**RSAI Legislative Update
April 29, 2019**

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

* **Legislation Impacting Schools: Final Week Action**
* **Clarity about IPERS and City/County Property Tax Proposals**
* **What’s next for bills to the Governor?**
* **Begin Advocacy Cycle again for 2020: RSAI Summer Regional Meetings**
* **Advocacy Resources: 2019 Legislative Digest will be Published after Governor’s Action**

**No RSAI Capitol Recap Update Video this week**

The Legislature adjourned Sine Die on Saturday, completing the 2019 Session with several education priority bills moving forward. RSAI will compile a Digest of the 2019 Session activity impacting schools, distributed after the Governor’s action to veto or approved bills sent to her after the Session is adjourned Sine Die. From the US Senate Glossary, adjournment *Sine Die* - The end of a legislative session "without day.", *which means there is no scheduled day to return.* These adjournments are used to indicate the final adjournment of an annual or the two-year session of a Congress.

**Legislation Impacting Schools: Final Week Action**

[**HF 546**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hf546) **SAVE Progresses to the Governor**

The Senate approved the Ways and Means Committee amendment to increase PTER diversion to 30%. The full Senate passed the bill, 48:2, with Sens. Chapman and Zaun voting no. The House concurred with the Senate Amendment, with 95 in favor, 4 voting no (Isenhart, Running-Marquardt, Shipley and Wheeler) and 1 absent/not voting Abdul-Samad. Post Session Advocacy Action: Send a thank you to your representative and senator for their action to get this bill to the Governor. RSAI supports.

[**SF 139**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf139) **Financial Literacy Implementation:** this bill was amended in the House, making the ½ unit of financial literacy graduation requirement apply to the class of 2020-21, 96 in favor and two opposed (Moore and Shipley) with 2 absent/not voting (Abdul-Samad and Upmeyer). The Senate concurred 50:0, sending the bill to the Governor. RSAI supports.

[**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 Senate concurred with the House amendment, sending it to the Governor. *Note: ILO funding through the DE budget was eliminated by the Senate, and the House agreed, making ILO courses potentially unavailable in the 2019-20 school year.* RSAI supports.

[**HF 596**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/billTracking/billHistory?billName=HF%20596&ga=88) **Whole Grade Sharing and Reorganization Incentives:** this bill extends the WGS and Reorganization incentives for five years. Currently, school districts that participate in whole grade sharing and joint employment which jointly adopt a resolution to study reorganization are eligible to receive supplementary weighting of up to 0.1 per student for three years. Additionally, if the school districts reorganize, they may be eligible to receive the supplementary weighting for a total of six years. In addition to supplementary weighting, school districts that reorganize may be eligible for a uniform levy rate reduction for three years. This bill extends these reorganization provisions authorized on or before July 1, 2019, to July 1, 2024. The Senate agreed with the House bill, sending it to the Governor. RSAI supports.

[**SF 603**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf603) **Concurrent Enrollment/STEM:** this bill increases the supplementary weighting for liberal arts concurrent enrollment courses from .46 to .50. The bill allows a district with an agreement with a community college that provides a course or teacher employed by the community college for a math or a science course, to use that course to meet Offer and Teach Requirements. The House amended the bill to require a good faith effort to hire an appropriately licensed teacher for the course. The bill was approved in the House, 57:38, and the Senate concurred, 48:0, sending it to the Governor. RSAI supports.

[**HF 609**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hf609) **ISL** **Legalizing Act;** this billis a legalizing act for a school district instructional support levy that missed a budget timeline, but for which no petition arose following the 28-day waiting period. The House approved it 96:1, the Senate agreed, 48:0, sending it to the Governor. RSAI supports.

[**HF 758**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=hf758) **Education Appropriations;** this billappropriates funds for many purposes in education, including community college general aid, funding for regents universities, funding for the college student aid commission and the DE. The bill includes $3.0 million for state assessment, of which no more than $300,000 may be used for nonpublic schools participating in the assessment. After negotiations, the bill as amended appropriates $2.7 million to the AEAs for MH training and supports and eliminates $500,000 appropriation for Iowa Learning Online. See a full explanation of every line item in the bill in the LSA NOBA (Notes on Bills and Amendments) found here <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/NOBA/1045456.pdf>

The bill was approved and sent to the Governor.

Although introduced in an earlier version of the bill, the $15 million continued reduction to AEAs, $8.7 million for nonpublic transportation reimbursement and zero funding for Instructional Supports were not contained in the final version of this bill. Those actions were included in [**SF 638**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf638) **Standings Appropriations** bill, as expected. RSAI registered as undecided.

[**HF 779**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=HF%20779) **Tax Changes including STO Tax Credits**: According to the Fiscal Note, Division VII of the bill increases the annual aggregate award cap for the School Tuition Organization (STO) Tax Credit from the current $13.0 million to $15.0 million, effective beginning CY 2020. RSAI registered opposed to this provision in both this House File and SF 631 which was discussed in the Senate. The Senate’s original bill increased the cap to $17 million, so this increase of $2 million is a compromise. The bill was approved and sent to the Governor. For context, this is a 15% increase in state funding for nonpublic school scholarships in a year in which the per pupil increase was set at 2.01%. RSAI is opposed.

**Clarity about IPERS and City/County Property Tax Proposals**

[**SF 634**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf634) **Property Tax Limits:** this bill, in its original form, would have required cities and counties to pay for pension benefits (IPERS) from their general fund (current law allows increased benefits costs to be paid from another fund outside of the $8.10 general fund levy limit for cities or the county’s general fund.) That stirred up some advocacy around the state suggesting that the bill negatively impacted IPERS. This bill never impacted school or AEA employees and never excused cities and counties from paying for the employers’ share of IPERS. The bill would have had city and county budgeting operate as school budgets operate. A later amendment in the House removed the controversial provision from impacting funds that pay for pension benefits. The [fiscal note](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/1045291.pdf) on April 23rd explains that the pension and other funds are not impacted by this bill:

“• For cities, funding for employee retirement and pension costs, debt service, and capital projects are excluded from the revenue limit calculation and may be funded separately through property tax revenue. In addition, several additional levies currently authorized under Iowa Code section 384.12 are allowed but not included in the revenue limit.

• For counties, funding for employee retirement and pension costs, mental health and disability services, cemetery care, emergency services, debt service, and capital projects are excluded from the revenue limit calculation and may be funded separately through property tax revenue.”

The bill was even more significantly amended last week to enact less onerous property tax limit provisions; it allows cities and counties to approve budget up to 2% increase, requires a public hearing if the budget will exceed that growth limit, and allows counties and cities to approve additional growth on 2/3 vote of city council or county supervisors. Makes definitions and makes changes to certification/budget protest deadlines. Includes requirements for the calculation of a maximum property tax rate. Requires assessor to use the most recent state appraisal manual. Allows the DOR to grant an exception on the showing of substantial hardship. The Senate passed the bill as amended 33-17; the House agreed 53:47, sending it to the Governor. RSAI did not register a position on this bill as it never impacted schools.

**What’s next?**

Now that the Session is adjourned, bills agreed to by both chambers not yet sent to the Governor will be messaged to her once final amendments are enrolled and they are signed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. For bills approved in the final 3 days of the session, Governor Reynolds has 30 days to review and sign, veto, or line-item veto within an appropriations bill. When the Governor concludes her action, RSAI will publish the 2019 Legislative Digest of Actions Impact Education.

The 2020 Legislative Session will be here before we know it. There’s no better time than right now to begin again. As soon as the Governor’s action is complete, school boards should determine their priorities to prepare to discuss at the RSAI regional meetings this summer.

**SAVE THE DATE! More information to come, but here are the dates, times and location of the RSAI Regional Meetings and Annual Meeting:**

Northeast Region: June 13, 2019 - 2:00 PM

North Fayette Valley CSD, 600 N Pine St, West Union

Southwest Region: June 20, 2019 - 4:00 PM

Riverside CSD

Southeast Region: July 18, 2019 - 4:30 PM

ACT Building (Fairfield Central Office), 403 South 20th Street, Fairfield

Northwest Region: June 7, 2019 - 1:00 PM

Humboldt CSD Central Office, 23 3rd Street, Dakota City

RSAI Annual Meeting: October 16, 2019 – 4:30 PM

FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Campus, Ankeny

We look forward to continuing our advocacy efforts together to benefit the students in our rural schools.

**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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**Connecting with 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> Click on any Senator or Representative within the Legislative website to find their office phone and email address. 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 page within the table)** *Note: these assignments may change prior to the 2020 Session.*

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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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