



Legislative Update April 21, 2016

The following provides analysis of this week's statehouse action. Education Appropriations includes lengthy conversation about State Assessments, and Standings Appropriations bill clears the House and CTE bill sent to the Governor. See details below. Thanks for all you do to advocate for Iowa's children! margaret.buckton@isfis.net

Closing down the Session: Although there has been a flurry of action on most of the budget bills, areas of disagreement remain that need to be worked out. Although offered as amendments in some cases, many RSAI priorities have not been addressed: Timely funding for FY 2018, extension of the state penny for school infrastructure, formula equality per pupil and transportation equity. Many of these priorities received much attention and many bill drafts, but little movement. RSAI leaders will need to continue advocacy necessary to build urgency prior to the election and in preparation for the next Session. We look forward to working with all of you on making that happen. In the meantime, we will keep you posted on the latest coming from under the Dome as the Session concludes.

Voices Advocating for Adequate Funding:

The True Cost of Underfunding Education in Iowa, published in the Cedar Rapids Gazette, April 24, <http://www.thegazette.com/the-true-cost-of-underfunding-education-in-iowa-20160417>

Guest view: Lawmaker derision doesn't help Iowa's schools, published in the Quad City Times, April 11, 2016, http://qctimes.com/guest-view-lawmaker-derision-doesn-t-help-iowa-s-schools/article_8e737268-0d9e-59e7-9d9e-b8001ee2ce57.html

If you know of others, please let us know so we can share.

Education Appropriations: The Senate passed **SF 2323** and sent it to the House on Tuesday. The House appropriations committee approved it and it's scheduled for debate this afternoon on the House Floor. RSAI is registered undecided on this bill, but has advocated for many of the provisions in the bill, specifically the first three policy language changes below. Policy language includes:

- Delay of summer school and mandatory 3rd grade retention until the summer of 2018.
- Preschool categorical fund flexibility to pay for transportation of PK students (and proration if other students are transported simultaneously).
- Although the initial Senate version included no language on state assessment (allows Smarter Balanced Assessments to move forward as the Iowa state test, first required to be implemented in spring 2017), that mandate would have been unfunded. The Senate agreed to delay implementation of the test for school districts until the 2017-18 school year, but allowed the state Board of Education Rules to move forward. A contentious amendment in the House would also nullify the rules, requiring the DE process to start all over. RSAI lobbied Representatives to vote no on the amendment to nullify the rules.
- Head start teaching experience will count toward licensure.
- Creates a new Fine Arts mentoring program.
- Delays the \$10 million appropriation for High Needs Schools Grants (originally created in HF 215 in 2013 Session but not yet funded)

Some appropriations maintain effort on state priorities:

- Level funding (\$1.0 million) for the Reading Research Center
- Level funding (\$1.0 million) to AEAs to support TLC.
- Level funding (\$1.0 million) to AEAs (ostensibly for support of core curriculum development)
- Level funding (\$8.0 million) for Successful Progression of Early Readers



- Requires the DE to prorate TLC grant payments to school districts if the allocated amount for FY 2017 does not cover costs of the program. The actual FY 2017 cost for TLC is \$51,243,543. The allocation in Section 14 of this bill is \$50,600,000.
- See last week's newsletter for details about higher education appropriations and other parts of this bill.

Standings Appropriations Bill [HF 2459](#): the bill was amended and approved by the House on Tuesday of this week. It is currently assigned to Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill continues the AEA cut from state foundation aid, previously at \$15 million, and cuts by another \$5 million, for a total reduction of \$20 million. The bill requires the Department of Management to prorate the additional cut as prior cuts were appropriated. The House Amendment also mandated that AEAs with media and education services balances in excess 5% redirect those funds to cover special education costs impacted by this \$5 million reduction. The AEAs are opposed to the mandate. In context of the SF 174, SSA increase, the AEAs were restored by the \$15 million and received an increase of \$4.5 million for special education services. This action wipes out both of those items from SF 174. When legislators stated last week that education received \$153.8 million, 87% of the new revenue available, that calculation included this \$20 million. The action in this bill lowers that total to \$133.8 million. RSAI is registered opposed.

Other Action this week:

- **[HF 2392 Career and Technical Education](#):** The Senate amended the bill to require DE to initiate rules to approve vendor systems for career planning, but doesn't mandate that school use them. It requires AEA and Community Colleges convening regional groups to include membership from all member school districts, includes representation of CTE teachers and professors on the regional planning groups, and adds specific references to content areas such as family and consumer sciences that were not evident in the new definition clusters of career and technical education. The House concurred in the Senate Amendment, which will send the bill to the Governor. RSAI is undecided on the bill.
- **[HF 2264 Open Enrollment Athletic Eligibility](#):** This bill addresses the eligibility of students to participate in varsity athletics immediately following an open enrollment if the student was subjected to a founded harassment or bullying, as determined by the resident districts. Signed by the Governor on April 7.

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