

RSAI Legislative Update Feb. 26, 2015

These updates are posted on the RSAI legislative web page at <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>.

The following provides analysis of this week's happenings. Thanks for all you do to advocate for Iowa's children! margaret.buckton@isfis.net

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

This week, the House voted to lower the Senate's 4% funding increase per pupil to the Governor's recommended 1.25% increase, on nearly party-line vote with Republican Reps. Baltimore and Kaufmann voting no with the Democrats. The Senate refused to concur with the House amendment. The House insisted on their amendment. The House appointed Representatives Soderberg, Paulsen, Upmeyer, Ruff, and Steckman to the conference committee. The Senate appointed Senators Quirmbach, Sinclair, Gronstal, Dix, and Bowman. The conference committee convened and elected chairs today (Soderberg and Quirmbach) but did not begin negotiations nor set another meeting date during the meeting. It is not known at this time whether the chairs will work out the agreement or the committee will meet as a group. There is still no House action on the senate bills applicable to FY 2017 ([SF 174](#) and [SF 175](#)) and no Senate action on [HF 139](#) which changes the timeline for setting allowable growth.

See the Feb. 26 RSAI call to action on School Funding for additional details and talking points posted [here](#).

Virtual petition on adequate school funding: let the legislature know that education funding is Iowa's priority and 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?>

Action on RSAI Priorities: Subcommittee action and committee action will continue one more week as we get closer to the March 6 funnel date, so we will keep you posted. Continue to connect with all legislators about funding Iowa schools adequately. Here are details on other RSAI priorities:

- [HF 384 PPEL Flexibility](#) was approved Feb. 23 and allows costs of repair for transportation equipment and technology to come out of the PPEL fund. Approved in House Education Committee 23:0. Referred to Ways and Means. Click here to see if you know any of the legislators on the [Ways and Means committee](#) who might listen to you and support the bill. RSAI supports this bill.
- [SF 280 PPEL Flexibility](#) was approved Feb. 19 and allows costs for repair of transportation equipment to come out of the PPEL fund. The Education Committee approved the bill unanimously. It's on the Senate Calendar. RSAI supports this bill.

For both of these PPEL bills, explain that school general funds are precious. If schools must choose between general funds to repair a bus or PPEL funds to buy a new bus, logic compels the decision to buy the new bus rather than reduce part or half of a teacher. However, if the PPEL can be used to repair the bus, it saves PPEL funds. That preserves more for construction and makes it less likely that voters will be asked to approve a PPEL tax increase.

- [HF 250 Transportation Supplemental State Aid](#): This bill provides funding to school districts equal to the difference between state average and actual transportation costs per pupil enrolled. The cost is funded by a standing unlimited appropriation with an estimated annual cost of \$26 million. The bill was signed by all three members of the **subcommittee** and RSAI is registered in favor.

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- [HF 320](#) **Graduated Transportation Supplementary Weighting:** The bill provides a weighting of 1/100th per pupil, or essentially \$63, for districts with transportation costs between the state average and up to \$100 above the average, 2/100th per pupil, or essentially \$128, for those between \$100 and \$200 above, and 3/100th per pupil, or \$191 for those spending in excess of \$200 per pupil above the state average. Although this is a good start, it doesn't address the inequity of those districts with the largest transportation costs. The bill was signed by all three members of the **subcommittee** and RSAI is registered in favor.

Other Bills Moving through Subcommittee and Committee Action:

[HF 347](#) **Child Care Programs:** this bill would require child care programs provided at school to be regulated by DHS rather than the DE's regulations which include educational requirements and licensed teachers running the program. The Education Committee did amend the background provision of the child care statute to allow programs on school property to follow the 5-year background check rotation to which schools are subject. There is a request for another amendment to allow schools flexibility for use of space. RSAI was initially opposed to the bill, but with these two amendments, is now registered as undecided.

[HF 274](#) **All Day Kindergarten:** This bill was introduced and assigned to the House Education Committee. It requires 180, 6-hour instructional days (or hour equivalent) for kindergarten. The bill doesn't allow prororation of funding for a half day program. This issue was discussed at the Dec. 19th School Finance Interim Committee. We learned at the Subcommittee hearing that 23 districts offer some half day but all districts offer full day kindergarten. There might also be an impact on transitional kindergarten programs that serve very young kindergarteners whose parents and schools believe are not ready for a full day program. RSAI is registered opposed to this bill since we believe instructional and programing decisions are best made by school boards and local leaders.

[SF 245](#) **LEP Weighting:** This bill was approved by the Senate Education Committee and increases the English Language Learner weighting from .22 to .30 and increases the time during which ELL student programs are paid by the state from 5 to 7 years. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee, with subcommittee approval this week. RSAI supports the bill, now on the Senate Calendar.

[HF 321](#) **SBRC requirement to grant spending authority** under certain conditions: Although this bill was written to give district more time before the School Budget Review Committee could impose a Phase II accreditation visit under certain circumstances, the bill actually would have prevented the SBRC's discretion to grant spending authority in many of the situations of the last SBRC meeting, inadvertently harming rural schools facing negative unspent budget authority. The DE staff agreed to provide the information to the SBRC that was required to be considered in the bill, but the subcommittee agreed to not move the bill forward for a year in order to observe if the information was enough. RSAI originally registered in favor, but has moved our registration to undecided based on the information learned in the subcommittee meeting.

[HSB 156](#) **Volunteer Iowa Reading Corps:** sets up structure for volunteers to be trained and assist with early literacy. The goal is to provide 20 minutes of one-on-one work with students needing assistance. Governor's budget appropriates \$1 million and would match federal funds in the range of \$2.5 to \$3 million. Subcommittee approved the bill contingent on an amendment. We requested inclusion of the work based on local goals in addition to the goals of the state board of education and the reading research center that were written in the original bill. RSAI is registered as undecided on this bill.

[HSB 172](#) **Assessment Bill Shell:** This bill states legislative intent to address state assessment in 2015 session. This bill serves as a placeholder, to allow the House Education Committee to make their funnel

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deadline with a bill that addresses the state assessments, even though they are not sure at this point the details of the bill. RSAI is registered as undecided.

HSB 39 Anti-bullying Bill: did not yet consider Amendment similar to Senate amendment, but that's probably coming. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill.

HF 396 Principal Institute Advisory Council: DE bill to create a council to study and make recommendations on the role of principal in high needs schools. The bill was amended to include SAI and ISEA in the council representation. RSAI is registered as undecided on this bill.

HSB 18 PMIC Billings: Requires district of residence to pay costs of education if student is in a PMIC or other institution, allows MAG/DoP to pay for additional costs beyond the tuition rate, allows district of residence to apply for foster care reimbursement if students wasn't on the enrollment count at the beginning of the year. Doesn't address anything to do with providers. Amended and approved unanimously. RSAI is registered as undecided on this bill.

HSB 11 DE Code and Technical Corrections Bill: On House Education Committee agenda Thursday with amendments filed. Will describe amendments in next week's update. RSAI is registered as undecided on this bill.

SSB 1044 Anti-bullying Bill Two subcommittee meetings with extensive amendment work. The bill as amended in committee directs the DE to provide training for school employees that will investigate bullying, sets up a pilot project in two middle and two high school to explore how student leadership can prevent bullying, includes social networking sites and other electronic means of bullying, allows but doesn't mandate school authority to investigate bullying that happens outside of school if the bullying interferes with the school environment and in response to a complaint, requires schools to notify parents except in cases where notification would put the student at risk, and allows a student who open enrolls into another high school to participate in athletics upon approval of both resident and open enrolled district, if there has been a founded incident of bullying in the current or prior year. Approved in committee 2.25.15. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill.

SF 245 LEP Weighting Increase: this bill increases the current .22 weighting to .30 and extends the time frame for state contribution of weighting from 5 to 7 years. The will was approved by the subcommittee in Appropriations Committee and moves to the Appropriations Committee. RSAI is registered in support.

SF 161 LEP Weighting for Preschool: This bill provides additional funds for students served in statewide voluntary preschool program who required English as a second language services. The weighting is set at half of the K-12 ELL weighting (since ELL weighting is .22, half would be .11.) RSAI is registered in support.

SSB 1047 PMIC billing: same amendment approved as explained in HSB 18 above. RSAI is registered as undecided.

SSB 1236 Dropout Prevention: This bill combines three different bill ideas into one, blending at-risk and dropout prevention uses for either funding stream (grants districts more flexibility that the stricter dropout prevention criteria), allows funds to support excess costs of education for students not otherwise eligible for special education but potentially dangerous to themselves or other students, specifically allows funds to be spent on alternative programs and alternative schools, and broadens the students eligible to receive support to include K-12. Lastly, the bill allows funds to be spent for children toward whom harassment or bullying was directed and for harassment and bullying prevention programs,

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training and initiatives. The bill also raises the compulsory attendance age to 18. RSAI is registered in favor of this bill.

SSB 1239 Smarter Balanced Assessments: This bill repeals, effective July 1, 2016, the requirement for the continued use of the assessments used for state reporting purposes be the same assessment as used in the school year beginning July 1, 2011. The bill requires, beginning July 1, 2016 and annually thereafter, schools administer Smarter Balanced Assessments during the last quarter of the school year. Requires the assessments be used to assess student progress on core academic indicators, be aligned with the Iowa Core standards in both content and rigor, accurately describe student achievement and growth for purposes of the school, the school district, and state accountability systems, and provide valid, reliable and fair measures of student progress toward college or career readiness. RSAI is registered as undecided.

This week's Advocacy Plan: Generate contacts from grassroots networks, staff and school leaders and recruit petition signatures on adequate school funding: go [here](#) to let the legislature know that education funding should be the priority and share this link with others.

Request that the Legislature set the state cost per pupil for FY 2016 ASAP in the 2015 Session. Target contacts to local legislators in both parties and chambers, members of the conference committee listed above, legislative leadership, and the Governor and Lt. Governor. Find resources on the RSAI web site, including the most recent call to action, the weekly Education Fact from the Education Coalition, contact information and talking points. <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>. These weekly updates are also posted on this page.

Let legislators know about extending the sunset of the state penny and extending PPEL to repairs are both measures to save district resources. See the RSAI web site for position papers and supporting information.

Let us know how we can help with your advocacy efforts,
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