



Mar. 20, 2015

RSAI Call to Action

All Legislators Need to Hear: Set Cost per Pupil Now at 4%

The Issue: The REC has met. Revenues are known. The Conference Committee assigned to resolve differences between the House's 1.25% and the Senate's 4% should get to work. All legislators need to hear you, both parties, both chambers, so the rank and file members can report to their leaders on the Conference Committee that Iowans care about school funding. Continue contacting legislators until this issue is resolved: *gentle persuasion applied relentlessly.*

Conference Committee Members for [SF 171](#) and [SF 172](#) State Cost Per Pupil

Committee members: Reps. Soderberg (co-chair), Paulsen, Upmeyer, Ruff, and Steckman and Sens. Quirmbach (co-chair), Sinclair, Gronstal, Dix, and Bowman. Three meetings so far:

TALKING POINTS: Thank them for their work, remain respectful, share the impact of 1.25% on your students, ask that they set the 2015-16 cost per pupil no lower than 4% and 2015-16 at 6%:

- The REC met on March 19th, set the revenue estimate at 4.3% for FY 2015 and 6.0% for FY 2016. All three members of the REC stated confidence in the state's economy. With \$750 million estimated in the state's cash reserve funds according to the Governor's budget recommendation, the state is in a solid position to prioritize and adequately fund schools.
- Iowa ranks 35th in the nation in per pupil expenditures, \$1,612 below the national average. In the 44-year history of the formula, in only two instances has the per pupil increase been lower than the House recommendation. But even if someone doesn't like a particular source or ranking, in every case of suggested other sources, Iowa is doing worse when comparing the latest numbers with 1998:
 - NEA ranking per pupil based on enrollment: 1998 rank of 23 compared to 2013 rank of 35
 - NEA ranking based on average daily attendance: 1998 rank of 28 compared to 2013 rank of 33
 - Annie E. Casey Foundation controlling for cost of living: 1998 rank of 11 compared to 2013 rank of 24
- Increased costs run 3-3.5% annually, to keep doing the business of school; heat/utilities, standards expectations, paying staff, increased costs of insurance, transportation, retirement, books, technology and programs.
- Iowa's economy is strong, state coffers are full. Although we can never be certain about the future, we are certainly well positioned to sustain any significant economic challenge in the next several years. Iowa ranks 9th in the nation in reserve funds on hand, has the 12th highest growth rate in gross domestic product nationally, and ranks 9th in growth of per capita personal income nationwide. We are not in a revenue crisis, just a funding priority crisis with some short-term hiccups such as Medicaid reimbursement and phasing in property tax reform and education reform.



Advocacy Actions: 15 minutes daily until they decide. Things to do:

- Call switchboard and leave a message – no lower than 4% on SF 171 and SF 172
515.281.3371 Senate and 515.281.3221 House
- Recruit a community person or parent to make a call
- Send a copy of the weekly ed facts to local media. Include a quote about how that works in your district
- Have your board pass a resolution calling for 4% and ask for fast action
- As board approves budget at assumptions generating highest tax rate, make a statement or pass a resolution that the rate is high because the state hasn't set the cost per pupil yet and the district needs to preserve flexibility. (Send copy to the media).
- Have board members write a letter to the editor explaining their budget along the lines above if the hearing is also done.
- Go to a booster club meeting or talk to the crowd 5 minutes before a band concert
- Send a hand-written card
- Get to a forum (links below)
- Start and end with a thank you

Get to forum this weekend - school board members, teachers, administrators, parents, business leaders and students. Talk directly to legislators while they are at home. Find forums here:

Senate Democrat Forums: <http://www.senate.iowa.gov/democrats/forum-schedule/>

Senate Republican Forums: <http://www.iowasenaterepublicans.com/events/>

House Republican Forums: <http://www.iowahouserpublicans.com/forums>

House Democrat Forums: <http://iowahouse.org/events/>

Sign and Share the Virtual petition on adequate school funding:

<https://www.change.org/p/the-iowa-legislature-provide-adequate-funding-for-iowa-s-public-schools?>

Parents, grandparents, staff and neighbors, you can help!

Call or email your legislators and leave a message that schools need sufficient school funding, at least 4% per pupil, for the year beginning July 1, 2015.

- Find your legislator's contact information:
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/Legislators/find.aspx>
- Email your legislators. firstname.lastname@legis.iowa.gov
- During the work week, call the House Switchboard. Leave a message for your representative at 515.281.3221
- During the work week, call the Senate Switchboard. Leave a message for your senator at 515.281.3371
- **Office of the Governor:** State Capitol, 1007 East Grand Ave. ,Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.281.5211 | [Contact Us](https://governor.iowa.gov/contact/) (<https://governor.iowa.gov/contact/>)