



Mar. 5, 2015

RSAI Call to Action

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

The Issue: The Conference Committee assigned to resolved differences between the House's 1.25% and the Senate's 4% is stuck. 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*.

Status: Conference Committee Meetings 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:

- 2/26: organizational meeting to elect chairs
- 3/3: opening positions: House explained 1.25% as more than half of the new revenue to the state, a responsible budget, an increase for schools which are a priority since 55% of the budget is education, and a goal to prevent future across-the-board cuts. Senate explained that 4% was a reduction from the 6% approved for July 1, 2016 during the last Session, so a compromise offer, less than school districts have requested or need, but responsible given state revenues. The Senate asked the House to make a counter offer. Speaker Paulsen explained that 1.25% should be sent to the Governor and any additional funding for public schools would be contingent on his conditions. Although not stated in the conference committee, his conditions have been reported in the press as collective bargaining reform, unlikely to move in the Senate.
- 3/4: House stated that 1.25% is their counter offer.

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

- 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:
 - 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. Through 3.5.2015, state general fund receipts are running 5.8% YTD, even better than the Dec. REC estimate of 5.6%. 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.



Advocacy Actions:

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 your legislator's 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.iowahouserepublicans.com/forums>

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

Sign and Share the Virtual petition on adequate school funding: share this link with others in your school district or other Iowans you know supportive of funding education.

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

Write a letter to your local newspaper explaining the information above in this call to action or share details from any of the education coalition funding facts of the week.

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