

Chapter 80

Standards for Paraeducator Preparation Programs

281—80.1(272) General statement. Programs of preparation leading to certification of paraeducators in Iowa are subject to approval by the state board of education.

281—80.2(272) Definitions. The following definitions are used throughout this chapter:

“Department” means the department of education.

“Director” means director of the department of education.

“Institution” means a public school district, area education agency, community college, institution of higher education under the state board of regents or an accredited private institution as defined in Iowa Code section 261.9(1) offering paraeducator preparation program(s).

“Paraeducator candidate” means an individual who is enrolled in a paraeducator preparation program leading to certification as a generalist, generalist with area(s) of concentration, or advanced paraeducator.

“Paraeducator preparation program” means the program of paraeducator preparation leading to certification of paraeducators.

“State board” means Iowa state board of education.

“Unit” means the organizational entity within an institution with the responsibility of administering the paraeducator preparation program(s).

281—80.3(272) Institutions affected. All institutions engaged in preparation of paraeducators and seeking state board approval of their paraeducator preparation programs shall meet the standards contained in this chapter.

281—80.4(272) Criteria for Iowa paraeducator preparation programs. Each institution seeking approval of its paraeducator preparation program(s) shall file evidence of the extent to which it meets the standards contained in this chapter. After the state board has approved an institution’s paraeducator preparation program(s), students who complete the program(s) may be recommended by the authorized official of that institution for issuance of the appropriate certificate.

281—80.5(272) Approval of programs. Approval of paraeducator preparation programs by the state board shall be based on the recommendation of the director after study of the factual

and evaluative evidence on record about each program in terms of the standards contained in this chapter.

Approval, if granted, shall be for a term of five years; however, approval for a lesser term may be granted by the state board if it determines conditions so warrant.

If approval is not granted, the applicant institution will be advised concerning the areas in which improvement or changes appear to be essential for approval. In this case, the institution shall be given the opportunity to present factual information concerning its programs at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the state board. The institution may also reapply at its discretion to show what actions have been taken toward suggested improvement.

281—80.6(272) Periodic reports. Institutions placed on the approved programs list may be asked to make periodic reports upon request of the department which shall provide basic information necessary to keep records of each paraeducator preparation program up-to-date, and to provide information necessary to carry out research studies relating to paraeducator preparation.

281—80.7(272) Reevaluation of paraeducator preparation programs. Every five years, or at any time deemed necessary by the director, an institution shall file a self-evaluation of its paraeducator preparation programs.

281—80.8(272) Approval of program changes. Upon application by an institution, the director is authorized to approve minor additions to, or changes within, the institution's approved paraeducator preparation program. When an institution proposes revisions that exceed the primary scope of its programs, the revisions shall become operative only after having been approved by the state board.

281—80.9(272) Organizational and resources standards.

80.9(1) Unit faculty shall collaborate with members of the professional community, including the unit's advisory committee comprised of practitioners, to design, deliver, and evaluate programs to prepare paraeducators.

80.9(2) Unit faculty shall maintain ongoing actual involvement in settings where paraeducators are employed.

80.9(3) The unit's planning and evaluation system shall support paraeducator candidate performance and shall use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the unit and its program.

281—80.10(272) Diversity.

80.10(1) Efforts toward racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among paraeducator candidates and unit faculty shall be documented. In addition, diversity efforts shall include persons with disabilities, persons from different language and socioeconomic backgrounds, and persons from different regions of the country and world.

80.10(2) Unit efforts in increasing or maintaining diversity shall be reflected in plans, monitoring of plans, and results.

281—80.11(272) Paraeducator candidate performance standards. Paraeducator candidate assessment and unit planning and evaluation shall include the following:

80.11(1) Performance of paraeducator candidates shall be measured against state certification standards adopted by the board of educational examiners under Iowa Code section 272.12 and the unit's learning outcomes.

80.11(2) Information on performance of paraeducator candidates shall be drawn from multiple assessments, including but not limited to unit assessment of content knowledge and its application as candidates work with students, teachers, parents, and other professional colleagues in school settings, and follow-up studies of certified paraeducators.

80.11(3) The unit's assessment system shall:

- a. Provide paraeducator candidates with ongoing feedback about what elements of performance are being assessed and how performance is being assessed.
- b. Demonstrate how the information gathered via the individual, paraeducator-candidate assessment system is utilized to refine and revise the unit's framework and program goals, content, and delivery strategies.
- c. Explain the process for reviewing and revising the assessment system.

80.11(4) An annual report including a composite of evaluative data collected by the unit shall be submitted to the department by September 30 of each year.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 256.7 as amended by 2000 Iowa Acts, House File 2146, section 1.

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