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## Model Core Curriculum Approved By State Board of Education

***Additional: Gene Vincent re-elected president, Rosie Hussey as vice president***

(DES MOINES, IA) – May 11, 2006 – State Board of Education members today approved [model core curriculum](#) for high school science, literacy and math, and directed the Department of Education to make it available to districts beginning in the fall of 2006.

“This model core clearly lays out the essential science, literacy, and math content and skills that students should be expected to master in order to graduate from high school and be prepared for work or college,” said Board President Gene Vincent.

The model curriculum was developed during the past year by a team representing teachers, students, administrators, higher education, the business community, and experts in the fields of science, literacy, and math. The group focused on two purposes:

- To ensure that all Iowa students have the opportunity for a rigorous and relevant learning environment that prepares them for success after graduation.
- To give Iowa educators a tool to ensure that essential subject matter is being taught and essential knowledge and skills are being learned.

“As districts increase their high school graduation requirements, it is critical that the required courses are challenging and hold the students to high expectations,” said Judy Jeffrey, director of the Iowa Department of Education. “By identifying essential skills and knowledge rather than simply course labels, this model core provides guidance for schools to monitor, analyze, and ensure quality in the coursework they provide.”

Jeffrey said the model core is the first step in helping districts make curriculum improvements, and emphasized several points:

- It must be tailored to fit local needs. Local districts should follow a similar review process to identify the steps most critical to delivering a world-class curriculum.
- Work must expand to other content areas. Social studies and foreign languages were both identified by the project team as essential content for a world-class curriculum.
- Work also should expand to other areas of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, including media literacy, financial literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving.
- Professional development training for educators will be a vital component.
- Follow-up studies – monitoring high schools that adopt key recommendations – will be fundamental to evaluating the success of this project. The question that will require answering: Did this model curriculum really benefit Iowa’s students?

– More –

Gene E. Vincent  
President  
Carroll

Rosie Hussey  
Vice President  
Mason city

Jackie Dout  
Pella

Charles C. Edwards, Jr.  
Des Moines

Sister Jude Fitzpatrick  
West Des Moines

Brian Gentry  
Des Moines

Wayne Kobberdahl  
Council Bluffs

Mary Jean Montgomery  
Spencer

Max Phillips  
Woodward

John Jessen  
(Student Member)  
Des Moines

Judy Jeffrey  
Director and  
Executive Officer

### Highlights within subject areas:

#### Science:

- The emphasis must be on student inquiry. Deep grasp of scientific concepts and processes isn't possible with a classroom diet of lectures, readings and "cookbook" labs. Students must be actively investigating, designing the experiments, questioning and exploring, and defending conclusions.
- The curriculum follows the guidelines of the respected National Science Education Standards, including its focus on four content-specific categories: Science as inquiry, physical science, earth and space science, and life science.
- The curriculum is designed for all students, not just those who have traditionally succeeded in science classes.

#### Literacy:

- Increasingly sophisticated levels of literacy are needed by the successful student-turned-adult. A literate person is able to become informed, inform others and make informed decisions.
- Curriculum goals include mastery of reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking. And, with the explosion in visual mediums delivering messages, viewing effectively is included.
- Literacy is fundamental to all teaching and learning. Thus, all high school teachers must take ownership for literacy development if students are to succeed.

#### Math:

- Recent test results both nationally and internationally show the United States faces a crisis in math education, with American students losing ground. The main reason: Schools trying to cover too many topics without any depth.
- To reverse the trend, math curriculum in Iowa must provide deep understanding of the most important areas of mathematics – algebra, geometry, statistics and probability, and quantitative literacy.
- The most important *skills* required in the math arena are problem solving, communication, reasoning and proof, an ability to make connections and representation.
- A world-class math curriculum should include eight main characteristics including teaching for understanding, problem-based instructional tasks, distributed practice that is meaningful, an emphasis on mathematical modeling, effective use of technology, and teaching that is integrated and connected.

Full text of the model core curriculum report is available at  
<http://www.iowa.gov/educate/ecese/hsmcc/documents.html>.

### Project team participants

#### Department of Education

Division of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education  
Pam Pfitzenmaier, Administrator  
Warren Weber

- Bureau of Instructional Services
  - Jim Reese, Chief
  - Tony Heiting
  - Rita Martens
  - Kathy McKee
  - Judith Spitzli
- Bureau of Children, Family & Community Services
  - Barbara Guy

- Division of Community Colleges and Career and Technical Education  
Linda Berg  
Dale Gruis

### **Lead Team**

Rita Martens, Department of Education  
Timothy Ansley, University of Iowa/Iowa Testing Program  
Ray Beets, Iowa Central Community College  
Hope Bossard, Gilbert Schools  
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Bill Callahan, University of Northern Iowa  
Bob Driggs, Kirkwood Community College  
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Steve Goodall, Anamosa Schools  
Dale Gruis, Department of Education  
Barbara Guy, Department of Education  
Eric Hart, Maharishi University  
Diane Crookham Johnson, Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce, Musco Corp.  
Shirley Kelly, Charles City Schools  
Alissa Jourdan, Kemin Industries  
Kris Mesicek, Des Moines Public Schools  
Mary Jean Montgomery, State Board of Education  
Pam Pfitzenmaier, Department of Education  
Susan Olesen, Iowa Association of School Boards  
Susan Pecinovsky, Area Education Agency 267  
Gary Phye, Iowa State University  
Tara Richards, State Board of Education (student member)  
LuAnn Richardson, Sioux City Community Schools  
Luanne Schneider, Waterloo Community Schools  
Phyllis Staplin, West Des Moines Community Schools/Drake University  
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### **Work Teams ( \* denotes team chairs)**

#### **Science Core Curriculum**

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Shannon Cde Baca \*, high school chemistry teacher, Iowa Learning Online  
Lawrence Escalada, University of Northern Iowa  
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#### **Literacy Core Curriculum**

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Jo Ellen Latham, Heartland Area Education Agency 11  
Jim Martin, Valley High School, West Des Moines  
Shelby Myers-Verhage, Kirkwood Community College  
Denise Rehmke, West High School, Iowa City  
Mary Ritchie, Valley High School, West Des Moines  
Deb Squires, Iowa Department of Education  
Bridgette Wagoner, Malcolm Price Laboratory School

### **Mathematics Core Curriculum**

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Charles Gustafson, Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10  
Julie Huckee, Heartland Area Education Agency 11  
Sergio Loch, Grand View College  
Dan Petrak, Des Moines Area Community College  
Cynthia Prewitt, Area Education Agency 4  
Judith Slezak, retired teacher, College Community School District  
Virginia Swenson, Ames Community School District

### **Facilitators**

Rita Martens, Department of Education  
Dena Goplerud, private consultant

### **Additional Board Action:**

#### **Gene Vincent re-elected president, Rosie Hussey as vice president**

[Gene Vincent](#) of Carroll was re-elected as president of the State Board of Education during its meeting today in Des Moines. [Rosie Hussey](#) of Mason City was elected as vice president. Each is a two-year term.

Vincent joined the State Board in 1996. He served on the Carroll Community School Board of Directors from 1978-1996, including 13 years as Board President. Vincent also has served on committees with the Iowa Association of School Boards. A graduate of Lake City High School, Vincent owns real estate and commodity brokerage businesses in Carroll. He has been involved in numerous civic organizations.

Hussey joined the State Board in 2004. She is chief executive officer of the Girl Scouts of North Iowa and serves as a trustee of North Iowa Area Community College. Hussey also is a Mason City Chamber Ambassador, chair of the Workforce Development Board, and a member of the Board of Opportunity Village in Clear Lake. She was born and educated in St. Louis.

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