

RSAI Legislative Update Mar. 12, 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, including action on RSAI priorities and floor debate following last week's funnel deadline. Find suggested advocacy actions in last week's Mar. 5 RSAI **CALL TO ACTION**. Thanks for all you do to advocate for Iowa's children! margaret.buckton@rsaia.org

Three priority issues for conversations this week, in addition to adequate funding which ought to be in every conversation (further details below):

- **PPEL flexibility for bus repair:** thanks to Senate for approving their bill 49:0 and encourage House members to support it.
- **Dropout prevention flexibility:** encourage support of DE proposal to blend uses of at-risk and dropout prevention funding, so we can locally determine how best to serve at-risk students.
- **Extend the state penny sunset:** SF 409 was approved by Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee yesterday. RSAI supports full repeal of the sunset but clearly supports the extension to 2049 proposed in this bi-partisan bill.

SF 171 and SF 172 State Cost Per Pupil: Conference Committee Update

Committee members: Reps. Soderberg (co-chair), Paulsen, Upmeyer, Ruff, and Steckman and Sens. Quirnbach (co-chair), Sinclair, Gronstal, Dix, and Bowman. *No action this week.*

State General Fund revenues are running at 4.6% net increase compared to March 11, 2014. That's down slightly from the 5.6% REC estimate for FY 2015. The REC will meet March 19. Some big picture considerations relative to the state of the economy and general fund budget:

- Difference between 1.25% and 4% for rural schools is significant, in terms of budget guarantee, program and staff reductions.
- Difference between 1.25% and 4% for the state is \$114.3 million. Sounds like a lot. That's 1.6% of Governor's Budget Recommendation of \$7,194.6 for FY 2016.
- Governor's Budget Recommendation is \$319.3 million BELOW the 99% expenditure limitation. Even if the REC lowers the revenue estimate by \$200 million (and they won't), there would still be enough room within the expenditure limitation to fund 4%. Sources:

SF 171 fiscal notes: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/fn/632647.pdf>

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/fn/644065.pdf>

LAGAR <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LAGR/620903.pdf>

Other Key Issues:

SSB 1254 Per Pupil Cost Adjustments: This bill establishes a district per-pupil equity cost adjustment by allowing districts with a regular program cost that is less than the highest cost of all school districts to make an adjustment of the difference between their district cost per pupil and the state's highest DCP. The district is allowed to use cash reserve to fund the spending authority, however, the cash reserve levy may not exceed the prior year's levy after subtracting any amount for SBRC granting modified supplemental state aid. RSAI supports this bill, which was assigned to the Senate Education Committee too late to obtain approval prior to this week's funnel date but discussions are happening in light of the Davenport superintendent's announcement this week regarding equity and spending authority.

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Floor Action: The following bills were approved in either the House or Senate Chamber:

- **SF 227 School Start Date:** This bill eliminates waiver provisions and allows school boards to determine when school starts. The bill was approved by the Senate 32:17 and RSAI supports.
- **SF 279 TAG Program Employee:** Requires the DE to employ a full-time consultant or staff member for the talented and gifted program. Senate approval 48:1.
- **SF 280 PPEL Flexibility for Bus Repair:** This bill allows use of PPEL for repair and maintenance of transportation equipment and was approved in the Senate 49:0 and RSAI supports this bill as a priority. Thanks for Joel Davis, Kevin Fiene, Bob Olson and Rich Stoffers for coming to the Capitol on Tuesday and advocating with House Ways and Means Committee members.
- **HF 228 Coaching Authorization:** This bill requires the BOEE to issue a non-renewable, one-year transitional coaching authorization to a person who is at least 21, has a verified offer of a coaching job but has not yet completed the required course work. Gives priority to teachers and persons with coaching authorization first. House approved it 81-18 and RSAI is undecided.
- **HF 445 PMIC payment for educational costs:** This bill specifies that a resident district is responsible for payment to the school district providing education to a child in a PMIC. Allows the resident district to use dropout prevention funds for excess costs. Allows the resident district to submit a claim under the foster care statute for reimbursement if the student wasn't counted on the district's enrollment the prior Oct.1. House approval 99-0 and RSAI supports.

Senate Education Committee Action

- **SF 245 ELP Supplementary Weighting:** This bill increases the weighting English-language learners to .30 and increases the length of state contribution from 5 to 7 years. RSAI supports it.
- **SF 246 PK Expansion Incentive:** This bill creates a three-year expansion program for the statewide voluntary preschool program, provides an expansion incentive of 20% of the cost per pupil applied to enrollment growth in the program compared to a base year, allows PK funds to be spent on transportation, rent and outreach activities and allows proration of transportation costs if other students are transported with PK students. The bill also increases the limit of administrative funds to no higher than 10%. RSAI supports the bill.
- **SF 247 Low-Income Program Supplement:** This bill establishes a supplementary weighting of .04 (or 4%) multiplied by the number of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch in the district. The bill specifies use of funds for before and after school programs, summer school, tutoring and mentoring, individualized instructional assistance, programs to reduce or waive student fees, or other program or assistance. RSAI supports the bill.

Thank you for your work!

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