**Iowa Background Check Requirements for Schools**

**Teachers**

Iowa law requires a school district to check the background of potential teacher employees before signing the employment contract.  Districts are not required to conduct a background investigation of new teachers operating with an initial license since the Board of Education conducts the check upon issuing the initial license.  Backgrounds of all other teacher applicants, defined as licensed employees with a 279.13 contract, are required to be checked.  In addition to classroom teachers are nurses, librarians, and speech therapists. It does not include substitutes who are not issued a 279.13 contract.

When a teacher first applies for licensing, the Board of Educational Examiners conducts the background check, so districts are not required to check beginning teachers’ criminal or registry backgrounds.

These requirements apply to school districts, AEAs and Community Colleges. Inquirehire recommends checking or rechecking the backgrounds of all other employees, including administrators and bus drivers.  It is a good idea to initiate the check on any employee who might have contact with students or access to district money.  Districts may also consider background checks of volunteers or offer the services of the program to construction and other contractors which might be on school property.

**Bus Drivers**

Prior to hiring an applicant for a school bus driver position, including a contract position, an employer shall have access to and shall review the sex offender registry information under section 692A.121 available to the general public, the central registry for child abuse information established under section 235A.14, and the central registry for dependent adult abuse information established under section 235B.5 for information regarding the applicant. An employer shall follow the same procedure every five years upon the renewal of an employee’s or contract employee’s school bus driver’s license issued by the department of transportation valid for the operation of a school bus. An employer shall pay for the cost of the registry checks conducted pursuant to this subsection. An employer shall maintain documentation demonstrating compliance with this subsection.

**Non-Teaching positions (food service, custodial etc)**

Prior to hiring an applicant for a school employee position, a school district shall have access to and shall view the information in the Iowa Court system available to the general public, the sex offender registry information under section 629A.121 available to the general public, the central registry for child abuse information established under section 235A.14, and the central registry for dependent adult abuse information established under section 235B.5 for information regarding the applicant. The school district shall follow the same procedure for each school employee employed by the district as of July 1, 2013.  A school district shall follow the same procedure every five years upon the anniversary of each employee's year of hire.

*School employee* means an individual employed by a district, including a part time, substitute or contract employee. IT DOES NOT IDENTIFY "VOLUNTEERS' BUT WE ADVOCATE THE SAME BACKGROUND.  Most schools do not follow this at it would be cost prohibitive to screen hundreds of volunteers.

**Background Updates**

Prior to hiring an applicant for a school employee position, a school district shall have access to and shall review the information in the Iowa court information system available to the general public, the sex offender registry information under section 692A.121 available to the general public, the central registry for child abuse information established under section 235A.14, and the central registry for dependent adult abuse information established under section 235B.5 for information regarding the applicant. A school district shall follow the same procedure by June 30, 2014, for each school employee employed by the school district as of July 1, 2013. A school district shall also follow the same procedure every five years upon the anniversary of each school employee’s year of hire. A school district shall not charge an employee for the cost of the registry checks conducted pursuant to this subsection. A school district shall maintain documentation demonstrating compliance with this subsection.