

Iowa's special education count

'One of the most fair methods
of funding special education'

Mark Draper, GHAEA Regional Administrator

Iowa is one of 36 states with a foundation formula that sets spending authority for general education per pupil costs and is frequently praised for its equity. In this system, all students are first and foremost considered regular education pupils and have equal funding.

In addition to this process of generating funds, Iowa is one of 20 states that "weights" special education pupils on a basis of need. This process promotes equalization of educational opportunity and provides additional funding for certain populations of students deemed eligible and entitled for special education.

The last Friday in the month of October is when the special education "count" takes place and staff from both local schools and the AEA work diligently to make sure that all of the necessary paperwork is in order for this process to take place. In our pupil driven weighted enrollment system, "weights" are added to pupils in special education to cover the additional costs incurred in the provision of specially designed instruction and support. This categorical funding process has three levels of funding and is provided in addition to the general education funds generated in the month of September. All students in special education are reviewed and one of three levels of funding (Level I, Level II and Level III) are assigned to pupils based upon factors reviewed by the AEA on the statewide Weighted Enrollment Factor (WEF) Matrix. These levels add additional funds, based upon a percentage of the general education



reimbursement. By using a common review factor for all IEPs for special education students across the state, each IEP is examined with four common factors:

- Curriculum and Goals
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
- Support for School Personnel and Least Restrictive Environment
- In addition to this process, beginning this school year, IEPs may also be reviewed for unique circumstances that are delineated across three levels of reasonably anticipated costs.

While this process may seem to many to be steeped in administria and minutia, Iowa's special education funding process is the envy of many states and parent advocacy groups.

So, during this hectic month, when all educators involved in the provision of services for students in special education seem immersed in the "dotting of i's and crossing of t's", please remember that Iowa's system provides one of the most fair methods of funding special education and has provided the assurance of some of the highest quality services for the families and consumers of special education services. The special education "count" is taxing for many, but provides the necessary resources to meet the needs of our students in special education - the largest group of students with unique civil rights in our Iowa schools.

New round of paraeducator certification set for early 2014

Registration is now open for Iowa Paraeducator Generalist Certification training. Course 1, Communication, Ethics and Confidentiality, will begin Jan. 14. Course 2, Roles and Responsibilities, Feb. 25, and Course 3, Behavior Improvement, March 25. All three courses are being offered in Creston. Registration fee for each course is \$100, which must be received before the first class of each course.

Paraeducators work under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel who have the ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs.

Paraeducators provide assistance to a variety of students including those with and without disabilities, with health needs, with limited English and others.

They work in a range of educational settings and provide instructional support to children and youth, early childhood through secondary school programs. The service of paraeducators contributes significantly to the success of individual children and youth, schools and educational programs.

Because paraeducators work under the supervision of licensed educators, their roles change to reflect the systemic changes within teaching practices. The evolution of teaching has experienced some profound changes under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA). An increased emphasis on measuring student achievement and on partnerships among all teachers of students with diverse needs has impacted not only the teaching profession, but all educational personnel. Paraeducators are seeing new service delivery models such as consultative and co-teaching options and are discovering new opportunities through these models to contribute to the educational growth of Iowa's children and youth.

Register at <https://www.ghaea.org/register>. For more information, contact **Denise Fricke**, dfricke@ghaea.org.



Global Education Institute for Teachers *Incorporate global learning in the classroom*

[Click here to access the application](#)

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In order to meet Iowa's Core Curriculum requirements, educators may soon be asked to include global perspectives in to their classes, whatever the content area. The Global Education Institute for Teachers will help educators incorporate global learning into their classes, from writing and science to social studies.

The Institute is a two-day, one license renewal credit, experience taught by University of Iowa professor Greg Hamot. Guest lecturers will include other U of I professors from various academic disciplines. In addition to developing an overview of global education and exploring specific issues, teachers will work together with mentors in writing curriculum during class sessions.

Forty middle, junior and high school teachers will be selected to attend this year's institute, Dec. 7-9, at the University of Iowa. Applications must be received by Oct. 28. Participants will receive free single-room housing at the Iowa House Hotel on the University of Iowa campus.

H.E.L.P. is on the way!

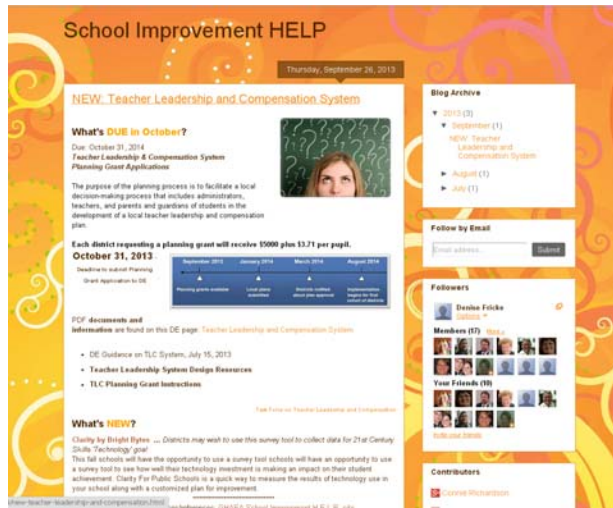
School Improvement HELP site serves as reference for 'all things school improvement'

Sherry Huffman and Connie Richardson, Green Hills AEA school improvement consultants, are pleased to introduce the GHAEA School Improvement Resource Google Site. The School Improvement H.E.L.P. (Helping Educational Leaders Prepare) site has been created to serve as a reference and resource for "all things school improvement."

On the H.E.L.P. site, you will find quick access to information on *What's New* and *What's Due*. A calendar of *What's Due* outlines important school improvement deadlines in Iowa. With a click on +Google Calendar you can add the H.E.L.P. calendar to your own Google calendar.

The site also contains a menu with links to access technical assistance on these specific topics:

- 2013 Legislative Changes
- C-Plan
- Collaboration and Peer Review
- DE Site Visits
- EdInsight
- Iowa Core
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
- School Leaders Update
- SINA/DINA
- Teacher Leadership and Compensation



The monthly School Improvement H.E.L.P. blog can be delivered directly to your e-mail. Choose "Follow by E-mail" or click "Join this site" to follow.

<http://schoolimprovementhelp.blogspot.com/>



Contact Sherry Huffman
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Contact Connie Richardson
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Red Oak Regional Office

In the November issue Highlights from the 21st Century Learners' Conference



AEAs join statewide efforts aimed at helping all students become skilled readers

Iowa's Area Education Agencies are pleased to be part of a new statewide effort designed to help all Iowa students read proficiently by the end of third grade.

Last month, AEA consultants from across the state worked with more than 600 educators to put in place a practice known as Response to Intervention (RtI). This statewide effort is due to a partnership among Iowa's AEAs, Collaborating for Iowa's Kids, Iowa Department of Education and Iowa school districts.

RtI is a proven practice that helps educators identify students who are struggling readers who are then offered interventions to help them improve. Teachers can adapt how they are teaching to fit individual student's needs and monitor the student's progress to identify what is working. Approximately 10 percent of Iowa's schools will roll out RtI this fall.

In 2012, roughly one in four fourth-graders scored below proficient on the state reading test. Students who don't read proficiently in third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school, according to a 2011 report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

During the weeklong workshop, educators learned three key elements to RtI related to how it provides a snapshot of the student's current pre-literacy skills:

- Assessment to ensure that students are ready to learn when they start kindergarten.
- Assessments in kindergarten through sixth grade that will continue to monitor each student's progress.
- Making decisions based on data.

AEAs will continue to provide training and coaching as the process is implemented.

[Click here to check out the GHAEA Reading and Language Arts webpage](#)



On the calendar

As educators, we are constantly striving to learn new skills and strategies that will improve student achievement. Green Hills AEA programs are coordinated to enhance the professional, personal, and organizational staff development needs of LEA and AEA staff. These include license renewal and graduate credit courses and informational workshops.

- Oct. 17:** Tiered Math K-3, Red Oak
- Oct. 17:** South Region Principals' Meeting, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., Red Oak
- Oct. 18:** Special Education Literacy Training Cohort 3
- Oct. 18:** Transition Coaches/PEC Meeting, 9 a.m. to noon, Red Oak
- Oct. 22:** GHAEA board meeting, Red Oak
- Oct. 25:** Head Count Day
- Oct. 28:** Early Childhood Institute, Halverson Center (broadcast to Atlantic, Creston)
- Oct. 29:** Early Childhood PLC, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Atlantic
- Nov. 1:** Hearing PLC, Red Oak
- Nov. 6:** Superintendents' Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Red Oak
- Nov. 12:** ART Institute, Halverson Center
- Nov. 12:** Tiered Algebra, Red Oak
- Nov. 14:** ART Institute East, Creston
- Nov. 18:** Early Childhood Institute, Atlantic (broadcast to Creston and Halverson)
- Nov. 19:** Early Childhood PLC, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Atlantic
- Nov. 20:** Speech-Language Pathology PLC, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Red Oak
- Nov. 21:** CPI training, Creston
- Nov. 21:** Tiered Math, K-3, Red Oak
- Nov. 26:** GHAEA Board Meeting, Red Oak
- Nov. 28-29:** Thanksgiving Break

For more information,
visit the GHAEA calendar link
at <http://www.ghaea.org>

In the Spotlight



Would you like your school *In the Spotlight*? Contact Denise Fricke, dfricke@ghaea.org, 712-322-7354, 800-432-5804

Twenty districts represented at Financial Literacy Fair for Educators

A Financial Literacy Fair for Educators was held on Sept. 26 at the Green Hills AEA Red Oak Regional Office. The event, sponsored by TS Bank Institute, brought in keynoter Adam Carroll, founder of National Financial Educators.

More than 30 educators from these districts took advantage of this opportunity: **Atlantic, Central Decatur, Council Bluffs, Creston, Essex, Exira-EHK, Fremont-Mills, Glenwood, Harlan, Lenox, Murray, Red Oak, Shenandoah, Sidney, South Page, Stanton, Tri-Center, Underwood, Villisca and Woodbine.**

Carroll was accompanied by 13 additional presenters (EverFi, MoneyIsland, Money Smart Week/Iowa Jump\$tart Coalition, Dordt College Center for Economic Education, Ednalysis, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Junior Achievement of the Midlands, and University of Nebraska-Omaha Council on Economic Education) who provided financial literacy information to educators to implement in the classroom.

TS Bank Institute is a foundation committed to creating stronger, more financially savvy future generations through K-12 financial literacy programming, which includes assisting educators with resources to promote and teach financial literacy in the classroom. In 2012, TS Bank invested \$1 million in the TS Bank Institute to further expand financial literacy in southwest Iowa school districts. Visit www.tsbankinstitute.com.



Educators who attended the Second Annual Financial Literacy Fair for Educators were provided financial literacy information that they can implement in their classrooms. (Submitted photo)



The average teacher explains complexity; the gifted teacher reveals simplicity.
Robert Brault



The mission of Green Hills AEA is to collaboratively advocate for families, communities and schools to help them achieve their goals by providing dedicated professional consultation and quality system-wide supports.

Equity statement: Green Hills AEA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity in its employment practices or on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or economic status in its educational programs and activities, or as otherwise prohibited by statute or regulation. For more information concerning application of this statement or the grievance procedure contact Lori Kinyon, Equity Coordinator, Green Hills AEA, 257 Swan St., Creston, IA 50801, lkinyon@ghaea.org, 800-432-5804.

Stay In Touch

In Touch is a monthly e-newsletter for school administrators and teachers served by Green Hills AEA. Throughout the year, we'll introduce you to GHAEA staff who will be working in your districts, keep you abreast of upcoming trainings that may be of interest to you and your staff and feature AEA services and programs. If there's something you'd like to see in *In Touch*, e-mail dfricke@ghaea.org or click [here](#) to submit a story idea. Thanks and have a great year!