproductive (grades 10-14 including post-school follow-up)
- A system to review school policies and practices that contribute to student failure is planned/implemented.
- Expected student outcomes (behavioral, social, academic) are identified in measurable terms for monitoring purposes.

- Support services are provided for those identified as being at-risk at all educational levels (K-12).
 - instructional support
 - guidance services
 - outside agencies
 - school-based support services (food and nutrition, psychological, social work, other)
 A toll to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and support services is available at:
<http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/418/721>

- Students are involved
 - Input is gathered and analyzed
 - Action is taken from what is learned

- Parents and family are involved.
 - at all education levels (pre-K through 14)
 - different roles of parent involvement are encouraged

- All staff, professional and support, are involved at all levels (pre-K through 14).
 - assigned objectives
 - special assignments
 - in-class modifications
 - other

- A staff professional development program exists to assist all staff to better serve at-risk children and youth.
 - at all levels
 - professional and support staff involved
 - full-time and part-time staff involved
 - administrators at all levels involved

- Support services and education programs for at-risk students meet the requirements of state and federal non-discrimination legislation.
 - students have equal access to support services;
 - students are being served on an integrated basis, without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, creed, color, religion, disability, and parental/family or marital status;
 - staff assignments do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, national origin, creed, color, religion, disability, and parental/family or marital status;
 - at-risk student data is collected on the basis of race, national origin, sex, and disability.

- A monitoring system exists to identify student progress in academic, behavioral, and social development at all educational levels. Inherent in IDM process.

If your LEA needs a systematic approach to addressing these nine components, or if you need to get started and don't know where to begin, IDM will help facilitate your progress on meeting the needs of all students. The web address for IDM is:

<http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/801/840/> . You will find contact information as well as the IDM document and other tools to help you meet the needs of at-risk students.

The nine components of the at-risk standard are identified and discussed separately in the following section. The discussion reflects the thinking of consultants from various units within the Department of Education, Area Education Agencies and local districts is offered to help local practitioners to address at-risk students at the local level. The ideas should be considered as a beginning and not as controlling all local initiatives.

The Nine Components: Specific Ideas For Consideration in Building Local Plans

#1

STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFICATION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

The definition of at-risk students includes three distinct categories of students that local practitioners may consider when developing local plans . The three categories are identified in the chart below.

At-Risk Categories and Specific Criteria for Identification		
Not Meeting Goals In Education Program	Not Completing High School	Not Becoming A Productive Worker
<p>Low achievement scores below the 30th percentile or two years or more behind, has received supplemental interventions (IDM) with little or no success and does not qualify for special education services</p> <p>Inability to cope with a full class schedule; low grades in one or more classes (below grade “C” or 2.0 on a 4.0 scale)</p> <p>Poor attendance; missing one day per week</p> <p>Suspended or expelled two or more times</p> <p>Lack of friends</p> <p>Dislike for school; frequently mentions not belonging</p> <p>Sudden negative changes in classroom performance or social interaction</p> <p>Poor organization of study habits; can't find homework, lacks necessary materials</p> <p>Inability to pay fees, lunch tickets, transportation, materials, etc.</p> <p>Limited English proficiency</p> <p>Disabled and not succeeding as expected after being given support services by special education staff</p> <p>Entitled Individual and not succeeding as expected due to factors other than lack of research</p>	<p>Pregnancy</p> <p>Teen parent</p> <p>Dropout</p> <p>Culturally or geographically isolated; not able to interact with students of a different race or socio-economic background</p> <p>No extracurricular involvement</p> <p>Substance use or abuse; unhealthy physical appearance</p> <p>Inability to adjust to transition steps in the education process (elementary to junior high/middle school, or junior high/middle school to high school)</p> <p>Homeless</p> <p>Frequently tardy</p> <p>Transient (moves from school to school - within and outside the district frequently)</p> <p>Suicidal tendencies</p> <p>Negative peer influence (social crowd of dropouts, delinquents and/or poor achievers)</p> <p>Victim of overwhelming peer harassment</p>	<p>No identified career interests</p> <p>Course selection is highly random, leading toward no specific post-school training or career choice</p> <p>No reasonable career plans upon graduation or beyond graduation</p> <p>No specific plan for post-high school training</p> <p>Low motivation to seek employment</p> <p>Inability to keep employment; unacceptable work behavior</p> <p>Unfamiliarity with and inability to use community service agencies</p> <p>Low aptitude/skills for competitive work</p>

based instructional practices		
Difficulty meeting long-term goals		
Low motivation to complete assignments		

The specific criteria for identification are examples of key factors that can be used to identify students who need additional help in grades K-12. The key factors overlap into each category of at-risk student. Therefore, the factors should be perceived as building upon each other. A student recognized as not becoming a productive worker could reflect characteristics listed in each of the other two categories. Likewise, students with failing grades may also display poor attendance and be unable to pay school fees. Conceivably, students could be classified from least to most at-risk based on the number of characteristics they display in order to prioritize limited services and resources.

Career potential is not specifically mentioned in the standard but is very much implied in the definition of at-risk student. Students at risk of not becoming productive workers need to be identified and given as much assistance as possible in career decision-making, course selection that will lead them somewhere, identification of career interests, post-secondary plans, financial assistance for training, and special assistance to upgrade aptitudes and skills for productive work.

The key factors listed in the chart can be determined at each level (elementary, junior high, senior high) from formal and informal procedures, assessments, and/or studies designed to predict and/or confirm student performance.

Strategies or procedures used for identification should account for students affected for short durations, such as those experiencing sudden trauma. Therefore, identification can be made through:

- Referral by teacher, family, counselor, support staff, peer, self, outside agency, or employer
- Testing (group and individual, formal and informal)
- Career assessment systems (aptitude, career interests, individual career planning, curriculum based assessments)
- Student assistance team models
- Centralized data analysis (achievement, ability to pay, low income, attendance, suspensions, grades, dropouts, homeless, follow-up, extracurricular involvement)
- Student response checklists
- Learning styles analysis and peer helper identification systems

The IDM process provides a system to make recommendations for needed support. A system to carry out the recommendations should follow the identification of an at-risk student. The system could consist of one or more of the following:

- A coordinator of support services, or teachers and counselors who assume the support roles and carry out the planned support services.
- One or more persons, such as a teacher assistance team, identified to receive data and coordinate support services or establish individual programs.

- A centralized system established to automatically recommend support services, and a central coordinator who assigns tasks to staff, students, agencies, support personnel, etc.
- Student assistance teams who receive information and make or implement recommendations as needed.

Each of the examples above needs a person or persons within the district to oversee and coordinate support services for students. Persons given the responsibility must have the flexibility and time to coordinate across all staff and be closely linked with administration for resource development. Specific consideration could be given to creating a new position and/or assigning existing staff the responsibilities. In any case, serving at-risk students will remain a responsibility for each separate facility in a district. Therefore, special assignments within each facility will most likely be necessary.

Schools implementing the IDM process have a system in place for identification, recommendations for support, and allocation of resources to meet the needs of students in the Core. Supplemental and intensive interventions for both academics and behavioral issues are also identified, supported, and implemented. School districts who chose to use the IDM process have a way to look at Core curriculum, instruction and assessments currently in place to determine the needs of individuals.

The identification of at-risk students should be complemented by an analysis of existing district policies and practices to identify factors in management and teaching that contribute to the lack of student success. Examples include forcing all students to maintain full-class schedules regardless of ability; allowing a limited number of credits to transfer in for high school completion; not allowing students to switch to other teachers teaching the same courses when the student is failing; not allowing students to attend neighboring school districts on a tuition basis when failing; restricting all students to high school completion within the same time line (age 17-18); and significantly reducing student assistance programs such as tutoring and remedial help beyond the elementary program. A process to help schools analyze their core curriculum, instruction and assessments to better meet the needs of all students is the IDM process created by the Iowa Department of Education. An inventory to assist local districts in the analysis of policies and practices related to student failure and dropping out is available from the Teaching and Learning Services, Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146.

#2

Special Instructional Support Services

The Iowa Department of Education has published a process to assist schools in meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students. This process helps schools look at their Core instruction through the curriculum, instruction and assessment lenses. Once a school is confident that the Core instruction is guaranteed, viable, rigorous and relevant, then individual student data is gathered. Screening, Diagnostic and Formative data are gathered to determine the academic/behavioral needs of individual students. Supplemental and/or intensive support is given in addition to the core to students who exhibit those needs. Schools will have supports identified and in place to meet the students' needs. Students who need help to succeed in academic classes should receive assistance by federal, state, and locally supported activities. Below are possible activities that could be considered:

- Preschool early intervention
- Transition programs (elementary to junior high, junior high to senior high, senior high to work or post-school training)
- Parent helpers in the classroom and at home with homework
- Computer-based tutorial assistance
- Pull-out remedial programs
- Learning centers (in-school and take-home)
- Small class ratios of 1:12 or less
- Peer tutoring
- Extended school days offering homework assistance
- Evening school
- Weekend classes or Saturday school
- Summer school
- In-class re-mediation – supplemental and/or intensive interventions
- Work experience and exploratory/vocational education offering
- Child care while learning
- Community service projects for applied learning
- Cooperative learning allowing mixed ability grouping
- Contractual learning and personalized education plans

#3

Coordination with Community-Based Support Services

Schools are not expected to take care of all the needs of students. Other established community services should be utilized to assist students whenever possible. Multi-agency collaborative plans should be established to allow for continuous outside service and the modification of the school program when necessary to ensure student success in the school program.

Formal plans with agencies should be considered at all education levels to establish clear working relationships and responsibilities and to form some sense of accountability in helping students to improve their performance. These formal plans should be in writing to facilitate implementation and evaluation.

Specific agencies that could be considered include: Iowa Department of Job Service, Mental Health, and Human Services; area education agency support services; family planning agencies; substance abuse centers; rehabilitation services; YMCA; YWCA; crisis pregnancy centers; hospitals; churches; law enforcement; JTPA; county extension services; women, infant and children (WIC) programs; and maternal child health (MCH) clinics. Each school may wish to identify the services available, the contact people, and the procedures that will be used to coordinate services, perhaps in the form of a directory or within staff handbooks. Joint meetings between the support agencies and school staff may facilitate working relationships and staff training. Whenever possible, agencies that can provide the person power to assist students within the school may want to consider providing office space. In addition, students and parents should be educated about the services available and how to use them. This can include incorporating the information into curriculum.

#4

School-Based Support Services

Many of the basic needs of students and families, especially those at-risk, have been considered in the process of building existing school-based support services. Therefore, these services should be incorporated into local school plans. Schools implementing IDM have these people identified and at the ready to meet the needs of all students. Area education agencies, which often provide many of the school-based support services for local districts, may need to be involved in the development of local plans. The following list indicates some school-based support services that might be considered.

School Based Support Services

Speech-language pathologist — Provides assessment and intervention services related to speech and language development as well as disorders of language, voice, articulation, and fluency.

School psychologist — Provides assessment, intervention, and consultation regarding students' behavioral, social, emotional, educational, and vocational needs. Provides group and individual counseling to students, parents, and families.

School social worker — Provides assessment and consultation regarding student and family social, emotional, and behavioral needs; intervention including individual, group, parent, and family counseling; and coordination of home, school, and community resources.

Special education nurse and/or school nurse — Provides assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation regarding students' school health needs.

Consultant (Special Education and/or Content Specialist)— Provides assistance in the development of curriculum and specialized instructional procedures, techniques, and materials for students experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties.

Work experience coordinator — Plans and implements sequential secondary programs for students requiring specially designed career exploration and vocational preparation.

School audiologist — Provides planning, counseling, coordination, and intervention strategies for students with hearing impairments.

School occupational therapist — Provides assessment and intervention strategies for students with physical impairments.

School physical therapist — Provides assessment and intervention relating to developmental and adaptive sensorimotor and gross motor competencies for students with physical impairments.

Food service personnel — Provide nutritious breakfasts, and lunches for all children, including low income students, children in childcare settings, and special-dietary-need students.

#5

Appropriate Counseling Services

Appropriate counseling service includes the identification, monitoring, and provision of assistance to students regarding their academic, career and personal social development. The standard for at-risk students (4.5(13)) implies that these counseling services should be made available to at-risk populations to no less an extent than provided to other students and, to the extent possible, be provided as needed at the local level.

Three resources that can be used to structure counseling services are as follows: The Iowa School Counseling Framework, The Standards for Guidance and Counseling Programs (12.3(1)) and the *“Iowa K-12 Career Guidance Curriculum Guide for Student Development.”* Specific efforts should be made to link the school counseling standards and at-risk standards.

The Standards for Guidance and Counseling Programs (12.3(1)) and career development specify that a qualified school counselor works collaboratively with students, teachers, support staff and administrators shall direct the program and provide services and instruction in support of the curricular goals. The school counselor is a member of the instructional team with special expertise in identifying resources and technologies to support teaching and learning. The school counselor and classroom teachers work collaborately to develop, teach, and evaluate curricular goals with emphasis on the following:

- (1) Sequentially presented curriculum, programs, and responsive services that address growth and development of all students; and
- (2) Attainment of student competencies in academic, career, personal, and social areas.

The school counseling program is designed to provide all of the following:

- (1) Curriculum that is embedded throughout the district’s overall curriculum and is systemically delivered by the school counselor in collaboration with instructional staff through classroom and group activities, and that consists of structured lessons to help students achieve desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental levels;
- (2) Individual student planning through ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish educational and career goals to develop future plans;
- (3) Responsive services through intervention and curriculum meeting students’ immediate and future needs as occasioned by events and conditions in students’ lives and that may require any of the following: individual or group counseling, consultation with parents, teachers, and other educators, referrals to other school support services or community resources, peer helping, and information; and
- (4) System support through management activities establishing, maintaining, and enhancing the total school counseling program, including professional development, consultation, collaboration, program management, and operations.

When developing a comprehensive guidance program, particular attention could be given to some specific issues which relate highly to at-risk students. Some examples of activities include:

- Intentional guidance activities
- A district-wide crisis plan for sudden trauma such as suicide, death, and accidents
- Student assistance teams
- Support groups
- Peer helper program, including at-risk students as “helpers”
- Individualized career plans
- Individualized counseling
- Coordination of outside agencies
- Mentorship programs
- Programs to help parents to help their children
- Consultation with staff to assist in understanding and helping students

#6

Strategies for Engaging Parents

“When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.” (*A New Wave of Evidence – The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connection on Student Achievement*, Henderson and Mapp, 2002). There is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for all students at all ages. The research identifies two key findings regarding parent engagement that support student learning:

- Key Finding: Respectful two-way communications which engage parents as partners in their child’s learning have an impact on student achievement.
- Key Finding: Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children’s learning at home are linked to higher education.

The following chart identifies actions parents/guardians/families and teachers/principals can take to increase the opportunities and abilities of their students to increase their learning.

Key Finding	Actions of Parents/Guardians/Family	Actions of Teachers and Principals
<p>Meaningful Two-Way Communication:</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases trust between schools and families • Encourages higher and realistic parental expectations • Serves as the first step to other types of parent involvement to follow • Leads to a higher degree of parents’ commitment to helping their students improve • Puts everyone on the “same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace a philosophy of partnership with the teachers and school. • Stay in touch with your child’s teachers and share your expectations, your child’s learning habits, attitude toward school, social interactions, and academic progress. • Ask for information about how the education system works where your child attends school. • Plan your student’s academic program with your student and the guidance counselor as well as with the teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a welcoming environment for families, where they feel comfortable sharing ideas for making the school a strong learning environment for their children, then <i>ask them</i> to share those ideas. • Invite families to the school to share their own education stories. • Stay in touch with each student’s parents/guardians and share your expectations and data regarding the student’s learning habits, attitude toward school, social interactions, and

<p>page”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double check to be sure the guidance counselor has your student involved in classes that will help him/her reach your expectations. • Share with the principal and teachers the ways you encourage your students at home; share also your cultural traditions and expectations. • Ask for an interpreter/translator if English is not your first language. • Invite teachers to your home before school starts to build relationships with teachers. • Meet regularly with teachers to talk about the progress of your student and to strengthen the partnership to support his/her learning. • Ask the teachers about the curriculum, the textbooks, and other learning materials your student is expected to use. • Contact your student’s teacher(s) with questions, concerns, or information (e.g., crisis, health issue, attendance, work schedule, bullying, homework) impacting your student’s ability to learn. • Ask for information that addresses your needs/concerns (e.g., careers, testing schedules, learning expectations, impact of nutrition, physical activity, and sleep on student success). • Tour your student’s school, especially at transition levels (e.g., entering kindergarten, middle school, or high school). • Connect with other families in the school community. Learn about their expectations for students. • Read the school/class newsletter. Call the principal or teacher(s) for additional information. • Share with your student’s teacher(s) and principal what would make school better for you and your student. • Get involved in the decision-making process of your school. Participate as an active member of the building’s leadership team. 	<p>academic progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about families’ expectations for their students’ education. • Partner with families to plan the academic program of their students. • Prepare parents/guardians for their student’s “next level” or “next steps” through focused conversations with guidance counselors and other building staff. • Recognize that families have tools in their toolkits for learning, also. • Meet families face to face and telephone routinely. • Lead with the positive whenever you contact parents. Use language that promotes cooperation, not confrontation. And end the conversation with a thank-you. • Use translators/interpreters who are able to translate between the cultural and ethnic groups and you. • Give families information about how your class/school works – especially those new to the building. • Provide tours of the classrooms and school as well as opportunities to visit with building staff, especially at transition levels. • Make home visits to build relationships and help students and their families make positive transitions. • Work with families to identify mutually convenient times for class events and/or meetings. • Provide a family center in the building, where parents can meet, have discussion groups, and work on school projects. • Meet with families and students at feeder schools – explain the transition, the expectations, and the classes. • Provide a variety of options for participation of parents and guardians, and let them choose. • Connect with families and communicate with them about what they care most – their child’s learning.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask any question for which you need an answer or have a concern; after all, it is your student’s success with learning that is most important, and you are the most influential advocate. 	
<p>Learning at Home:</p> <p>Rationale: <i>All</i> families can, and do, have positive effects on their children’s learning. Families of <i>all</i> cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage their children • Talk with them about school • Help them plan for higher education • Keep them focused on learning and homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a study area equipped with appropriate lighting, quiet atmosphere, writing materials and utensils, and support materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus). • Talk with your student about school activities and classes in which they are involved. • Make sure your student reads and does his/her homework. • Talk about career and education options; provide experiences for students to learn about both. • Monitor your student’s out-of-school activities, and encourage those that are “learning related.” • Get involved in interactive homework – homework that involves you in your student’s learning. • Encourage others and get involved in programs at school or in your community that support families in guiding students’ learning. • Participate in workshops on topics important to you and your student’s success (e.g., best practices in reading to your child, building students’ vocabulary, development of positive discipline strategies, supporting students through crisis). • Participate in training provided on how to use learning packets and/or parent handbooks related to standards and benchmarks. • Volunteer in school to make connections at home with the learning observed at school. <p>And at the middle school level, it is especially important to . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss school activities. • Monitor out-of-school activities • Contact school staff regarding strengths, challenges, or concerns about your child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask parents what they need to help their children learn at home. Provide opportunities in a variety of formats (e.g., face to face, online, through community partners) to meet those needs. • Offer workshops based on parents’ needs (ASK! Listen! Provide!). For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of positive discipline strategies, • Supporting students through crisis, • Contributing to children’s positive attitudes about school and developing high expectations, • Tips on curtailing TV viewing, • Reading to your child, • Math in the kitchen, • Surviving early adolescence, • Setting up expectations for homework. • Develop and share a tool box for helping kids at home. • Share “homework” expectations with students and families, and provide parents/guardians with guidelines that will help them monitor and supervise their children’s homework. • Share effective practices with parents about their involvement (e.g., interactive homework, building vocabulary). • Make “homework” interactive, but not to the point that the parent has to be the teacher of the learning. • Develop “A Minute for Learning” for the local television/radio station; have students and/or parents share the information that identifies opportunities/connections for learning at home. • Develop partnerships with

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer and attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events. • Also remember to talk about career and education options; provide experiences for student to learn about both. <p>And at the high school level, it is just as important to . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide your students toward postsecondary opportunities. • Make sure they read and do their homework. • Stress the value of education. • Also remember to talk about career and education options; provide experiences for student to learn about both. 	<p>other community agencies who have a stake in quality education in the community to provide easily accessible opportunities for parents/guardians to network with other families to learn strategies for helping their children at home as learners.</p>
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Students with involved parents are more likely to . . .

- Earn higher grades and test scores.
- Be promoted, pass their courses, and earn credits.
- Attend school regularly.
- Have better social skills and improved behavior.
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

#7

“Involvement of All School Personnel”

All school personnel are expected to provide support and assistance for all students, including those identified as being at-risk. Plans for providing and improving services for at-risk students should reflect efforts by all staff in a comprehensive effort as opposed to segregated and pull out program models involving a few staff.

Involvement of all school personnel implies that at minimum each staff member assumes responsibility for planning, identification, and monitoring and for providing some type of support service and maintenance of an integrated education environment in compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination legislation. Schools who are using the IDM process will find all staff working together to meet the needs of all students, because all supports are given in addition to the Core. Ongoing formative assessments guide instructional decisions which results in meeting the needs of all students. Therefore, all staff may need to be involved in identifying students who are not meeting Core requirements in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment and plan for supplemental and intensive supports which may involve personnel outside of the classroom teacher. This becomes a continuous fluid cycle of reaching the students in need of assistance in a proactive format. Of most importance is that all staff be involved in planning the identification process and in identifying the support services which will be provided and those which should be added to improve student performance. Their involvement will foster ownership. This could very possibly be an annual activity facilitated by administrative staff. Potential objectives for all staff can also be gleaned from parent involvement, monitoring student progress, coordination with community-based support services, professional development training, and provision of appropriate counseling services.

A common problem of some staff is the teacher/student ratio. Some teachers serve over 150 students per day and lack time to devote to students who need additional support. Some support service activities that involve minimum time but benefit students at-risk are identified in the list below. These activities could possibly be assumed by teachers who are serving large numbers of students.

- Once per week over nine weeks, contact one assigned at-risk student to assure that someone cares about them as an individual.
- Once a month, call a parent of an assigned at-risk student.
- Send short, positive notes home, identifying student success or short notes on how to help with homework.
- Engage peers in cooperative learning/tutoring.
- Utilize computer programs for tutoring, remedial help, and additional instruction time.
- Provide in-class practice exercises with the specific objective to assist the most needy in the time provided.
- Include low achievers in class participation and encourage their interaction by using questioning techniques involving opinion and evaluation.
- Help all students review for tests, with specific attention given to those most likely to fail.

- Utilize classroom learning centers as much as possible to maximize individualized learning and assistance.
- Remember student names and use the preferred name when interacting with students, particularly in learning exercises.
- Teach study skills in the content of subject matter; utilize reviews in class incorporating the study skills.
- Present information/directions using as many learning modalities (hearing, seeing, touching or manipulation, speaking) as possible.
- Deliberately select learning experiences with the greatest likelihood of success to minimize the possibility of failure.
- Differentiated instruction based on student interest, knowledge and learning profile
- Use of flexible grouping
- Use of cooperative learning techniques to involve more students
- Create real-life problems for students to be engaged in the content

#7 (continued)

In-service For All School Personnel

The district may want to consider engaging all full- and part-time professional and nonprofessional staff in a minimum of one training program to increase their potential to assist students identified as at-risk. Such training can be included in annual staff development training programs and/or be provided by individual scheduling throughout the year. The following list indicates potential staff development ideas that can be incorporated into local plans.

1. IDM – Instructional Decision Making
2. TESA — Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement
3. GESA — Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement
4. P.I.M. — Positive Impact Model
5. Madeline Hunter model of instruction
6. Identification and referral of at-risk students, including abused, limited English proficiency, and homeless
7. Shared collaboration between school and service agencies staff
8. Peer counseling/tutoring/helper programs
9. Personalizing education
10. Poverty: Practices To Overcome Poverty
11. Online Learning and Accommodation

12. Understanding family functioning/diversity
13. Accelerated Schools Model
14. Teacher/student interaction time for problem solving
15. Emergency health care
16. Principles of Acceleration
17. Substance abuse identification/intervention
18. Parent communications/involvement
19. Teachers as counselors
20. Multicultural non-sexist education
21. Job clubs/career development/post-school planning
22. Behavior modification techniques
23. Computer assisted instruction/tutoring and remedial software
24. Student assistance teams
25. Cooperative learning
26. Hotlines and community volunteer assistance programs
27. Business and industry adopt-a student/school programs
28. Early prevention of school failure
29. Chronic health problems/suicide including high risk populations such as
homosexuals
30. Differentiated Instruction
31. Accommodations/Modifications/Interventions
32. Learning by Doing: Project-Based Learning

Staff development could also allow time for individual input and planning on local problems. Significant dialogue occurring among all staff at the local level may help achieve ownership and a commitment to making a difference. Expertise at the local level often matches that from outside sources.

#8

Compliance with Federal and State Non Discrimination Legislation

Federal and state nondiscrimination legislation supports placing attention on at least four strategic areas related to the education of At-Risk students. The first is identification and placement processes, which ensure equal access to educational programs and support services. The second is educational programming and support services which promotes integration and heterogeneous grouping and which provides connections between the school, the home, and the community. The third area is data based decision-making, which is based on the collection and analysis of student data disaggregated by racial/ethnic background, gender, disability, language

background, and socioeconomic status. The fourth area is employment and personnel practices, which reinforce and support diverse role models for students.

The At-Risk standard requires that a monitoring system be established to evaluate the progress of at-risk students and the effectiveness of the support services provided. It is important that staff members receive training to insure that the curriculum and support services reflect multicultural, gender fair approaches and that instruction models cultural competency. (see Major Educational Equity Legislation in Appendix)

The following chart indicates some possible strategies to promote effective instruction and support to at-risk students from diverse backgrounds.

Example: Activities Related to the Effective Support Services for Diverse At-Risk Students

Effective	Ineffective
Identify early during elementary school years when possible	Lets wait and see. Intervene later approach
High expectations and rigor for all students in heterogeneous groups with tutoring and language assistance when necessary.	Ability grouping or homogeneous grouping
Work from students' assets and develop individualized plan and goals. Provide opportunities for success	Work from student deficits and develop individual goals
Collaborative instruction and learning which involves parents, family and community Provide parenting supports for parents	Working with students, but ignoring family, community or cultural context
Instruction and supports that reinforce resiliency	Inflexible timelines that do not reward persistence
Instruction that reflect the student's culture, gender and life experiences (MCGF) and connects to community based cultural supports	Ethnocentric/mono-cultural, male-centric approach
Establishing a caring, personal relationship between the staff and their students as well as with their families. Know your students and their cultural heritage	Maintaining social distance between teacher and student
Teacher and student teams used to pursue individualized goals	Teacher directed goal setting
Use of alternative assessment, performance based assessment, and portfolios with accommodations for disabilities and English language proficiency	Use of standardized and other conventional tests without appropriate accommodations
Provide school based and community based professional support services such as health services, social work services and psychological and faith-based services	Not looking at the whole child
Provide work & career based education and applied connection to real life	Primarily lecture and theory in classroom
Provide mentoring and positive role modeling opportunities	Homogeneous staffing patterns with an absence of role models and mentors

#9 Provisions for Monitoring Behavior, Social, and Academic Improvements

Some students, once identified as being at-risk, may not remain at-risk throughout their school career. However, some students may need constant support until they leave school. Therefore, a monitoring system is needed to allow for the constant review of student performance. Schools who implement the IDM process have a constant review of performance monitoring system in place. A constant review will allow for the entry and exit of students as needed. The review and analysis of data is more frequent when students are receiving supplemental and/or intensive support. Thereby ensuring students' needs are being met in a proactive manner. This constant review of formative data allows for the fluid entry and exit of students as needed.

Provisions for monitoring can include formal and informal assessments and/or studies at each level (elementary, junior high or middle school, and high school) to verify student progress resulting from the support services provided. IDM provides the systematic planning for the monitoring of student progress in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment for both academics and behavioral issues.

- Instructional Decision Making (IDM)
 - Curriculum
 - Instruction
 - Assessment

The following list would be examples of monitoring tools used in the IDM process:

- Follow-up studies
- Behavior checklists
- Achievement testing on a pre/post basis
- Peer observation
- Individualized education/career plans
- Report cards, including the review of defined behaviors
- Letters or notes sent to parents or guardians
- Recorded observation of performance
- Attendance records
- Assessments and/or communications with cooperating agencies
- Student/parent evaluations of services provided
- Records of economic assistance provided students for fees, materials and supplies, transportation, etc.
- Centralized databases or centralized records

- Student feedback questionnaire system
- Classroom data: qualitative and quantitative

Existing databases may be used for monitoring the academic, behavioral, social, and career development improvements of at-risk students. IDM advocates the use of a centralized database. For more information about this program, go to the IDM website: <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/801/8401>. Multiple strategies for monitoring students are recommended, including the involvement of parents.

Monitoring systems should be based on factual information that can be documented and that is consistent with state and federal legislation regarding student records.

Appendix

Funding

At-Risk programming and alternative schools are approved for increased allowable growth to provide support for serving at-risk students at their families. The approval process can be located on the superintendent's secure web page under the title, "at-risk." The legislation which guides the funding process is Chapter 257.38-41. Iowa Code Chapter 257.11 provides a second source of funding. Schools receive funding under this legislation through a formula based on poverty. Local districts must have an approved CSIP to access support under 257.11 and/or 257.38-41.

257.11 Supplementary weighting plan.

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4. At-risk programs and alternative schools.

a. In order to provide additional funding to school districts for programs serving at-risk pupils and alternative school pupils in secondary schools, a supplementary weighting plan for at-risk pupils is adopted. A supplementary weighting of forty-eight ten-thousandths per pupil shall be assigned to the percentage of pupils in a school district enrolled in grades one through six, as reported by the school district on the basic educational data survey for the base year, who are eligible for free and reduced price meals under the federal National School Lunch Act and the federal Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. § 1751-1785, multiplied by the budget enrollment in the school district; and a supplementary weighting of one hundred fifty-six one-hundred-thousandths per pupil shall be assigned to pupils included in the budget enrollment of the school district. Amounts received as supplementary weighting for at-risk pupils shall be utilized by a school district to develop or maintain at-risk pupils' programs, which may include alternative school programs.

Programs for returning dropouts and dropout prevention are funded through modified allowable growth monies. Boards of school districts must submit a comprehensive program plan and budget costs in order to use the modified allowable growth monies for these programs.

257.38 Programs for returning dropouts and dropout prevention.

Boards of school districts, individually or jointly with boards of other school districts, requesting to use additional allowable growth for programs for returning dropouts and dropout prevention, shall submit comprehensive program plans for the programs and budget costs, including annual requests for modified allowable growth for funding the programs, to the department of education as provided in this chapter. The program plans shall include:

1. Program goals, objectives, and activities to meet the needs of children who may drop out of school.
2. Student identification criteria and procedures.
3. Staff in-service education design.
4. Staff utilization plans.
5. Evaluation criteria and procedures and performance measures.
6. Program budget.
7. Qualifications required of personnel delivering the program.
8. A provision for dropout prevention and integration of dropouts into the educational program of the district.
9. A provision for identifying dropouts.

10. A program for returning dropouts.

11. Other factors the department requires.

Program plans shall identify the parts of the plan that will be implemented first upon approval of the application. If a district is requesting to use modified allowable growth to finance the program, it shall not identify more than five percent of its budget enrollment for the budget year as returning dropouts and potential dropouts.

89 Acts, ch 135, §38; 2001 Acts, ch 159, §9

Questions and Answers:

Do programs for at-risk students have to include preschool services?

No. However, preschool assessments are recommended to determine services necessary at the kindergarten level. In some school districts, model preschool programs are being developed for at-risk children. At-risk pre-kindergarten students are children who, because of physical or environmental influences, are at-risk of entering the education program at the kindergarten level lacking the development necessary to succeed.

Can districts or other agencies combine programs/services to satisfy the standard?

Yes. Joint planning and shared programming and staff development among districts, area education agencies, community colleges, business and industry, and community service agencies are encouraged within the standard.

Do existing special education programs satisfy the standard?

In part, the standard designates that services be provided to all at-risk students, including those who are disabled. Some disabled students, such as dropouts from special education programs or those who become law offenders, often need help beyond what the existing special education delivery service can offer. Consequently, services beyond existing special education programs are necessary and implied.

Must schools develop new programs or can existing practices satisfy the standard?

Existing practices at all levels of education should be documented before moving toward new program development.

Are area education agencies responsible for monitoring local district programs?

No. Area education agencies will assist local districts to develop programs and support services required under the standard. The Department of Education will assume responsibility for monitoring compliance with the standard.

What can districts do for students who drop out?

Districts can provide student follow-up and alternative placements in districts with alternative schools, community college offerings, and/or private schools.

Major Educational Equity Legislation

Affecting Iowa Schools

Federal Legislation:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination against students on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in educational agencies receiving federal funds. It covers admissions, access to courses, programs and school activities, and board and administrative policies. The agency responsible for enforcement is the Region VII Office of Civil Rights in Kansas City. The Iowa Department of Education has monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. Title VII prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex in educational agencies with 15 or more employees. Areas such as recruitment, hiring, promotion, salaries, benefits, and retirement are covered. The agency responsible for enforcement is the Region VII Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Kansas City. The Iowa Department of Education has monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities.

Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex against students in educational programs within educational agencies which receive federal funds. Areas such as admissions, access to program, counseling practices, school activities, and student treatment are covered. The regulation requires a local grievance procedure for the handling of complaints. This procedure may be used, or complaints can be filed with the Region VII Office of Civil Rights in Kansas City. The Iowa Department of Education has monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities.

Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 and the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in vocational education programs. The law requires nondiscrimination components in all vocational education plans.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in any educational program receiving federal financial assistance. The compliance agency is the Region VII Office of Civil Rights in Kansas City. The Iowa Department of Education has monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities.

Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 restored, through legislative action, the interpretation that Title IX, Section 504, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applied to all parts of an institution that received federal financial assistance.

Iowa State Legislation:

Chapter 280.3 — Uniform School Requirements — Iowa Code. Chapter 280.3 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, or national origin in the public schools of Iowa. It covers all components of the educational program. The Iowa Civil

Rights Commission and the Iowa Department of Education are the enforcement and monitoring agencies.

Chapter 256.11 — Iowa School Standards — Iowa Code. Chapter 256.11 defines the minimum standards for the approval of public and nonpublic schools in Iowa. This legislation is affirmative in that it requires that all school programs be taught from a multicultural nonsexist perspective. Section 281-12.1(1) 12.7(2) of the Department of Education Administrative Rules sets the standards for this legislation. This legislation is unique in that it pertains to curricular programs as well as policies. The Department of Education is the monitoring and compliance agency for maintenance of minimum educational standards and has technical assistance responsibilities.

Chapter 601A.9 — Civil Rights Commission — Iowa Code. Chapter 601A.9 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, creed, color, religion, disability, and parental/family or marital status in educational programs in Iowa. It includes admission and recruiting, intramural and interscholastic athletics, employment, and all educational programs. The enforcement agency is the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. The Department of Education has monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities.

Chapter 280.4 Uniform School Requirements — Iowa Code. This Section of the Code requires that bilingual or English-as-a-second language programs be provided for students whose primary language is not English. Section 281.60 of the Department of Education Administrative Rules sets the standards for these programs. The Department of Education has monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities.

Section 19B.11 Iowa Code. This legislation confirms the state policy of nondiscrimination in employment in school districts, area education agencies, and merged area schools. It requires that the State Board of Education adopt rules requiring affirmative employment strategies in the recruitment, appointment, assignment, and advancement of personnel, covering race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, and disability.

12.1(1) Educational Units Covered by Standards. These standards govern the accreditation of all pre-kindergarten, if offered, or kindergarten through grade twelve school districts operated by public school corporations and the accreditation, if requested, of pre-kindergarten or kindergarten through grade twelve schools operated under nonpublic auspices. “*School*” means pre-kindergarten to grade twelve of an elementary-secondary education program. Equal opportunity in programs shall be provided to all students regardless of race, national origin, sex, or disability. Each board shall take affirmative steps to integrate students in attendance centers and courses. In order to monitor progress, district attendance centers and course enrollment data shall be collected on the basis of race, national origin, sex and disability, and be reviewed and updated annually.

Definition of Terms

Academic Development

This could include the Instructional Decision Making processes of Core, Supplemental and Intensive instructional practices. Core instruction is the combination of instructional practices, materials, and strategies that compose the instruction provided in the general education classroom. All students receive core instruction. Core instruction implements a guaranteed and viable curriculum with rigor and relevance. Supplemental and Intensive instruction is the combination of research-based/evidence-based instructional practices and a positive learning environment, designed to match identified student needs.

At-Risk Student

Any identified student who is at risk of not meeting the goals of the educational program established by the district, not completing a high school education, or not becoming a productive worker. These students may include, but are not limited to, dropouts, potential dropouts, teenage parents, substance users and abusers, low academic achievers, abused and homeless children, youth offenders, economically deprived, minority students, culturally isolated, those with sudden negative changes in performance due to environmental or physical trauma, and those with language barriers, gender barriers, and disabilities.

School Personnel

Professional and support service employees of the district. Professional employees are full-time and part-time certificated staff, including administrators, curriculum coordinators, consultants, teachers, nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers. Support service employees are certified and non-certificated full-time and part-time staff, including teacher aides, volunteer associates, food service workers, custodians, child-care workers, security officers, study hall monitors, bus drivers, and others.

Student Identification/Assessments

This could include Screening, Diagnostic and Formative Assessments terms used in the Iowa Instructional Decision Making process. Screening occurs at many levels and includes individual screening, classroom screening, grade level screening, building screening and district screening. Diagnostic assessment involves gathering information from multiple sources to determine why students are not benefiting from core instruction due to advanced or deficit learning needs. Formative assessment occurs with individuals in core, supplemental, and intensive instruction with varying degrees of frequency.

Support Services

Special assistance provided at-risk students by the school program, community-based service agencies/organizations, area education agency support personnel, and parents and guardians.

Plan

A written document adopted by the local board of education documenting coverage of the nine requirements in the standard (12.5(13)) at each education level (elementary, junior high, senior high) and a continuous process for review for improvement of services at each level.

IDM

The IDM process begins with all students having access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum provided by the school through the core instructional program. Assessment data

are gathered on a regular basis and each student's response to instruction is evaluated. Students with additional instructional needs are provided supplemental and core instruction. Those students with significant needs are provided intensive instruction in addition to core instruction. Performance is monitored and students flow from one cycle of instruction to another as indicated by the data. In this system, all students receive instruction to address their unique learning needs.

Professional Development

The professional development for staff follows the Iowa Professional Development Model and is tied to the District Career Development Plan, Building Career Development Plan and the Individual Career Development Plan.