

Iowa Department of Education
Report 2006
Iowa Code Chapter 284: A Review of the Educator Quality Legislation

Iowa Code Chapter 284 titled “Teacher Performance, Compensation and Career Development” was first passed by the Iowa legislature during the 2001 legislative session to establish a student achievement and teacher quality program for the purpose of promoting high student achievement. The program as designed consisted of five major elements:

1. A mentoring and induction program to provide support for beginning teachers.
2. Career paths with compensation levels that strengthen Iowa’s ability to recruit and retain teachers.
3. Professional development designed to directly support best teaching practices.
4. Team-based variable pay that provided additional compensation when student performance improved.
5. Evaluation of teachers against the Iowa teaching standards.

The Iowa teaching standards and teacher evaluations including comprehensive evaluations for beginning teachers and performance reviews for career teachers requiring competence in those standards are also stipulated in the code. Training for administrators to implement the evaluations is also provided.

Because the Iowa Department of Education believes that ongoing review of the Teacher Quality Program is in the best interest of the Iowa schools, the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest (REL Midwest), Learning Point Associates, were asked to provide a formative review of the ongoing components of the teacher quality program including the Evaluator Approval Training Program, the Professional Development Program, and the Mentoring and Induction Program. A summative evaluation of teacher retention rates and student achievement was also reviewed. This document summarizes the findings of REL Midwest in these areas. The complete document is available upon request.

The Teacher Quality Program (TQP) identified the following approaches to be used to accomplish the goals of increasing student achievement and maintaining a qualified workforce of teachers in our state.

- Define quality teaching by establishing the Iowa Teaching Standards and ensuring these standards and supporting criteria are used to design and deliver each element of the TQP.
- Support beginning teachers by establishing an induction and mentoring program.
- Deliver quality professional development through the implementation of the District Career Development Plan along with Individual Career Development Plans aligned to the District Plan.
- Ensure the quality of professional development by creating criteria and procedures for approval of professional development providers.
- Ensure the quality of teacher evaluation by developing procedures for Department approval of evaluator approval training programs. The approval would include

- evidence that the program is capable of certifying the attainment of the required evaluator skills.
- Provide models for professional development providers and local districts to use in designing, planning and delivering professional development effectively.
 - Provide evaluation models for local districts to use in designing, planning and delivering a system of comprehensive teacher evaluation based on the Iowa Teaching Standards and supporting criteria.
 - Coordinate networks of career development for Iowa teachers.
 - Link professional development to financial incentives by recognizing teachers who demonstrate skills in successfully implementing research-based instructional practices in the workplace.
 - Align systems of professional development, teacher evaluation and advancement on a career path.
 - Establish a team-based variable pay pilot project that provides additional compensation when student performance improves.

The goal of the Iowa Department of Education is to build on the existing strengths and assets in the state as it facilitates implementation of this legislation. A timeline of the key areas of implementation is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Implementation of Teacher Quality Legislation

2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Legislation Passed • Four consultants assigned to TQ Team • Professional Development (PD) Stakeholder Group formed to study PD with Bev Showers and draft PD Model • AEA interviews to study PD practices • AEA's develop Mentor Training • LEAs submit district plans for Mentoring • Team-based Variable Pay (TBVP) Pilot initiated • Iowa Teaching Standards/Criteria developed by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iowa PD Model disseminated • PD Orientation/Awareness Sessions Presented • Formed and trained Iowa Content Network teams, studies reviewed • Evaluator training curriculum developed, trainers prepared, and training initiated • Team-based variable pay Year 1 study complete • All beginning teachers supported by Mentoring and Induction (M and I) • Reading capacity building efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity Building Seminar Series trained 400 AEA and partner LEA staff • Ongoing awareness sessions for PD • Rules passed for District Career Plan and PD standards • Iowa Content Network studies on DE Web site • Revised Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM) Training Materials • Developed six PD case studies • Continue to PD build content capacity through Reading/Math initiatives • Technical assistance provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Seminar Series to build AEA capacity for PD • Four part series to build administrator capacity in PD • District Career Development plans (DCDP) submitted • DCDP analyzed and technical assistance designed • PD Content Network refined • Design work on Individual Plan (ICDP) process • 2nd TBVP study completed • Initiate Academies to add content trainers • Mentoring and Induction Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual plans (ICDP) must be in place • Performance reviews for career teachers in place • 3rd Team-based variable pay study completed • Ongoing technical assistance and support to LEAs/AEAs to implement quality PD • Additional Iowa Teacher Development (ITD) Academies scheduled • Trainers prepared in a training-of-trainers component of the ITD Academies • Design work on renewal plan for evaluation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal Evaluator Training being developed • Professional Development Leadership Capacity Building for AEA and LEA leaders • Content Networks maintained • 34 Second Chance Reading (SCR) trainers completed the training of trainers requirements and began delivering SCR • Additional Iowa Teacher Development Academies Offered • Design work with Iowa Leadership Academy • Mentoring and

2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
stakeholders • Evaluator system designed • Reading initiative ongoing • Rules passed for mentoring/induction	continue • Math initiative revised and expanded • Statewide Mentoring and Induction Network formed	on District PD Plans • Evaluation system in place for beginning teachers • M and I maintained	• Iowa Teacher Development Academy conducted four Academy sessions	certified staff • Mentoring and Induction Institute	Induction Institute

Redesigning Professional Development

Districts play a prominent role engaging in the determination, planning, and implementation of professional development. In order to see what changes have occurred in district professional development plans, 2001 and 2004 comprehensive school improvement plans from 30 districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status were reviewed by REL Midwest. They found that 2004 comprehensive school improvement plans were more likely to be aligned with the requirements in the 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program. Specifically the 2004 plans were more likely to address how the district would deliver professional development that is based on student goals, the needs of individual teachers, and the Iowa Teaching Standards. The plans in 2004 were far more likely to provide elements of quality professional development including, research based, strategies, theory, classroom demonstrations, opportunities to observe other teachers, practice, and evaluation of the district professional development plan.

Mentoring and Induction Programs

All districts have an approved mentoring and induction program in place. Based on an analysis of mentoring and induction plans from 25 districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status, all 25 districts require beginning teachers to complete activities by collaborating with a mentor as well as working independently through the program components. The majority describe program activities using basic phrases such as the following:

- Meeting staff and becoming familiar with the school's facilities.
- Reviewing pertinent handbooks, forms, responsibilities, and procedures.
- Supporting novice teachers in meeting Iowa teaching standards.

Few plans outline the specific program requirements. Most plans do not explicitly provide guidance for conducting the induction component of the program. It is unclear when the programs are offered and for what duration and intensity.

Teacher Evaluation Processes

Teacher evaluation policy documents were collected from 22 districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status. More than half of the districts' policies referred the following aspects of their teacher evaluation procedures:

- Time frame for conducting the evaluation (e.g., months during the school year).
- Standard evaluation form to be used by the evaluator (e.g., matrix).
- Method of evaluation (e.g., observation, portfolio).

Approximately half of the districts' policies detailed the following:

- Persons responsible for the evaluation (e.g., principal).

- Documentation communicating the evaluation policy to teachers (e.g., manual).
- Way in which the district would use the evaluation results (e.g., inform professional development opportunities).

According to interviews with ten principals from districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status, most principals' reports were in agreement with teacher evaluation policies prescribed by the district. Iowa Code requires that a career teacher's performance is reviewed at least once every three years for the "purposes of assisting teachers in making continuous improvement, documenting continued competence in the Iowa teaching standards, identifying teachers in need of improvement, or to determine whether the teacher's practice meets school district expectations for career advancement." Furthermore, the review must include "classroom observation of the teacher, the teacher's progress, and implementation of the teacher's individual career development plan." Every administrator who conducts evaluations of teachers must complete the evaluator training program.

Retaining Teachers

Retention of new teachers in Iowa has increased since the Teacher Quality Legislation was implemented. Prior to implementation of the teacher quality legislation, 87 percent of the teachers who were first year teachers in 2000-2001 returned to teach the next year (Table 2). However, 92 percent of the teachers who were first year teachers in 2004-2005 returned to teach in 2005-2006. This was an increase of five percentage points.

The percent of teachers in the classroom two years after their first year also increased. For example, of the 1810 first year teachers in the base year 2000-2001, 1424 or 78.7 percent were in the classroom in 2002-2003. On the other hand, 83.8 percent of the first year teachers in 2003-2004 were in a school during the 2005-2006 school year. This was an increase of 5.1 percentage points.

Also note that there has been considerable variability in the number of first year teachers during the last six years. The number of first year teachers was greatest in 2000-2001 and decreased for the next two years. During the last three years the number of first year teachers has slowly increased.

Table 2. Teacher Retention Percentages*

School Year	Cohort 1 (New in 2000)	Cohort 2 (New in 2001)	Cohort 3 (New in 2002)	Cohort 4 (New in 2003)	Cohort 5 (New in 2004)	Cohort 6 (New in 2005)
2000-2001 (% retained)	1,810 (100%)					
2001-2002 (% retained)	1,574 (87%)	1,614 (100%)				
2002-2003** (% retained)	1,424 (79%)	1,407 (87%)	1,269 (100%)			
2003-2004*** (% retained)	1,339 (74%)	1,285 (80%)	1,131 (89%)	1,432 (100%)		
2004-2005 (% retained)	1,273 (70%)	1,216 (75%)	1,033 (81%)	1,295 (90%)	1,512 (100%)	
2005-2006 (% retained)	1,221 (68%)	1,162 (72%)	975 (77%)	1,200 (84%)	1,391 (92%)	To be determined

*Data does not include teachers leaving Iowa to teach in other states.

**Mentoring and induction was first offered in 2001-2002.

***All beginning teachers were supported by mentoring and induction in 2002-2003.

Promoting Student Achievement

Based on data from Condition of Education reports, students' reading and mathematics proficiency rates from 4th, 8th, and 11th grade are displayed in Figure 1. The red vertical line in each chart represents the passage of the 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality legislation.

With the exception of 11th-grade mathematics performance, students' reading and mathematics scores are improving. A close examination of the graphs suggests that the upward swing in achievement began to occur prior to the implementation of the law and continues to increase in most grades.

The variation in the long-term performance for fourth-grade reading as well as 8th- and 11th-grade mathematics comes with the conversion to the 2000 norms. Because the performance of Iowa students shifted upward with respect to the national cohort, particularly the fourth-grade reading scores, the broken trend line is shown to more accurately portray student achievement using the 2000 norms.

Figure 1. Students' Reading and Mathematics Proficiency Rates (1993–2006)

