

Legislative Update:

Many little bills, some good, some bad, are receiving attention in preparation for the March 15 funnel deadline. House bill have to survive a Senate Committee and vice versa. In the meantime, here is status for some critical **RSAI Priorities**:

SSA Funding: Governor recommended 2.5%. [HF 2613 SSA](#) sets a 3% increase in the State Cost Per Pupil, approved in the House on Feb. 22 . It's over in the Senate attached to SF 2258 on the Calendar. The Senate's bill has no specified increase, serving as a placeholder. Whenever they decide on an amount, they can pass it, send back to the House (if it's not 3%) or to the Governor (if it is 3%). Contact Senators about budget deadlines, urgency to communicate actual information to taxpayers rather than budgets based on unknown assumptions. RSAI is registered in support of the House bill.

Teacher Pay: Governor's recommendation was \$96 million (\$50,000 for beginning teachers up to 12 years of experience and \$62,000 for teacher with 12 years or more). The Senate's proposal, in [SF 2386](#) AEA Reform, sets minimum teacher pay of \$46,251 (on the Senate Calendar). The House's proposal is a stand-alone policy in [HF 2630](#). The House sets beginning teacher pay at \$47,500 for FY 2025, increasing to \$50,000 for FY 2026, includes an appropriation of \$14 million to raise hourly school employee pay to \$15 an hour, and another \$22 million for districts to use at their discretion to compensate both teachers and hourly employees. All three use the teacher salary supplement (TSS) per pupil to deliver resources to schools to meet the minimums. The House has HF 2630 on the Debate Calendar for March 4. RSAI is registered in support of the House bill and opposed to the Senate's AEA bill including teacher pay.

School Start Date: The House's bill, [HSB 585](#), allows school to start the Monday preceding August 23 if August 23 is a weekday. Passed the House Education Committee on Jan. 30 so survived the funnel. It is still awaiting a new bill number before it can be assigned to the House Calendar. The Governor's Charter School bill, [SF 2368](#), is on the Senate Calendar. This bill changes charter school and open enrollment funding (current year cost per pupil rather than prior year state cost per pupil plus the state costs of TSS, PD, and EICS per pupil all follow students), gives charter schools the right of first refusal for lease or sale of school property. Division III of the bill allows schools to start as early as the Tuesday following the end of the Iowa State Fair. RSAI is opposed to SF 2368. The House version, [HF 2543](#), includes all of the provisions above except for the start date policy. RSAI is opposed to HF 2543, too.

Preschool: [SF 2383](#) Expanded Preschool is on the Senate Calendar, but likely in trouble due to the estimated impact of the bill on the state budget. The bill is phased in over two years, up to 1.0 weighting for students below 185% of the federal poverty level. Contact Senators to support it.

AEA Reform: [HF 2612](#) approved by the House on March 1 significantly addressed many RSAI issues, including reinstatement of operational sharing for AEAs and requirement that special

education services be required from AEAs. The Senate’s changes are in [SF 2386](#). See your RSAI weekly report or check out the [AEA Policy Tracking Comparison Chart](#) to see key differences with the Senate.

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 and more. Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work.

RSAI Regional Meetings Coming Soon:

Mark your calendars for the upcoming RSAI Regional Meetings **during April and May**. Whether you are an RSAI member district there to express your voice about rural school matters, or are not a member district but interested in listening and learning more about legislative issues and RSAI, we'd love to have you attend. These Regional Meetings are an important step in the work of advocating for rural school districts and the students we serve across Iowa. Registration and more details will be coming soon at: <https://www.rsaia.org/region-meetings.html>

RSAI Region	Meeting Date	Meeting Location	Meeting Start Time	Regional Meeting Host
NE Region	April 2, 2024	Elkader	Follows Keystone AEA Supts Meeting	Nick Trenkamp Central
SW Region	April 3, 2024	Red Oak	Follows Green Hills AEA Supts Meeting	Paul Croghan CAM/Nodaway Valley
SE Region	May 1, 2024	Fairfield	Follows Great Prairie AEA Supts Meeting	Dan Maeder Davis County/Moulton Udell
NW Region	May 7, 2024	Pocahontas	Follows Prairie Lakes AEA Supts Meeting	Justin Daggett Manson NW Webster

At each Regional Meeting, RSAI Legislative Committee liaison(s) are elected by the members for the upcoming year. At the NE Regional Meeting, there will also be an election for the RSAI Leadership Group representative, as this region’s three-year term is up this year. We will let everyone know the official start times and meeting locations very soon so those of you attending the RSAI meeting but not the AEA Superintendent’s meeting will know when and where to arrive. Generally, the meetings include lunch and begin around the noon hour. More details to come.

RSAI Annual Meeting:

Save the date for the RSAI Annual Meeting, which will be held on **Tuesday, October 15, 2024**, at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. More details coming soon!

Thanks to all of you for your energy and voice on behalf of the students in your schools!