

An Act relating to education governance, compensation, district organization, instructional priorities, and student performance evaluation, and providing that this Act may be cited as the “Make Iowa Education Great Again Act.”

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

Section 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act may be cited as the "Make Iowa Education Great Again Act".

Sec. 2. ADMINISTRATOR AND TEACHER COMPENSATION.

1. For purposes of this section, "median individual income" means the median income averaged over the preceding three years for the school district, as reported by the United States census bureau.
2. Compensation caps. Subject to collective bargaining under chapter 20: a. Teacher salaries shall not exceed one hundred seventy-five percent (175%) of the median individual income. b. Teacher-leader salaries shall not exceed two hundred percent (200%) of the median individual income. c. Principal salaries shall not exceed three hundred percent (300%) of the median individual income. d. Provost salaries shall not exceed two hundred fifty percent (250%) of the median individual income. e. Shared professional resource salaries under section 10 of this Act shall not exceed the highest principal salary in the district.
3. Nothing in this section prohibits local boards from negotiating compensation under chapter 20, provided it does not exceed these caps.

Sec. 3. ADMINISTRATOR CREDENTIALS AND ROLES.

1. Principals shall hold administrator credentials under chapter 272 and assume curriculum and budget duties for their building, reporting to the local board.
2. Each school shall establish a provost position for student and faculty oversight and discipline.
3. Superintendent positions are abolished. Existing contracts shall terminate at the end of the current term, with severance limited to accrued benefits under chapter 279.

Sec. 4. AREA EDUCATION AGENCY SUPPORT. Area education agencies under chapter 273 shall provide technical, special education, and shared services support to districts, prioritizing underserved areas to minimize per-pupil costs.

Sec. 5. BOARD OF EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

1. Each local board under chapter 279 shall consist of seven members and meet at least monthly.
2. Meetings shall include a one-hour open forum, allowing district residents at least five minutes each to speak.

Sec. 6. DISTRICT REORGANIZATION.

1. Districts with fewer than six hundred (600) enrolled students shall initiate merger proceedings under chapter 275 with contiguous districts to reach at least eight hundred (800) students.
2. Districts exceeding seven thousand five hundred (7,500) students shall initiate division proceedings under chapter 275.
3. Reorganized districts shall eliminate redundant administrative costs.
4. The department of education may grant waivers for geographic or performance-based hardships to ensure uniformity under Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Iowa.

Sec. 7. STATEWIDE ONLINE ACADEMY.

1. The department of education shall establish a statewide online academy as a platform for teachers to offer curricula.
2. At least half of openings shall prioritize Iowa students; remaining may include out-of-state students.
3. For Iowa students, teachers shall be paid by host districts at negotiated rates not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50) per semester credit.
4. For out-of-state students, teachers shall negotiate rates directly, with no cap.
5. The academy shall facilitate instruction and discussion only, without additional administrative functions.

Sec. 8. TEACHER EVALUATION AND EDUCATION SUCCESS METRIC.

1. Teacher evaluations shall align with chapter 284 and the Iowa teaching standards under section 284.3, incorporating multiple sources of evidence, including classroom observations, professional practice artifacts, and student feedback where appropriate.
2. An education success metric (ESM) shall serve as one component of evaluations under the Iowa teaching standards, weighted at forty percent (40%), with the remaining sixty percent (60%) based on evidence of professional practices across all eight Iowa teaching standards.
3. The ESM shall emphasize student growth and include: a. Student growth on the Iowa statewide assessment of student progress (ISASP), measured using growth percentiles or similar value-added models (30%). b. Graduation rate for high school teachers (10%). c. Inverse dropout rate (10%). d. Armed services vocational aptitude battery (ASVAB) average growth, if voluntarily administered (5%). e. College enrollment rate (3%). f. Military enlistment rate (2%).

4. ESM formula shall be adjusted for growth measures and prorated for teachers with less experience. For elementary and middle school teachers, base primarily on ISASP growth.
5. Districts with dropout rates over 10% may receive department waivers if adopting improvement policies.
6. The department of education shall develop guidelines for ESM integration, including demographic adjustments for fairness, and require professional development plans for below-threshold performance tied to specific Iowa teaching standards.
7. Salary increases shall tie to overall evaluations; below-threshold teachers receive coaching and improvement plans under chapter 284. After three years, boards may terminate under chapter 279 procedures.
8. High schools may offer voluntary ASVAB to seniors; no requirement for enlistment or data release without consent under federal law.
9. The department of education shall conduct a two-year pilot of the integrated ESM in select districts and report to the general assembly on effectiveness, fairness, and adjustments needed.

Sec. 9. INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITIES AND FUNDING.

1. Art and music are essential; districts unable to provide shall access from contiguous districts.
2. Extracurriculars, including sports, are optional and must be self-funded through fundraising, sponsorships, or fees; no general fund use.
3. Club, public, and private teams shall have equal access to state tournaments.

Sec. 10. SHARED PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES. Districts may share IT, transportation, and nutrition directors under section 2, or use area education agencies, to reduce costs.

Sec. 11. GENERAL FUND REQUIREMENT.

1. At least eighty-five percent (85%) of general fund appropriations under chapter 257 shall fund classroom instruction, defined as direct teaching costs excluding administration, facilities, and extracurriculars.
2. Districts shall report compliance annually to the department; noncompliance triggers funding adjustments.

Sec. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect July 1 following enactment.