

At-Risk K-12 Plan



School Year: 2026-2027

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The mission of the Clear Creek Amana Community School District is to prepare students to be productive, responsible, community members by providing an environment that brings learning to life.

1. Introduction

This plan outlines the district's comprehensive approach to identifying, supporting, and monitoring at-risk students while implementing evidence-based dropout prevention strategies. The goal is to eliminate barriers that prevent students from achieving academic, personal, and career success.

At Risk Team Members

- Administrators: Director of Student Support, Principals, assistant principals/deans
- Instructional Staff: Core teachers, EL teachers, special education teachers, interventionists
- Support Staff: School Counselors, school social worker, nurses

2. Identification Criteria

CCA uses criteria established by Iowa Code section §257.39 and district-developed risk factors. Students must meet two or more of the following criteria to be identified as at-risk:

- High absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness
- Poor grades or failing one or more core classes
- Achievement scores less than or equal to 2 years below grade level in reading/math
- Limited school engagement or extracurricular participation
- Expressed feelings of not belonging
- Identified as homeless, migrant, EL newcomer, or in foster care. ●

Returning Dropouts: Students in grades 7-12 who withdrew for reasons other than transfer and later re-enrolled.

The Clear Creek Amana School District recognizes that there are several factors beyond those defined by state code that would place a student in the position to be considered as an at-risk student at any given time in their educational career. The following district criteria has been adopted based on the research of the National Dropout Prevention Center. If a student does not meet the state criteria but does meet three or more of the district-level criteria, that student will be considered at-risk.

Identification & Monitoring Procedure

- Data Sources: Attendance, behavior logs, academic grades, assessment scores (MAP, FAST, ELPA 21, ISASP), Risk Matrices

- Frequency: Early Warning System meetings are conducted at least once per month.

3

- Monitoring: School Counselors, School Social Worker, and Student Support Staff update intervention plans

3. Data Analysis

- Chronic absenteeism rates are disproportionately higher amongst EL and low-income populations.
- Course failure remains a significant predictor of dropout risk, especially considering the credits required for graduation.
- Students receiving two or more behavioral referrals are at increased risk of academic and social disengagement.

4. Root Cause Analysis

- Attendance Barriers: Students experiencing homelessness face instability that disrupts consistent attendance and limits access to academic supports.
- Academic Challenges: Course failures make the graduation pathway more difficult, as students must earn additional credits to remain on track, increasing the likelihood of disengagement.
- Behavioral Concerns: Repeated behavioral referrals often signal unmet social-emotional needs, limited school connection, or external stressors, which can accelerate disengagement.
- Interconnected Risks: These factors are interrelated; challenges with attendance, academics, and behavior compound one another and significantly increase the risk of dropping out.
- Need for Integrated Support: Addressing these issues requires coordinated interventions that combine attendance monitoring, credit recovery, behavioral supports, and partnerships with community resources.

5. Evidence-Based Practices

Practice	Supporting Research	Implementation Plan
Check-In, Check-Out	Researched by Institute of Education Sciences	Assign mentors to monitor attendance/behavior weekly
PBIS & MTSS	Center on PBIS National Center on MTSS	Tiered behavior and academic supports

Credit Recovery Programs	U.S. Department of Education dropout prevention studies	Expand online/hybrid opportunities for credit recovery
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4

Family Engagement Nights	Dual Capacity Framework (Mapp & Kuttner)	Host 2-3 annual family nights with interpreters and resources
Community Partnerships/ Community Organizations	Research shows school–community partnerships increase engagement and achievement (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). National Dropout Prevention Center identifies community collaboration as one of its 15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention. Community partnerships provide wraparound supports like mental health services, mentoring, and family resources (Adelman & Taylor, 2006).	Collaborate with local agencies to provide wraparound supports, mentoring, and family engagement opportunities. Extend learning opportunities and connect students with community-based resources to address academic and non-academic barriers.

Provisions for Monitoring Behavior, Social, and Academic Improvements

Ongoing evaluation of at-risk programming is essential, providing valuable information for decision-making, which will lead to improved instructional services to our at-risk learners. Some students, once identified as being at-risk, may not remain at-risk throughout their school career; while other students may need continued support until they leave school. For students receiving supplemental and/or intensive support, a review and analysis of data occurs more frequently to ensure 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 may include formal and informal assessments at each level (elementary, middle school, and high school) to evaluate student progress resulting from the support services provided. The following list would be examples of monitoring tools used in our process:

- Achievement testing on pre/post basis (i.e. MAP/FAST/Benchmarking)
- At-risk services entry and exit criteria
- Attendance records
- Assessments and/or communications with cooperating agencies
- Classroom data; qualitative and quantitative

5

- Communication logs
- Graduation rates
- Report cards/ grade reports
- Standardized Assessment
- Intervention data

6. Action Plan (SMART Goals)

SMART Goal	Milestone	Action Steps	Due Date
Goal 1: Reduce chronic absenteeism from 9.28% to 7%	Quarterly Attendance Reviews	Review attendance data at the district and building level each quarter to identify trends and monitor progress toward the goal.	Ongoing (Quarterly through June 2026)
	Monthly Early Warning System (EWS) Meetings	Hold at least one EWS meeting per month to review students flagged for attendance concerns and update intervention plans.	Monthly through June 2026
	Mid-Year Progress Benchmark	Reduce chronic absenteeism to ≤8% , as measured in district attendance reports.	January 2026
	End-of-Year Outcome	Meet or exceed the target of ≤7% chronic absenteeism.	June 2026

Goal 2: 75% of at-risk students will demonstrate at least one year's growth in reading and/or math	Individualized Intervention Plans	Develop academic intervention plans for all identified students outlining targeted supports and progress-monitoring methods.	Fall 2025
	Quarterly Benchmark Monitoring	Assess student growth three times per year using benchmark data; adjust interventions as needed.	Ongoing (3x per year through June 2026)
	Mid-Year Growth Checkpoint	Ensure at least 50% of identified students demonstrate half a year's growth in reading and/or math.	January 2026

6

	Family Communication & Engagement	Provide parents/guardians of at-risk students with progress reports and strategies for supporting learning at home.	Spring 2026
	End-of-Year Growth Goal	Ensure at least 75% of at-risk students demonstrate one year's growth in reading and/or math.	June 2026

7. Staffing

Role	Number	Duties	Credentials Required
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Interventionist	14 FTE	Provide targeted small-group and individual instruction in core subjects for students below grade level; use assessment data to design and adjust interventions; collaborate with teachers to align supports with standards; deliver Tier II and III interventions within MTSS/RTI; monitor progress and communicate regularly with families to support learning at home.	Bachelor's degree in education Iowa Teaching License Reading endorsement
Social Worker	1 FTE	Provide counseling and interventions to address students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs; conduct needs assessments and develop plans for at-risk students; collaborate with staff to implement academic and behavioral supports; serve as a liaison connecting families with community resources; and contribute to Special Education and 504 teams with expertise on social-emotional needs.	Master's degree in Social Work MSW Certification required

School Counselor	10.5 FTE	Provide academic, career, and social-emotional counseling; support student goal-setting and course planning; collaborate with staff and families to address barriers to success; deliver classroom lessons and small-group interventions; assist with crisis response; and contribute to MTSS, Special Education, and 504 teams as needed.	Master's degree in counselor education
Homeless Liaison	.50 FTE	Ensure access to educational services such as Title I supports, nutrition programs, transportation, and extracurricular activities. Coordinate with families and agencies to connect students with housing, counseling, healthcare, and community resources.	Master's degree in counselor education
Student Support Teachers	5 FTE	Provide academic support through small-group or one-on-one intervention in core subjects. Assist students with executive function skills	Bachelor's degree in education Iowa Teaching License

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8

Staff In-Service Education Design

All staff involved in the program will participate in targeted professional development:

Training Topic	Frequency	Target Audience
Behavioral De-escalation and Crisis Management	Annually	**School Counselors, Administrators <i>** may serve on the building student response team</i>
ACES	Annually (Due in the fall)	All Program Staff, Certified Teachers, Counselors, Social Workers, and Administrators
Iowa Science of Reading Summit	Annually (June/July)	Interventionist
Post Secondary Opportunities	Annually (Fall)	Secondary School Counselors
Tier 2 Training for intervention	Pilot	School Counselor, Interventionist, Administrators

8. Program Budget

Expense	Cost	Purpose	Source
At-Risk Staff Salaries	\$1,085,645	Targeted Academic Support	At-Risk Title I

School Counselor Salaries	\$472,505	Academic, college/career, and social-emotional counseling	At Risk (50%) General Fund (50%)
Credit Recovery	\$6,500	Academic Intervention	At-Risk
DW Social Worker	\$65,175	Academic, college/career, and social-emotional counseling	At-Risk

9

Total SBRC Request	\$1,629,825		

9. Measure Success

In 2025, the district's chronic absenteeism rate decreased from 15.3% in 2024 to 9.28%. During the same period, the four-year graduation rate increased from 86.75% to 93.33%. Notably, the graduation rate for students identified as low socio-economic status improved significantly, rising from 68.87% to 84.91%.

The program will be evaluated quarterly and annually based on the objectives outlined in section 6.

Performance Measure	Evaluation Procedure	Data Source/Timeline
Dropout Rate Reduction	Compare the current program participant dropout rate to the previous year's at-risk cohort	SIS Data (Semester and Annual)

Academic Improvement	Measure student growth against the baseline data upon entry to the program	SIS Data (Fall/Winter/Spring)
Attendance Improvement	Track student attendance percentage vs baseline upon entry	SIS Data (Monthly)

Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey participants, parents,

and teachers on the

perceived effectiveness and positive impact of the program.

Annual Anonymous Survey

(Spring)

Iowa Administrative Code

281--Iowa Administrative Code 12.2(256) Definition of At-Risk

"At-risk student" means any identified student who needs additional support and who is not meeting or not expected to meet the established goals of the educational program (academic, personal/social, career/vocational). At-risk students include but are not limited to students in the following groups: homeless children and youth, dropouts, returning dropouts, and potential dropouts.

281--Iowa Administrative Code 12.5(13) Provisions for At-Risk Students – The Iowa Standard

Each school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan the following provisions for meeting the needs of at-risk students:

1. Valid and systematic procedures and criteria to identify at-risk students throughout the school district's school-age population.
2. Determination of appropriate ongoing educational strategies for alternative options

education programs as required in **Iowa Code section 280.19A**, and 3. 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**.

281--Iowa Administrative Code 97.3 (257) Supplementary weighting plan for at-risk students. Funding generated by the supplementary weighting plan for at-risk students shall be used to develop or maintain at-risk programs, which may include alternative school programs. Funding for the supplementary weighting plan for at-risk students is calculated as follows:

- a. Adding a weighting for each resident student of one hundred fifty-six one-hundred-thousandths.
- b. Adding a weighting of forty-eight ten-thousandths for each resident student enrolled in grades one through six, as reported by the school district on the basic educational data survey for the base year, who is 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. Sections 1751-1785.

Iowa Code section 257.39 Definition of Potential and Returning Dropouts 11

1. "Returning dropouts" are resident pupils who have been enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in any of grades seven through twelve who withdrew from school for a reason other than transfer to another school or school district and who subsequently enrolled in a public school in the district.

2. "Potential dropouts" are resident pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated by two or more of the following:

- a. High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness.
- b. Limited or no extracurricular participation or lack of identification with school, including but not limited to, expressed feelings of not belonging.
- c. Poor grades, including but not limited to, failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels.
- d. Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflect achievement at least two years or more below grade level.
- e. Children in grades kindergarten through three who meet the definition of at-risk children by the department of education.

Research-Based At-Risk Indicators

Risk Category and Risk Factor	Elementary	Middle	High School
Individual Background Characteristics			
• Has a learning disability or emotional disturbance		√	√
Early Adult Responsibilities			
• high number of work hours		√	√ *
• parenthood			√ *
Social Attitudes, Values, & Behavior			

● high-risk peer group		√ *	√
● high-risk social behavior		√ *	√
● highly socially active outside of school			√
School Performance			
● low achievement	√ *	√ *	√ *
● retention/over-age for grade	√ *	√ *	√ *
School Engagement			
● poor attendance	√ *	√ *	√ *
● low educational expectations		√ *	√ *
● lack of effort		√	√
● low commitment to school		√	√ *
● no extracurricular participation		√	√ *
Social Behaviors			
● misbehavior	√	√	√ *
● early aggression	√	√	
Family Background Characteristics			
● low socioeconomic status	√ *	√ *	√ *
● high family mobility		√ *	
● low education level of parents	√	√	√ *
● large number of siblings	√		
● not living with both natural parents	√		√ *
● family disruption	√		
Family Engagement/Commitment to Education			
● low educational expectations		√ *	
● sibling has dropped out		√	√
● low contact with school		√ *	
● lack conversations about school		√ *	√

√ * indicates that the risk factor was found to be significantly related to dropout at this school level in two or more studies

√ indicates that the risk factor was found to be significantly related to dropout at this school level in one study

Adapted from: 2007 & 2015 National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University and Communities In Schools, Inc.

CCA Special Instructional Support Services

Alternative Credit Earning Option- High school at-risk students identified as potentially dropping out of school may earn credit through alternative means such as E2020 or online courses. In many cases, students pursuing this option are earning credit for a course they had previously failed in a classroom setting or are in need of credit recovery.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)- Along with core instruction, identified students may participate in supplemental and intensive instruction. MTSS uses data regarding students' response to instruction to determine educational needs. The framework is based on the proactive concept of early intervention and matches the amount of resources to the nature of the students' needs. When implemented fully, MTSS is designed to enable all students to be successful.

Key Features of Multi-Tiered System of Supports:

- **Universal instruction (Tier 1)** is the combination of instructional practices, materials, strategies that comprise the high-quality instruction provided in the general education classroom for all students.
- **Supplemental instruction (Tier 2)** is evidence-based instruction that is designed to meet the needs of students who are having marked difficulties and/or those who have a need for instruction in addition to the core instruction. It is most often provided in a small group.
- **Intensive instruction (Tier 3)** is instruction that is significantly differentiated and individualized to meet the intensive needs of the student who has not responded to interventions and supports in Tier 1 or Tier 2. It is instruction that occurs in addition to core instruction and is provided in a small group or one-to-one.

Compass/ Student Support- Compass/Student Support is a secondary intervention program (6th-2nd grade) that works with identified at-risk students who may be struggling

academically or need additional forms of support in order to be successful in a comprehensive secondary school structure. Students experience a smaller student/teacher ratio and benefit from more individualized instruction of the core courses. Students are eligible for Compass/Student Support if they have been identified at-risk through the district's identification process and meet two or more of the established criteria.

Summer School (High School)- Opportunity for high school students who have previously failed a course to recover credit.

Before/After School Programming- Programming options for before or after school opportunities look different depending upon a student's grade level. Opportunities will be arranged for identified at-risk students and communicated via the at-risk teacher(s), advisor, or administrator.

CCA Coordination with Community-Based Support Services

Listed below are examples of community-based support services. The list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Community Crisis Services and Food Bank- Provides food assistance through a food bank. Offers 24/7 crisis support by phone or text, including local and statewide crisis lines.

Coralville Community Food Pantry- Provides food access for Coralville residents. Delivery assistance available for Coralville and Tiffin households.

Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)- Provides confidential support, advocacy, and shelter for individuals experiencing domestic violence. Offers resources for safety planning and crisis intervention.

CCA Community Food Pantry- Food pantry open to all community members. No restrictions- anyone is welcome to receive assistance.

Iowa County General Relief- Provides short-term emergency assistance to residents of Iowa County. Support may include housing, utilities, food, medical expenses, or transportation.

Iowa Legal Aid- Offers free or low-cost legal services to low-income individuals. Helps with housing, family law, consumer issues, benefits, and more.

Johnson County General Assistance- Provides emergency financial assistance to Johnson County residents. Assistance may include rent, utilities, food, or healthcare needs.

Linn County General Assistance- Offers temporary financial aid for basic needs to Linn County residents. May include rent, utilities, prescriptions, and food support.

Middle Amana Church (Food Pantry)- Provides food pantry support to individuals and families in need.

North Liberty Community Food Pantry- Offers food assistance and community resources to residents of North Liberty and surrounding areas.

15

Shelter House- Provides emergency shelter and supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Offers transitional housing and employment support programs.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)- Federal nutrition assistance program providing benefits for groceries. Helps low-income individuals and families purchase healthy food.

United Action for Youth (UAY)- Provides counseling, crisis intervention, and advocacy for youth and families. Offers after-school programs, art and music opportunities, and leadership development.

Willis Dady Shelter- Provides shelter, housing programs, and supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Works to promote stability and long-term independence.

CCA School-Based Support Services

Homeless Services – The district's Homeless Liaison ensures that homeless children and youth are identified and coordinates the support of the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Iowa Administrative Code 281 – 33.1 (256) (Appendix I). Homeless Population Forms are completed by staff members and sent to the Homeless Liaison for processing and to ensure homeless students receive entitled services.

Section 504 Plan – An educational plan for students with qualifying disabilities and the necessary accommodations. For more information, please contact the administrator in your child's building.

School Social Workers- School Social Workers are elementary and secondary based personnel, who are part of the at-risk department. They work collaboratively with math and literacy interventionists, school counselors, advocates, and other personnel to identify students at-risk based on the State of Iowa's identification criteria. School Social Workers work specifically with identified at-risk students to ensure that their needs are met socially and emotionally. School Social Workers are part of an at-risk team that is responsible for the collection of data, facilitation/implementation of student interventions, and the implementation/monitoring of individual student plans for all of the identified students they serve.

CCA Counseling Services

Intensive Individual Counseling – Specific individual counseling services are provided to identified at-risk students. Individual counseling services may be facilitated by Clear Creek Amana Community School District counselors or by school social worker.

***School Based Mental Health Services** – Clear Creek Amana Community School District partners with Care Solace to provide school based services for students experiencing social/emotional difficulties. Parents are actively involved in the treatment plan, and school personnel communicate regularly with the mental health therapists. Collaborating therapists provide insights and suggestions to assist school staff in

working more effectively with students with mental health issues.

Support Group Counseling – Specific counseling services are provided to identified at-risk students. Groups may be facilitated by Clear Creek Amana Community School District counselors or by outside community facilitators. Since the needs of at-risk students vary from year-to-year, support group topics are revised and updated to meet the student ongoing needs. Possible support group topics include: positive peer/friendship, divorce, grief/loss, bullying/harassment, social skills, stress management, girls/female issues, boys/male issues, anger management, organization and study skills, personal issues, gender identity support, leadership, careers, transitioning to adults, new students, and test preparation.

CCA Strategies for Involving All Personnel

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)– A framework for addressing individual student's unique learning needs using evidence based teaching techniques, materials and strategies. Data is collected and reviewed to determine students' future educational needs and the educational/instructional services the student needs to be successful.

MTSS Teams Referrals – These building level teams serve as a clearinghouse for student academic, social emotional and behavioral concerns. Referrals are made to these teams by a variety of sources including, but not limited to: students, parents,

teachers, administrators, and counselors. Members of the MTSS Teams may include school counselors, at-risk staff, administrators, teachers and other staff members who support at-risk students. Student referrals are reviewed and guided to instructional, community-based, school-based, and/or counseling supports and services to resolution and/or monitoring.

CCA At-Risk Services Entry and Exit Criteria

Alternative Credit Earning Option

Student Eligibility: Students who are identified as potential or returning dropouts due to being deficient in credits or have demonstrated a history of inability to earn credits in a traditional classroom setting. Additionally, students that are determined to meet “extenuating circumstances” may use alternative credit earning option.

Participation: Students will earn credits through alternative means, such as online coursework. During this period of eligibility, students will be assigned a class period during the day to work on those courses.

Exit: Participation in the service will cease when:

- Students are no longer deficient in credits.
- Student's counselor and at-risk staff agree that the student no longer needs credits through this means.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Student Eligibility for Support Beyond Tier 1: Depending on grade level, a variety of screening assessments (i.e., MAP math, literacy, and behavior) are used to triangulate student data. Students are placed in the appropriate small group instructional settings to receive explicit instruction in the diagnosed areas.

Participation: Identified students are required to participate in intervention. Student progress is monitored to determine effectiveness and changes are made as needed.

Exit: Students meet or are on track to meet the identified goal.

Intense Individual School Counseling Sessions

Student Eligibility: Students are referred by any building stakeholder (Admin, Nurse, Teaching/Associate staff...), based on determination of need related to poor or failing grades, low achievement scores in reading and/or mathematics, lack of identification with school and/or high rates of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness. Student may be eligible to receive intense individual school counseling sessions if he/she demonstrates two of the four poor school adjustments listed above.

Participation: Students meet with school counselor/ school social worker at least 2 times monthly

20

Exit: Reduction in peer discrepancy in targeted areas or receiving community based support services.

Compass/ Student Support

Student Eligibility: Incoming 9th grade students are recommended by the CCA MS Student Support Team. Current CCA HS students are recommended by a high school staff member and must meet the at minimum two of the criteria from the following list:

- Total credit deficiency (failing courses)- incoming 9th grade students failing one or more courses, student in grades 10-12 earning less than 6 credits per semester.
- Credit deficiency (failing courses) in multiple required areas (i.e., mathematics or English)- student is 2 or more credits behind per area or incoming 9th grade students identified for Compass in 8th grade.
- Low academic achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflect achievement at least two years below grade level.
- Lack of connectedness with school.
- High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardies.

Participation: Compass/Student Support as this is a voluntary service. Students are assigned Compass/Student Support as a regular scheduled class.

Exit:

- Total credits average 7 or more per semester
- Sufficient credits in required areas

Once a student meets the exit criteria, they will be removed from Compass/ Student support and will be monitor student's credits for 1 semester.

Compass/Student Support teacher will recommend exit based on the following factors when selecting options above:

- Previous amount of assistance provided by Compass/Student Support teacher.
- Use of time while be served in Compass/Student Support
- Attendance
- Grades

Support Group Counseling Sessions

Student Eligibility: Students are referred by grade level, special education, at-risk, ELP, ELL, instructional, or admin teams, classroom teachers, school nurse, parents, or self based on poor school adjustment as indicated by two or more of the following:

- High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness.
- Lack of identification with school.
- Poor or failing grades.
- Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflect achievement at least two years below grade level.

A determination of need related to one or more target areas such as family changes, academic/grade changes, behavioral discrepancies, lack of connection to school, negative peer relationships, teen parenthood, frequent visits to the school nurse, poor attendance, and/or tardiness.

Participation: Students will participate in target groups such as anxiety, grief, problem-solving skills, social skill development, divorce/separation, behavioral discrepancies, friendship skills, school skills, bullying, confidence building, coping skills, anger management, and/or teen parenting, facilitated by school counselors.

Exit: Typical groups will run for four to six weeks in duration.

Summer School

Student Eligibility: High school students who have failed a core area course during the school year.

Participation: Students will attend summer school classes and will complete the requirements of that class.

Exit: Participation in the service will cease when:

- The summer session ends.
- The student is dropped from service due to not meeting requirements (i.e., attendance).
- The student fulfills course requirements.

281--Iowa Administrative Code 33

CHAPTER 33 EDUCATING THE HOMELESS 281—33.1(256) Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to facilitate the enrollment of homeless children of school age and, where appropriate, of preschool age in the public school districts of Iowa to enable the children to have access to a free, appropriate public education, and to be free of being stigmatized on the basis of

their status as homeless. **281—33.2(256) Definitions.**

“District of origin” is defined as the public school district in Iowa in which the child was last enrolled or which the child last attended when permanently housed. *“Guardian”* is defined as a person of majority age with whom a homeless child or youth of school age is living or a person of majority age who has accepted responsibility for the homeless child or youth, whether or not the person has legal guardianship over the child or youth.

“Homeless child or youth” is defined as a child or youth from the age of 3 years through 21 years who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes the following: 1. A child or youth who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital; or is awaiting foster care placement; 2. A child or youth who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; 3. A child or youth who is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; or 4. A migratory child or youth who qualifies as homeless because the child or youth is living in circumstances described in paragraphs “1” through “3” above. *“Preschool child”* is defined as a child who is three, four, or five years of age before September 15.

“Unaccompanied youth” is defined as a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. **281—33.3(256) Responsibilities of the board of directors.** The board of directors of a public school district shall do all of the following: **33.3(1)** The board shall locate and identify homeless children or youth within the district, whether or not they are enrolled in school. **33.3(2)** The board shall post, at community shelters and other locations in the district where services or assistance is provided to the homeless, information regarding the educational rights of homeless children and youth and encouraging homeless children and youth to enroll in the public school. **33.3(3)** The board shall examine and revise, if necessary, existing school policies or rules that create barriers to the enrollment of homeless children or youth, consistent with these rules. School districts are encouraged to cooperate with agencies and organizations for the homeless to explore comprehensive, equivalent alternative educational programs and support services for homeless children and youth when necessary to implement the intent of these rules. **33.3(4)** The board shall enact a policy prohibiting the segregation of a homeless child or youth from other students enrolled in the public school district. **33.3(5)** The board shall immediately enroll a homeless child or youth, pending resolution of any dispute regarding in which school the child or

youth should be enrolled. **33.3(6)** The board shall determine school placement based on the best interests of a homeless child or youth. The board shall, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child’s or youth’s parent or guardian. If the child or youth becomes permanently housed during

an academic year, enrollment shall continue in the school of origin for the remainder of that academic year unless the parents agree otherwise. **33.3(7)** The board shall designate an appropriate staff person as the district's local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth to carry out the following duties:

- 1a. Ensure that a homeless child or youth is identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- b. Ensure that a homeless child or youth is enrolled in, and has a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of the district;
- c. Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which such families, children, and youth are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs, tuition-free preschool programs administered by the district, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
- d. Ensure that the parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- e. Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where such children and youth receive services under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- f. Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with 42 U.S.C. Section 11432(g)(3)(E), which requires the following: (1) The child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute; (2) The parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision; (3) The child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the local educational agency liaison designated under this subrule, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process set forth in rule 33.9(256); (4) In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute;
- g. Ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, or the unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school of enrollment;
- h. Coordinate and collaborate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

281—33.4(256) School records; student transfers. The school records of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained so that the records are available in a timely fashion when a child or youth enters a new school district, and in a manner consistent with federal statutes and regulations related to student records. Upon notification that a homeless student intends to transfer out of the district, a school district shall immediately provide copies of the student's permanent and cumulative records, or other evidence of placement or special needs, to the homeless child or youth or the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth who may take the copies with them. Upon the enrollment of a homeless child or youth, a school district shall accept copies of records, or other evidence of placement provided by the homeless child, youth, or the parent or guardian of the homeless child or youth, for purposes of immediate placement and delivery of education and support services. Thereafter, the receiving school shall request copies of the official records from the sending school. The receiving school shall not dismiss or deny further education to the homeless child or youth solely on the basis that the prior school records are unavailable.

281—33.5(256) Immunization requirements. Consistent with the provisions of Iowa Code section 139A.8 and rules of the department of public health, a public school shall not refuse to enroll or exclude a homeless child or youth for lack of immunization records if any of the following situations exist. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth or a homeless child or youth:

- 2-1. Offers a statement signed by a doctor licensed by the state board of medical examiners specifying that in the doctor's opinion the immunizations required would be injurious to the health and well-being of the child or youth or to any member of the child or youth's family or household.
2. Provides an affidavit stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination of which the homeless child or youth is a member or adherent, unless the state board of health has determined and the director of health has declared an emergency or epidemic exists.
3. Offers a statement that the child or youth has begun the required immunizations and is continuing to receive the necessary immunizations as rapidly as is medically feasible, or 4. States that the child or youth is a transfer student from any other school, and that school confirms the presence of the immunization record. The school district shall make every effort to locate or verify the official immunization records of a homeless child or youth based upon information supplied by the child, youth, parent, or guardian. In circumstances where it is admitted that the homeless child or youth has not received some or all of the immunizations required by state law for enrollment and none of the exemptions listed above is applicable, the district shall refer the child, youth, and parent or guardian to the local board of health for the purpose of immunization, and the school shall provisionally enroll the child or youth in accordance with item "3" or "4" above.

281—33.6(256) Waiver of fees and charges encouraged. If a child or youth is determined to be

homeless as defined by these rules, a school district is encouraged, subject to state law, to waive any fees or charges that would present a barrier to the enrollment or transfer of the child or youth, such as fees or charges for textbooks, supplies, or activities.

A homeless child or youth, or the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, who believes a school district has denied the child or youth entry to or continuance of an education in the district on the basis that mandatory fees cannot be paid may appeal to the department of education using the dispute resolution mechanism in rule 33.9(256).

281—33.7(256) Waiver of enrollment requirements encouraged; placement. 33.7(1) If a homeless child or youth seeks to enroll or to remain enrolled in a public school district, the district is encouraged to waive any requirements, such as mandatory enrollment in a minimum number of courses, which would constitute barriers to the education of the homeless child or youth. **33.7(2)** In the event that a school district is unable to determine the appropriate grade or placement for a homeless child or youth because of inadequate, nonexistent, or missing student records, the district shall administer tests or utilize otherwise reasonable means to determine the appropriate grade level for the child or youth.

281—33.8(256) Residency of homeless child or youth. 33.8(1) A child or youth, a preschool child if the school offers tuition-free preschool, or a preschool child with a disability who meets the definition of homeless in these rules is entitled to receive a free, appropriate public education and necessary support services in either of the following: a. The district in which the homeless child or youth is actually residing, or b. The district of origin. The deciding factor as to which district has the duty to enroll the homeless child or youth shall be the best interests of the child or youth. In determining the best interests of the child or youth, the district(s) shall, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the district of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian of the child or youth. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison shall assist in the placement or enrollment decision, taking into consideration the views of the unaccompanied youth. If the child or youth is placed or enrolled in a school other than within the district of origin or other than a school requested by the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide a written explanation, including notice of the right to appeal under rule 33.9(256), to the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth. **33.8(2)** The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with a homeless parent or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s); or, if the child or youth is a runaway or otherwise without benefit of parent or legal guardian, where the child or youth has elected to reside. **33.8(3)** Insofar as possible, a school district shall not require a homeless student to change attendance centers within a school district when a homeless student changes places of residence within the district, unless the change of residence takes the student out of the category of homeless. **33.8(4)** If a homeless child or youth is otherwise eligible and has made proper application to utilize the provisions of Iowa Code section 282.18, “Open Enrollment,” the child or youth shall not be denied the opportunity for open enrollment on the basis of homelessness.

281—33.9(256) Dispute resolution. If a homeless child or youth is denied access to a free, appropriate public education in either the district of origin or the district in which the child or

youth is actually living, or if the child or youth's parent or guardian believes that the child or youth's best interests have not been served by the decision of a school district, an appeal may be made to the department of education as follows: **33.9(1)** If the child is identified as a special education student under Iowa Code chapter 256B, the manner of appeal shall be by letter from the homeless child or youth, or the homeless child or youth's parent or guardian, to the department of education as established in Iowa Code section 256B.6 and Iowa Administrative Code 281—41.32(17A,256B,290). The letter shall not be rejected for lack of notarization, however. Representatives of the public school district where the child or youth desires to attend and of the corresponding area education agency, as well as the child, youth, or parent or guardian of the child or youth, shall present themselves at the time and place designated by the department of education for hearing on the issue. The hearing shall be held in accordance with the rules established in 281—41.32(17A,256B,290). **33.9(2)** If the child is not eligible for special education services, the manner of appeal shall be by letter from the homeless child or youth or the homeless child or youth's parent or guardian to the director of the department of education. The appeal shall not be refused for lack of notarization, however. Representatives of the public school districts denying access to the homeless child or youth and the child, youth, or parent or guardian of the child or youth shall present themselves at the time and place designated by the department of education for hearing on the issue. The provisions of 281—Chapter 6 shall be applicable insofar as possible; however, the hearing shall take place in the district where the homeless child or youth is located, or at a location convenient to the appealing party. **33.9(3)** At any time a school district denies access to a homeless child or youth, the district shall notify in writing the child or youth, and the child or youth's parent or guardian, if any, of the right to appeal and manner of appeal to the department of education for resolution of the dispute, and shall document the notice given. The notice shall contain the name, address, and telephone number of the legal services office in the area. **33.9(4)** This chapter shall be considered by the presiding officer or administrative law judge assigned to hear the case. **33.9(5)** Nothing in these rules shall operate to prohibit mediation and settlement of the dispute short of hearing. **33.9(6)** While dispute resolution is pending, the child or youth shall be enrolled immediately in the school of choice of the child's parent or guardian or the school of choice of the unaccompanied youth. The school of choice must be an attendance center either within the district of residence or the district of origin of the child or youth.

281—33.10(256) Transportation of homeless children and youth. 33.10(1) Intent. A child or youth, a preschool child if the school offers tuition-free preschool, or a preschool child with a disability who meets the definition of homeless in these rules shall not be denied access to a free, appropriate public education solely on the basis of transportation.

The necessity for and feasibility of transportation shall be considered, however, in deciding which of two districts would be in the best interests of the homeless child or youth. The dispute resolution procedures in rule 33.9(256) are applicable to disputes arising over transportation issues.

33.10(2) Entitlement. Following the determination of the homeless child or youth's appropriate school district under rule 33.8(256) or 33.9(256), transportation shall be provided to the child or youth in the following manner:

- a. If the appropriate district is determined to be the district in which the child or youth is actually living, transportation for the homeless child or youth shall be provided on the same basis as for any resident child of the district, as established by Iowa Code section 285.1 or local board policy.
- b. If the appropriate district is determined to be a district other than the district in which the child or youth is actually living, the district in which the child or youth is actually living (sending district) and the district of origin shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the receiving district. If these districts are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.
- c. Rescinded IAB 7/7/04, effective 8/11/04.

281—33.11(256) School services. 33.11(1) The school district designated for the homeless child's or youth's enrollment shall make available to the child or youth all services and assistance, including but not limited to the following services, on the same basis as those services and assistance are provided to resident pupils: a. Compensatory education; b. Special education; c. English as a Second Language; d. Vocational and technical education courses or programs; e. Programs for gifted and talented pupils; f. Health services; g. Preschool (including Head Start and Even Start); h. Before and after school child care; i. Food and nutrition programs. **33.11(2)** A district must include homeless students in its academic assessment and accountability system under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110. Assessments should be included in the economically disadvantaged category for reporting purposes. Schools are not required to disaggregate information regarding homeless students as a separate category, but may be asked to do so in accordance with the duties of the United States Secretary of Education and the Office of the State Coordinator.

These rules are intended to implement the provisions of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in January 2002 as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431, et seq.). [Filed 9/15/89, Notice 7/26/89—published 10/4/89, effective 11/8/89] [Filed 6/17/04, Notice 5/12/04—published 7/7/04, effective 8/11/04]5

