



**GRANT WOOD**  
**AREA EDUCATION AGENCY**

**Sixth Street Facility**

4401 Sixth Street SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-4499  
319-399-6700  
800-332-8488  
Fax 319-399-6457

**33rd Avenue Facility**

1120 33rd Avenue SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-4499  
319-399-6700  
800-332-8488  
Fax 319-399-6474

**Coralville Facility**

2301 Oakdale Blvd.  
Coralville, IA 52241  
319-351-2510  
1-800-854-0446  
Fax 319-358-6201

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# NEW TEACHERS' INTRODUCTION TO GRANT WOOD AEA

As a new teacher or teacher new to this area, we want you to know about the many resources available to you from Grant Wood Area Education Agency (AEA).

Please keep this document handy for quick links and/or as a reference about the AEA. We also encourage you to bookmark the Grant Wood AEA Web site: [www.gwaea.org](http://www.gwaea.org). It will give you access to many of the agency's resources.



**GRANT WOOD**  
**AREA EDUCATION AGENCY**

**Our Mission: To ensure success for all learners.**

## WHAT THE AEA PROVIDES YOU

State law mandates the AEA provide services to schools in nine areas:

- ☒ Diverse Learners
- ☒ Curriculum Instruction and Assessment
- ☒ Professional Development
- ☒ Instructional Media
- ☒ School Technology
- ☒ Leadership
- ☒ Multicultural, Gender-Fair
- ☒ School-Community Planning
- ☒ School Management

This brochure touches on some (but not all) of the services available to you.

## WHY WE HAVE AN AEA

The Iowa legislature created the AEAs to fulfill three important roles in the schools:

- ☒ **Equity**
- ☒ **Efficiency**
- ☒ **Excellence**

Many of the roles that AEA staff perform, especially in the many rural school districts across Iowa, require less than full-time work by individuals. The AEAs can hire many of these professionals as full-time employees and provide critical services to multiple schools.

The AEA is also integrally involved in assisting districts meet requirements of public mandates such as **No Child Left Behind**, the **Individuals with Disability Act** and its related state performance plan, **Common Core/Iowa Core**, and the **Iowa Teacher Quality Initiative**.

*The AEA exists to embed into Iowa schools improvement and learning processes that will ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed in school.*

Iowa currently has nine area education agencies, covering every school district in Iowa. The AEAs are also required to provide services to parents home-schooling their children and to accredited, nonpublic schools.



## LEADERSHIP FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SERIES

Participants in this dynamic learning program will work collaboratively with members of their district/building leadership teams to bring depth and meaning to the implementation of an action plan. The series involves five, all-day learning events.

It includes a continuous improvement segment for all participants plus breakout sessions in three specific strands:

- ☒ Competency-Based Instruction
- ☒ Standards and Assessment
- ☒ Response to Intervention (RtI)

These will provide an opportunity for teams to focus throughout the year on implementing the continuous improvement cycle through collaborative inquiry on a strand.

## TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Grant Wood AEA serves 85,200 students in Iowa school districts with **PowerSchool** and **PowerTeacher Gradebook**. This support includes hardware hosting and support, training, consultation, and help desk services. For more information about this site, enter <http://www.gwaea.org/psusers> on your Web browser.

PowerSchool is a product developed by the Pearson company. Grant Wood AEA has negotiated reduced licensing costs for area schools. It has components affecting students, parents and teachers:

- ☒ Students can go to the site to get homework assignments.
- ☒ Parents can check on students' grades and homework.
- ☒ For teachers and administrators, PowerSchool automates critical functions such as attendance, scheduling, behavior reports, classroom grading, and reports. Student information is available when you need it, anywhere, anytime.

Grant Wood AEA's **Creative Services** provides many services. You can laminate posters and other materials for your classroom. A variety of die-cut shapes for development of bulletin boards and displays are also available. The Work Center can produce buttons in sizes from 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch in diameter up to 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches, and can also produce short runs of imprinted T-shirts. All About Me posters and various maps are also available at very reasonable prices.

The Work Center has traveling labs that circulate to most of the schools throughout the year. Check with your school secretary to identify the dates when the lab will be at your school. If you need materials sooner, you can send them to The Work Center to be done. A modest charge is applied to cover the cost of time and materials.

The AEA also offers graphics and printing. You can design and print your own poster at the AEA – in color or in black and white. Prices for printing at the AEA are usually much less than what you would pay at a commercial printer. We frequently help the schools design and print various booklets, brochures and other materials – especially during peak printing seasons. In addition, the agency has graphic designers who can assist the school in preparing more attractive and readable print materials.

## SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Most of the districts in the Grant Wood AEA service area use the agency's accounting and payroll services; so, it's quite likely your paycheck is generated by this agency, too.

Many of the districts also use the AEA's high speed fiber optic Internet connections for access to the Web and for their school's email systems.

## LEARNING SUPPORTS

Not every student comes to school ready and able to learn. On any given day, a significant number of students experience barriers (either situational or long-term) which interfere with their ability to fully engage in classroom instruction.

Research from a variety of sources indicates that fully implementing a comprehensive system of supports promotes healthy social, emotional, and behavioral development in all students so that all youth have an equal opportunity to be successful in school.

Learning Supports include a wide range of strategies, programs, services, and practices that are implemented to create conditions and environments that promote student learning from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. If your school needs assistance in this area, talk with AEA staff in your building about arranging this.

## GROUP PURCHASING DISCOUNTS

**AEA Purchasing**, <http://www.aeapurchasing.org>, is an initiative of Iowa's AEAs.

AEA Purchasing facilitates a voluntary purchasing program to help Iowa schools and other eligible entities save time and money. AEA Purchasing is an initiative of the Iowa Association of Area Education Agencies (IAAEA). The goal is to combine the purchasing power of Iowa schools to offer aggressive pricing on materials, goods and services through a competitive bid process.

AEA Purchasing is also a member of the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEP), a multi-state non-profit organization of educational service agencies that works to leverage purchasing power to enable all schools and agencies, regardless of size, to purchase at equal buying levels.

## HOW TO CONTACT THE AEA

If you need to reach any of your agency service providers, you can always go to the Grant Wood AEA Staff Directory region (<http://www.gwaea.org/GWdirect.cfm>). This Web query helps you to find people by name, by discipline or by agency region. You can then email them or find their telephone extension from this search site. (Many of our staff work as itinerants and have only voice mailboxes rather than phones they can answer during the workday; however, they check voice mail regularly.)

The AEA is divided into regions, and most agency staff are assigned to specific regions. Some agency specialists provide services to multiple buildings or regions. If you have concerns about a student or about a service, we encourage you to talk directly with your AEA staff person. If that doesn't resolve the problem, you can click on the link for Schools (<http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/aeadist/index.html>) and see the region in which your district is located. You can then contact the agency and ask for that regional administrator.

[www.gwaea.org](http://www.gwaea.org)



## HOW THE AEA WORKS

Unlike school districts, the AEA system has no taxing authority. The agency is funded by a per-pupil assessment designated by the state legislature, by federal funds, various grants and sale of services. Some services, such as Professional Development, are supported by fees charged to participants.

A nine-member board of directors elected by area school boards governs Grant Wood AEA. Board members represent designated segments of the agency's service area called director districts. They are elected by school district board members.

## DIVERSE LEARNERS

Nearly 78 percent of AEA funding goes to providing services that make education equitably available for all students. Students who qualify for Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans as well as students who are considered talented and gifted receive AEA support services.

AEA staff work in your building on a weekly basis providing support services for students who may need extra help or who have IEPs. You may see **school psychologists, social workers, speech-language pathologists, Special Education consultants, occupational therapists and physical therapists**, to name a few of the professionals supplied by the AEA. These employees work with students and families on an as needed basis and they often serve as a member of an IEP team, facilitating education for a child needing extra assistance.



The AEAs are responsible for identifying and serving children from birth to age five through **Early ACCESS** and **Early Childhood** programs. Many children receive help before they ever reach kindergarten so that they are school-ready just like the rest of their age group.

The AEA provides a wide assortment of **assistive devices** for children of all ages. These range from simple pencil grips to auditory amplification systems to speech devices and a wide variety of personal conveyances.

A resource team of educators and AEA support staff provides consultation, information and coordination of plans for persons with autism and related disorders and for their families. AEA staff also work with schools in reducing the effect of **behavior disorders** that can disrupt classrooms.

The agency's **transition support services** are for students, parents, teachers and school districts as they plan for students' transitions for living, learning and working. Planning includes movement from home to school, school to school, and to their post-school employment, education and living settings.

The **Parent/Educator Partnership** offers a library of information about various disabilities. It's available to parents whose child or children may have one or more disabilities. You may ask someone from the PEP staff to sit in on an IEP meeting as a parent advocate and to help explain the process, forms and other intricate details involved.



## CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

When the legislature enacted the Iowa Core, the Iowa Department of Education turned to the AEA to help develop it and to share it with school leadership. **The alignment of enacted curriculum helps to define the Common Core/Iowa Core standards. Professional development initiatives incorporate the Characteristics of Effective instruction and the six Universal Constructs, identified as the building blocks for student success in the 21st century: critical thinking, complex communication, creativity, collaboration, flexibility and adaptability, and productivity and accountability.**

The agency has content teams to help support your efforts in aligning content, using student formal and informal assessments and in building better articulated curriculums between grade levels and school buildings. The AEA is deeply committed to assisting all learners. These consultants work with districts and/or individual teachers to improve their teaching methodologies in the core subject areas of math, reading and science.

The agency provides an **Online Assessment** system, which all of the schools in the Grant Wood AEA service area use. This Internet tool facilitates our district's collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of student assessment data. The assessment system may be used to generate a number of reports, including some required in the district's Annual Progress Report (APR).



## ONLINE CATALOG

**E-mail:** [reservations@aea10.k12.ia.us](mailto:reservations@aea10.k12.ia.us)

**Phone:** 319-399-6754 or **Toll Free:** 800-642-4107

**Web site:** [www.gwaea.org](http://www.gwaea.org), click on Media Center Catalog

**My Client Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Password:** \_\_\_\_\_



## AEA ONLINE RESOURCES

**Web site:** [www.gwaea.org](http://www.gwaea.org), click on Online Resources

**Username:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Password:** \_\_\_\_\_



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Web site:** [www.aea10.k12.ia.us/profdev/index](http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/profdev/index)

**My License Folder # is:**  
\_\_\_\_\_



## POWERSCHOOL

**Web site:** [www.gwaea.org/psusers](http://www.gwaea.org/psusers)

**My login is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My password is:** \_\_\_\_\_



## MEDIA CENTER

The agency's **Media Center** offers an **Online Catalog** from which you can order DVDs, books, boxed book sets, and curriculum materials for use in your classroom. You will need a password to order these items.

The agency has a multitude of instructor materials for use in classrooms. Ask your teacher librarian to set up an account for you, if they haven't done so already. If you don't have a resource person, contact us directly at [reservations@aea10.k12.ia.us](mailto:reservations@aea10.k12.ia.us) or phone 319-399-6754 (for long distance, call 800-642-4107).

The AEA provides regular **van delivery** to public and accredited nonpublic schools. Check with your school secretary to find out when the AEA van delivers to your school.

Materials may be ordered online 24/7.

Although we have duplicate copies of some of the most popular titles, the number we have available for loan are limited. **We ask that you return materials on time, since other teachers may have developed lesson plans around that same material.**

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Each of the Online Resources may be searched independently.

Please tell parents about this site!

# Iowa AEA Online

Educational Resources Funded and Provided by Iowa's Area Education Agencies

### Iowa AEA Online Resources

- ✦ **AEA Digital Library** - Streaming video, still images, and digital documents for PreK-3 children's literature, 4-8th grade science, 7-12th grade health and guidance, and the AIME copyright newsletter.
- ✦ **AP Images** (PreK-12) - Downloadable photographs, graphics and audio clips.
- ✦ **Atomic Learning (PreK-12)** - Electronic help desk and training system for computer programs and assistive technology.
- ✦ **BookFLIX** (PreK-3) - An online literacy resource that pairs fictional video storybooks with related nonfiction books.
- ✦ **Britannica Online** (PreK-12) - A suite of products designed to support student research and classroom instruction.
- ✦ **CultureGrams** (K-12) - An insider's perspective on daily life and culture, including the history, customs, and lifestyles of the world's people.
- ✦ **GALE** (K-12) - An eResource package offering screened and reliable content from magazines, newspapers, and reference materials.
- ✦ **iCLIPART For Schools** (PreK-12) - A collection of royalty-free photos, clipart, fonts, animations and sounds.
- ✦ **Learn360** (PreK-12) - Digital delivery of video, video clips, images, and audio. Includes support materials.
- ✦ **Sirs Issues Researcher** (9-12) - Articles exploring social, scientific, health, historic, business, economic, political and global issues.

- ✦ **soundzabound** (PreK-12) - Royalty free music that can be used in educational productions ensuring copyright safety.
- ✦ **TeachingBooks.net** (PreK-12) - An easy-to-use website that adds a multimedia dimension to the reading experiences of children's and young adult books.
- ✦ **Teen Health & Wellness** (7-12) - Resource includes topics related to health and wellness for middle and high school students.
- ✦ **TrueFlix™** (3-5) - An online resource that leverages the award-winning True Books content to help students hone literacy skills, build knowledge of subject-area content, and cultivate 21st Century Skills through the inquiry process.

### Grant Wood AEA Provided Resources

- ✦ **CybertSmarts (3-6)** - Offers a safe, simulated Internet experience with hands-on online safety issues instruction.
- ✦ **Digital Literacy (7-12)** - A database empowering 21st century learners with the knowledge and skills set to safely and effectively navigate the digital world.
- ✦ **EBSCOhost** - Full-text periodical articles, newspapers, reference materials and images.
- ✦ **FollettShelf** - A virtual bookshelf that provides an online environment to search for eBooks which are exact copies of the physical book and have the advantage of being available 24/7.
- ✦ **Integrated OneSearch** - A single interface that allows users to simultaneously search EBSCO databases as well as the Iowa AEA Online, Grant Wood AEA provided resources, and the Media Center Catalog.
- ✦ **MackinVia** - Digital platform for eBooks.
- ✦ **netTrekker** - An educational search tool that connects students and educators to over 300,000 educator-approved digital resources.
- ✦ **Student News Net** - Blazing a trail leveraging technology as both a mediator and motivator for meaningful learning.
- ✦ **Teen CyberSmarts: Staying Safe Online (7-12)** - Offers Interactive eBooks along with learning simulations providing hands-on experience in navigating the online world in a safe, controlled environment.
- ✦ **Tumblebooks (K-3)** - An online collection of animated talking picture books you can read or have read to you.

### EBSCO Mobile Interface

Schools in the Grant Wood AEA service area have access to EBSCOhost through their iPhone or iPod. Your students may use the school's passwords to access these tools at school, at home or anywhere else they may have access to the Internet. Check with your teacher librarian for the password.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The AEA offers many different classes that you may take for licensure renewal purposes or to simply stay current in your field.

Check the issues of the agency's newspaper **The Linker** to see what classes are being offered. For more complete information and to see the list of classes, instructors, times, and costs of classes, log on to the agency's Professional Development Web site at: <http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/profdev/index.html>.