**RSAI Legislative Update   
June 5, 2020**

The Session resumed on June 3, taking up policy bills with an extended funnel deadline to the end of the week. We expect work on the budget to begin next week. As of this writing, the House is planning on working through their debate Calendar on Saturday. The Senate plans to finish up work today and return on Monday. As you connect with legislators this weekend and through next week, remember to *Thank them for already approving SF 2164 (Transportation and Formula Equity) and SF 2142 (SSA at 2.3% increase in the state cost per pupil) and encourage them to keep those education resources in place as they consider the FY 2021 budget.*

**Please note: expedited timelines and changes in rules implemented to close down the session quickly can create opportunities for sudden policies not previously discussed to appear and obtain approval very quickly. SF 2410 SAVE Athletic Facilities below is a particularly disappointing example of the process. Please monitor your email through the weekend in case we need quick action on any other surprises.**

In case you missed it, NREA recommended a webinar produced by the University of Texas School of Public Health and the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Health Living, to better understand the issues around COVID-19 that school leaders should consider in determining when and how to open schools. The recording of this webcast is posted on the University’s website here: <https://sph.uth.edu/research/centers/dell/webinars/>

Here’s bill status of legislation important to RSAI:

[**SF 2261**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF%202261) **School-based Telehealth** **Services:** this bill makes schools a site for reimbursement for private insurance. This bill is especially critical in light of COVID-19 closures and recovery for students once returning to school. This bill authorizes schools and AEAs to contract for behavioral health screenings and services and to offer such services through telehealth. Allows a valid provider-patient relationship to be established through a consultation with a primary care provider or through telehealth, if the standard of care does not require an in-person visit. Requires the notification of the child’s primary health provider of the results of a behavioral screening. Requires insurance to pay the same for such telehealth services as for in-person services. The bill was amended to allow the screenings to be sent to a health care provider but does not require that the screenings be sent. The House passed the bill as amended 92-4; and the Senate concurred in the amendment, sending the bill to the Governor. RSAI supports it.

[**SF 2310**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf2310) **Online Learning and Funding Flexibility:** this bill ends the state Iowa Learning On-line Initiative and authorizes the AEAs, in collaboration with other schools and AEAS, to offer on-line classes. Makes changes to the duties of the State BOE and the DE. Requires AEA classes to meet established standards. Requires schools to pay AEAs for the on-line course work. Allows the DE to waive requirements for two additional subjects to be offered by school districts, if the district cannot offer them after good faith efforts. The bill was amended and approved in the House Education with some additional changes expected to be made on the floor regarding online learning provisions. The committee amendment includes some flexibility language to create capacity for additional instructional days:

* Notwithstands (which means sets aside) expenditure and professional development day requirements regarding professional development supplement and allows flexibility for use of that time and professional development funds for additional instructional days during the 2020-21 school year beginning July 1, 2020.
* Allows use of unencumbered management fund balance at the end of FY 2020 plus any management fund revenues in FY 2021 which may also be used in the 2020-21 school year for additional instructional days.

RSAI supports this bill and is working on a further amendment to the bill, such as removing the requirement that DE approve every districts’ online course content and alignment and specifying how instructional time is counted in return-to-learn plans. The bill has survived the funnel and moves to the House Floor, currently on the debate calendar for Saturday.

[**SF 2313**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF2313) **and** [**HF 2384**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202384&ga=88) **Future Ready Iowa:** The bills were amended in their respective House and Senate Appropriations Committees Thursday to delay the mandate for a computer science course in high school until the July 1, 2022 school year. The amendments also included offer and teach flexibility to meet the requirements exclusively online without having to seek an annual waiver, in the Senate amendment, for World Languages, Financial Literacy and Computer science (once required). In the House, the flexibility for offer and teach was expanded to include Financial Literacy and Computer Science. The two bills will eventually become identical to move forward as one bill to the Governor. RSAI is registered as undecided.

[**SF 2356**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF2356) **Dyslexia Specialists, Board and Training:** this bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules on an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement for teachers, in consultation with the Iowa Reading Research Center and the Board of Education Examiners. Directs the BOEE to adopt rules on the criteria for the endorsement. Establishes the Iowa Dyslexia board, with membership and duties. Directs the DE to hire a consultant to work on dyslexia issues. Defines dyslexia and requires specific classroom teachers to complete the Reading Research Center module on dyslexia. The IRRC Dyslexia Overview [module](https://iowareadingresearch.org/news/dyslexia-education-and-advocacy-tool) is available online and is free for all Iowa in-service K-12 teachers and AEA employees. The module takes about an hour to complete. The Senate approved the bill as written. The House Education Committee amended a clarification to which teachers must complete the module. The LSA estimates that the requirement that the BOEE develop an advanced Dyslexia Specialist endorsement will cost about $250,000. The nine AEAs will need to add a Dyslexia Specialist position at a cost of $90,000 for each AEA, or $810,000 total. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill. The bill is on the House Calendar.

[**SF 2360**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF2360) **Classroom Behavior/Therapeutic Classrooms:** this bill was amended in the House Appropriations Committee Thursday. The amendment removed Section 10 which included corporal punishment reference in current law and other provisions that had received some last minute social media and email opposition. The amendment also delayed appropriations for a year to provide grants to establish new therapeutic classrooms. Several other amendments sponsored by the minority party were approved unanimously, including sharing best practice resources with all districts, specifying that grants were to be allocated to small, median and large districts in the pilot project, and additional language to protect teachers from reprisals when acting in good faith to protect students. The bill was approved unanimously and moves to the House Calendar. Rep. Mascher and Rep. Dolecheck stated their intent to continue to work on an amendment regarding IEPs and classroom clears. RSAI is registered in support.

[**SF 2410**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202410&ga=88) **SAVE Athletic Facility Processes**: this bill, authored by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Sen. Chapman, sets a lower threshold for sufficient petition signatures to require a vote on a school board decision to use SAVE funds for athletic facilities, currently at 30% of those voting in the prior election, to instead the lower of 30% or 1,000 signatures. It retains the minimum number of signatures required at 100. An amendment further limited the 30% to those who specifically voted for school board during the combined city and school elections. The bill also requires a supermajority approval of 60% of voters at the special election to approve the SAVE expenditure on athletic facilities. The bill was approved in the Senate Ways and Means Committee as a committee of the whole (meaning the subcommittee was held at the same time) and later approved on the Senate Floor. There was no public notice of the Subcommittee, the bill was not on the Ways and Means Committee Agenda and the Senate passed it without it being on the published debate Calendar, moving through procedural steps typically taking days if not weeks in the Senate, within just a few hours. We are checking about plans in the House. Watch your email inboxes through the weekend in case we determine that a call to action is necessary and has the potential to stop the bill from moving forward. RSAI is opposed.

[**HF 2340**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=HF2340) **Educational Plan Spending**: this bill allows appending from 529 Educational Trusts for the costs of out-of-state elementary and secondary schools for children who need special education. The Senate passed the bill, sending it to the Governor. The RSAI is undecided.

[**HF 2359**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202359&ga=88) **Teacher Preparation Reports:** this billremoves the requirement that students applying to the college of education must have a minimum test score on the Praxis I to be admitted, eliminates the mandate for teacher prep programs to administer the test before entrance into the prep program. The ability to attract minority students and bilingual students to teaching was often mentioned as a significant rationale for moving this bill forward. The bill was approved by the SenateEducation Committee and moves to the Senate Calendar. RSAI supports.

[**HF 2418**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hf2418) **BEDS Error Correction:** requires DE to certify that an error made in BEDS reporting was an error that impacted an employee’s licensure and requires the BOEE to adjust their licensing actions accordingly. This bill came from Ft. Dodge Community School District. The bill is still on the Senate Calendar awaiting consideration. RSAI supports it.

[**HF 2443**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=HF2443) **Senior Year Plus Proficiency**: this bill strikes requirements for a student to show proficiency on the Iowa tests in core subjects to participate in the senior year plus program and expands the ability of community colleges and boards to agree on an alternative assessment for those students who are not proficient on the Iowa Tests. The bill was amended and approved by the Senate Education Committee, sending it to the Senate Calendar. RSAI supports.

[**HF 2627**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hf2627) **Licensing Qualifications** (and similar SF 2393): this bill limits the crimes used to disqualify persons from holding a professional license, requires the conviction to be related to the actions normally taken by someone in the profession and requires licensing boards to develop lists of crimes that can be used to disqualify an applicant. Requires a board to grant an exception if an applicant shows rehabilitation by a clear and convincing standard. Strikes specific criminal conviction disqualifications in various licensed professional provisions. Out-of-State: Allows a licensing board to grant a license to a person who moves to Iowa if the person be licensed and in good standing in another state and can meet various other requirements (would include school administrators and coaches governed by Board of Educational Examiners). Allows the board to require licensing exam and the submission of fingerprints. Allows the fee to be waived for first time low-income applicants (incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, which would likely include recent college graduates applying for teachers’ licenses). The bill was approved in committee and moves to the House Floor. The Senate Version, SF 2393 has a 50% waiver of fees. Both of these fee waivers could have negative consequences for the Board of Educational Examiners capacity to timely grant initial and renewal licenses. This Senate bill was on the Ways and Means Committee agenda in the Senate Thursday, but action was deferred. RSAI is registered as undecided.

[**SF 2400**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf2400) **Broadband Changes**: this bill allows the state’s chief information officer (CIO) to deem an area without sufficient high-speed broadband access as a targeted service area by rule. Deems an underserved area as an area in a targeted service area that does not have high speed broadband service. Makes changes in determining areas where broadband services are unavailable. Changes the fund name to the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Fund. Caps the use of money in the fund for administration. Adds retroactive provisions on reversion. Allows awards of up to 35% of the project cost, if the project will meet certain speeds. Allows the consideration of whether a grant request could have been for more money when awarding grants. Deems that broadband service only be facilitated. Gives the CIO the duty to give grant-writing assistance to information technology providers. Other: Makes conforming changes and other definition and language changes. Establishes reserves for allocation for projects with different download speeds. Includes other provisions on awards. The bill also allows the CIO to distribute federal COVID aid related to broadband service. The House passed the bill as amended 96-0; returning it to the Senate. RSAI is not registered to lobby on this bill but will continue to monitor its progress to keep members informed.

**RSAI Regional Meetings**. Thanks to those members for participating in the first three RSAI regional meetings! These meetings are critical for conducting some business. Members discuss the 2021 Legislative Priority list to inform the work of the RSAI Legislative Group. The SE Region meets Tuesday, June 9th at noon via zoom. Click here to review agendas, minutes, or to register for Tuesday’s meeting: <http://www.rsaia.org/district-meetings.html>

Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work:   
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**Find RSAI 2020 Legislative Priorities and Position Papers here:**  <http://www.rsaia.org/2020-legislative-session.html>