**RSAI Legislative Update
June 15, 2020 – End of Legislative Session**

The Legislature adjourned the 2020 Session yesterday afternoon. We will have a complete update with bill descriptions soon, Governor’s veto action, if any, and the 2020 RSAI Legislative Digest published soon after that. We will cover the details of key legislation impacting Return to Learn Plans, District decision-making and flexibility and other details we think you need to know ASAP on the Wednesday ISFIS SitRep webinar, 10:00 am, ([register here](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7856536554192858640)). Below are some details we thought you might want to see immediately:

**Priority of School Funding:** In the end, the 2021 budget was approved with primarily status quo appropriations for everything else with a few changes we will note in the Legislative Digest. However, they did not lower the State Supplementary Assistance Rate (SSA) previously set at 2.3% or make any changes to the Transportation and Formula Equity appropriations signed by the Governor before the COID-19 health emergency. Thank your Legislators and the Governor for holding to these commitments.

**SAVE Athletic Facilities Legislation SF 2410:** the bill was amended by the House to strip all of the onerous retroactive petition threshold and supermajority changes out of the bill. In the end, the only thing the bill does is clarify that the 30% petition threshold for challenging use of SAVE for athletic facilities applies to those votes cast for school board/school ballot initiative in the prior election. This clarity applies to new actions going forward. The Senate concurred with the House amendment, sending it to the Governor. Thanks to all of you who contacted your Representatives and Senators this last week on this issue!

**Online Learning and COVID Flexibility SF 2310** was last amended by the Senate and the House concurred with the Senate amendment, sending it to the Governor. Although this bill accomplishes quite a few things, of immediate importance, the bill;

* **Authority to Close School:** allows a school board to authorize a closure of the school district or any attendance center, if the Governor proclaims a public health emergency, due to an outbreak of COVID-19. Encourages schools to follow CDC guidelines and allows consult with local board of health when determining closure or social distancing measures.
* **RTL Plans: Counting Days/Hours:** specifies that instruction provided in accordance with the July 1 COVID-19 approved return-to-learn plan meets the days/hours minimum requirements, regardless of the nature, location or medium of instruction if the RTL Plan contains the minimum number of days and hours. (The Senate removed provisions that the RTL plan could use virtual learning for make-up snow days.) This provision is only for the 2020-21 school year and is repealed July 1, 2021. The bill also prohibits time from counting if the school district does not include required learning during the closure (allows compulsory remote learning, including online learning, electronic learning, distance learning, or virtual learning). Specifies that RTL plan must contain provisions for in-person instruction and provides that in-person instruction is the presumed method of instruction.
* **Closure Requirement:** Requires the school board to require teachers and staff to be available during the remote-learning period to support students, participate in PD and perform other job-related functions during regular contract hours even if instruction is offered remotely. Defines students who don’t participate in required learning as truant, unless they were home-schooling before July 1, 2020.
* **Computer Science and Offer and Teach:** provides immediate offer and teach flexibility, allowing online instruction to meet offer and teach requirements for world language, financial literacy and a new computer science mandate under certain conditions. FYI: the computer science mandate is included in the Future Ready Iowa Act, HF 2629, and not required until the July 1, 2023 school year.
* **Open Enrollment**: allows students with a COVID-19 health condition to, by July 15, request open enrollment into an approved online learning academy (such as Des Moines Virtual Campus, Cedar Rapids Virtual Academy, CAM Connections Academy, Clayton Ridge Iowa Virtual Academy). The parent must notify the district of residence that the child, an immediate family member or primary caretakers has a significant health condition that increase the risk of COVID-19, including written verification from the individual’s doctor.
* **Funding for Additional Instruction:** provides temporary flexibility for use of professional development supplement funds for additional instructional time and waives the requirement for 36 hours of time for teacher collaboration outside of instructional time. This flexibility is for the 2020-21 school year only. (The Senate deleted the ability to use Management Fund for additional instructional time.)

Thanks to all for great advocacy and continued relationship building with your Legislators throughout the 2020 Session. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the Rural School Advocates of Iowa and all you do for your students!

Margaret Buckton
RSAI Professional Advocate
margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com
515.201.3755 Cell