

Evaluating Coaches

Drew Bracken
Ahlers & Cooney, P.C.
100 Court Avenue Suite 600
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
(515)246-0307
dbracken@ahlerslaw.com

I. The Authority of Boards to Set School District Policy and District Goals Relative to Athletics

A. Iowa Code Section 279.8 General Rules

The board shall make rules for its own government and that of the directors, officers, employees, teachers and pupils

B. Administrative Rules Relating to Extracurricular Programs

12.6(1) General guidelines. Each board shall sponsor a pupil activity program sufficiently broad and balanced to offer opportunities for all pupils to participate.

The program shall be supervised by qualified professional staff and shall be designed to meet the needs and interests and challenge the abilities of all pupils consistent with their individual stages of development . . .

-Contribute to the physical, mental, athletic, civic, social, moral, and emotional growth of all pupils

-Be integrated with the instructional program

-And provide balance so a limited number of activities will not be perpetuated at the expense of others

C. Setting the Rules: An Example

Board of Directors of Ames Community School Dist. v. Cullinan, 745 N.W.2d 487(Iowa 2008).

Ames School District adopted both a parent-athlete handbook and a coach's handbook which were critically important in the outcome of that case.

II. The Board's Authority to Establish Employee Evaluation Criteria

Iowa Code Section 279.23A Evaluation Criteria and Procedures.

The board shall establish written evaluation criteria and shall establish and annually implement evaluation procedures.

Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

The determination of standards of performance expected of school district personnel shall be reserved as an exclusive management right of the school board and shall not be subject to mandatory negotiations under chapter 20.

Iowa Code Section 279.14(2)

III. The Responsibility of Administrators Relative to Athletics

Iowa Administrative Code section 12.4(7).

“Principal” means a licensed/certificated member of a school’s instructional staff who serves as an instructional leader

. . .

-Provides formative evaluation for all practitioners and other persons in the school

-Implements the local school board's policy in a manner consistent with professional practice and ethics

-And assists in the development and supervision of a school's student activities program

IV. The Responsibility of Coaches to Implement School Policy and Goals

Iowa Code Chapter 272 –
Educational Examiners Board

Iowa Code section 272.31 – Coaching
Authorization

Iowa Code section 272.1(15) Teacher

Iowa Administrative Code section 12.4(8) Teacher

-A teacher shall be defined as a member of the instructional professional staff who holds a license/certificate endorsed for the type of position in which employed.

-A teacher diagnoses, prescribes, evaluates, and directs student learning in terms of the school's objectives

-Shares responsibility for developing educational procedures and student activities to be used in achieving the school's objectives

-Supervises educational aides who assist in serving students for whom the teacher is responsible

-Evaluates or assesses student progress during and following instruction in terms of the objectives sought, and uses this information to develop further educational procedures.

V. Responsibility of Administrators to Evaluate Coaches and Respond to Concerns

Principals are instructional leaders.

Athletic Directors are instructional leaders, too.

Direction and supervision of the athletic program

Evaluation should be methodical, detailed and specific.

VI. A New Coaching Evaluation Instrument

Iowa Code Section 284.3 – The Iowa Teaching Standards.

Modified to suit coaches in athletics.

Standard 1

Demonstrates ability
to enhance student-athlete performance
and support for implementation of
the district's student-athlete achievement
goals.

Criteria The coach:

- a. Provides evidence of student-athlete progress to student-athletes and families.
- b. Implements strategies supporting student-athlete, athletic program and district goals.
- c. Uses student-athlete performance data as a guide for decision making.
- d. Accepts and demonstrates responsibility for creating a team culture that supports the progress of every student-athlete.
- e. Creates an environment of mutual respect, rapport, and fairness.
- f. Participates in and contributes to a team culture that focuses on improvement of student-athlete performance.
- g. Communicates with student-athletes, families, colleagues, and communities effectively and accurately.

Standard 2

Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the coaching position.

Criteria The coach:

- a. Understands and uses key concepts, underlying themes, relationships, and different perspectives related to the skill/sport.
- b. Uses knowledge of student-athlete development to make learning experiences in the skill/sport meaningful and accessible for every student-athlete.
- c. Relates ideas and information within and across skill areas.
- d. Understands and uses instructional strategies that are appropriate to the skill/sport.

Standard 3

Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.

Criteria The coach:

- a. Uses student-athlete achievement data, athletic program standards, and the district goals and expectations in planning for instruction.
- b. Sets and communicates high expectations for social, behavioral, academic and athletic success of all student-athletes.
- c. Uses student-athlete's developmental needs, backgrounds, and interests in planning for instruction.
- d. Selects strategies to engage all student-athletes in improvement.
- e. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the development and sequencing of instruction.

Standard 4

Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple progress needs of student-athletes.

Criteria The coach:

- a. Aligns team instruction with athletic program standards and district goals and expectations.
- b. Uses research-based instructional strategies that address the full range of skill levels.
- c. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in adjusting instruction to meet student-athlete needs.
- d. Engages student-athletes in varied experiences that meet diverse needs and promote social, emotional, and academic growth.
- e. Connects student-athletes' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in the instructional process.
- f. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the delivery of instruction.

Standard 5

Uses a variety of methods to monitor and communicate student-athlete progress.

Criteria The coach:

- a. Aligns student-athlete and team assessment with instruction.
- b. Communicates assessment criteria and standards to all student-athletes and parents.
- c. Understands and uses the results of multiple assessments to guide planning and instruction.
- d. Guides student-athletes in goal setting and assessing their own progress.
- e. Provides substantive, timely, and constructive feedback to student-athletes and parents.
- f. Works with other coaches, athletic director and district leadership in analysis of student-athlete progress and team/program progress.

Standard 6

**Demonstrates competence in team
management.**

Criteria The coach:

- a. Creates a team culture that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement, good sportsmanship, skill development and self-regulation for every student-athlete.
- b. Establishes, communicates, models, and maintains standards of responsible sportsmanship and student-athlete behavior.
- c. Develops and implements team procedures and routines that support high expectations for student-athlete progress and achievement.
- d. Uses instructional time effectively to maximize student-athlete progress and achievement.
- e. Creates a safe and purposeful team environment by caring for facilities and equipment and maintaining appropriate level of supervision over all activities.

Standard 7

Engages in professional growth.

Criteria The coach:

- a. Demonstrates habits and skills of continuous inquiry and progress.
- b. Works collaboratively to improve professional practice and student-athlete progress.
- c. Applies research, knowledge, and skills from professional development opportunities to improve instruction/coaching.
- d. Establishes and implements professional development plans based upon the coach's needs aligned to the District's standards and athletic program student-athlete achievement goals.

Standard 8

**Fulfills professional responsibilities
established by the district.**

Criteria The coach:

- a. Adheres to board policies, district procedures, and contractual obligations.
- b. Demonstrates professional and ethical conduct as defined by state law and district policy.
- c. Contributes to efforts to achieve district and athletic program goals.
- d. Demonstrates an understanding of and respect for all students and staff.
- e. Collaborates with student-athletes, families, colleagues, and communities to enhance student-athlete progress.

VII. Some Possible Additional Specific Standards of Performance

A. Winning and losing

B. Program development - Participation vs. attrition

**C. Cooperation with the Administration
in Implementing School Policy**

D. Subject Matter Competence

E. Player development – all players

F. Player evaluation - assessment

G. Treatment of Students

H. Organization, Use of Practice Time and
Lesson Plans

VIII. Remediation for Underperforming Coaches

Iowa Code Section 284.8 – Teachers' Performance Review

Evaluation

Intensive Assistance Program

"Intensive assistance" means
the provision of organizational support and
technical assistance to teachers
for the remediation of identified teaching
and classroom management concerns
for a period not to exceed twelve months.