

Iowa Fire Service & Emergency Response Council

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

10:00 am – 1:36 pm

Country Inn & Suites

Ames, IA

Council Members Present

Justin Adams, Chair – *IA Professional Fire Chiefs Association*

Jeff Kling, Vice-Chair – *Public Member*

Lynn Washburn-Livingston, Secretary – *IA Professional Fire Chiefs Association*

Ellen Hagen – *IA Fire Chiefs Association*

Alicia Lidtke – *IA Firefighters Association*

Marion Valero-Lehman – *IA Firefighters Association*

Mike Bryant – *IA Professional Firefighters*

Tom Craighton – *Emergency Medical Services*

Kyle Gorsch – *FSTB Acting Board Director*

Labor Commissioner/Designee – Ex Officio Members Present

Joe Mullen – *Division of Labor, Iowa Workforce Development*

Council Members Absent

Gabe Haugland – *Public Member*

Positions Currently Vacant

IA Professional Fire Chiefs Association – *Nominee Deb Krebill*

IA Professional Firefighters – *Nominee Thad White*

State Fire Marshal Staff Present

Jeff Quigle – *State Fire Marshal*

Jim Kenkel

Russ Grossman

Dawn Beisner

Linda Thede

Public members present

Deb Krebill – *Marion Fire, IFC*

Kim Fensterman – *Kirkwood College*

Jerry Estlick – *West Des Moines Fire*

Tony Miller – *Ottumwa Fire*

Tim Richmond – *Ottumwa Fire/Wapello EMA*

Thad White – *Indianola Fire, IPFF*

Jason Anderson – *Northwest Iowa CC*

Adam Wedmore – *North Iowa Area CC*

Mike Craff – *Ottumwa Fire*

Board Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and asked all Board members to introduce themselves. Chair Adams welcomed the public in attendance and provided an overview of the agenda.

Agenda item #1 – Update from the FSTB on the retesting process:

Acting Board Administrator (ABA) Gorsch stated that test are still being rescored and entered. The refresher/retesting process was moving too fast and class structure was not allowing sufficient time for learning. Classes have been restructured to specialize on only one certification level and the timeframe for completion has been extended. Refresher classes are scheduled in April. Over 700 have registered to retest. Ten sites will provide retesting. Not all refresher classes will include retesting. May sites are also set up.

An Ames firefighter is working with the Bureau to process and send certificates and patches. Another firefighter may be bought in to provide additional assistance.

Chair Adams asked if future classes and testing should be stopped in order to get caught up on the backlog. He asked for input from Jim Kenkel and Russ Grossman on the summer schedule of classes. Both stated that the summer class load is light.

Craighton stated the he has heard feedback from the field also regarding a halt on new classes to allow for recovery. Vice-Chair Kling asked how long it would take to catch up. Bryant stated that the FSTB staff progress is slow due to non-productive time answering phone calls about tests. Chair Adams asked if there were any remaining regional fire schools on the calendar. FSTB staff stated that all schools were done until the Fall.

Bryant made a motion to recommend that the FSTB place a hold on any new initial certification testing. Craighton seconded the motion. Council discussion – Lidtke asked about people in current classes. They will be allowed to test. Jim Kenkel asked the Board about career departments that could be starting recruit academies. Secretary Washburn-Livingston stated that this will be the case for Davenport.

Chair Adams made a motion to amend with an exemption on a case by case basis review of testing requests by the FSTB. Craighton seconded. The motion for amendment passed with all Ayes. Secretary Washburn-Livingston suggested the time period for the hold to be April 1-August 30. Bryant accepted this change to his motion.

Final motion to read: Recommend to the Fire Service Training Bureau that all new initial certification testing be on hold from April 1 to August 30. The motion passes with all Ayes. ABA Gorsch stated that this could be revisited at a future Board meeting.

Agenda item #2 – Approval of the January 31 Board minutes

Chair Adams stated that the minutes from the January meeting needed to be approved. Hagen made a motion to approve, Valero-Lehman seconded. No discussion. The motion passed – all Ayes.

Board discussion on the location of the minutes on the FSTB webpage. Hagen stated that it was difficult to navigate to the Council information. Dawn Beisner stated that a separate page could be created for the Council.

Hagen (?) returned to the topic of retesting and asked why the IFA had not been informed of additional bad tests that had been discovered when they were with ABA Gorsch at the Capital. He admitted fault of the Bureau and accepted responsibility. It was also stated to Gorsch that the letters sent to firefighters had insufficient directions to testing sites. Gorsch stated he would add more specifics to the letters.

Agenda item #3 – Accreditation update

ABA Gorsch stated that the IFSAC site visit was February 22-24. Copies of the report were distributed to the Board. Two requirements and 7 recommendations were stated in the report. Conditional accreditation will be recommended. The ProBoard site visit will be scheduled after progress on the IFSAC requirements/recommendations and policy updates.

Lidtke asked if there was a specific timeframe for a progress report to IFSAC. ABA Gorsch stated that there will be ongoing communication with the site team and once items are complete they will be submitted for review. FM informed the Board that the same site team would be in place for the next five years. Lidtke asked how frequently reaccreditation site visits are conducted. ABA Gorsch responded that they are normally done every five years but the FSTB was one year overdue so the next visit will be in about four years.

Agenda item #4 – FSTB vacancy update

FM Quigle stated that hiring is still on hold until budget numbers are available for next year. Chair Adams reminded FM Quigle that at the last meeting it was said that the budget would not affect the Bureau Director position. DPS Commissioner Ryan now states the hiring will not occur. FM Quigle confirmed that there are salary savings from the open positions.

Kling asked why the search could not proceed given the time it would take. Chair Adams stated that the Commissioner's office has not responded to his requests for a meeting to discuss the hiring process progress. Hagen asked if the hiring documents were approved and why a State Patrol Colonel was hired so quickly. FM Quigle stated the documents have not received final approval. Chair Adams provided explanation of the difference between internal and external hires.

Bryant stated he has checked official protocols and recommends circumventing the Commissioner and taking the issue to a higher authority. He stresses the need to know what the Commissioner's intent is and that respect must be reciprocal. Hagen agreed and stated that the Commissioner should respond to the Chair.

Craighton shared that he had discussion with Senator Ragan on this issue. He asked if we should be pushing for action on the legislative level stressing the importance of the fire service and life safety.

Chair Adams asked what the FSTB gave up in relation to the budget cuts. FM Quigle stated nothing was taken from the Bureau budget as it was all taken from other Fire Marshal divisions. Chair Adams asked for confirmation that the Bureau Director salary line was still in place and FM Quigle confirmed. Hagen asked when salary payouts to the Bureau Director and Certification Manager ended. FM Quigle's response June 2016.

FM Quigle recommended talking to legislators and other contacts to work the issue from both ends. Bryant suggested a position statement from the Council to all fire associations. Hagen and Craighton supported this suggestion.

Craighton stated that the FSTB is more than just fire certification testing. They are doing their job; let's move forward from the testing issue. Hagen stressed that EMS must be linked to fire service training.

Agenda item #5 – Report on meeting of community colleges

Kirkwood College representative Kim Fensterman reported on discussion of fire certification testing and how to better serve the fire service at a meeting of all 15 community colleges. A report from the meeting was shared with the college Dean's and Directors. The report was given to Board members. Fensterman stated that all community colleges want to be included. Chair Adams responded that the Council did not initiate the discussion with DMAACC and did not want community colleges pitted against each other.

Agenda item #6 – Revolving loan fund

Committee reviews applications for loans annually. Chair Adams and ABA Gorsch recommend suspending loans for one year to allow the fund to build. Current balance approximately \$150K with 23 loans out. 3 loans were approved last year.

The loan fund was started with two \$1 million dollar investments. No interest loans are available to departments for purchase of apparatus, PPE, equipment. Applications are reviewed by a committee of three people. 95% of loans to primarily volunteer departments. Loan payments return to the fund.

Valero-Lehman suggested reviewing the application process and documents during the suspension period.

Craighton made a motion to suspend loan awards for one year. Bryant seconded. Motion passed – all Ayes.

Agenda item #7 – Computer-based testing

Secretary Washburn-Livingston stated that this links to Fensterman's report on the community colleges meeting. FSTB needs to meet with the colleges first before moving forward with any one. Craighton stated the same test needs to be utilized by everyone. Secretary Washburn-Livingston added that there needs to be consistency from all colleges in how test are administered. Gorsch said the mobile testing labs are a positive as people cannot be allowed to bring their own devices to tests. Hagen agreed that ability to send testing labs to sites is a positive.

Public comment from Jason Anderson, NW Iowa CC – happy to have conversation with the Dean's and Directors. The presentation at the January meeting was one model that can be used. The concept can be a statewide system.

Chair Adams stated the problem with Pearson Vue was higher costs and the need for firefighters to travel to a testing site. Hagen stated that if costs were higher at least it would be local.

Public comment from Adam Wedmore – great opportunity to structure partnership. Community colleges and FSTB need to have to have the same rate structures for testing.

Bryant stated that field instructors must be included in the discussion. Chair Adams suggested the issue could be worked on during the testing hold period.

Public comment from Kim Fensterman, Kirkwood College – encourages looking into using Resource One from IFSTA for test banks. Public comment from Linda Thede, FSTB – consider people being able to set up their own individual test with the test site.

Chief Adams stated it will be fighting tradition and the solution must be the best for the entire fire service. ABA Gorsch stated the cost of paying for one proctor at a time is not sustainable.

Bryant asked for clarification on the status of moving the computer-based testing model forward. Chief Adams directed FM Quigle and ABA Gorsch to initiate the communication with the community colleges to begin moving forward.

Bryant asked a question about Board member expenses and per diem.

Public comment from Jerry Estlick that the purpose and action of the Council is very important and the work must continue.

Agenda item #8 – Report from Division of Labor

Joe Mullen informed the Board of training opportunities and upcoming events. The DOL gives updates on enforcement activities and conducts inspections based on complaints.

Agenda item #9 – Report on letter from DPS Commissioner Ryan

Secretary Washburn-Livingston presented a summary of the letter that was sent to the Presidents of the IAPFC, IFC, and IFA. Chair Adams apologized for not sharing the letter with the Board members. Craighton stated that it will be important to meet with the Commissioner and to move forward in a direction that everyone agrees with. Public comment from Kim Fensterman again asking who set up the meeting with DMACC.

Agenda item #10 – Future of FSTB and meeting with DMACC

FM Quigle had no additional information on who started the DMACC conversation. He has had discussion with the Commissioner about her vision for the Bureau.

Secretary Washburn-Livingston shared her first communication from IFA President Bill Halleran about the meeting. Bryant said that association lobbyists need to be engaged. Hagen said the IFC are not expressing a positive opinion about the DMACC option. Chief Adams told the Board that times of stress can bring about positive actions.

Question about the status of the FSTB when under Iowa State – FM Quigle shared the history of the extension program and funding from the college. Public comment from Chief Tony Miller, Ottumwa – has anyone actually talked to Iowa State about taking the FSTB back. Chair Adams stated he has approached the conversation but their leadership is in transition as well.

Secretary Washburn-Livingston expressed that the current issues need to be resolved before having discussions about the future status of the FSTB. Craighton asked if there was enough code to keep the Bureau under DPS and FM Quigle responded that it is codified in Chapter 100 but added that change can happen very quickly. Chair Adams stated that FM Quigle and ABA Gorsch must be utilized to help make contact with DPS.

Agenda item #11 – Other items

FM Quigle stated he was on record opposing fireworks.

ABA Gorsch shared that Iowa State contacted the Bureau to discuss issues related to the contract with the University to be on campus including fees and charges for use of services.

Bryant restated that legislators need to be contacted now and suggests writing a white paper to share the Board's position on the status of the FSTB. Board members stated that a statement should include positive points and be very specific about needs. Chair Adams

stated that he would request feedback from Board members to use as the basis for the position statement. Public comment from Adam Wedmore College – agrees with the urgency of a position statement from the Board communicated out.

Chair Adams asked the Board for feedback on the option of an Interim Director.

Next meeting – Chair Adams will work with the FSTB to address scheduling to ensure consistency.

Motion to adjourn made by Craighton, seconded by Hagen. Motion passed, all Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 1:36 pm.

COUNCIL MEETING - 3/29/17

Justin Adams	Boone	IAPFC
Joe Muller	Des Moines	IA Div. of Labor
Thomas A. Craghton	Hampton	EMS
Kyle Garsh	AMES	FSTB
Jeffrey Quigle	Des Moines	SFM / FSTB
Ellen Hogen	Juwel	IFCA
Alicia Liotke	Elberon	IFA
Mirion Valero-Lehman	Adel	IFA
Jeff Kling	Bettendorf	Public
Mike Bryant	Ames	Iowa Prof Ass
L. Washburn-Livingston	Davenport	IAPFC
Deb Krebill	MARION	IAPFC
Thad White	Indianola	Iowa Prof FF's
Kim Fensterman	Cedar Rapids	Kirkwood C.C.
JERRY R ESICK	WEST DES MOINES	
Jim Kenkel	FSTB	
Ross Grossman	FSTB	
Linda Thede	FSTB	
Down Beisner	FSTB	
Adam Wedmore		North Iowa Area CC
Tony Miller	Ottumwa Fire	
Mike Craft	Ottumwa Fire	
Tim Richmond	Ottumwa	Wapello Co EIA / FSTB field staff



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL REPORT



Entity Name: Iowa State Fire Marshal – Division of Fire Service Training

Dates of Visit: February 22 – 24, 2017

Accreditation Site Team Members

Name	Title	Representing
John Cunningham	Site Team Leader	Nova Scotia Firefighters' School
John Smith	Site Team Member	US Department of Defense
Bill Slosson	Site Team Member	Washington State Fire Marshal's Office

Entity Representatives

Name	Title	Representing
Kyle Gorsh	Acting Bureau Chief	Fire Service Training Bureau
Steve DeJoode	Certification Manager	Fire Service Training Bureau
Doug Allen	Training Specialist	Fire Service Training Bureau

Report Prepared by:

Signed  Date 2-24-17

Signed  Date 2-24-17

Signed  Date 2-24-17



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL REPORT



Entity Name: Iowa State Fire Marshal – Division of Fire Service Training

ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

Recommendation to Board of Governors: Conditional Reaccreditation

A reaccreditation site visit was conducted in Ames, Iowa, at the offices of the Iowa State Fire Marshal's Fire Service Training Bureau, February 22 – 24, 2017.

The site team conducted a thorough review of the applicant entity's Application for Accreditation, Criteria Self-Study, policies and procedures, certification test item banks, manipulative skill sheets, and written test item correlation sheets. Site team members also examined the test bank security protocols and storage system, observed a mock written exam and a mock manipulative skills evaluation.

In reviewing the entity's policies for compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, the policy manual is very well organized; policies are concise and speak directly to the criteria. Very few deficiencies were found in this review. In those cases, Fire Service Training Bureau (FSTB) staff added new policies and amended existing policies during the visit to come into compliance with the Criteria.

In general, the site team found the written test item banks to be well organized and accurately correlated to the relevant National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. The entity has met IFSAC's requirement of at least one written test item for each element of the Job Performance Requirements (JPR) for each standard. In very few instances test items needed to be written to meet JPR's; those questions were written by the entity's staff during the site visit and reviewed by the site team. Representatives from the entity were immediately responsive to the minor changes that needed to be made in correlations and those were completed during the site visit. Some additional work will need to be done on test banks and submitted to the site team prior to recommendation for full reaccreditation. Those items will be listed below.

Manipulative Skills testing sheets were reviewed; the entity will need to perform some additional work on the skill sheets to meet all of the elements of the JPR's. These additions will need to be submitted to the site team. Those are listed below in the Requirements section. In all instances the entity's representatives were understanding of the additions/changes that needed to be made and were very receptive to feedback provided by the site team.

The site team observed two practical skills exams and found the candidates to be well prepared for testing and understand the process. The evaluators were consistent in their approach to rating candidate performance and following the processes and procedures established by the entity.

Interviews were conducted with staff, candidates, and evaluators regarding their overall perception of the program, testing procedures, test shipping/receiving procedures, test security, and data entry/processing of exam results. Interviewees were Firefighter Elijah Ingram (Ames FD), Firefighter Anthony Whitmore



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL REPORT



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(Iowa Falls Fire Department), Firefighter AJ Placy (Ames Fire Department) and Training Specialist Doug Allen (FSTB), and Robin Snider (FSTB).

Comments from the candidates and evaluators were favorable of the program, though they felt that the program would benefit from greater use of local resources (community colleges) to broaden delivery of the program. Members of the FSTB staff were interviewed, with particular focus on how test results were captured, entered into the scores database, and reported to the candidate. Written exams are now scored by the Iowa State University testing center, under an agreement with the university following FSTB protocols, then entered into the FSTB system by the certification manager. Comments from FSTB staff reflected confidence in the current direction of the FSTB and supportive of procedural changes in the program.

Written exams are appropriately secured, and access to those exams is limited to staff with a business need for access. Student workers are given an orientation and sign a confidentiality agreement when they begin employment at FSTB. Written exams are rotated on a quarterly basis. When tests are shipped, they are secured in a tote and shipped directly to the test proctor.

Test bank media are stored securely and access to their storage is limited to personnel with a business need for that access. Test banks are managed in LXR on a stand-alone computer, and access to that computer is limited to those same personnel.

Requirements – The following items must be provided to the site team leader in order to receive a recommendation for full reaccreditation:

Local validation will need to be conducted on all written knowledge test banks. FSTB will need to notify the site team leader in writing when that process has been completed.

Skill sheets will need to be modified or additional skill sheets will need to be created to meet all the Job Performance Requirements. Local validation will need to be completed on those skill sheets. Those skill sheets and revised correlation sheets will need to be submitted to the site team, with written notification that local validation has been completed.

Recommendations - The following recommendations are offered to help enhance the growth and development of the entity's certification program, which will better serve Iowa's fire service and thusly help better protect the citizens of and visitors to the state.

The site team recommends adding additional inventory controls for the written test booklets, in order for a limited amount staff to more easily manage the test booklet inventory.

The site team recommends adding redundant security to the test packages prior to shipping to the proctor.

The site team recommends adding internal audit procedures for both exam booklet inventory and test entry into the FileMaker database.



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL REPORT



Entity Name: Iowa State Fire Marshal – Division of Fire Service Training

The site team recommends that key staff involved in managing written test item banks receive training in the LXR software package.

The site team recommends cross-training appropriate staff so that there is redundancy and coverage of critical functions when staff members are absent or positions are vacant.

The site team recommends that the FSTB consider additional staffing to support the operation of the certification program. It is evident to the site team that a large volume of work is placed on a limited number of staff, and this limits their capacity to efficiently operate, make important improvements to the program, and expands program offerings to Iowa's fire service.

The site team also strongly recommends that the entity attends and participates in IFSAC meetings to the greatest extent possible and that certification staff participate in IFSAC committees and site visits. IFSAC is a peer-driven and peer-governed organization, and participation in the organization has proven very beneficial for member entities to enhance their own programs and gain insight from other member entities. Participation in other entities site visits is critical for entities to be prepared for their own reaccreditation preparation and site visit. Continuing participation in the organization is also important for ensuring that an entity has a voice in the long term direction and mission of the organization.

The site team would also like to extend its appreciation to the staff of the Iowa State Fire Marshal's Office – Fire Service Training Bureau for hosting this site visit. All staff members are engaged and knowledgeable in the program; those staff members who are new to the program and its processes are eager to learn and very receptive to suggestions and recommendations. Staff members were very accommodating in meeting the needs of the site team and provided all necessary items and information in a very professional and timely manner. The hospitality extended by the organization was excellent and all site team members appreciated the opportunity to visit the entity and observe their organization and process.



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL REPORT



Entity Name: Iowa State Fire Marshal – Division of Fire Service Training

Site Team Recommendations for Levels Presented by Entity

NFPA Level	Edition	Accreditation Type	Recommendation
NFPA 472: Haz-Mat Awareness	2013	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 472: Haz-Mat Operations - Chapter 5 Core	2013	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 472: Haz-Mat Operations - 6.2 PPE	2013	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 472: Haz-Mat Operations - 6.6 Product Control	2013	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1001: Firefighter I	2013	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1001: Firefighter II	2013	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1002: Driver/Operator	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1002: Driver/Operator Pumper	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1002: Driver/Operator Aerial	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1021: Fire Officer I	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT FINAL REPORT



Entity Name: Iowa State Fire Marshal – Division of Fire Service Training

NFPA 1021: Fire Officer II	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector I	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1033: Fire Investigator	2014	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1041: Fire Service Instructor I	2012	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation
NFPA 1041: Fire Service Instructor II	2012	Reaccreditation	Conditional Accreditation

OVERVIEW

1. Background and Description

References from: Iowa Department of Public Safety,

http://www.dps.state.ia.us/commis/pib/Releases/2017/01-24-2017_SFM_ReportReleasedOnFSTB.html

In April 2016, the State Fire Marshal received notification of irregularities in the documentation of the scoring of exams for fire service certification. An initial review identified errors in scoring of certification exams. When it was determined that the errors in scoring examinations were not the result of a computer problem or processing issue, a full review was undertaken as discussed below to determine the extent of the scoring concerns.

The irregularities arose in two contexts:

- **Certification:** Individual fire service personnel in Iowa may but are not required to receive certification that is recognized nationally. This individual certification is based on a test score of at least 70% on an exam that is administered by the Fire Service Training Bureau. Local agencies can choose to require certification, but there are no state or federal requirements for individuals to be certified in order to perform their duties. Each state identifies the passing score for these exams. The standard of 70% or above for a passing score is typical and is the standard adopted in Iowa.
- **Accreditation:** The Fire Service Training Bureau has sought and received national accreditation for oversight of testing services to individual fire service personnel who seek specific certifications. Accreditation depends on compliance with the National Fire Protection Association standards for certification of individuals. The FSTB is not required to seek accreditation, but has chosen to become accredited in order to allow individual fire service personnel to seek certification that can be recognized nationally.

Future Testing & Scoring

New procedures will provide additional checks and balances within the FSTB, including random reviews of the process. In addition, **third party scoring will be used for all certification exams.** IFSTB supervisors have identified options for third party scoring that meet the needs of IFSTB and also minimize the cost to test takers.

The training bureau offers certifications for the following levels:

- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Firefighter I
- Firefighter II
- Instructor I
- Instructor II
- Driver Operator Pumper
- Driver Operator Aerial
- Fire Officer I
- Fire Officer II
- Fire Inspector I
- Fire Investigator

Third-Party testing was discussed at length at the last Fire and Emergency Response Council meeting in Ames, January 31st. A presentation on Online Instruction and Testing by Gretchen Bartelson, Steve Waldstein, and Jason Anderson of the Northwest Iowa Community College. Bartelson began with a background about a meeting that took place at the Sheldon FD in October 2016 with SFM Quigle, Kyle Gorsh, Steve DeJooode, Scott Meineke, and Gretchen Bartelson, at which time a plan was discussed, to include a possible partnership to provide online testing through the "CANVAS" system. Because other community colleges have expressed interest in the opportunity, it was explained by Kyle Gorsch and Jeff Quigle that an RFP would more than likely need to happen if other community colleges are interested in submitting a proposal to the Fire Service Training Bureau.

The State Fire Coordinator's meet in Ames on February 17, and one of the agenda items was certification testing and Dan Neenan expressed that we bring this to the Dean's and Directors for further discussion.

2. Community College Assistance with Online Testing

The Community Colleges of Iowa are able to assist with online testing by utilizing the centers in each of the Community College districts. With online testing these test can be taken anywhere where a computer lab and secure internet connection exist, which could be a satellite location of the community college, library, school, fire department etc. For example, Kirkwood Community College has satellite centers in 7 of their counties which for most fire departments could be less than a 1-hour drive for testing.

A Model that already exist in the Community College system is the statewide certification testing that is done for the Plumbing & Mechanical Systems Board for the HVAC and Plumbing installers.

3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Certification Testing

Advantages

- Automatic grading
- Online data storage facilitates testing management, eliminating need for storage and increasing the security of test and results through data encryption
- Students can receive instant feedback
- Online testing is mobile and could be offered anywhere that there are computers and internet connection.
- Answer data is compiled for easy analysis
- Automatic formatting of questions and options

Disadvantages

- Time must be spent for learning the tool
- Security and Encryption issues for Mobile tablets and hotspots
- Requires a Secure Internet connection
- Requires computer literacy
- Students have varying levels of experience with computers
- Computers or Internet connection may unreliable during test
- Incompatibilities in browsers can create display problems
- Limited number of computers in classrooms requires lab use
- Candidate authenticity
- Data transmission
- System Integrity (prevent interruptions and irregularities)

4. Implementation Plan

Our mission in working with the Fire Service Training Bureau is to provide consistency throughout all levels of certification examinations. In addition, to ensure that all levels of certification are conducted with the same criteria in accordance with the guidelines of IFSAC and Pro Board.

It is our suggestion to set-up a meeting specific to online testing with those community colleges that have interest in providing online training for the Fire Service Training Bureau. We would also like to discuss the implementation plan if you choose the community colleges of Iowa, such as time line, development of test banks, registration options, etc.

5. Optional Training Services

Community colleges are currently playing a critical role in firefighting training, many offer Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2 and Driver Operator training at their facility or fire departments within their community college district. These courses are funded through the Volunteer Firefighter Training Fund administered through the Fire Service Training Bureau. The Hub and Spoke training model is currently in place, whereas the FSTB is the hub and they work with the 15 Community Colleges to continue offering training and possible having the ability to offer more training to off-load some of the burden of training request. What is meant by this is the ability to offer Fire Officer 1 and 2 along with Instructor 1 and 2.

Many of the community colleges received appropriations to build a burn facility several years ago, so the resources for training already exist.

Conclusion:

To discuss how the Community Colleges could better serve the Fire Service Training Bureau in the immediate future and beyond we encourage the State Fire Marshal and Acting Director of FSTB to set-up a meeting with the Dean's and Directors of all 15 Community Colleges to discuss this further. Please contact Kim Fensterman so she may work with the Chairman of the Deans and Directors to make arrangements for the meeting.

Kim Fensterman

Kim.fensterman@kirkwood.edu

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