**RSAI Legislative Update
April 25, 2024**

This RSAI Weekly Report from the final days of the 2024 Legislative Session includes:

* End of the 2024 Legislative Session
* Bills signed by the Governor to date
* Details of Policy Bills to the Governor
* Appropriations bills impacting PK-12 education
* Tax bills
* Advocacy Actions and Resources

**End of the 2024 Legislative Session**

The 2024 Session adjourned “Sine Die”, which means to return without a time certain. Unless there is a compelling emergency under which the Governor or Legislative Leaders would call a special legislative session, they will not return until the second Monday of January 2025. There will be many new Representatives and Senators following retirements and the 2024 General Election. The Governor has 30 days to sign or veto any bills sent to her in the final three days of the Session. It could take days, even weeks, before the final versions of bills actually get to her desk. Stay tuned to your email for any calls to action requesting the Governor to veto pieces of appropriations bills. Otherwise, advocacy will take a short rest, and we will soon begin planning for outreach prior to the election and for the 2025 Session.

**Bills Signed by the Governor to Date**

* [**HF 2152**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2152) **DE Commission on Education Leadership** and Compensation Report 4/10/24
* [**HF 2393**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2393) **Dental Screenings** Exempt from screenings requirements 4/10/24
* [**HF 2612**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2612) **AEA, SSA and TSS** signed 3/27/24
* [**HF 2653**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2653) **Perry Use of Management Fund** for retention incentives 4/5/24
* [**SF 2096**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2096) **Gender Balance Requirements** for Appointed Bodies 4/3/2024
* [**SF 2331**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2331) **Publication Requirements** for Official Publications 4/10/2024
* [**SF 2340**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2340) **Illegal Reentry** into Iowa by Certain Aliens 4/10/2024
* [**HF 555**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf555) **Practice of Pharmacy** (may impact insurance premiums)
* [**HF 2153**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2152) **College Student Aid Commission** Reporting Requirements
* [**HF 2398**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2398) **Insurance Instead of Bonds** for Public Officers
* [**HF 2404**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2404) **DHHS Processes** (includes Mandatory Reporter Training)
* [**HF 2487**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2487) **Mandatory Reporting**, Complaints, Investigations, Grooming Definition and BOEE Responsibilities
* [**HF 2515**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2515) **Therapist, Counselor, Social Worker** Authorization from another jurisdiction
* [**HF 2538**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2538) **Executive Branch Agency Planning**, Reporting and Data Sharing (allows data sharing between agencies such as DE and DOM, requiring DOM to keep confidentiality)
* [**HF 2586**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2586) **School Security Personnel** and Authorizing School Employees to Carry

**Details of Policy Bills to the Governor**

[**HF 255**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF%20255) **Teacher Intern License:** **Teacher Intern Program:** requires a higher education institution offering a program to assist students in getting an intern license from BOEE to include: 1) student must have graduated from an accredited or state-approved college or university and must meet the requirements for an endorsement area approved by the BOEE for a teacher intern license, 2) must submit a with the application to the program a copy of an offer of employment from a school, 3) must complete the required pedagogy training, 4) must work under the supervision of a teacher leader assigned by the district or nonpublic school, including during co-teaching and planning time.

**Teacher Intern License:** adds to current Iowa Code 256.146 section on nontraditional preparation options the requirement for the BOEE to adopt rules for an intern license for a person with a BA degree or higher from an accredited or state-approved college or university, who does not meet the requirements for licensure and requires the rules to include at a minimum 1) issue a teacher license to an intern enrolled in the program and 2) allow teacher interns licensed in the program to apply for an initial teaching license if the school that employed the licensee during their completion of the program and the higher education institution that operated the program recommend that the licensee be allowed to apply for an initial teaching license.

**CTE Secondary Authorization:** requires BOEE to adopt rules allowing an individual seeking a career and technical secondary authorization to apply, and if eligible, be issued the secondary authorization prior to accepting an offer of employment with a school.

**Temporary Initial license for applicants who complete an alternative teacher certification program:** requires BOEE to grant a temporary intern license to applicants meeting all of the following requirements: 1) BA degree from an accredited college or university. 2) at least 60 contact hours in the classroom, of which at least 30 must be teaching in a classroom under a licensed teacher. Allows the applicant to complete any remaining hours as a para-educator or in another relevant role. Requires: 1) the principal in the school to certify completion of contact hours. 2) must successfully complete an intern preparation program that has been approved by BOEE and includes the required content training in the area in which the applicant seeks to be licensed. 3) Requires DE to recommend to the State BOE an alternative teacher certification program be approved or denied within 60 days after application for approval and requires the program to provide sufficient evidence that it meets all of the following requirements:

* Operates in at least five states
* Been in operation for at least ten years
* Incorporates pedagogy training, including an examination, that teaches effective instructional delivery, classroom management and organization, assessment, instructional design and professional learning and leadership.
* Includes administration of the Foundations of Reading assessment and must adhere to the same reporting requirements imposed on higher education institutions.

**Program Approval:** requires that, if the state BOE approves the program, approval must be for seven years, or less if the state BOE determines a shorter time is warranted. Requires approved programs to submit a report to the DE, by March 15 annually, reporting the number of students participating, the number of students completing, retention of students, data that allows the DE to match licensing and employment records in the state, any other information requested by the DE that will allows monitoring and assessment of the quality of the program. Requires that, if the state BOE denies the program, the BOE must provide advice concerning the areas in which the program needs to improve or changes the program otherwise needs to make in order for approval. Requires the State BOE to allow the program to present factual information concerning the program at a regularly scheduled meeting of the BOE within three months of denial. Requires a six-month waiting period before a denied program can reapply. Requires the reapplication to include information showing issues needing correction or change have been addressed.

**Teacher Intern Program Completers:** authorizes individuals who have successfully completed a teacher intern licensure program to teach in the subjects and grade levels that the individual successfully completed during the program. Prohibits the successful intern from providing instruction to students with special education services until the individual successfully completes a practicum related to special education instruction that includes short-term field experiences in education settings connect to specific coursework. Requires the state BOE to treat individuals with the temporary intern license on par with individual with an initial teaching license.

**RSAI was initially opposed to HF 255.** With the addition of required pedagogy, classroom experience, and protection for special education students, **RSAI registered undecided**.

[**HF 2465**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2465) **Agriculture Unit Requirements Flexibility**: **Science:** allows up to two of the five units of required science instruction to be related to agriculture, taught either through dedicated units of coursework or coursework meeting the requirements of career and technical education (CTE) course offerings. Requires State Board of Education rules to implement this requirement. **Mathematics:** Allows up to two additional units of math may include instruction related to applied sciences, technology, engineering, or manufacturing, including transportation, distribution, logistics, architecture, and construction, which may be offered and taught through dedicated units of coursework or through CTE courses. Requires State Board of Education rules to implement this requirement. **Charter Schools:** prohibits the State BOE from waiving content standards allowing the use of agriculture coursework to meet science or math offer and teach requirements and requires charter schools be subject to and comply with these course requirements. **RSAI supports**.

[**HF 2487**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2487) **Mandatory Reporter Requirements:** Adds grooming behavior to the list of inappropriate relationships with students for purposes of licensure violation. Changes the language in Iowa Code 256.160 (1)(a) regarding reporting to BOEE of behavior leading to the nonrenewal or termination of employment from a romantic relationship to a sexual or physical relationship with a student, grooming behavior toward a student. Also adds being on the premises or at a school-sponsored activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal drugs, unauthorized drugs, or alcohol, or abusing a student to the list of offenses which a district, AEA or accredited nonpublic school must report to BOEE. **Definitions**: defines “grooming behavior” as any behavior, in light of all relevant circumstances, constitutes actions to entice or entrap a student or students with the intent to make such student or students engage in a sex act. Defines “inappropriate relationship” as any of the following: 1) an unprofessional relationship for an educator to have with a student, 2) a sexual relationship, 3) a relationship in which sexual harassment or any form of physical or sexual abuse occurs, 4) a relationship that is not in compliance with generally accepted educational practices. Defines “misconduct” as an action disqualifying an applicant for a license or requiring the license of a person to be revoked or suspended in accordance with the rules adopted by the BOEE. **Process for Complaints:** the bill strikes the language from HF 430 enacted in the 2023 Session requiring the DE to develop an investigation process to instead move the language to Iowa Code 256.146 which is the Board of Educational Examiners now under the DE pursuant to state government reorganization also enacted in the 2023 Session. **New Provisions:** adds personal information regarding investigation of non-licensed employees also be kept confidential. Adds a new requirement that if investigative information in the possession of the BOEE or is employees or agents indicates a crime has been committed by either a licensee or a non-licensed school employee, the board is required to report the information to the proper law enforcement agency. **RSAI registered as undecided**.

[**HF 2539**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2539) **Open Meetings Violations:** excludes the gathering of local government body that is hosted or organized by a political party, political candidate or civic organization from the definition of an open meeting. **Penalties:** Increases penalties for each member of a governmental body participating in an open meetings violation to at least $500 and no more than $2,500 (prior thresholds were no lower than $100 and no higher than $500.) Increases the penalties for such members if they knowingly participated in a violation, not less than $5,000 or more than $12,500 (prior thresholds for a knowing violation no lower than $1,000 or higher than $2,000.) **Member Actions to Prevent Damages in Current Code**: Section [21.6](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/21.6.pdf) subsection 3(a) states that a member of a local government body shall not be assessed damages if the member did any of the following: 1) voted against the closed session, 2) had good reason to believe and in good faith believed facts which, if true, would have indicated compliance with all requirements of the open meetings law, 3) reasonably relied upon a decision of a court, formal opinion of the IPIB, attorney general, or attorney for the governmental body, given in writing, or as memorialized in the minutes of the meeting at which a formal oral opinion was given, or an advisory opinion of IPIB , the AG or attorney for the governmental body, given in writing. **RSAI registered as undecided.**

[**HF 2545**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2545)**Core Curriculum and Social Studies:**

**Division I Comprehensive Review of Education Standards:** Requires DE Director to conduct a comprehensive review of high school graduation requirements, core curriculum, and education standards. **Recommendations and Report:** requires recommendations for policy changes in a report, which must include: 1) a plan to regularly review and revise ELA, math, science, and social studies standards, with a focus on US History, western civilization and civics, 2) a plan to make Iowa’s standards the best in the nation, 3) input from relevant stakeholders including parents and teachers, 4) a plan to increase the quality of the instructional curriculum, 5) a plan to maximize local flexibility in graduation requirements and course offerings while maintaining a goal that all high school graduates have necessary skills at graduation, 6) identification of opportunities to equip high school graduates with sufficient knowledge of civics and US history, including principles reflected in the Constitution, so that high school students are capable of discharging the responsibilities associated with US Citizenship, 7) a statewide literacy plan to increase student proficiency using systematic and sequential approaches to teaching phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension and a requirement that the statewide literacy plan shall address standards for practitioner preparation programs that promote evidence-based reading instruction and practical application that are direct, systematic, explicit, responsive, and consist of phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension. Requires that standards shall not include instruction or practical application designed to teach students using the instructional model commonly known as the three-cuing system. Also requires the core curriculum and standards must comply with [Iowa Code 279.74](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/279.74.pdf) regarding race and sex scapegoating and stereotyping and certain prohibited defined concepts. **Process Requirements of the Review**: requires the review to provide the opportunity for public and interested stakeholder comments at each committee meeting and requires the director to collect and compile the comments. Requires the director to convene committees to assist in the review and provide recommendations in the subject area standards. DE director is required to determine the membership of each committee, but must include four legislators as nonvoting members (one senator from each party and one representative from each party appointed by legislative leadership.) Requires the director submit an initial report by Dec. 31, 2024. The final report including policy changes is due to the Governor and Legislature by July 1, 2025.

**Division II State Board of Education (BOE) Core Curriculum Process:** requires the State BOE to adopt a core curriculum but does not require the adoption go through the official administrative rules review process (according to DE staff, this change in Iowa Code 256.7(26)(a) conforms with current process) and requires that State BOE to use the administrative rules review process for adopting high school graduation requirements. Requires rules adopted before the effective date of this Division remain effective until modified or rescinded by action of the State BOE.

**Division III State BOE Social Studies Standards Review**: requires the State BOE to review and revise core state social studies standards, with a focus on US History, government, founding philosophies and principles, important historical figures, western civilization, and civics. Requires the revised standards include all of the following, at a minimum:

1. US federal and republican form of government, including branches and structure of the US federal government, division of power between branches and between federal and state governments, a comparison to alternative forms of government and the crimes against humanity that occurred under communist regimes since 1917.
2. Rights and responsibilities of US and Iowa citizens, including civic virtues displayed in the lives of exemplary Americans.
3. History of US and Iowa, including
	* political, diplomatic and military history of US (including exemplary Americans important to such events), beginning with discovery of the western hemisphere through the present, including but not limited to founding fathers, the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and the War on Terrorism, including Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.
	* the founding of Iowa, famous Iowans and their involvement in important events in history.
	* Secular and religious ideals and institutions of liberty, including political, religious, economic, social and cultural liberty, in western civilization, the US and the state of Iowa.
4. Exemplary figures and important events in western civilization, the US and the state of Iowa including but not limited to the history of ancient Israel, the free Greek city-states, the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, medieval Europe, Columbus and the Age of Discovery, World Wars I and II and instruction related to the Holocaust and the Cold War.
5. Important historical and founding documents to the US and the State of Iowa, including but not limited to the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the US and amendments to the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the Emancipation Proclamation.

Requires the DE Director, or designee, to present the revised social studies standards to the State BOE for adoption on or before December 31, 2025.

**Division IV Education Standards for Grades Seven and Eight:** adds instruction related to civics in what must be taught in 7th and 8th grade social studies.

**RSAI registered as undecided.**

[**HF 2586**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2586) **School Security Personnel/Armed School Staff:** Requires large districts (greater than 8,000 enrollment) to employ or retain the services of a school resource officer, a security officer employed by a private security business or by the district in schools serving 9th, 10th, 11th and/or 12th grade students, unless the school board votes not to. Encourages smaller districts to have such staff. Requires school security officers and staff to participate in annual live firearms scenario training and quarterly live firearms training approved by the Iowa Department of Public Safety (DPS). **Armed School Staff:** allows school employees to be issued a permit, after completing required firearms training. Requires school security staff to complete one-time in-person legal training on qualified immunity and receive annual emergency medical training and communication training approved by DPS. Also requires annual live scenario training and quarterly firearm training for these staff. **Immunity:** gives school employees qualified immunity from criminal or civil liability for all damages incurred due to application of reasonable force at the place of employment. Requires the employee’s identification be confidential and not a public record. This bill was further amended by HF 2652 to require the DPS to adopt administrative rules to administer this legislation. ***Note:*** *this bill does not authorize school staff to individually decide to carry weapons on school grounds, but applies only if a school board enacts a policy authorizing staff to carry on school grounds.* **RSAI registered as undecided.**

[**HF 2618**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2618)**Literacy Initiative:** Requires teacher preparation programs to administer the Foundations in Literacy test to students and report scores to the Department of Education no later than by Aug. 1 annually. Requires the DE to compile a report and publish it on the DE’s website. (Does not require students to have a passing score for either a diploma or license.) Requires schools to notify parents if their K-6 student is not proficient in reading, including the parent’s authority to request retention of the student. Requires retention if the parent requests it. Requires the school to develop an individualized reading plan and continue with the plan until proficient through the 6th grade. **RSAI registered as undecided.**

[**HF 2652**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2652)**School Security: Radios:** Authorizes schools to purchase mobile panic systems that can connect with public safety answering points and law enforcement (911). Requires schools to have a hand-held radio in each school building that can access public safety answering points. **Safety:** Requires schools to do comprehensive safety reviews of school buildings. Requires safety reviews to be submitted to the state patrol and local police. Deems such reviews as confidential. **Firearms Detection:** Allows SAVE fund to pay for gun detection technology. Requires that gun detection technology be certified as anti-terrorism technology by Homeland Security. **Guns:** Instead of the grant program originally included, the final bill allows the use of professional development funds for training if a school board authorizes staff to carry guns. **Security Officers**: Requires school board of districts with a total enrollment of at least 8,000 students to employ, or retain the services of, at least one private school security officer or school resource officer to guard each attendance center where students enrolled in grades 9, 10, 11 or 12 regularly attend classes, unless a majority of school board of directors of the school district vote to not employ or retain a private school security officer or a school resource officer. Requires those security personnel to participate in the annual live-scenario training and quarterly live-firearms training approved by the DPS. (3)**Other:** Requires the DPS, with the DE and the DHHS/DE, to establish a task force on school safety standards and requires a report by December 2024. Prohibits schools from issuing bonds for school building projects that are not in compliance. Allows the use of SAVE funds instead for technology and safety equipment but not for staff. Requires schools to maintain infrastructure and requires infrastructure be approved as anti-terrorist. **RSAI registered as undecided.**

[**SF 2368**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF2368) **Charter Schools:** this bill addresses the funding formula requirements for funding to follow students and the sale of real property by school districts.

**Division I Funding Formula**: requires money to follow students to charter schools (Iowa Code 256.E8) and via open enrollment (Iowa Code 282.18), including the current year state cost per pupil (SCPP). Current law requires the prior year state cost per pupil. Also requires current year categorical per pupil supplements of professional development supplement SCPP and early intervention supplement SCPP. (Teacher leadership and Compensation per pupil categorical funds already follows students to charter school and receiving districts, but PD and EICS are new requirements in this bill.) Requires ELL weighting generated by the student to be multiplied by the current year SCPP. Although the Governor’s bill also included a requirement for TSS to follow students, that was not included in the enacted version of the bill.

**Division II Sale of Property:** requires school districts to post information on the district’s website including: 1) square footage of each school building owned by the school district, 2) enrollment capacity of each attendance center owned by the district, 3) how each school building owned by the school district is currently utilized by the district, and 4) school buildings owned by the district that are vacant. Prohibits a school board from entering into any agreement that prohibits the sale of real property to an educational institution. Requires a school district to sell real property to an educational institution if the educational institution is the highest bidder. Defines “educational institution” to include: 1) a school district, 2) a nonpublic school, 3) a charter school, 4) a charter or innovation zone school, 5) an institution of higher education under control of the state Board of Regents, 6) a community school, 7) a state training school, or 8) an accreditated private college. Specifies that Iowa Code 25B.2 regarding unfunded mandates does not apply to this bill.

**Division III Participation in Athletics:** **Virtual Charter Schools:** specifies that students in virtual charter schools can participate in up to two extracurricular activities in their district of residence under the same conditions and requirements as the students enrolled in the district of residence. The district of residence may approve a student’s participation in additional activities. Requires the student to comply with the eligibility, conduct and other requirements relating to the activity that are required for any resident student who applies to participate or who is participating in the activity. Allows the district of residence to charge the Virtual Charter school up to $250 per activity per semester. Specifies that for cocurricular activities, one semester equals one activity. Defines extracurricular activities to include interscholastic athletics, music, drama and any other activity with a general fund expenditure exceeding $5,000 annually. Allows the district to charge the student a fee for participation equivalent to the fee charged to and paid in the same manner by resident students.

**State Authorized Charter Schools:** allows a charter school that does not offer extracurricular activities to form an agreement with any public school, nonpublic school or other charter school to provide the activities to the charter school students. Requires a copy of the agreement to be sent to the appropriate organization defined in Iowa Code 280.13 not later than April 30 of the preceding year, unless exception is granted by the organization for good cause. Allows the organization to deny the agreement within 10 days of receipt. Requires the organization to determine whether an agreement would substantially prejudice the interscholastic activities of other schools. Allows an appeal of the denial by the charter school to the State Board of Education. The bill does not mandate that public schools partner with charter schools.

**RSAI opposed this bill.**

[**SF 2411**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF2411) **Work-based Learning:** RSAI followed two specific divisions of this bill.

**Division II CTE credit for Work-based Learning:** provides that instructional programs under Iowa Code section 256.11(5)(h)(1) related to CTE may include work-based learning. Allows instructional programs that include work-based learning to be provided when school is not in session.

**Division III Student Teaching**: Allows a student participating in a 14-week student teaching experience to be credited between 1 week and 10 weeks for prior work experience as a substitute teacher or a para-educator, including prior experience under the TPRA grant program, if the following conditions are met:

* The BOEE has issued a substitute license, substitute authorization, or para-educator certificate to the student.
* The student's prior work experience took place in the classroom of a cooperating teacher who is appropriately licensed in the subject area and grade level endorsement for which the student is being prepared.
* The student bears the primary responsibility for planning, instruction, and assessment within the classroom during the student teaching experience.

Allows a student participating in a 14-week student teaching experience to be credited between 1 week and 14 weeks for work experience as a para-educator if the following conditions are met:

* The BOEE has issued a para-educator certificate to the student.
* The student works as a para-educator for at least one-half of each school day during the student teaching experience.
* The student's work experience takes place in the classroom of a cooperating teacher who is appropriately licensed in the subject area and grade level endorsement for which the student is being prepared.
* The student bears the primary responsibility for planning, instruction, and assessment within the classroom during the student teaching experience.

**RSAI was registered in support of these two divisions.**

**Appropriations Bills Impacting PK-12 Education**

[**SF 2443**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2443) **Standings Appropriations**: *this bill was introduced, processed through appropriations committees, and approved in both chambers, all after midnight on Friday.* Here are the provisions impacting education:

* A new appropriation of $14 million for the 2024-25 school year (one-time funding) for additional compensation for education support personnel defined according to HF 2612. Requires these funds to be miscellaneous income. HF 2612 requires that the district apply for this funding and provide information requested by DE about educational support staff. The funding is distributed per pupil based on budget enrollment.
* Continues current practice of limiting standing appropriations
	+ $8.997 million for nonpublic school pupil transportation
	+ Zero for state contribution to instructional support
* Requires proration of the $7.5 million statutory reduction to AEA s be apportioned to school districts and AEAs based on how those funds are allocated after changes to AEA funding. Also continues the reduction of $15 million and an additional $10 million to AEAs, also prorated to AEA and district allocations accordingly. *NOTE: in the past, reductions to AEAs were applied to AEA state funding, which is special education, but allowed AEAs to use media and education services funding for special education purposes. Since media and education services money goes in part to school districts in the 2024-25 school year (60%), and totally in the 2025-26 school year, these funds will necessarily result in reduced special education resources.*
* Specifies that the 12-years of experience benchmark for the higher teacher pay minimum ($60,000 for FY 2024-25 and $62,000 for FY 205-26) is based on 12 years of experience as of July 1, 2024 and July 1, 2025 respectively.

**RSAI did not register on this bill.**

[**SF 2435**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF%202435) **Education Appropriations**, as approved by both chambers and finished Friday. The following information comes from the Legislative Services Agency’s Notes on Bills and Amendments, known as the **SF 2435** [**NOBA**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/NOBA/1448874.pdf). **Division II: 2024-25 Appropriations-Department of Education**

* **Department of Education:** Appropriates $434.1 million from the General Fund and 418.4 FTE positions. This is an increase of $22.8 million and 67.3 FTE positions (62 of which are for the new Division of Special Education).

DE provides oversight, supervision, and support for the State education system, including all of the following, the last four of which were added to DE’s area of authority in the 2023 State Government Reorganization bill:

* + Public elementary and secondary schools.
	+ Community Colleges.
	+ Area Education Agencies (AEAs).
	+ Elementary and secondary schools under the purview of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
	+ Nonpublic schools that receive State accreditation.
	+ Teacher preparation programs.
	+ *The Board of Educational Examiners.*
	+ *The College Student Aid Commission.*
	+ *The Iowa School for the Deaf Iowa.*
	+ *Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI).*
* The General Fund changes for appropriations to the DE and some status quo items include:
	+ An increase of $1,028,578 for the Department of Education Administration.
	+ An increase of $123,582 for Career and Technical Education Administration (serves as part of the overall maintenance-of-effort requirement to receive federal Perkins funding).
	+ An increase of $500,000 for Jobs for America’s Graduates (iJAG)
	+ An increase of $7,000,000 for General Aid for Community Colleges.
	+ An increase of $285,543 for the Iowa School for the Deaf.
	+ An increase of $119,851 for the Education Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
	+ A new appropriation of $10.0 million for a new Special Education Division under the Department of Education. (This provision was further amended by SF 2443 Standings Appropriations to state that the $10 million and 62 FTEs for the Division of Special Education was for general supervision, oversight, compliance, employee salaries, support, maintenance and miscellaneous purposes within the AEA regions and DE main office.)
	+ A new appropriation of $2,176,458 for the establishment of the Professional Development fund in the DE to provide free mandated PD.
	+ An increase of $150,000 for the Future Ready Skills Workforce Grant Program
	+ Maintains the current level of funding of $3,383,936 to AEAs to provide mental health awareness training for educators and support mental health needs of students.
	+ Maintains the current level of funding of $650,000 to the Teach Iowa Scholar Program, which offers an income bonus or student loan repayment to recent graduates of teacher prep programs who teach in eligible teaching fields, as designated by DE, at a school district or AEA for up to five years. To be eligible, teachers must graduate in the top 25% of their class within the teacher prep program and secure full-time employment in the coming school year at local school district or AEA in a designated teaching field.
	+ Maintains the current level of funding of $23,927,005 for the Future Ready Iowa Skilled Workforce last-dollar scholarship program, which provides financial assistance to students attending community colleges or accredited private nonprofit institutions and enroll in program of study leading up to a postsecondary credential, aligned with a high-demand job as designated by Iowa Workforce Development or a community college (many teaching positions are on that list).
	+ Maintains the current level of funding of $520,000 to DE for the Mental Health Practitioner Loan Repayment Program.
	+ Maintains the current level of funding of $1,500,000 to UNI to recruit additional students to participate in educational opportunities that lead to teacher licensure.
* **Division IV Standing Appropriations** **including the Programs for At-Risk Children:** Limits the standing appropriation under Iowa Code section 279.51 for at-risk children to $10,524,389 (overrides the General Fund appropriation of $12,606,196 specified in Iowa Code section 279.51. Prorates among the programs. (No change compared to FY 2024.)
* **Division V State Program Allocation including the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program**: Maintains required allocations for FY 2025.
	+ $508,250 for issuance of National Board Certification awards per IC 256.44. Of this amount, not less than $85,000 is used to administer the ambassador to education position per IC 256.45 (also known as the Iowa Teacher of the Year.)
	+ $728,216 PD requirements of chapter 284, including developing model evidence for teach quality committees and evaluator training (allows DE to use a portion of funds for administration of this requirement and up to 4 FTEs).
	+ $1,077,810 Teacher Development academies.
	+ $50,000 Fine Art Teacher Mentoring Program.
	+ $626,191 to DE for a Delivery System in conjunction with AEAs to assist with teacher career development and leadership (allows DE to use a portion of funds for administration of this requirements and up to 5 FTEs).
	+ $10,000,000 for High Needs Schools grants was again delayed a year, so requires appropriation beginning July 1, 2025 (allows no more than $100,000 for DE administration and 1 FTE).

**Other Policy Language**

* **Division II:** Requires the General Fund appropriation to DE for **Early Head Start** projects to be used for the implementation and expansion of Early Head Start pilot projects addressing the comprehensive cognitive, social, emotional, and developmental needs of children from birth to three years of age, including prenatal support for qualified families. Requires the projects to promote healthy prenatal outcomes and healthy family functioning, and to strengthen the development of infants and toddlers in low-income families.
* **Division II:** Requires DE to provide **reading assessments** for prekindergarten through grade six to identify students not proficient in reading. Allows the DE to charge school districts for the cost of the assessment, which school districts may pay out of Early Intervention Funds. (NOBA states: Currently, the DE provides the assessments at no cost to schools. Local school districts use universal screening and progress monitoring assessments and store student performance data on a statewide database.)
* **Division II:** Allows unexpended monies from the **Iowa Reading Research Center**, from the nonpublic concurrent enrollment payments to community colleges, and from the Therapeutic Classroom Incentive Fund for FY 2025 to remain available for expenditure in FY 2026.
* **Division VI**: Allows DE to transfer unencumbered or unobligated funds from the FY 2024 General Fund appropriation for the Therapeutic Classroom Transportation Claims Reimbursement to the **Therapeutic Classroom Incentive Fund** before the close of the fiscal year. Effective on enactment.

**Division VII: Chronic Absenteeism Provisions.** This division addresses chronic absenteeism and truancy.

* **Board Policy:** it requires school boards to have policies and allows policies to be more stringent than required. Requires the policies to contain: 1) how the board of directors determines whether a child is chronically absent, 2) different interventions the board may use when a child is chronically absent, 3) different penalties associated with a child being chronically absent.
* **Exceptions:** requires the policies not apply to students who have completed graduation requirements or attained a G.E.D, who are excused for sufficient reason by any court or record or judge, for absences while attending religious services or receiving religious instruction, who are unable to attend school due to a legitimate medical reason, or who has an IEP or 504 plan that affects attendance.
* **County Attorney**: requires the county attorney of the county where the school’s administrative office is located to be responsible for enforcement and requires any actions to be instituted in that county. Specifies that anyone who violates the terms of an absenteeism prevention plan or refuses to participate in a school engagement meeting commits a public offense. Defines a child who violates the terms of an absenteeism prevention plan, or refuses to participate in a school engagement meeting, is a child in need of assistance and allows that to be the sole basis for a CINA petition and immediate referral to DHHS for investigation. Also allows the county attorney, if a child is chronically absent, to make an immediate referral to DHHS and if the investigation warrants, file a family in need of assistance petition, or a CINA complaint, even if the child is otherwise compliant.
* **Definitions:** defines “truant” as a child for whom exceptions don’t apply who has been absent from school, for any reason, for at least 20% of days or hours in the grading period. Defines “chronically absent” as absent from school for 10% of days or hours in a grading period established by the school. “School official” means an employee of a public school whose job duties involve identifying children at-risk for becoming chronically absent, creating interventions to limit the rate of student absenteeism and participating in the legal process related to student absenteeism.
* **Process for notification**: requires the school official to notify the county attorney (mail or email) and send notice by certified mail to child’s parent/guardian/legal custodian or to emancipated minor, including information related to the child’s absences and the policies and disciplinary processes associated with additional absences. Specifies conditions under which the notice may be sent earlier, if the county attorney and school board agree on a number of absences to trigger the notification and if the number is included in the student handbook.
* **School Engagement Meeting**: if student is absent 15% or more of days/hours in the grading period, requires the school official to attempt to find the cause for the absences and initiate and participate in a school engagement meeting, the purpose of which is to identify barriers to attendance and determine appropriate interventions. Allows the school to initiate the meeting before 15%. Requires the child, the child’s parent/guardian, and a school official to participate in the meeting. Requires creation of the **absenteeism prevention plan** during this meeting, requires all to sign it, and get a copy. The plan must identify the causes and any future responsibilities for each participant. Requires the school official to monitor compliance, and requires the school official to contact the participants at least once each week during the remainder of the school calendar. Allows the participants to initiate referrals to any series or counseling believed to be appropriate under the child’s circumstances. Requires the county attorney to initiate a proceeding (public offense and/or CINA) if participants fail to enter into an absenteeism prevention plan, violate a term of the plan, or fail to participate in the school engagement meeting. Does not require this process for students in home school (Independent Instruction or Competent Private Instruction).
* **Repeals Mediation Requirement**: Repeals Iowa Code 299.5A requirements for mediation agreement regarding truancy.
* **Unfunded mandate**: Specifies that districts must pay the cost of compliance with state foundation aid and states that no additional state foundation aid is necessary for full implementation.

**Division VIII Open Enrollment:** reinstates the March 1 open enrollment application deadline for 1-12 and Sept. 1 for kindergarten. Will apply to applications for open enrollment made after the enactment date of the bill (July 1, 2024). Adds truancy status as a reason for a receiving school board to prohibit a student from enrolling. **Good Cause Exceptions:** Specifies good cause exceptions (change in child’s residence due to change in family residence, change in residence from one parent to another, change in the state in which the family residence is located, change in parents’ marital status, guardianship or custody proceeding, placement in foster care, adoptions, foreign exchange program participation, initial placement of PK student in special education program requiring specially designed instruction, or participation in a substance use disorder or mental health treatment program, change in accreditation status of resident district, or permanent closure of a nonpublic schools, revocation of a charter school contract, failure of negotiations or rejection of current whole grade sharing agreement or reorganization plan. Another code section creates exemptions from the deadline if a student is a victim of founded bullying or harassment in their district of residence). **Processes,** **Disputes and Appeals:** Explains processes and requires DE mediation if there’s a dispute. Parent may also appeal to the State Board of Education within 30 days of district denial to open enroll. The bill allows the parent to withdraw the open enrollment request at any time prior to the beginning of the school year, and allows student to return to the district of residence at any time during the school year. Allows receiving district to prohibit a truant pupil from remaining enrolled and from enrolling in the district in the future. Requires the sending district to enroll that pupil. Exempts requests to open enroll to virtual schools from the March 1 application deadline established in Division VIII.

**Division IX DEI:** defines diversity, equity and inclusion, diversity, equity and inclusion office and public institution of higher learning governed by the State Board of Regents. Prohibits such public institutions, except as required by federal law or accreditation standards from certain DEI activities and prohibits public institutions from expending moneys on DEI-related activities. (*This division does not apply to public school districts.*)

**Division XIV Open Enrollment State Aid:** creates the option for school districts for whom the percentage of students enrolled in the school district as a result of open enrollment is equal to or greater than 45.0% of the total number of students enrolled in the school district, to request modified supplemental amount (spending authority) from the SBRC. School districts may be granted a modified FY 2025 supplemental amount (MSA). A MSA cannot be granted in an amount that exceeds 50.0% of the net change in the following resulting from open enrollment: difference between the district’s regular program district cost per pupil minus the regular program State cost per pupil, TSS district cost per pupil, PD supplement district cost per pupil, and Early intervention/Class size supplement district cost per pupil. Requires a public hearing and the publication of a notice of public hearing to be done prior to the request. Prohibits districts from increasing the combined property tax rate for FY 2026 due to an MSA if doing so would cause the school district levies’ for the budget year to exceed the combined property tax rate for FY 2025. A school district is not eligible for additional MSA if a majority of the students open enrolling into the district are students receiving online instruction from a private provider under Iowa Code section 256.43. Specifies school districts are only eligible for the open enrollment MSA in FY 2025. The LSA estimates granting MSA associated with this request would increase school district spending authority statewide by an estimated total of $1.9 million beginning with FY 2025.

**RSAI was registered as undecided on this bill but had specifically lobbied in support of reinstating the open enrollment deadline and $10 million annual appropriation for High Needs Schools.**

**Tax Bills**

**SF 2442 Income Tax Reduction**: Division I Individual Income tax accelerates the reduction of a flat tax rate and lowers the rate to 3.8% which first applies to the 2025 Tax Year. The individual income tax rates of SF 2442 are expected to reduce income taxes and state General Fund revenues and school income surtaxes as reported in the [Fiscal Note](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/1449617.pdf):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fiscal Year Impact | Income Tax / State General Fund Reduction | School Income Surtax Reduction |
| FY 2025 | $382.5 million | $8.1 million |
| FY 2026 | $605.3 million | $15.0 million |
| FY 2027 | $97.0 million | $2.4 million |
| FY 2028 | $96.8 million | $2.4 million |
| FY 2029 | $99.5 million | $2.5 million |
| FY 2030 | $102.4 million | $2.5 million |

School boards will have the option during the budgeting process to set a higher income surtax rate to generate the same revenue or to shift the impact to local property taxes. Income surtax are used to offset what would otherwise be property taxes for the instructional support levy (ISL) or the physical plant and equipment levy (PPEL).

**Division II Targeted Jobs Withholding Credit:** estimated state general fund impact in FY 2025 of $120,000 increasing to $960,000 by FY 2023.

**Division III Franchise Tax Changes:** fiscal impact cannot be determined

**Division IV Property Tax Procedures:**

* Changes the deadline for political subdivisions to file report with DOM from march 15 at 4:00 p.m. to March 5 containing all necessary information for DOM to compile and calculate amounts required to be included in the statements sent out to property tax owners and taxpayers in that subdivision. If a city or county fails to meet the deadline, that city’s or county’s tax levy is limited to the previous year’s budget amount.
* Changes the deadline for county auditors to send an individual statement containing information related to property taxes from March 20 to March 15.
* Changes the property tax statements examples to require assessment value of $300,000 for residential property and 110% of residential and commercial property in the current fiscal year compared to budget year. Requires future statements to include a percent change in property taxes owed from the current fiscal year example to the budgeted year example. Requires all statements include a link to DOMs Internet site.

**RSAI did not register on this bill.**

**Advocacy Actions & Resources**

* **Send a thank you note to a legislator.** RSAI will soon publish a list of legislative actions that aligned with our priority requests, that members can refer to throughout the Interim when preparing to meet with legislators. Send a note to the Governor as well, for policies originating from her office that were improved along the way to benefit schools and students.
* **Watch for the RSAI 2024 Legislative Digest.** We will publish later this summer, after Governor Reynolds has finished signing and vetoing bills. This digest will document all legislation impacting schools, indicate what actions local districts must take to comply with mandates, share information about task forces and public hearings where your voice can be heard, detail information about important bills that died, and include advocacy resources.
* **Watch for the RSAI legislative priority survey.** Your school board is encouraged to share their priorities with RSAI for our planning process this summer, when the Legislative Committee will meet, review the Session, consider district requests for future priorities, and prepare a draft platform for the 2025 Legislative Session to be approved by the RSAI Steering Committee at the November annual meeting.

**Connecting with Legislators:** Most legislators stop regularly checking their legislative email during the Interim, so it’s important to get their home contact information to use from now until the 2025 Session starts.Find legislator contact information at home from the Legislative Website at: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators>. 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>. Stay tuned for more information about candidates running in the general election in November, which we will share as soon as the information is available from the Iowa Secretary of State’s office.

**RSAI Advocacy Resources:** Check out the RSAI Website at <https://www.rsaia.org/2024-legislative-session.html> to find Advocacy Resources such as Position Papers, RSAI Weekly Legislative Recap Reports and Videos, 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. Be sure to review the [2024 RSAI Advocacy Handbook](https://nebula.wsimg.com/4db9cbaa2277bd686c52a89e1982108e?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1), which is also available on the RSAI website.

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