**RSAI Legislative Update
February 23, 2024**

This RSAI Weekly Report from the 2024 Legislative Session includes:

* Preschool Bill on the Senate Calendar
* House Approves SSA
* Public Hearing on AEA Bill in the House
* House and Senate Floor Action
* SF 2368 and HF 2543 Charter School and Open Enrollment Categorical Funding
* New Bill Numbers and Bills on House and Senate Calendars
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**Senate PK Bill is on the Calendar**

[**SF 2383**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF%202383) **Expanded Preschool** phases up to 1.0 weighting for students below 185% of the federal poverty level. Allows the school district to choose half-day or full days programs for low-income students, with 10 hours of instruction at 0.5 weighting and in the year beginning July 1, 2025, 15 hours of instruction for students below 185% of the federal poverty level or 10 hours of instruction for students above the FPL, and for the year beginning July 1, 2026, 20 hours of instruction for students below the poverty level and 10 hours above the FPL. Allows parents of lower-income students to choose either program. Calculates budget enrollment at 75% of low income students in the year beginning July 1, 2024 and 100% in the year beginning July 1, 2025. On the Senate Calendar. Successor to SF 2075. RSAI supports.

**House Passes 3% increase Per Pupil, Supplemental State Aid**

[**HF 2613**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2613) **SSA:** establishes a 3% increase in the State Cost Per Pupil. The bill includes the property tax replacement payment, whereby the State assumes what would otherwise be the property tax impact of the increase on the additional levy. An amendment was offered to increase the percentage to 6%, which failed 35 to 61 (with 4 absent). The bill was approved 60 to 36, sending it to the Senate, where SF 2258 awaits on the Calendar. SF 2258 does not have a percentage increase specified. The Governor recommended a 2.5% increase. RSAI is registered in support of HF 2613, which is the highest increase proposed and in concert with HF 2611 Teacher Pay Investments, would exceed the current inflation rate.

The [Fiscal Note](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/1447060.pdf) describes many details of the bill:

* Establishes a 3.00% State percent of growth rate to be applied to the State cost per pupil (SCPP) for FY 2025, for an SSA of $229 per pupil.
* Establishes a 3.00% State percent of growth rate to be applied to each of the State categorical cost per pupil amounts for FY 2025.
* Provides additional property tax replacement funding based on the per pupil increase. The bill requires the additional levy portion of the FY 2025 SCPP amount to be frozen at $685 per pupil, regardless of the per pupil increase for FY 2025. This action means that $227 per pupil from the State is offsetting what would otherwise be property taxes.
* Specifies that the 30-day deadline to establish SSA written into the Code of Iowa does not apply to this bill (the deadline was Feb. 9).
* The 3% increase also applies to categorical funds (TSS, PD, EICS, and TLC) and to AEA per pupil costs.
* This action also increases the Transportation Equity Fund by approximately $0.9 million.
* The 3% increase doubles the amount of funding for budget guarantee, which means that districts with enrollment declines will receive a 1% growth rate in their regular program district cost, even if the 3% increase would reduce the regular program budget further. The difference is paid by local property taxes.

**Public Hearing on AEA Overhaul Bill HF 2612**

The House held a public hearing on Feb. 21 to get additional input on the House’s AEA Proposal. During the hour of testimony, alternating pros and cons, there were some consistent messages.

* Those opposed were concerned that students with disabilities would not get the services they need, that the AEA would not be able to consistently provide those services under a fee-for-service system, and that the Legislature should slow things down and thoroughly study the issue before making changes. Several individuals stated that this is a solution in search of a problem.
* Those in favor said that it was time for reform, that districts would make good decisions with resources to meet the needs of their students, that Iowa’s method of identifying students with disabilities should be studied and in no case said that AEAs should be dismantled. Several speakers supported a lengthy timeline for changes to special education services but urged school district control over educational services and media services resources by July 1, 2024.
* In both camps, concerns were expressed about the Department of Education’s capacity to provide oversight or educational services of value, encouraging the legislature to minimize the role of the DE’s proposed Division of Special Education.

**Details about** [**HF 2612**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2612) **AEA Reform:**

* Includes a task force to study, but it needs to study Iowa’s model of identifying students with disabilities.
* Pushes out the timeline but goes too far. Schools should have more authority over the media services and educational services funds before July 1, 2025 and July 1, 2026 respectively.
* A longer phase-in for special education is a good idea to learn from the Task Force, establish accreditation standards, define services and what makes sense for contracts, and figure out how to provide a safety net or certainly of special education service provision for students with disabilities from smaller schools or school more distant from services. The House bill requires school districts to contract with AEAs for special education services and does not provide any alternatives that local districts might provide on their own or through other providers.
* A smaller DE Division of Special Education, with 13 FTEs in the DE in Des Moines and 45 in AEAs regionally, although the House removes the more transparent steps of AEA budgeting, accreditation and possible merger by placing those under the DE Director rather than locally elected AEA boards or the State Board of Education.
* RSAI supports the ability of rural schools and AEA to share operational functions, most lately in the areas of social workers and mental health professionals, to get important services to students and requests removal of the prohibition against sharing contained in HF 2612.
* Teacher Pay provisions are in a separate bill in the House, HF 2611, now in the House Appropriations Committee, with a Subcommittee of Reps. Nordman, Holt and Matson assigned. RSAI supports.

For more information, see this [**Comparison of Senate and House Provisions**](https://nebula.wsimg.com/e6cefe415b8be971f860c9edf56c4699?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) of AEA reform. RSAI is undecided on the AEA reform proposal and continuing to offer suggestions for improvement.

**Floor Work in House and Senate**

[**HF 2152**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2152)**Education Leadership Reporting Requirement:** the bill eliminates the requirement that the DE provide an annual report on the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Program. The bill was approved by the House 95-0. RSAI is undecided. The bill moves to the Senate, where companion [**SF 2364**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202364&ga=90)is on the Senate Calendar.

[**HF 2539**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2539)**Open Meetings Law Penalties:** the bill increases the penalty for violating the open meetings law, to between $500 and $2,500 if found guilty, but if the local official knowingly participated in the violation, requires the penalty be between $5,000 and $12,000. Requires Iowa Public Information Board to create a module for training on open meetings and public records, and allows IPIB to authorize training from other organizations. Requires locally elected officials to complete training on Chapter 21 and 22 within 19 days of taking the oath of office. The bill was approved by the House, 92:0 and goes to the Senate. RSAI is undecided.

[**SF 2096**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2096) **Gender Balance:** Repeals the requirements for boards to be gender balanced. Was approved by the Senate 32:15 and goes to the House. RSAI is not registered on this bill.

[**SF 2331**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2331) **Government Notice in Newspapers:** Requires cities to deliver minutes of council meetings to newspapers for publication within 15 days. Requires newspaper of notice to have been published for at least one year and that the official publications be available at the website of the paper at no cost to the public. Requires the paper to post to a statewide notice to the website. Requires a statewide newspaper organization to maintain such a site. Allows notice requirements to be satisfied by internet publication. Allows a county to publish on the internet if no newspaper meeting the requirements for the local publications exists in the county or if a newspaper refuses publication. Deems notice requirements to be met if the governmental body publishes notice on the internet even if the newspaper fails to publish the notice. Requires notices to be published within 72 hours of receipt. Requires the newspaper to refund any money paid for notices not published in a timely manner. Gives the IPIB jurisdiction over disputes about notice publication between governments and newspapers. Requires IPEB to award attorney fees to the prevailing party. The bill was approved by the Senate, 37:9, and is assigned to the House State Government Committee. RSAI is registered in support.

**Money Following Students: Charter Schools, Open Enrollment and Categorical Funding**

[**HF 2543**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2543) **and** [**SF 2368**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202368&ga=90) **Charter Schools, Open Enrollments, Facilities Right of Refusal and Charter School Board Membership.** These two bills, on their respective calendars, address the school funding formula, including how funding follows students to charter schools and through open enrollment.

**Division 1 Per Pupil Funding for Charter Schools**: Sec. 1 increases the state cost per pupil to the current year amount and requires the school district to pay categorical funds, including TSS, PD, and EICS (estimated at just over $1,030 per pupil), to the charter school. (TLC and ELL weighting are required by current code to be included.) One of the theories of charter schools is that they can provide education more efficiently and for less money than the public school system. Additionally, eight new charter schools were approved at this month’s State Board of Education Meeting, indicating that current funding levels are enough to provide many kinds of school choice.

**Sec. 2 Open Enrollment Payments**: requires the same funding be paid by resident school districts to receiving districts pursuant to open enrollment. This would require resident school districts to send $800.59 per student of categorical funding to a receiving district based on the categorical state cost per pupil, regardless of how much funding the district received per pupil for these categoricals. It also requires that the resident district pay the regular program cost per pupil (state cost per pupil) for the current year rather than for the prior year, which is current law. This last action would require an additional $222 to follow open enrollment in FY 2024 dollars.

The intent of equity, that money follows students, is worthy. However, the categorical funds are not generated equally per pupil for all districts. These categorical funds, TSS, PD and EICS, were based on grants with formulas that were not entirely enrollment-driven. For example, 1) TSS was based on what districts needed to meet minimum teacher pay decades ago, which was a reflection of economies of scale and the number of FTE teacher positions in districts that were paid below the minimums. If this method is used again to distribute funds for new teacher pay increases, we would expect the range of TSS per pupil to grow. 2) PD was also originally based on a combination of enrollment and FTE teachers. 3) EICS was based half on poverty and half on enrollment in grades 1-6.

This bill does not address other inequities that may tip in the other direction, such as dropout prevention capacity caps and differences in instructional support program funding, which is based on property value (lower property value means lower ISL per pupil). The bill also does not consider poverty, which impacts district resources for students in many ways, including waiving fees for students eligible for free and reduced price lunch or property values per pupil which impact revenues from PPEL or bond issues.

These three categoricals directly impacted by the bill have a significant deviation shown in the chart below from DOM. In many cases, the bill would require the resident district to pay more than they received for the student that open-enrolls out (see the number of districts at or below the SCPP for each categorical.) This would also be the case for any student coming into a district after the Oct. 1 enrollment count, for whom the district receives no funding, but still must pay the entire RPDC and TLC, currently, and all of the categoricals proposed in these bills. This would be another good reason to reinstate the March 1 open enrollment application deadline. In many but not all cases, students tend to open enroll to districts with more property value supporting each student and lower poverty concentration. Legislators should be very careful to understand the implications of this bill in guarding against creating new inequities while trying to address old ones.



**Division II Right of First Refusal for School Property:** Requires school districts to give a right of first refusal to charter schools when selling or leasing property.Requires school boards to grant reasonable access to charter schools to use underutilized or vacant school property. Removes the application of chapter 297.22 from any exchange between a school district and a charter school, which removes 7 public hearings from processes designed to inform the public. Prohibits the public from being able to petition to vote against the school board’s decision to sell or lease property to the charter school (that right to petition any sale of property is in the current code for all other property sales). Requires school boards to publish on their website a report of vacant or underutilized property, including square footage of facilities, enrollment capacity of facilities, how facilities are currently used and vacant facilities.

**Division III Charter Governance:** allows charter school board members to not be Iowa residents.

SF 2368 includes an earlier school start date (Tuesday following the end of the Iowa State Fair). HF 2543 does not. RSAI is undecided on these two bills, now on their respective calendars.

**New Bill Numbers**

When bills are approved by a committee, a new bill number will often be assigned. The following bills have new numbers and/or on the House and Senate Calendars.

[**HF 255**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF255)**Alternative Pathways:** specifies requirements for higher education programs that offer a Teacher Intern License, requiring pedagogy training and work under a teacher leader, including during co-teaching and planning time. Also creates a new Temporary Initial Alternative License, which would apply to completers with a bachelor’s degree who obtain a certificate from only one provider, the American College of Teacher Certification, which is an online program without student teaching or practicum experience. Although required to have a bachelor’s degree, the bill does not require the participant to have a BA in the content area of their license. Specifies the requirements for the program and that the BOEE treat this license equal to other teaching licenses. Moves to the Senate Calendar with a significant amendment [S-5005](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/AMDI/90/S5005.pdf), which requires pedagogy training and classroom experience, resolving our major objections. RSAI was opposed to the original bill, but will likely change our registration if/when the amendment is attached.

[**HF 2278**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF%202278) **Open Enrollment Transportation** by Education: strikes the requirements that a sending and receiving district agree to arrangements for transportation for an open-enrolled student. Amended to only allow a receiving district bus into the resident district by no more than 2 miles, limited to only pick up students whose resident is closer to the receiving district’s attendant center than their own, and limits to school districts below 2,000 students, unless a small district comes into the larger district to pick up students, than the larger district can do the same. On the House Calendar. RSAI registration is now undecided (although originally opposed, the amendments minimized the potential for harm to rural districts). Successor to HF 134.

[**HF 2299**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2299) **Open Records:** Authorizes a government to provide an open record in a reasonable format rather than the requested format. Does not require the government to supply a record that is available on its Internet site. Allows the government to send a notice of the availability on the Internet. On the House Calendar. RSAI supports.

[**HF 2377**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF%202377) **Dyslexia Endorsement Grant:** Appropriates $335,000 to DE for grants to help teachers obtain an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. Assigned to the House Appropriations Committee. RSAI supports. Successor to HF 2030.

[**HF 2393**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202393&ga=90) **Student Dental Exam:** Exempts dental exams for students from restrictions on physical exams, which would otherwise require written, advance parental permission, similar to exemptions for hearing and vision. On the House Calendar. RSAI supports. Successor to HSB 651.

[**HF 2396**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202396&ga=90) **School Pronouns:** Prohibits schools and charter schools from disciplining employees, contractors or students for the use of a legal name or the failure to use a personal pronoun. Allows an employee who is terminated to sue for reinstatement and to seek civil damages in three times the amount of back pay. On the House Calendar. RSAI is registered opposed. Successor to HF 2139.

[**HF 2398**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF%202398) **Public Officer Bond:** Allows a public officer to purchase an insurance policy in lieu of posting a bond. Requires the policy to substantially meet the bond requirements. Allows for the reasonable expenses of the insurance policy to be paid for by the government to the extent the expenses of the bond would be covered. Allows an officer who fails to post a bond to be suspended for failing to do so, and to be removed after a reasonable time if the bond is not posted. On the House Calendar. RSAI supports. Successor to HSB 597.

[**HF 2457**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202457&ga=90) **Holocaust Education**: Requires schools, beginning July 1, 2024, to include education about the Holocaust, antisemitism, religious intolerance, personal responsibility, the leading role of the US armed forces, including African Americans, Native Americans and Asian Americans, in defeating the 3rd Reich and liberating concentration camps and to provide PD to teachers, and requires DE to report for the year July 1, 2024 school district compliance with this requirement. On the House Calendar. RSAI is opposed, not because we believe it is wrong to educate students about these topics, but because we do not appreciate very specific content language in the Iowa Code. Successor to HF 2197.

[**HF 2465**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF%202465) **Agricultural Science:** Allows instruction in agricultural science classes to count as science instruction for offer and teach requirements. On the House Calendar. RSAI supports. Successor to HF 2081.

[**HF 2516**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2516) **Governor’s Work-Based Learning:** Provisions impacting schools: Division II defines work-based learning internships for high school credit and allows experiences outside of school hours, including summer. Division III allows a student-teacher experience requirement to be reduced to four weeks if the teacher meets certain criteria. This specifically includes apprentices in the Teacher and Para Educator Registered Apprenticeship Grant Program (TPRA) or other intern program with significant para or substitute teaching experience. Assigned a subcommittee of Reps. Holt, Amos and Collins in the House Appropriations Committee. RSAI is registered in support of Division III. See also SF 2260. Successor to HSB 686.

[**HF 2541**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202541&ga=90) **School Building Demolition Fund:** Establishes a fund for vacant school buildings in the Economic Development Authority. Requires the school to have been vacant prior to July 2021. Sets timelines for the acquisition of buildings. Requires that applications from small towns be prioritized. Requires proceeds from the sale of the property after demolition, except for certain costs, be returned to the fund but does not require the property to be sold. Allows the EDSA to use 5% of the fund for administration and to report annually. RSAI supports. Successor to HF 706.

[**HF 2542**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2542) **Student Data System and Count Date:** Requires DE to provide a new data information system for reporting and collecting information at no cost to the school district for the first year. Allows DE to charge up to $12 per pupil for year 2 (both public and nonpublic schools pay the fee) and no limit on future year fee. Would allow districts to purchase a SIS module that would play well with the state data collection system. Also adds March 1 as a second enrollment count date and requires budget enrollment to be based on the average of the Oct. 1 and Mar. 1 enrollment counts. With new budget timelines, lots of concerns were expressed about this second date’s workability for schools, DE and DOM. The bill is on the House Calendar. **RSAI has changed registration to opposed**, concerned about the impossible timeline of a March 1 count date with the new budget process public hearing deadlines. RSAI also has concerns about a mandated statewide student information system. Companion SF 2367 is on the Senate Calendar.

[**HF 2544**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202544&ga=90) **Social Studies Subjects and Regents**: Includes a list of 14 items that must be taught in social studies in grades 1-6. The high school content includes a semester of civics with 9 specified items, United States History with 5 specific items, History of Western Civilization, Iowa History to be taught in grade 8, Economics, which must be taught in grade 8, requires certain historical documents be incorporated throughout. And so much more. The bill requires the Regents institutions to adopt a requirement that a student pass a civics exam before admittance. Requires the Regents to prohibit the universities from awarding credit for any course that requires students to take civics/political actions. On the House Calendar. RSAI is opposed. We value history and social studies but oppose very prescriptive curriculum and content written into the Code of Iowa. Successor to HF 2330.

[**HF 2545**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2329) **DE Review of High School Graduation Requirements:** requires DE to review HS graduation requirements, core content and core curriculum, and make policy recommendations. Requires the policy recommendations to include a plan to eliminate the use of core content standards and return to the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and US History and Civics, to make Iowa’s education standards the best in the nation in gathering input from relevant stakeholders including parents and teachers, to increase the quality of the instructional curriculum, find innovative ways to streamline testing, identify opportunities to equip high school graduates with sufficient knowledge of civics and US History so they are capable of discharging the responsibilities associated with US Citizenship, a way to make Iowa the most literate state in the US using systematic and sequential approaches to teaching phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension, a plan to eliminate the teaching of critical race theory and social-emotional learning. The DE is required to publish a link to its website that allows public and interested stakeholders to provide comments related to the comprehensive review, including comments related to each graduation requirement, core content standard, and educational requirement by grade level. The DE Director is required to convene committees to assist in the comprehensive review and provide recommendations related to the subject areas in the educational standards established in section 256.11 related. The Director is required to determine the membership of each Committee, and the bill requires each Committee to include four members of the general assembly (one member designated by the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the Minority Leader of the House) as ex officio, nonvoting members. Bill is on the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to HF 2329.

[**HF 2547**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202547&ga=90) **Chronic Absenteeism:** Requires the parents or guardians, and the student if an emancipated minor, if the student missed more than 10% of school in the prior school year for any reason, to meet with a representative of the school and a representative of the county attorney to develop and attendance plan. Requires the county attorney to provide information to the parents and/or student regarding truancy laws. The bill was amended during the committee meeting to remove provisions requiring DOM to withhold the regular program district cost in a subsequent year if 20% or more of students are chronically absent. The bill is on the House Calendar. With the amendment improving the bill, RSAI changed our registration from opposition to support. Successor to HF 2254.

[**HF 2548**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202548&ga=90) **World Language Pronouns:** prohibits the incorporation of gender-neutral language in high school world language instruction when the language uses a grammatical gender system. The bill is on the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to HF 2060.

[**HF 2553**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202553&ga=90) **High School Athletic Participation:** Requires public schools to allow a student from a private school who lives in the school district to participate in extracurricular competitions for the public schools, pursuant to an agreement between the schools. Includes a similar provision allowing a public school student to compete for a private school. Allows private schools to charge the student a fee. Prohibits the athletic unions from considering the enrollment of the student’s school when determining classification for the public school. The bill is on the House Calendar. RSAI is registered as undecided. Successor to HF 2214.

[**HF 2586**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=HF2586) **School Guards and Firearm Training:** Requires school districts with enrollment over 8,000 to employ at least one security guard, with a professional weapons carry permit, per high school. Encourages smaller districts to do so. Establishes a school security grant program with grants up to $50,000 to help pay costs. Requires guards to have live training at least quarterly. Allows other school employees to have a carry permit if the school has not opted out of professional permits for school employees. Requires the employee to have regular training. Includes immunity provisions. The bill was amended in the House Education Committee to remove the mandate that requires large schools to have an SRO or private security officer and instead encourages school districts to hire peace officers. On the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to HSB 675.

[**HF 2609**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202609&ga=90) **School Board Liaisons:** Requires school boards to appoint at least one student to serve as a liaison between the board, administrators, teachers and student, if the applicant meets requirements. Requires the liaison be allowed to sit in on meetings and to have access to non-confidential material. Requires boards to develop a selection process. On the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to HF 2189.

[**HF 2611**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2611) **Teacher Salaries:** Sets minimum teacher pay for FY 2024-25 at $47,500 and increases that to $50,000 for the FY 2025-26 school year. Sets minimum hourly wages for education support personnel at $15 per hour (caps the state expense for the minimum hourly pay at $14 million and requires DOM to prorate the shortfall to districts is the $14 million is insufficient to cover the cost). Requires DOM to calculate TSS per pupil necessary for each district to reach minimums, including the employer’s share of FICA and IPERS. Allows TSS to be used for educational support staff costs. Appropriates an FY 2024-25 Funding Supplement of $22 million, based on districts’ share of budget enrollment (estimated at $45.50 per pupil), to be used at the school district’s discretion to supplement teacher salaries and salaries and wages of education support personnel in a manner that promotes quality teaching and rewards experience. Approved by the House Education Committee unanimously and moved to the House Calendar. RSAI supports. Successor to HSB 714.

[**HF 2613**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2613) **SSA Increase Per Pupil:** Sets the growth rate for state school aid/categoricals for the 2024-2025 school year at 3%. Was amended to continue the property tax relief payment to offset the cost of the 3% that would otherwise be included in the school district’s additional levy. Approved by the House and on to the Senate. See details of the bill above. RSAI is registered in support. Successor to HSB 712.

[**HF 2615**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/lobbyist/reports/declarations?ga=90&ba=HF2615) **College Information:** In addition to many community college and university reporting requirements, requires high schools to give information to students in grades 11-12 students who are interested in college the reports from the community colleges and universities. Makes the school college and career transition counselor responsible for giving out copies of the report if the school has a college and career transition counselor. Excludes a shared college and career transition counselor from counting against the limits on supplementary weighting for operational sharing purposes. On the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to HF 2347.

[**HF 2617**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202617&ga=90) **Pregnancy Education**: Requires Human Growth & Development (Sex-Ed) courses to include instruction on pregnancy and fetal development, including high-definition ultrasound and a video comparable to the “Meet Baby Olivia” video showing the development in the womb. Includes additional requirements. On the House Calendar. RSAI is opposed. Successor to HF 2031.

[**HF 2618**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2618) **Governor’s Reading Initiative:** Requires teacher preparation programs to give the latest version of a specific 2012 Massachusetts test (Foundations of Reading assessment) to students in the program as a condition of completing the program (college diploma). Requires the BOEE to require current K-6 teachers to pass the test by 2027. Requires schools to notify parents in writing if a third-grade student is behind in reading progress and requires the notification to include the opportunity for the parent to request their child be retained in third grade. Allows the parent to request the student be retained in grade 3. Requires that students who are behind in reading get personalized reading plans and allows the plans to continue until grade 6. On the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided, but has expressed our concerns for this high-stakes test and the impact of additional testing on the teacher shortage. Successor to HSB 650. SSB 3155 did not advance out of the Senate Education Committee before last week’s funnel deadline.

[**SF 2105**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF2105)**Operational Sharing:** Increases the maximum amount of additional weighting a school district may receive for sharing operational functions from 21 to 29 students. A [fiscal note](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/1445951.pdf) has been published to show the impact on the state budget. The bill is on the Senate Calendar. RSAI is registered in support.

[**SF 2195**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF%202195) **Reading Instruction:** Requires, beginning July 1, 2026, that districts include evidence-based early reading instruction, specifically related to developing decoding and encoding skills, that follows scope and sequence and that is direct, systematic, explicit, responsive and consists of 1) phonics including decoding and encoding and instruction in wiring, 2) phonemic awareness and phonological awareness, 3) fluency, including oral language development, 4) vocabulary and 5) Comprehension, including building background knowledge. Also prohibits, beginning July 1, 2026, the use of the three-cuing instructional model designed to teach students to read based on meaning drawn from context, structure and syntax, visual cues and pictures, or memory. The bill also requires teacher preparation programs to provide instruction for teachers in the science of reading and prohibits the instruction of the three-curing system related to encoding and decoding instructional strategies. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to SSB 3069.

[**SF 2332**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202332&ga=90) **Computer Science Graduation and Reporting:** Requires high school students in public, charter and accredited nonpublic schools to complete one-half unit of computer sciences as a graduation requirement, beginning with the graduating class of the 2028-29 school year. Allows schools to apply to the DE for a waiver through 2030. Requires the class be taught in a traditional in-person classroom to the extent feasible. Requires courses to meet or exceed standards adopted by the state BOE. Requires the DE to publish a list of computer science courses and course codes that satisfy the requirements. Requires school districts to report annually to DE, the number of teachers teaching computer science courses, including their credentials, courses and demographics, and the number of students by subgroup enrolled in computer science. The bill also expands the computer science professional development fund to reimburse teachers for computer science training tuition to include initial and intern teachers. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to SSB 3171.

[**SF 2333**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202333&ga=90) **Educational Land Sales:** Prohibits various governmental bodies, including school districts, from adopting or enforcing a deed restriction or ordinance that prohibits the lease or sale of the property to an educational institution planning to offer educational services. Requires that if a nonpublic school is the highest bidder on a property for sale, the school district must sell the property to the nonpublic school. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI is opposed. Successor to SSB 3122. Companion HSB 679 was not approved by the House Education Committee, so did not survive the first funnel.

[**SF 2364**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202364&ga=90) **Education Leadership Commission Reporting**: Strikes the reporting requirements for the Commission on Education Leadership and Compensation to the DE, Legislature and the Governor. Approved by the Senate Education Committee 15-0 and moved to the Senate Calendar. RSAI is undecided. See Companion HF 2152 on the House Calendar. Successor to SSB 3047.

[**SF 2365**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202365&ga=90) **BOEE Investigation Reporting:** Requires the BOEE to include the number of investigations of school employees who are not licensed or holders of certificates or authorizations that are referred to law enforcement in its annual reports. Includes protections for personal information. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI supports. See companion HF 2151 on the House Calendar. Successor to SSB 3041.

[**SF 2367**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF%202367) **Student Data System and Count Date:** Requires DE to provide a new data information system for reporting and collecting information, at no cost to the school district for the first year. Allows DE to charge up to $12 per pupil for year 2 (both public and nonpublic schools pay the fee) and no limit on future year fee. Would allow districts to purchase a SIS module that would play well with the state data collection system. Also adds March 1 as a second enrollment count date and requires budget enrollment to be based on the average of the Oct. 1 and Mar. 1 enrollment counts. With new budget timelines, concerns were expressed about this second date’s workability for schools, DE and DOM. RSAI has changed registration to opposed, concerned about the impossible timeline of a March 1 count date with the new budget process public hearing deadlines. RSAI also has concerns about a mandated statewide student information system. See HF 2542 on the House Calendar. Successor to SSB 3156.

[**SF 2368**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF%202368) **Charter Schools:** See the description of HF 2543 above. However, the Senate bill includes Division III school start date, which makes the earliest school start date the first Tuesday after the final day of the Iowa State Fair. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to SSB 3157.

[**SF 2374**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2374) **Union Recertification Elections:** Requires PERB to decertify a public union if an employer fails to file with PERB a list of eligible voters and the union does file an objection through the court system within five days. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI is undecided. Successor to SSB 3158.

[**SF 2378**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202378&ga=90) **BOEE Grooming Investigations:** Strikes the requirement that BOEE investigations about the misconduct of a practitioner involving behavior that led to an inappropriate or romantic relationship be down within three years of the conduct. Requires BOEE to report to law enforcement agencies when an investigation discovers a felony has been committed. RSAI is registered as undecided. See Companion HF 2261 on the House Calendar. Successor to SSB 3050.

[**SF 2383**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202383&ga=90) **Expanded PK Program:** Allows schools to choose between the 10 hours of instruction for voluntary preschool programs or adding expanded programs (15 hours of instruction, increasing to 20 hours in FY 2026) for children in families at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. Allows those families to choose in which preschool program to place their child. Changes the formula for preschool aid commensurate with the expanded hours (75% weighting for 15 hour program and 1.0 weighting for the 20 hour program). On the Senate Calendar. RSAI supports. Successor to SF 2075.

[**SF 2386**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=sf2386) **AEA Overhaul and Teacher Pay:** The bill includes following five Divisions:

Division I: Creation of the DE Division of Special Education and Assigned Duties

Division II: AEA General Provisions

Division III AEA Funding

Division IV Initial Teacher Compensation: Establishes a new teacher pay minimum of $46,251

Division V AEA Required Evaluations and Reports

Division VI TSS DCPP.

See the [Feb. 16 RSAI Weekly Report](https://nebula.wsimg.com/0d270ebe9de7febf3f493d177db02430?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) for details of each Division. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI is opposed. Successor to SSB 3073.

[**SF 2388**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202388&ga=90) **School Administrator Contracts:** Requires contracts between school boards and school administrators to include a statement that severance payments will not be made if the administrator is found liable in a criminal, civil or administrative proceeding, except for simple misdemeanors or traffic tickets. Applies to contracts entered into or continued after the effective date of the bill. The bill was amended in the Committee, requiring the criminal act to be related to the duty of the administrator. On the Senate Calendar. RSAI was opposed to the original bill, but with the amendment, has changed our registration to support. Successor to SF 2041.

[**HSB 585**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hsb585) **School Start Date:** Allows the earliest school start date to be the Monday preceding August 23 if August 23 is a weekday. Passed by a vote of 21:1 on Jan. 30. Moves to the House Calendar. RSAI supports. Still awaiting a new bill number.

**Advocacy Actions This Week: School Funding, AEA Overhaul Changes, Operational Sharing, Quality Preschool and Charter School/Open Enrollment Equity:**

**Adequate School Funding:** Contact legislators regarding SSA, the House’s 3% alone would fall short but the commitment to fund teacher salary increases and an additional supplemental appropriation of $22 million is good. See the RSAI Position Paper for additional information.Now that the House has sent their 3% bill to the Senate, contact Senators and ask them to support House recommendation of 3%, and confirm a commitment for additional teacher pay. Additional supports:

See the RSAI website for an [RSAI Position Paper](https://nebula.wsimg.com/79b6d832ce2a03034afb138992d88ff2?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) providing education funding history, comparing total Iowa education expenditures per pupil, which most recently ranked our state as 35th in the nation, now spending more than $3,000 per student LESS than the national average, and including some talking points to help you advocate with your legislators. *RSAI’s Legislative Priority supports an SSA rate that at least matches the inflation rate schools are experiencing.*

**FY 2025** [ISFIS New Authority Calculator](https://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Public/New%20Authority%20Report%20FY%202025.xlsx) allows users to set the SSA rate and calculate the impact for all districts for FY 2025 on your regular program (not including special education or other supplemental weightings or categoricals). Enter the SSA percentage increase and your Budget Enrollment and you can compare to the new money you’d receive if the SSA rate matched inflation (either 3.1% for CPI and 4% for Core Inflation) compared to the Governor’s Recommendation of 2.5%.

**AEA and Teacher Pay Bill:** Now that the House and Senate versions are through committees, discuss preferences in each policy. In short, the House version has longer implementation timelines and a smaller transfer of power to the Department of Education, but does not give districts local control over special education flow-through dollars (requires those services be contracted through an AEA). Keep talking about the priorities of limited state government authority, sensible timelines, removal of the Operational Sharing limitation and ensured provision of district and AEA capacity to provide needed services for students with disabilities.

**Operational Sharing:** [**SF 2105**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF2105)Increases the maximum amount of additional weighting a school district may receive for sharing operational functions from 21 to 29 students. A [fiscal note](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/1445951.pdf) has been published to show the impact on the state budget. The bill is on the Senate Calendar. Encourage Senators to pass this bill, a priority for rural schools.

**Quality Preschool and Other RSAI Priorities:** in every communication, find a way to mention Quality Preschool, and Teacher and other Staff Shortages. [SF 2383](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SF%202383) Expanded Preschool is on the Senate Calendar (phases up to 1.0 weighting for students below 185% of the federal poverty level). Contact Senators to support it. Find Position Papers and other resources on the RSAI Advocacy website to find talking points or other resources to share when you meet with policymakers.

**Charter School and Open Enrollment Funding and Right of First Refusal on School District Property:** RSAI is undecided on these bills, which could impact rural schools in different ways depending on open enrollment patterns. HF 2543 on the House Calendar and SF 2368, require categorical funds TSS, PD and EICS to follow students. See the article and description above. Encourage members in both chambers to start small, avoid furthering other inequities, and study the implications during the School Finance Interim Committee this Fall.

**Connecting with Legislators:** To call and leave a message at the Statehouse during the legislative session, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281.3221 and the Senate switchboard operator number is 515.281.3371. You can ask if they are available or leave a message for them to call you back. You can also ask them what’s the best way to contact them during session. They may prefer email or text message or phone call based on their personal preferences.

Find biographical information about legislators gleaned from their election websites on the ISFIS site here: <http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/legislative_bios>. Learn about your new representatives and senators or find out something you don’t know about incumbents.

Find out who your legislators are through the interactive map or address search posted on the Legislative Website here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

**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 when immediate advocacy action is required, testimony presented to the State Board of Education, the DE or any legislative committee or public hearing, and links to fiscal information that may inform your work. Be sure to review the [2024 RSAI Advocacy Handbook](https://nebula.wsimg.com/4db9cbaa2277bd686c52a89e1982108e?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1).

Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work:
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