**RSAI Legislative Update
Jan. 31, 2019**

In this Jan. 31, 2019 RSAI Report of the third week of the 2019 Legislative Session, find information about:

* **SAVE bills get through subcommittees**
* **Reorganization and Whole Grade Sharing Incentives Extension approved in Senate Education Committee**
* **Praxis test bills move forward**
* **Financial literacy implementation date change – incoming freshman**
* **Timeline on SSA is ticking**
* **Other Bills**
* **Links to members of Key Legislative Committees**
* **Advocacy Resources**

**Find this week’s RSAI Capitol Recap video [HERE](https://youtu.be/RldriDQRsqQ):**

**SAVE Extension Bills** [**HSB 18**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hsb18) **and** [**SF 74**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf74)

Bills to extend the state penny for school infrastructure were assigned to subcommittees in both chambers this week. The language is built on last year’s bill with some very slight differences:

* Language requiring secure entrances before SAVE funds could be spent on new athletic facilities is included in the House study bill. It’s rather prescriptive, with better language in the Senate version that’s more in line with an intent to attend to safety. Rep. Dolecheck indicated his intention to amend the bill in the House Education Committee with the better Senate language.
* Updated dates – extends through January 2051, and moves other dates one year forward. They missed one important date change that will also be cleaned up in the House Education Committee.

The bill contains the same compromises on property tax relief, property tax equity and career and technical academy grants as last year’s version. The Subcommittee in the House unanimously recommended it move forward with amendment. See an complete annotated version of last year’s bill in the RSAI Legislative Digest found on the RSAI Legislative page <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>

The Senate held a subcommittee, with Sens. Sinclair, Cournoyer, Sweeney, J. Smith, Quirmbach, and recommended moving SF 74 forward to the Education Committee. It’s posted for consideration on the Committee Agenda for Monday, Feb. 4.

Advocacy Actions: Explain that SAVE extension is an RSAI priority, encourage support of the compromise bill, especially to Senators and new Representatives who weren’t in the House last year to get the full background. Check to see if your Senator is on the Education Committee (Senators and email address links are listed at the conclusion of this report.)

**Reorganization and Whole Grade Sharing Incentives Extension:**

SF 138 (formerly known as[SSB 1032](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=ssb1032) was approved unanimously by the Senate Education Committee this week. It extends these incentives through July 1, 2024. It moves on to the full Senate Calendar for debate). A Fiscal Note shows the impact as a continuation of $1.2 million. Find a new Position Paper on the RSAI Legislative Website [here](http://nebula.wsimg.com/318e9ab7e8d52b2d060862115702573c?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1).

**Praxis Test Changes:** bills have cleared a House Subcommittee and the full Senate Education Committee to change Praxis requirement. [SSB 1031](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=ssb1031) creates a one-year temporary license during which time a new teacher can get the Praxis text taken. The bill would also give the DE authority to set a cut score and there was an amendment proposed to require the DE to consider the score recommended by the Praxis Administration, the cut scores of neighboring states and teacher shortage areas in the state. The bill will get a new number as a committee bill. [HSB 17](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=hsb17) is similar and awaiting amendment in the House Education Committee, likely next week. Just FYI: The BOEE already approved rules last year so that teachers with three or more years of experience do not have to take the Praxis at all. This new process would just apply to new teachers. *RSAI supports these efforts to minimize barriers to recruitment and grow the pool of qualified candidates, especially for shortage areas.*

**Financial Literacy Transition:** SSB 1029 is assigned a new bill number as it cleared the Senate Education Committee this week unanimously. Now [SF 139](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf139), this bill requires the graduation mandate of ½ unit of financial literacy apply to graduations beginning in the 2022-23 school year. Other concerns about the content being overly prescriptive in Iowa Code, about confusion on licensure and credits and the ability to offer courses online without requiring districts to first use Iowa Learning Online (ILO) remain to be addressed, but it’s encouraging to see this bill to delay implementation move very quickly in the Senate. The bill is now on the Senate Calendar. *RSAI supports.*

**State School Aid:** The Governor’s recommendation of ***2.3% increase*** in the State Supplemental Assistance (state cost per pupil formerly known as allowable growth) is an increase of ***$89.6 million in FY 2020***. Check out ISFIS New Authority Calculator here to determine what 2.3% will mean for your district. It also allows comparison at other percentage increases in case the House or Senate proposal deviates from the Governor’s Recommendation. Access the New Authority Calculator on the ISFIS home page [here](http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Excel/New%20Authority%20Report%20FY%202020.xlsx). The 30-day statutory deadline for the enactment of the new state cost per pupil is Feb. 14, so expect to see proposals from the House and Senate soon.

**Other Bills Moving through the Process:** If RSAI Legislative Priorities address our registration, you’ll see a registration already declared as in *support, undecided or opposed*. For those issues not addressed in our legislative platform, we encourage your feedback on what our registration should be, but in the meantime, will indicate an undecided registration.

[SSB 1034](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=ssb1034), by Sinclair, **Voluntary Diversity Plan/Open Enrollment** (also HF 6 by Fisher): These bills would prohibit districts with voluntary diversity plans from regulating open enrollment in and out of the district based on the criteria in the plans. Currently, only five districts have voluntary diversity plans, including Des Moines, Davenport, Waterloo, Postville and West Liberty. Subcommittee members, Sens. Zaun and Behn, recommended passage, moving it to the Senate Education Committee where it is on the agenda for Monday, Feb. 4, meeting. Sen. Danielson declined to sign the report. *Registered opposed.*

[SSB 1043](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SSB1043), by Sinclair, **INS Citizenship Test**: this bill would require school districts to offer high school students the opportunity to take the United States citizenship and immigration services naturalization civics test. The bill requires the DE to find an alternative test for students needing special education or English-language learner accommodation. The bill applies to school years beginning and after July 1, 2020.  *Registered opposed*. The bill is on the Senate Education Committee agenda for consideration on Feb. 4.

[SF 31](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf31), by Zaun, **School Administrative Costs Limitation**: this bill would require schools to budget no more than 5% for administrative costs and would require the DE to define what is included in administrative costs. Iowa code 279.45 currently states: “The administrative expenditures as a percent of the school district's general fund for a base year shall not exceed five percent.” Questions asked centered on salary growth over the last decade, annuities and full family health insurance coverage for administrators, benefits not available to all employees. It was clear from the conversation in the subcommittee that some senators would benefit from a conversation with administrators about what is required of the job, the economics of attracting and retaining quality administrators, and what instructional and other student supports administrators contribute to education every day. This bill was approved 2:1 but the subcommittee members, but is not expected to move forward to the full committee. *Registered opposed.*

[SF 43](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf43) **School Bus Exception** (Similar to [SF 58](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf58) and [HSB 39](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=hsb39)): These bills would have state law mirror federal law allowing used passenger vans designed to carry 12 passengers including the driver to be used to transport students to activities/events or home due to sickness or other emergency. SF 58 also allows pick-up trucks designed to carry 9 or more passengers to be used but also allows a local school board to prohibit the use of pick-up trucks via local board policy. The subcommittee of Senators Breitbach, Kinny and Koelker recommended passage, moving the bill to the full Transportation Committee. *Registered undecided.*

[SF 54](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=sf54), by Hogg, **School Caucus Night**: This bill would prohibit both public and nonpublic schools from scheduling classes, any school activities or events after 6:00 p.m. on the date of presidential caucuses. Would also apply to community colleges and universities that receive any aid from the state. *Registered undecided.* The bill was assigned to a subcommittee of Senators Sinclair, Danielson and Zaun.

[SF 115](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%20115&ga=88), formerly [SF 7](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf7), **Carrying on School Grounds,** by Judiciary: This bill allows a peace officer or reserve peace officer, whether certified or not, and federal peace officers whose duties include carrying a gun, to carry a gun on school grounds, whether the officer is in performance of official duties or not. The bill was approved unanimously by the Senate Judiciary Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar. *Registered undecided.*

[SF 116](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%20116&ga=88), formerly [SSB 1017](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=ssb1017), **Firearms and School Transports,** by Judiciary: This bill would allow individuals with a valid nonprofessional permit to carry a firearm may go armed with, carry or transport a firearm on school grounds when the person is on the grounds of the school for the purpose of transporting another person to or from school or delivering an item to or from the school, and if the person remains in a parking area or driveway designed for a motor vehicle. *Registered undecided.* This bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and dis now on the Senate Calendar.

[SF 160](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF%20160) **School Emergency Plans**, by Education: This bill would require schools to consider and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to make recommendations regarding school emergency plans. The conversation in the subcommittee of Sens. Kraayenbrink, Cournoyer and Danielson discussed the strength of having all players at the table working together and anticipated that DE and DPH coordinate their guidance and recommendations. *Registered support.*

[HF 54](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=HF%2054)  by Rep. Salmon, **Property Owners Vote**: This bill would allow Iowans who own property in a school district to be able to vote in a school bond election in the district. Establishes procedures to allow such voting. This bill is assigned to the House State Government Committee, with a subcommittee of Reps. Sexton, Jacobsen and Konfrst. *Registered opposed.*

[HF 78](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=sf78) by Gassman, **School Start Date**: This bill would allow schools to start school on the Monday after the conclusion of the Iowa State Fair. Other similar bills are expected to be released soon. This bill was assigned a subcommittee of Reps. Fry, Brink and Donahue. *Registered support.*

**Advocacy Resources:** To find Advocacy Resources such as 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:

Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate

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515.201.3755 Cell

**Committee Assignments and Legislator Contact Information follows:** Find biographical information about legislators gleaned from their election web sites on the ISFIS site here: <http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/legislative_bios> Learn about your new representatives and senators or find out something you don’t know about incumbents.

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>

You can click on any legislator to find their office phone and email address or search the Iowa Secretary of State’s general election candidate list for all House members and those Senators who were elected in November of 2018 to see their home address, local phone or cell phone number and email address.

That list is found here: <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/candidates/generalcandidatelist.pdf>

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 email address within the table):**

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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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