**RSAI Legislative Update   
Mar. 28, 2019**

In this Mar. 28, 2019 RSAI Report of the 2019 Legislative Session, find information about:

* **Next funnel deadline**
* **SAVE Extension assigned a new Subcommittee in Senate again**
* **Bills with action this week**
* **New Tax Bill expands STO private school scholarship tax credits**
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**Find this week’s RSAI Capitol Video Update here:** <https://youtu.be/xDf-uyH9pgw>

April 5 is the next funnel deadline by which House files must clear a Senate committee and Senate files must clear a House Committee to survive.  Tax bills, appropriations bills, oversight committee bills and bills sponsored by leadership are exempt from the funnel deadlines. Any bill that died may come back as an amendment to another bill. Bills introduced this year remain in their committees for continued work in the 2020 Session. As expected, there was much time spent in caucus and on floor debate this week as each chamber is sending their ideas to the other side.

**HF 546 SAVE Extension House Version Assigned a Senate Subcommittee:**

This week, there was another change to the legislators assigned to the subcommittee of the Senate Ways and Means Committee with Sen. Roby Smith replacing Sen. Feenstra, to join Sens. Dawson and Quirmbach as the official subcommittee. Last week’s [RSAI Report](hhttp://nebula.wsimg.com/66155b1824cba35ddbd2f491f2befaaf?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) detailed the specifics of the property tax relief provisions of the bill. Other provisions of the bill:

* **Extension:** Extends the SAVE (Secure an Advanced Vision for Education) Fund, also known as the state penny sales tax for school infrastructure, until 2051.
* **CTE Academies:** establishes a new career academy transfer and formula for transfers for a career academy, beginning at $1 million and growing to maximum of $5 million.
* **Voter Input: Revenue Purpose Statements:** terminates revenue purpose statements the earlier of when they would otherwise expire or 2031. District voters must support a new RPS to direct expenditures of SAVE revenue from 2031-2051 (or to anticipate those revenues earlier.)
* **Uses:** states legislative intent that school buildings in a district have various safety equipment before building new athletic facilities. No other change in infrastructure uses.
* **Voter Input: Reverse Referendum:** public hearings and reverse referendum process:
  + Requires a public hearing andallows voters to petition for a vote if SAVE funds are planned to be used for athletic facilities. If there are sufficient petition signatures exceeding 30% of those voting in the last school election received by the district in 14 days, the board my call for a vote or rescind the idea and start over.
  + Requires a public hearing for revenue bond sales and allows voters to petition for a vote on revenue bond sales. Same provisions for petitions and board options.
* **Safety:** Allows the use of SAVE funds for school security and safety equipment (although articulated in HF 546, this is already an allowable purpose).
* **Small Schools:** Requires the DE to use a cost benefit analysis when determining whether to issue a certificate of need for building by a small school district (fewer than 250 students enrolled in the district or fewer than 100 enrolled in the high school) to include impact on student learning. *RSAI requested this provision.*

The House passed the bill as amended on March 13, 2019, 96-3. It is currently assigned to the Senate Ways and Means Committee along with the Senate version, SF 74, where it is funnel proof, since it is a tax bill. RSAI supports. [Here’s a link](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/1039167.pdf) to the fiscal note which provides a detailed bill explanation and fiscal impact.

**Two Timely Advocacy Actions are still relevant:**

Please send a thank you note to all representatives who voted yes for their support of the SAVE extension if you have not yet done so!!! Please also contact all of your Senators about SAVE extension and, if they are on the Senate Ways and Means Committee, recruit one other community member to also reach out to them for support. Share the RSAI Position Paper on SAVE extension found here [State Penny Extension 2019](http://nebula.wsimg.com/d3798c03938c6aa25a676a74ab8f2f9c?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1)

**Bills with Action This Week**

[**SF 159**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf159) **Praxis Testing:** this bill is a bi-partisan compromise, which does several things. It authorizes the DE to set a minimum passing score for the Praxis test for completion of a teacher preparation program to receive an initial teaching license. The bill requires DE to consider several factors in setting the minimum score, including scores recommended by PRAXIS, passing scores in neighboring states and supply and demand imbalance of the teacher’s content area. The bill allows a one-year waiver for a new teacher with an Iowa school district job offer to complete the test if the teacher did not get a passing score, and defines good faith efforts to school districts to show they were not able to hire a qualified licensed applicant to meet their expectations. The bill was approved 48:0 in the Senate. HF 513 is the companion bill on the House Calendar. RSAI is registered in support.

[**SF 394**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/billTracking/billHistory?billName=SF%20394&ga=88) **Online Learning:** This bill allows school districts flexibility to meet accreditation requirements four ways in addition to teaching courses at the high school; offer Iowa Learning Online courses, develop online courses by the school district, develop online courses in partnership with other schools or through private provider approved by DE. The bill was approved unanimously in the Senate 49:0 and moves to the House Education Committee. RSAI supports.

[**SF 437**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf437) **High School Ineligibility for Extracurricular Activities:** This bill prohibits the state Board of Education rules from imposing multiple periods of ineligibility for a student for all school-approved activities for a single violation of the rules. The Senate approved the bill 49:0. Moves to the House Education Committee. RSAI is registered as undecided.

[**SF 438**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF438)**: Elimination of Mandates;** this bill eliminates several mandates on schools and cleans up irrelevant or redundant Code, but does not eliminate authority for school boards and administrators, staff, parents and families, to make decisions regarding the health and welfare of students. The bill includes the following provisions:

1. Eliminates schools as the middle man for dental and vision screenings, lead testing, etc., reporting. Requires parents of both public and private students to ensure their child is appropriately screened. Allows schools to provide access to screenings. Requires providers who conduct screenings to submit data to DPH. Requires schools to provide information about screenings to parents. Allows DPH to release screening data to schools with parent consent. The implementation of these screening provisions is delayed until July 1, 2020 to allow DPH to set processes in place and request the resources necessary to take on this activity through the normal budget process. The Fiscal Note estimated a cost to the DPH of $1.2 million in the first year and $850,000 in the second year.
2. Eliminates requirements for schools to use environmentally friendly (green) cleaning products.
3. Eliminates AEA public notice of budget in the newspaper to online with the intent of more appropriately reaching their broader audience not served by one newspaper.
4. Eliminates a requirement for school districts to publish a notice before entering into a loan agreement for an equipment purchase.
5. Eliminates a duplicative provision for loading and unloading buses.
6. Allows a school board to deposit proceeds of the sale of building or school site into any school fund other than the PPEL fund following a public hearing and board action.
7. Slightly limits reporting requirements around preschool reporting, but maintains the requirement for districts to report preschool experiences of kindergarteners.
8. Allows school districts to charge employees for DHS registry checks not to exceed the actual cost of the checks.
9. Repeals energy audit reporting requirements
10. Eliminates equipment purchase advance public notice.

The bill was passed by the Senate on a party-line vote, with Republicans in favor and Democrats opposed, 32:17. It is assigned to the House Education Committee. A subcommittee of Reps. Wheeler, Dolecheck, Moore, Mattson, and Ras Smith is assigned. Find the entire education committee listed at the end of this report and contact committee members advocating for this bill to move forward. RSAI supports.

[**HF 502**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/billTracking/billHistory?billName=HF%20501&ga=88) **Whistleblower Protection:** this bill specifically authorizes public employees to disclose information to a human resources director/department and seek injunctive relief to enforce Code provisions against reprisals against employers (whistler-blower protection). The bill requires that public employees be informed of the power of the state Ombudsman to investigate complaints and be given the toll-free number of the Ombudsman. The Senate approved the bill 49:0 and it now goes to the House Commerce Committee. RSAI is registered as undecided.

[**HF 598**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/billTracking/billHistory?billName=HF%20598&ga=88) **Siblings in Classes:** this bill requires school administrators to defer to parents of siblings regarding class placement. The bill gives the administrator more authority to appropriately place siblings under certain conditions. The bill was approved by the House 93:5, sending it the Senate Education Committee. Subcommittee Senators Sinclair and Kraayenbrink signed the report, moving the bill to the full Senate Education Committee, with Sen. Giddens opting not to sign the report. RSAI is opposed.

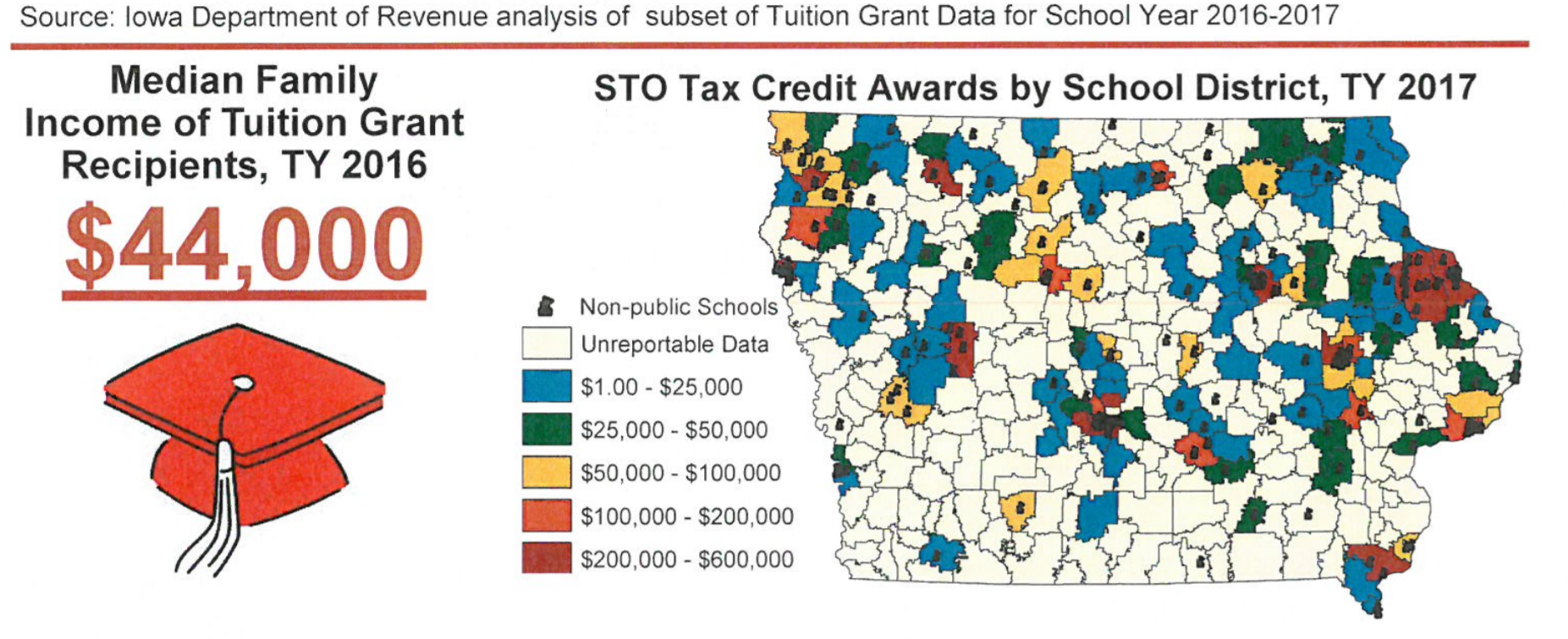
[**SF 603**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf603) **Concurrent Enrollment Math and Science Courses/On-line Learning:** this bill increases weighting for liberal arts concurrent enrollment (community college) course from .045 to .05. Allows districts to meet offer and teach math and science requirements through concurrent enrollment or online courses. Allows nonpublic schools to contract for community college courses directly rather than through the public school via shared students. Replies retroactively to July 1, 2018 for entering into agreements. Clarifies that the regulations apply to courses used to meet offer and teacher requirements rather than to courses specified in the offer and teacher content areas. The bill was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar. As an appropriations bill, it is exempt from the funnel deadlines. RSAI supports.

[**HF 637**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hf637) **Reporting of School Misconduct**: this bill requires school district to report certain school employee misconduct to the Board of Education Examiners within 30 days. The bill was approved 98:0 in the House. Moves to the Senate Education Committee, with a subcommittee of Sens. Cournoyer, Sweeney and Wahls. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill.

[**HF 673**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hf673) **Radon Testing and Mitigation:** this bill requires school boards to conduct a short-term test for radon in school buildings at least once by July 2024 and at least once every five years afterwards, by certified testers (or employees trained to test). Requires mitigation efforts after the second test and biennial testing. Requires new buildings to be radon resistant. Requires DE and DPH to adopt rules. The bill also allows the use of SAVE or PPEL to pay for testing and mitigation. The bill was approved by the House Appropriations Committee, 22:1, placing it on the House Calendar. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill.

**A New Bill Introduced Impacting Private Schools**

[**SSB 1249**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB1249&ga=88) **Tax Administration and Changes:** this is a large bill and we are not weighing in on most of it, but Division 11 is problematic for UEN schools. This division expands School Tuition Organization tax credits to $17 million (currently at $13 million) beginning in tax years starting on or after Jan 1. 2020, which is a 31% increase. These tax credits provide a 65% credit for contributors and funds to private schools to pay tuition for children in families at or below 400% of the federal poverty level, which is just over $100,000 annual income for a family of four. The 400% threshold is effective in 2019, with prior years set at 300%. We would expect the median family income of recipient reported in the following map to increase with that eligibility expansion. The following map is from a report by the Department of Revenue to the Tax Expenditure Committee, dated Jan. 8, 2019 and posted [HERE](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/SD/1023535.pdf).



The STO scholarships are not used in all school districts, especially in those with no private schools. RSAI is registered opposed to Division 11 of SSB 1298.

**Budget Bills**

The House Education Appropriations Subcommittee took initial action on the Education Appropriations Bill, HSB 248, sending it to the full Appropriations Committee with action likely on Monday. Here’s a link to the [NOBA](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/NOBA/1041337.pdf) (Notes on Bills and Amendments) written by LSA fiscal staff to explain the bill. The funding includes $960.8 million associated with appropriations typically funded in the annual Education Appropriations Bill and a net decrease of $6.8 million to standing appropriations typically funded in the annual Standing Appropriations Bill. Although most line items in the bill have status quo funding levels, the following appropriations to DE, which total $13.3 million compared to FY 2019, are either new appropriations or changes in funding impacting school districts and AEAs.

**Appropriations to the Department of Education:**

* An increase of $356,000 for Career and Technical Education Secondary.
* An increase of $1.0 million for Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) General Aid (School Ready Grant).
* An increase of $300,000 for the Statewide Assessment (brings total to $3 million).
* An increase of $1.0 million for the Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (iJAG) program.
* An increase of $500,000 for the Iowa Learning On-Line Initiative.
* An increase of $3.0 million for Children's Mental Health Training.
* An increase of $7.0 million for General Aid for Community Colleges.

**Governor’s Priorities:** The bill also includes appropriations in other areas for STEM and the Future Ready Iowa Initiative, both of which are priorities of the Governor.

**AEA and ISL reductions:** Regarding standing appropriations, the bill reduces the FY 2020 State school aid funding to area education agencies (AEAs) by $15 million. LSA’s explanation: “In addition to the $15,000,000 State aid reduction for FY 2020, the AEAs have an annual statutory reduction of $7,500,000. The State aid reduction to the AEAs will total $22,500,000 for FY 2020. This same amount of reduction was applied to FY 2019 funding.” The bill also Suspends the General Fund standing appropriation of $14.8 million for the Instructional Support Program for FY 2020. That is a continuation of several consecutive years of providing zero state match for ISL.

RSAI is registered as undecided on this bill.

**Bills not moving forward:**

[**SF 209**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf209) **School Citizenship Tests**: This bill requires accredited public and nonpublic schools to offer high school students an opportunity to take the test required by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for US citizenship. The bill requires the DE to identify an alternative for students with special education or English-language learner services. The bill was on the Wednesday Education Committee agenda in the House, but after a brief caucus, Rep. Dolecheck, chair, explained that they were not going to take up the bill in committee that day and likely not next week, by which time the bill would die due to the funnel deadline. RSAI is registered opposed.

**Advocacy Resources**

To find Advocacy Resources such as Calls to Action, Position Papers, RSAI Weekly Legislative Reports and video updates, RSAI Calls to Action when immediate advocacy action is required, testimony presented to the State Board of Education, the DE or any legislative committee or public hearing, and links to fiscal information that may inform your work, visit the RSAI legislative web page here: <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>

Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work:

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515.201.3755 Cell

**Legislator Contact Information follows:** Find out who your legislators are through the interactive map or address search posted on the Legislative Website here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

To call and leave a message at the statehouse during session, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281.3221 and the Senate switchboard operator number is 515.281.3371. You can ask if they are available or leave a message for them to call you back.

**Key Committee Contacts (every name is linked to their legislative email address within the table):**

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| **Senate Education Committee Members:**  [**Amy Sinclair**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/legislator?ga=88&personID=10729)**(R, District**[**14**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/DMP/925098.pdf)**), Chair**  [**Chris Cournoyer**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/legislator?ga=88&personID=27004)**(R, District**[**49**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/DMP/925133.pdf)**), Vice Chair**  [**Herman C. 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