



2023 List of Successes

Despite the overall funding and school choice policy defeats of the 2023 Legislative Session, there are some notable successes for rural schools and students worthy of mention and significant enough to include when thanking Legislators and the Governor for their service:

Teacher/Staff Shortage Policies:

- [HF 256 Educator License Minimum Age](#): allows the BOEE to issue a teaching or substitute license or paraeducator certificate to an individual at least 18 years of age, as long as all necessary degree and certification requirements for the license or certificate are completed.
- [HF 614 BOEE Out of State Licensing](#): allows educators from other states or countries to get an Iowa license under several conditions, expanding the pool of potential educators in Iowa.
- [SF 391 Chapter 12 Flexibility](#): expanded the possibilities for community college instructors to teach high school level courses and for both school teachers and community college instructors to teach sequential units of coursework in the same class period, both of which will help school districts maximize opportunities for students with efficient use of staff time.

Local Control/District Flexibility:

- [HF 68 Education Savings Accounts/School Choice](#): RSAI was registered against this bill, opposed to ESAs, however HF 68 included some provisions benefitting rural schools: 1) the ability to use Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) and Talented and Gifted (TAG) funds for teacher salary supplement (TSS) purposes, 2) removed the mandate for districts to meet the requirements of Iowa Chapter 284 to receive TLC per pupil supplements, 3) extended operational sharing through 2035, and 4) allowed districts of residence to count students receiving an ESA for categorical funds, generating an average of \$1,208 per ESA. This last provision is estimated to generate \$52 million for some public schools. *(However, for some, this benefit may result in reduced resources. The LSA estimated a loss of over 9,600 students from public schools over the next three years, for a reduction of \$84.8 million.)*
- [SF 391 Chapter 12 Flexibility](#): allows school districts to include up to 5 days of virtual learning in their calendar (for make-up snow days or planned dates throughout the year), allowed districts to hire a public librarian for accreditation purposes, removed graduation requirements for a financial literacy credit (restoring graduation requirements to local district discretion), and created more flexibility regarding offer and teach mandates in fine arts and world languages. Overall, the theme of this bill respected the decisions of local leaders to determine how best to meet student needs.

School Funding/High Needs Schools:

- **Standing Limited Appropriation of \$10 million for High-Needs Schools**: in the 2013 Session, the education reform act created an ongoing (standing limited) annual appropriation of \$10 million for schools with high needs, which the DE defined as high poverty, high minority, high English-learner, and large achievement gaps for students. During every legislative session from 2014 through 2022, the legislature delayed the appropriation. This session, there was no action to delay, so the \$10 million will be available for the DE to use in supporting high needs schools to improve student learning.